

GHANA

A Desk Review of the Ghana School Feeding Programme

World Food Programme's Home Grown School Feeding Project

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List of acronyms

AAGDS	Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DPCU	District Planning Coordination Unit
FASDEP	Food and Agricultural Sector Development Policy
GPRSII	Second Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
MoA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPDRP	Non-Poor Diverse Risk prone farmers
PFM	Public Financial Management
PDRP	Poor Diverse Risk Prone farmers
PSIA	Poverty and Social Impact Assessment
SEND	Social Enterprise Development Foundation
SNV	Netherlands Development Co-operation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

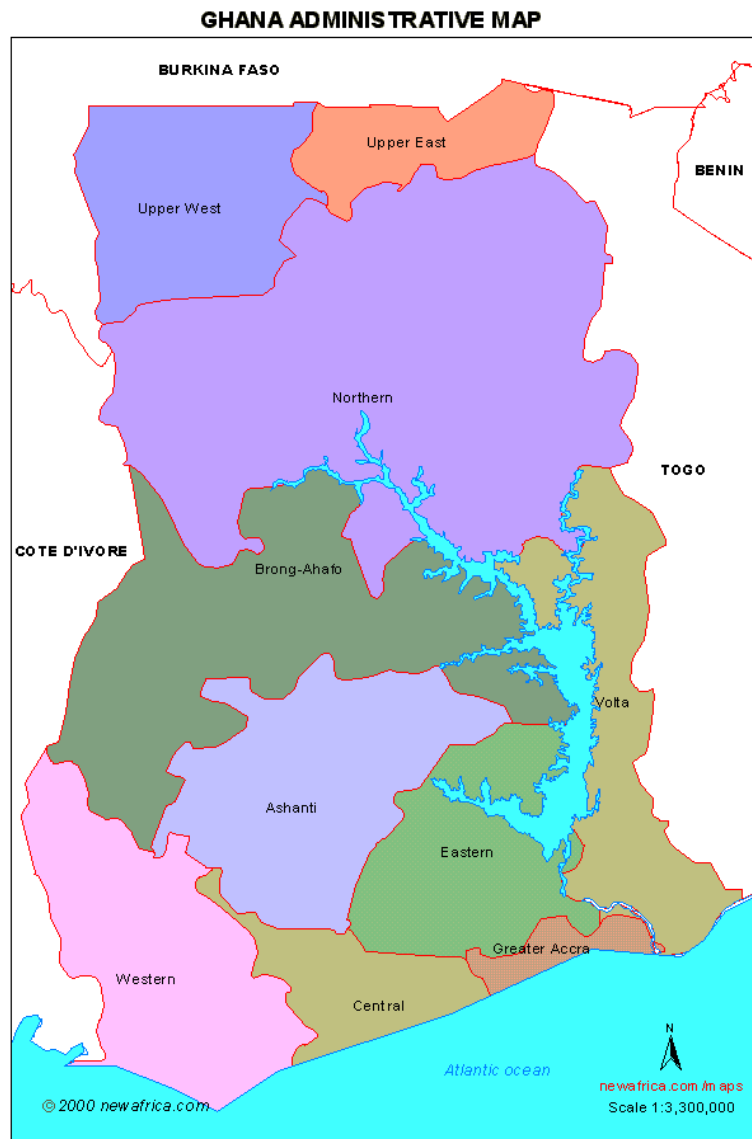
This case study on the Ghana School Feeding Programme is one of 7 desk-based studies on school feeding around the world produced for the World Food Programme. In line with the terms of reference, it focuses on governance structures, financing and procurement dimensions. Other important dimensions, such as nutritional aspects, are outside the remit of this report.

1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

1.1. Recent history and administrative arrangements

The Republic of Ghana is a country of 230,940 km² on the coast of West Africa bordering Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Togo. It achieved Independence from the British in 1957 and is now considered a rare West African example of a stable country with a maturing democratic culture. In December 2004 the presidential and parliamentary elections returned the ruling New Patriotic Party to power. Elections are next due in 2008.

Administratively the country is divided into 10 regions and 138 districts (see Map). It has been undergoing a process of decentralisation, transferring decision-making powers to district level government through district assemblies.



1.2 Development indicators

Ghana's human population is approximately 22.9 million, with a growth rate of 1.9% (CIA, 2007). Ghana's Human Development Index (UNDP, 2004) ranks life expectancy at 57, adult literacy rates 57.9 and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment in education ratios at 47.2. The dependency ratio is 51.5 percent (i.e. human population between 15-59 years); 41 percent are 0-15 years, 7.2 percent are over 60 years. In terms of its Human Poverty Index, at 33.1 it is ranked 58th among 102 developing countries.

These rates are better than averages for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, and for parts of South Asia, but still well below levels in Europe, Latin America and East Asia. Furthermore, statistics behind these rankings suggest that although Ghana has made impressive strides in human development, there is considerable spatial variation and significant impediments remain, such as growing prevalence of HIV/AIDS, poor access to potable water, and gender-based inequality.

1.3 Poverty reduction

Ghana is categorised as a low income country but since the 1990s it has seen one of the fastest rates of poverty reduction in Africa (DFID, 2007). Per capita GDP currently stands at 281, with growth rates aided by buoyant gold exports and high world market prices for cocoa (CIA, 2007). According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey, poverty fell from 52% in 1991/2 to 28% of the population in 2005/6 (GoG, 2005/6). This rate of poverty reduction is reflected in good progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), notably with regard to primary school enrolment (from 79.9% in 1999 to 85.9% in 2005: Min. of Education Statistics).

Headline figures on poverty reduction need to be approached with caution. The picture is complex when indicators are disaggregated, with less progress on indicators such as child mortality and nutrition. Furthermore studies recognising the multidimensional nature of poverty suggest there has been a downward trend in living conditions and increase in hardship for many poor people – particularly the chronically poor - over the last decade (SyncConsult, 2004).

Spatial differences in the country poverty profile are also marked: very broadly there are higher levels of deprivation in the north, as compared to the south (see McKay & Aryeetey, 2004). Statistics demonstrate that poverty rates are increasing in the Central Northern and Upper East Regions, where food crop farmers are concentrated, while in the Upper West Region rates have remained stable (SyncConsult, 2004). There are, however, less poor parts of the north, just as there are relatively poor districts in the south. In both north and south deprivation is highest in rural areas and higher for women than men.

For people living in rural poverty, livelihoods are based on food crop production as their main economic activity (99% being rain-fed agriculture: FAO, 2006). There is also a strong tradition of migration from north to south and to urban areas. It follows that food insecurity and lack of economic opportunity are identified as important dimensions of poverty (Ashtong & Rider Smith, 2001). During times of food shortage, evidence suggests that Ghanaian households decrease their nutritional uptake resulting in deteriorating health and malnutrition, particularly affecting vulnerable individuals such as children and the elderly (WFP, 2004).

Food insecurity and high poverty levels in northern Ghana contribute to making households extremely vulnerable to a multitude of shocks – floods, erratic rainfall, insect infestations and health risks in which diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, respiratory and gastro-intestinal infections, and nutritional deficiencies are endemic (Fisher, 2002). At times of stress linked to food insecurity, families may withdraw children from school; the ILO Ghana

Child Labour Survey found that 2 in every 5 children aged 5 to 17 had been prematurely pushed into economic activity, with the highest proportions in rural areas, working for example as goat-herders, on family farms, or domestic labour (GSS, 2003).

Against this background, Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial and technical assistance. In 2002, Ghana opted for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief and was included in the G-8 debt relief programme decided at Gleneagles in 2005. The Government has recently developed a second poverty reduction strategy paper, the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II 2006 - 2009), supported by international donors. The thrust of this strategy is towards promotion of human development and basic services, good governance and civic responsibility, and modernization of agriculture development and private sector competitiveness for growth (IMF, 2006).

As a result of the poverty context, in parts of Ghana, most notably the north, food insecurity is widespread and children may experience significant levels of hunger on a routine basis. This is particularly during the lean season and when adverse weather conditions have affected agricultural production. School feeding programmes are therefore an important source of food and nutrition, stopping Ghanaian children from experiencing hunger, providing an important source of nutrients, assisting in household food security on a short-term basis, and raising levels of school enrollment and attendance (c.f. Glewwe & Jacoby, 1994).

1.4 Public Procurement

When considering how procurement mechanisms function in relation to school feeding, it is helpful to place this understanding in a wider context. A helpful starting point is the Ghana 'Drivers of Change' study which provided evidence on the way underlying factors shape social, political and economic change (Booth et al., 2005). This study notes that there is a continued tendency for government business relations to be conducted on patron-client terms and doubts about the willingness of politicians to change their approach because of the nature of the political system. This system is characterised as "enduring neo-patrimonialism of a particular Ghanaian sort in which 'horizontal' interest groups are subordinated to 'vertical' patronage relationships. This weakens issue-based pressures and the demand for improved performance" (ibid: 1).

Within this context, the implementation of development programmes may be governed less by clear policy and planning frameworks bought into by different actors, than by personalised relations and embedded social practices. Nevertheless, Ghana has taken steps to reform its public procurement system to ensure that efficient, fair and transparent public procurement decisions are made and that those who make them are held accountable. To this end the Public Procurement Act was passed in 2003 (GoG, 2003) and a Public Procurement Board established, which is working to strengthen procurement management to ensure more transparent procedures are adopted (World Bank, 2006: viii).

In 2004 a financial accountability assessment was conducted in Ghana by the World Bank (in collaboration with the IMF, DFID and Government of Ghana). With regard to contract management the following statements are made: "systems designed to monitor performance (the contract itself, measurement of work performed, contract extensions, variation orders, analysis of claims, price escalation clauses and payments on account) are weak. In addition very large payment arrears occurred. Overpayments and corrupt practices benefiting both contractors and government staff are known to

have occurred, even though total losses from such causes are largely unknown” (World Bank, 2004: 23).

The report identifies the following features of procurement practices that give rise to significant financial risk: extensive use of sole method for selection of consultants; extensive and repetitive use of shopping procedures, often using the same firms; unclear procedures for opening of bids and criteria for bid evaluation and contract award; inadequate post contract negotiations; systematic use of pro-forma invoices as a basis for payment; informal procedures that have developed to avoid losing uncommitted funds at year end; over-centralisation of procurement in Accra.

The more recent External Review of Public Financial Management (World Bank, 2006) is more positive. It argues that Ghana’s public financial management system is based on a solid legal and regulatory framework which sets out appropriate budget and accountability structures. The main message of the Review is that Ghana’s PFM system is performing at an average standard, and in some respects rates above average.

While the 2006 Evaluation is focused on budgetary processes at the national level, it should be borne in mind, firstly, that there has been positive improvement in procurement mechanisms, and secondly, that problems encountered in the procurement of food in schools reflect wider weaknesses within Ghanaian procurement systems.

1.5 Primary Education

Recent emphasis has been placed on trying to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal access to primary education by 2015. This is considered ‘probable’ within the context of a ‘strong’ supportive environment, although achieving gender equity within this goal is considered ‘unlikely’ (IMF, 2006: 8). The GPRS II identifies a recent shift in strategy to meet this goal, namely a move towards making school attendance obligatory for all children from 4 – 15, under the Programme for Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education. This is linked to improvements in the physical environment and quality of schooling.

In effect, political will, government resources, and donor support are focused on improving primary education. This includes major initiatives like the Capitation Grant Scheme¹ and the Ghana School Feeding Programme. An understanding of the national school feeding programme, its institutional environment, and evaluation of successes, has to be situated within this context.

¹ Under the Capitation Grant the government has provided a grant of 30,000.000 cedis [approx. US\$32] per child to assist public schools to undertake activities in school. With the introduction of the grant, all levies have been abolished. These levies were a disincentive for poor parents to send their children to school and the Capitation Grants Scheme led to a substantial increase in enrolment numbers across the country from 2005. <http://www.edughana.net/fcube.htm#capi>. Date accessed: 9th July 2007.

2. SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN GHANA

This section traces the historical context to school feeding in Ghana and provides details of a major national initiative, the Ghana School Feeding Programme, implemented on a pilot basis in 2006 and expanded rapidly in 2007. Because the current national feeding programme is so new, independent research is only starting to be conducted and to date Government's own monitoring and evaluation is very weak. By implication robust empirical evidence to inform this discussion is limited.

2.1 Historical Development of School Feeding

Ghana has a long history of school feeding programs implemented by different development agencies, particularly in the north. The two most important players in terms of coverage and length of programmes have been Catholic Relief Services, a US-based NGO, which started to feed school children in Northern Ghana in 1958, and the World Food Programme, which has been active in Ghana since the late 1960s.

Other agencies associated with school feeding projects include, or have included, USAID (United States Agency for International Development), Self Help International, World Vision, the Adventist Development Relief Agency, SNV (Netherlands Development Co-operation), and SEND (Social Enterprise Development Foundation). Typically school feeding has been linked to wider food relief programmes that seek to improve the nutritional status of communities, and contribute to gender equality and poverty reduction in areas where food insecurity is substantial and levels of malnutrition are high (USAID/AED/Linkages (2004).

The WFP (2006c) has identified three 'models' of school feeding programmes that have been used in Ghana:

- (i) School meals: for example a major school meals initiative started in 1997 when financing by USAID enabled CRS to deliver school feeding in the three northern regions of Ghana (Northern, Upper East, and Upper West), as part of the Food Assisted Child Survival Program. With the aim of improving school attendance and enrolment, approximately 200,000 primary school children in 296 pre-schools and 967 primary schools receive/or received hot lunches on a daily basis.²
- (ii) Take-home rations: an example is the WFP's Girl's School Feeding Programme in 25 districts across the 3 northern regions of Ghana that gives girls take-home food rations every month to ensure continued enrolment in primary and junior secondary school (WFP, 2006: 7); and,
- (iii) Lunch during the lean season for agricultural produce: an example is a project by World Vision for primary schools in Gushiegu and Bongo Districts where it also operates area development programmes.

² USAID provided this funding under its Public Law 480 Title II Non-Emergency Assistance Programmed for Direct Food Aid Program, delivered through Food For Peace with cooperating sponsors, the Adventist Relief and Development Agency and Catholic Relief Services (USAID, 2003). US Public Law 480, also known as Food for Peace, is a funding avenue through which surplus US food can be used for overseas aid; it was started in 1954 by President Eisenhower.

Both CRS and WFP have historically used imported food as the basis of their school feeding programmes. In 2005 a change of policy was reflected in WFP's Ghanaian programme as it started to source local food items such as corn, salt and palm oil. Through CRS, Ghana has for many years been a recipient of 'Food for Peace', whereby US food surpluses (crops and oil) have been imported into Ghana (Jones, 1981) (see footnote 2): CRS continues to import food provisions for its school feeding programme and will do this until its programme is wound down.

In 2006 it was announced that the CRS School feeding programme would be phased out by the end of 2008 because Ghana was no longer among the priority countries earmarked for 'Title II Assistance' and also due to changing policy commitments within USAID itself.³ WFP will also phase its programme out by the end of 2010 although it is currently using its on-site school feeding as part of the national school feeding programme outlined below. To this end, in 2006 WFP entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ghanaian Government as detailed in Section 2.3.

The school feeding programmes in northern Ghana organised by multilateral donors, bilateral donors, NGOs and CBOs have generated a body of experience that is important for Government to draw on to inform the national school feeding programme, and to maintain achievements by the CRS and WFP after their programmes are withdrawn.

2.2 The Ghana School Feeding Programme - Background

In 2004, Ghana was one of the first African countries to develop an implementation plan for a home grown school feeding programme. This forms part of a 10 country initiative, the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, promoted by the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Millennium Development Task Force on Hunger under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).⁴ The new Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa, headed by Kofi Annan, is also committed to school feeding.⁵ Against this background, school feeding programmes have significant political backing from international and African leaders.

The Government of Ghana is highly committed to its school feeding programme, and, with the backing of the President, there is high level political support for the initiative. To date, after only one year, 405,000 children receive school meals on a daily basis: impressive figures by any standards and particularly in a low income African country. A pledge by the Dutch Government to support the establishment of a national

³ USAID Ghana Mission Program Overview - Food for Peace.mht and 'No More Lunch?' School Feeding Suffers Big Blow (14th February, 2007). [URL://www.ghanadistricts.com/news?read=3350](http://www.ghanadistricts.com/news?read=3350). Accessed 6th July 2007.

⁴ Objectives of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme are to revitalise African Agriculture, food security and trade balance (Pillar 3, Program 3 focuses on HGSF). Endorsed by the UN General Assembly September 2005 (Resolution 60/1, Article 34). School feeding was seen as one of three 'quick wins' by the UN Hunger Task Force; See UN Hunger Task Force report "Halving Hunger: It Can Be Done". Available at: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_hunger.htm See also Eenhoorn, 2007b.

⁵ Hans Eenhoorn, pers. comm.. 24th July 2007.

school feeding programme helped to make this political commitment possible (SNV, 2006).

The NEPAD School Feeding Programme was initiated by the Government of Ghana as a pilot in 10 primary schools (one for each region) in September 2005. From January 2006, the renamed the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), was expanded across all regions of the country.⁶ Phase One of the GSFP started in 2006 and will run until 2010 (GoG, 2006).

The Government of Ghana has expanded the GSFP rapidly seeking to reach children living in hunger: between June 2006 and the end of 2006 approximately 400 schools were included in the GSFP, by January 2007 975 schools and 405,000 children were reported to be enrolled.⁷ It is hoped that a further 1,000 schools can join the Programme in 2008. In effect a political decision has been made to implement the GSFP rapidly in all 10 regions, rather than a more gradual approach building up from selected areas.

Already the GSFP has led to increased enrolment and attendance rates. For example, a review of the GSFP pilot in 2006 estimated that enrolment rose by 20.3% in GSFP schools as compared to non-GSFP schools.⁸ Similarly, attendance rose by 39.9%, 5% and 13% in three pilot schools compared to 9%, 0.5% and 19% in non-GSFP schools in the same districts.⁹

While such an outlook is positive for children and their families, rapid expansion carries in its wake the many challenges that are inherent in fast organisational and programmatic growth, particularly given that Ghana is a low income country. Moreover, while high level political backing for the programme is unquestionably important, it does carry disadvantages insofar as the programme is highly political, as intimated by recent allegations from opposition parties over corruption within GSFP procurement committees.¹⁰

⁶ Government of Ghana (2006) Ghana School Feeding Programme: Programme Document 2007 – 2010.

⁷ SIGN (2006) Annual Report. Details of how the programme has expanded at district level can be found on www.ghanadistricts.com

⁸ SIGN Newsletter, November 2006.

⁹ See Ghana School Feeding Programme: Programme Document 2007-2010. Accra, Ghana.

¹⁰ In June 2007 the Ghanaian media reported that in response to reports of the misappropriation of funds earmarked for the payment of cooks, the Executive Director of the School Feeding Programme, Dr Tuffour, had dissolved procurement committees responsible for purchasing foodstuffs and other items in all 138 districts of the country. The allegations were strongly refuted by the Executive Director who argued that the problems of arrears in payments of cooks came about because District Chief Executives (DCEs) were delaying the disbursement of funds to procurement committees. The NDC Minority Deputy Spokesperson on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs entered into this debate over the misapplication of public funds, demanding explanations and filing a motion in Parliament seeking the setting up of an investigation committee.

'School Feeding Programme dissolves procurement committees', Wordpress, June 3rd 2007, URL: <http://www.ghana2008.wordpress.com/2007/06/03/school-feeding-programme-dissolves-procurement-committees.htm> Date Accessed: 09.07.2007. 'Ghana: Controversy Swirls Around Veep's 'Baby'' Public Agenda, Accra. URL: <http://www.allafrica.com>. Date Accessed 06.07.2007 'Accra: Recalcitrant DCEs warned' URL: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/news/?read=3107>. Date accessed: 06.07.2007 'Accra: Hospital Bills Taken Up' Daily Graphic, 01.06.2007. URL: <http://ghanadistricts.com/news/?read=5190>. Date accessed: 06.07.2007.

2.2.1 The GSFP

The basic idea of the GSFP is to provide all children in public primary schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas with a hot, nutritious meal each day, using locally-grown food. This meal consists of carbohydrate, protein and vegetables. To this end cooks have been trained and funded, kitchens have been built, potable water secured, and food is being procured in local markets or through local retailers and caterers.

Overall objectives of the GSFP are to contribute to poverty reduction and food security through:

- increasing enrolment, retention and attendance rates;
- enhancing the nutritional status of all school-going children;
- creating wealth at the rural level through agricultural development; and
- ensuring accessibility to markets (GoG, 2006).¹¹

There is also an intention to link the school meals initiative to other health interventions, such as deworming.

While school feeding programmes seeking to improve school enrolment and children's health and development are long established in Ghana, coverage by the GSFP is intended to be far more extensive than past programmes, and also the linkage to local agricultural development and local food procurement is new. As such the objectives of the GSFP represent new challenges for all parties involved in the Programme.

2.2.2 Indicators of Achievement

The Government of Ghana has outlined the following indicators of achievement (GoG, 2006: 21):

Objectives	Indicators of Achievement
Long-term: contribute to poverty reduction and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8% real increase in incomes at national and community levels • 8% increased employment at community level • Greater availability, access, utilization, and stability of food crops and community level
Immediate 1: Reduce hunger and malnutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rate of growth in height and weight for age is more than the national average • The height, weight, upper arm circumference of under fives in the GSFP should be greater than the national average • Meals produced and consumed by school children during the school days
Immediate 2: Increase school enrolment, attendance and retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase enrolment in GSFP schools above the national baseline 83.3% • Improve attendance in GSFP schools by 20% by the end of the program • Reduce drop out rate by 20% in GSFP schools
Immediate 3: Boost domestic food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of farmers (linked to the GSFP or supplying GSFP) increased • Income of farmers supplying to the GSFP increased • 40% of GSFP beneficiary schools have established school farms

¹¹ The Fight Against Hunger, Monthly News Bulletin of the Ghana School Feeding Programme, No. 2, October 2006.

Schools only started participating in the GSFP in 2006 and 2007; therefore it is very early to assess whether these achievements have been reached.

2.2.3 Targeting

Targeting is an issue of concern to WFP (2006). Historically the WFPs feeding programmes have been targeted at the most deprived districts in the north, as have projects by other donors. The GSFP, however, has been rolled out across Ghana into areas where children are not necessarily malnourished or hungry.

GSFP documents state that school feeding is targeted at children in primary schools and attached kindergartens in government-controlled establishments. A whole school will enter the programme and all pupils be fed; no selection takes place at school level. It identifies criteria for selection as follows:

- willingness of the community to put up basic infrastructure (e.g. kitchen, store room, latrines) and to contribute in cash and kind;
- commitment of the district assembly toward the programme and the level of readiness and interest towards sustaining the programme;
- poverty status based on GLSS data and NDPC poverty mapping;
- low school enrolment and/or attendance rate and gender parity index;
- high drop-out rate;
- low literacy levels;
- presence or planned provision/expansion of health and nutrition interventions
- communities/schools not already covered by other feeding programmes
- poor access to potable water
- high communal spirit and/or communal management capability
- (although not listed, the school should also have access for vehicles).

Despite the presence of these formal criteria, a widespread practice is for selection to be based on which schools are favoured by the relevant district chief executive or chief of the area. Information available on the Internet (www.ghanadistricts.com) would also suggest that in many districts, schools taking up the GSFP programme are those that are most physically accessible.

Robust evidence is needed comparing which schools have entered the programme with spatial distribution of poverty indicators according to population, however local politics may mean that schools with the poorest, most hungry pupils are excluded by the programme. As the GSFP extends its reach these problems may be overcome but targeting to ensure the neediest children receive a meal will remain a critical issue.

The need for targeting is particularly strong in areas where there are social groups who are marginal due, for instance, to their ethnic background and culture. SNV (2006) has conducted a multi-stakeholder context analysis of girls' participation in education in Northern Ghana. One point is that push factors in sending girls to school differ

across socio-cultural and geographic areas, therefore the design of intervention strategies need to be informed by social and psycho-cultural factors in specific localities.

SNV (2006) gives the example of the Birifors who are a tribal group found in northwest Ghana. Because this group are not indigenes of the land, social services to these communities are not given a priority. They are therefore extremely marginalised and deprived of resource allocation and the distribution of public services and social infrastructure, including primary schools. For the GSFP and Partners there will be major challenges in reaching children living in hunger amongst a group such as the Birifor, where access to primary education itself is extremely limited.

Drawing from evidence of school canteen projects in West Africa, Hicks (n.d.) argues that targeting areas where families are food insecure is crucial if the programme is intended to provide a significant nutritional transfer to beneficiaries. Evidence emerging from two studies of 5 schools in Central Region suggests that the impact on the nutritional status of children may be very minor but that there was a major impact on home meals.¹² These schools are in a part of southern Ghana where children are used to eating 2-3 meals every day and the GSFP has meant that lunch at home can be replaced with a school lunch; it may provide an incentive for children to be sent to school but is unlikely to have a nutritional impact.

2.2.4 Impact

It is still early to assess the impact of the GSFP on its stated objectives. There is however extensive learning from past programmes (e.g. Jones, 1981; Levinger, 1986; USAID, 2004; WFP, 2006; NDPC, 2004) and an evaluation of the 2006 GSFP pilot programme was carried out by SNV (2006).¹³

A self evaluation of the WFP programme for take-home rations for girls in September 2004 noted that it has resulted in a significant increase in girls' enrolment and retention rates, with annual growth in enrolment averaging 8.4 percent per year WFP (2006: 7). Together with the CRS school feeding programme, the take-home rations were deemed to have contributed substantially to the "tremendous leap in the gross primary enrolment rates in the three deprived regions far in excess of the nationwide growth rates" (NDPC, 2004).

An evaluation of the CRS Programme concludes that school feeding has proved to be beneficial in ensuring short-term food insecurity for children, siblings and parents, increased enrolment (even for shepherd boys), increased attendance and participation, and a bargaining chip to get girl children to school. The average number of children enrolled per programme primary school in 1997 was 56%, this increased to an average of 89%.¹⁴ Average number of children per programme has increased more than 3 times; Attendance rates at the programme schools improved by 33%; Nearly 4 times more primary school children and 1.6 times more schools receive hot lunches; 85% of the girls

¹² Pers. comm.. Iris van den Berg and Tineke Martins, Wageningen University, 14th July 2007.

¹³ The Ghana Agricultural Initiatives Network is in the process of re-submitting a proposal on the GSFP to the Gates Foundation; this includes a significant monitoring and evaluation component.

¹⁴ Development Alternatives International. February 2001. Evaluation of the Impact of Three PL480 Title II Programs on Food Security in Ghana; cited in USAID/CRS (n.d.) School Feeding Program in the Three Poorest Regions of Ghana.

achieve 85% attendance rate needed for take-home rations (USAID, 2004). Conversely when there were problems of food supplies for the programme then the number of children going to school started to decrease.

Despite these educational and short-term food security outcomes, one of the biggest challenges of school feeding is its low sustainability in rural food insecure communities. Persistent drought and poor soils makes it almost impossible for parents to feed children once the programme ends.

2.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

To date monitoring and evaluation of the GSFP has been very limited. The National Secretariat has established an M&E unit to monitor implementation processes and evaluate effectiveness. It is understood from persons contacted as part of this study that M&E capacity is at present weak.

3. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The GSFP has major financial backing from the Government of Ghana and its donor Partners. While core financing of the programme from the Governments of Ghana and the Netherlands and mechanisms for fund disbursement are in place, persons contacted for this desk-study identified a lack of cost-sharing mechanisms between the different stakeholders as an important issue that needs to be overcome.

This includes cost sharing between different sectors of government and their budgets (such as the GPRS, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport), between Central Government, the GSFP National Secretariat and District Assemblies, between the Government and donors, and between stakeholders at very local levels such as parent groups and CBOs. It has been suggested that financing models already used within existing school feeding programmes would be a good starting point for learning.

3.1 Government of Ghana

The total programme budget for the GSFP for 4 years is US\$211.7 million; it is expected that other collaborative institutions like district assemblies and some ministries will spend US\$102,3 million.¹⁵ If projections are accurate, by 2010 the GSFP could have injected US\$147 million into the local economy (GoG, 2006). In effect, at least fifty percent of the GSFP is financed by the Government of Ghana, enabled by the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief.

3.2 Donor support

Bilateral and multilateral donors and international and local NGOs are involved in the GSFP.

3.2.1 The Netherlands

Financial support is provided by the Dutch Government as part of its commitment to spend 15% of its total development budget on primary education in developing countries from 2007.¹⁶ It will finance approximately 50% of local food costs until 2011 on the condition that 80% of the food is procured locally: this comes to approximately 11 million Euros per annum for 4 years.¹⁷

Linked to Dutch Government financing, SNV (Dutch Development Co-operation) assists in implementing the GSFP in Central, Western, Upper East and Northern Regions. Its main objectives are to help generate ownership for the Programme at the district level and to help establish linkages between schools and local farmers.¹⁸

There is an innovative 'multistakeholder platform', the Schoolfeeding Initiative Ghana Netherlands (SIGN), which unites support for the GSFP from government, civil society, the private sector and academia in the Netherlands. SIGN describes its aim as

¹⁵ SIGN November 2006.

¹⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'An Active Stance, An Integrated Foreign Policy' press release for budget day, 19.09.06. URL: <http://www.minbuza.nl/en/home> Date Accessed: 20.07.07

¹⁷ Pers.comm. Hans Eenhoorn, 24th July 2007.

¹⁸ SIGNALS, No. 4, June 2007.

to “accelerate economic development in hunger hotspots in Ghana through increasing agricultural productivity and providing locally grown, nutritionally balanced schoolmeals”.¹⁹ This partnership brings together stakeholders with different expertise and resources that can contribute to the programme, they are: Akzo Nobel, ASN Bank, Biox Biosciences, Codrico, Cordaid, ICCO, Nutrition Improvement Program DSM, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NCDO, Oxfam Novib, SNV Netherlands, Schuttelaar & Partners, Teeuwissen, TNO, Uniliver, Wageningen Ambassadors, Wageningen University and Research Centre.

3.2.2 The World Food Programme

The WFP Country Programme provides a major food contribution to the GSFP in the three northern regions, Ashanti Region and Western Region (WFP, 2006a). The value of the component is US\$ 5.1 million equalling 10,600mt commodities, with 75% of the food basket being fortified.²⁰

WFP has agreed to help the Ghanaian Government to expand and replicate throughout the country successful models of food-based programmes (2006a: 7-8). To this end it has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in which it will implement Support for Basic Education (WFP, 2006).²¹ An important aspect of the WFP implementation strategy will be to establish long-term linkages between the core activities and local agro-processors to enhance development of local food markets, increase demand for agricultural products, stimulate food production, and increase rural farmers’ incomes.

3.2.3 Non-Governmental Organisations

It is recognised by both the Government of Ghana and its Partners that civil society organisations (non-governmental and community-based) have an important role to play in the GSFP, particularly in terms of ensuring community-level engagement and accountability. In northern Ghana, where community engagement in school feeding programmes is long-established, the Government has a good foundation to build on; this is not the case in the South. There is some suspicion of the GSFP on the part of NGOs because it is a Government initiative (this is a wider issue in Ghana) and also because in some districts the programme has been very ‘top-down’ and handled by a few government officials, without seeking to engage community support. Nevertheless there are examples of NGOs becoming involved in the programme.

¹⁹ URL: <http://www.sign-schoolfeeding.org/>. Date accessed: 11/07/2007 The idea of linking an African country with a European country (one-to-one,121) to form a partnership to reduce malnutrition was prepared by Mr Hans Eenhoorn, member of the Hunger Taskforce and a retired Senior Vice President of Unilever who has been instrumental in promoting the GSFP in the Netherlands (Eenhorn, 2007a).

²⁰ WFP Ghana Case Study. WFP/Gates Foundation (2007).

²¹ This component has two elements (i) on-site school feeding in primary schools for boys and girls; and (ii) take-home rations for girls from primary grade 4 up to junior secondary school. As it is intended as a model for the GSFP, the school feeding component will be implemented in the most deprived districts of five regions (Ashanti, Western, Upper East, Upper West and Northern); distribution of take-home rations will continue only in the three northern regions, which contain 19 of the 40 educationally most deprived districts (ideally in the same schools as the previous programme).

The SEND Foundation has been involved in developing stakeholder dialogue in relation to the GSFP, as part of its wider work in Ghana. For example, SEND works with other civil society groups to monitor and evaluate Heavily Indebted Poor Country-funded (HIPC) programmes in Ghana, such as the GSFP, as part of 'Ghana HIPC Watch'. Several districts and schools had denied receiving GSFP funds, yet central government was adamant it had disbursed the money. Once dialogue had been encouraged between stakeholders it was found that the money had been disbursed to the wrong Government bank account and the error was rectified (IBP, 2006).

TechnoServe, an NGO working to promote technical development, entrepreneurship and income generation in the agricultural sector, is working with WFP to help link farmers association with local food processors (WFP, 2006: 17). TechnoServe also has experience of small business development for salt producers²² and will be working with WFP to develop iodised salt supplies for the GSFP.

Grameen Ghana, Ghana Organic Agricultural Network, Foodspan and Agro-Eco are all seeking to be involved in the Programme, details are not known. Also, the International Fertilizer Development Centre has been advancing a memorandum of understanding with the GFSP to provide technical input and knowledge in the facilitation of regional procurement and processing of soybean and maize.

3.3 Sustainability

A central challenge for the Government of Ghana is the sustainability of the GSFP; to this end a debate is starting to emerge within the Ghanaian public sphere.²³ At present Government is providing major financing for the programme, there is also extensive donor support. Whether there will be political will after the 2008 elections, and whether the Dutch Government will continue funding after 2011, are open questions. In this context the GSFP National Secretariat has been emphasising the need for legal backing for the Programme in order to make it more entrenched and prevent discontinuation by future governments. Ways of mobilising resources at all levels to maintain the national programme need to be further explored.

²² Anon. (n.d.) Roadmap for Universal Salt Iodisation in Africa.

²³ 'School Feeding Programme unsustainable – Kojo Yankah, 25th June 2007. URL: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/education/200706/6041.asp>. Date accessed: 09.07.2007

4. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

This section describes the institutional structures in place for implementation of the GSFP based on official documentation. Because local government is responsible for implementation of the GSFP, in keeping with wider decentralisation processes in Ghana, the way the GSFP is implemented varies from district to district in ways that have not yet been documented.

4.1 The National Level

The GSFP is administered through a national secretariat in Accra which is responsible for policy formulation and establishing institutional structures. This Secretariat reports to the Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, who chairs a Ministerial Oversight Committee responsible for programme governance. The Committee includes representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs.

There are difficulties with regard to sectoral involvement in the programme. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment leads the Programme but there are apparently tensions with other ministries at a senior level and this has undermined their involvement. Also, because the GSFP National Secretariat has been putting its energy into establishing the core programme, components such as linkages to local agricultural production are yet to be taken forward. Thus although the Ministry of Food and Agriculture should be an important player in the 'home grown' element of the GSFP it is at present peripheral at both national and district levels. It is, however, early days. A Technical Group Meeting was convened by the National Secretariat in May 2007, which was well attended, with discussion covering the design of a baseline study and agreements on an operational manual.²⁴

The GSFP has sought to put new governance structures in place, in the form of decision-making committees at national, district and school levels, rather than working through existing structures. However this has created difficulties in that many committees are not operational due, for example, to problems of people getting attendance allowances and possibly lack of will; there are also examples where tensions have been generated with existing structures, for instance between a GSFP School Implementation Committee and an existing School Management Committee. Empirical evidence of these governance issues is not available from secondary sources.

The basic idea of the GSFP involves an integrated, cross-sectoral planning approach, bringing together educational, health and agricultural sectors, as well as the GSFP National Secretariat and Central Government as well as, more peripherally, institutions responsible for poverty reduction strategies. Without effective multi-stakeholder committee structures, and without mechanisms for truly devolving responsibility to district level, or for shifting responsibility to other institutions at national level, this makes an integrated approach very difficult.

²⁴ Signals No. 4, SIGN June 2007.

Following from institutional weaknesses, lack of knowledge of the programme at all levels is apparently an important issue. The WFP (2007: 35) report on Ghana states: “during the field visits, it was evident that knowledge of the program was limited at the regional, district and community levels, and this was a major complaint from all the players.” This is by no means surprising given the speed at which the GSFP has expanded and given the particular development context within which the GSFP is being implemented (see Booth et al., 2005).

4.2 The Regional and District Levels

The GSFP is implemented by local government at district level, with regional government playing a co-ordination and monitoring role within each of Ghana’s 10 regions. A critical dimension for success of the Programme will be how effectively the National Secretariat and central government enable district government to be responsible for implementation, as well as how well partnerships are developed at the district level between different stakeholders (e.g. district assemblies, school management committees, parent teacher associations, local farmers, and communities) (SNV, 2006). Existing District Planning Coordination Units (DPCU) and could play an important role in this respect.

According to project documents, the Programme is implemented at the district level in each of Ghana’s 138 districts through a District Implementation Committee (DIC). Each committee is composed of a municipal/district chief executive, two representatives of the social services sub-committees, three members from the national secretariat, an opinion leader (retired civil servant or business executive), a traditional ruler or his representative, the district directors of education, health, food and agriculture, and selected primary school head teachers. The DIC is responsible for the procurement of food stuffs and the necessary activities that contribute to the successful running of the programme.²⁵

In practice the way the Programme is organised at district level can be very different: in many districts, a DIC may not be operational and the District Chief Executive delegate’s responsibility for all aspects of the programme to one person.²⁶ This raises concern both in terms of lack of ownership by different sectoral stakeholders, and in terms of capacity as more schools come into the programme and the individual may not have access to transport, nutritional expertise, etc.

The GSFP is only one of many decentralised programmes being implemented at district level in Ghana so budgetary constraints, capacity, information-sharing, etc. are very real issues affecting implementation of the Programme. For instance each district must provide water and building materials out of already limited budgets. Furthermore, the Programme is inevitably embedded within the structure of power relations at the district level, with the District Chief Executive and in some places local chiefs having an important influence on the character of programme implementation and availability of resources.

²⁵ GSFP (2006) *The Fight Against Hunger*, a monthly bulletin of the Ghana School Feeding Programme, No. 2 October.

²⁶ Iris van den Berg and Tineke Martins, Wageningen University, pers. comm. 14th July 2007.

Despite the rapid ‘scaling up’ of the GSFP at the national level there is still along way to go in terms of making its presence felt within all districts. For example, in Dangwe West out of 102 schools in the District only 8 are within the GSFP (2007), all of which are located in Dodowa Township.²⁷

4.3 The School Level

Each school should have a School Implementation Committee (SIC) to set the menu, employ cooks, procure food, oversee the cooking and feeding, and to troubleshoot when problems arise. The SIC is composed of the head teacher, a representative of the parent-teachers association, two representatives of the school management committee, a representative of the traditional leader, a teacher in charge of the programme within the school.²⁸ In Muslim areas a local imam may be added to this membership. In practice not all schools have a SIC and the tasks may be taken on by, for example, a headmaster and a cook.

In addition to worries about burdening teaching staff with non-teaching responsibilities, the absence of SICs or effective forms of monitoring and evaluation within the GSFP raises questions about accountability for school feeding budgets and food within schools.²⁹ One does, however, need to be wary about jumping to rapid conclusions: Section 5.2 outlines the successful case of a headmaster responsible for food procurement.

With regard to children’s and parents’ participation in the GSFP, there are examples of community-level involvement (especially in the north where community-based feeding programmes are long established), however this is not as a matter of course, particularly where an individual is responsible for the GSFP at district level and where procurement is carried out by suppliers or caterers (see Section 5).

²⁷ ‘Accra: Recalcitrant DCEs warned’ URL: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/news/?read=3107>. Date Accessed: 06.07.2007

²⁸ GSFP (2006) The Fight Against Hunger, a monthly bulletin of the Ghana School Feeding Programme, No. 2 October.

²⁹ This is particularly so when placed in the context of ‘unofficial payments’ to school authorities being reported as a widespread phenomenon (e.g. for admission to school) (CDD, 2000).

5. PROCUREMENT MECHANISMS

The following information will outline the procurement mechanisms in place for the GSFP. According to the GSFP National Secretariat all equipment, food and staff are procured according to public procurement laws (GoG, 2003). It is likely that competitive, fair and transparent bidding procedures are not followed systematically within all districts; empirical evidence based on primary research is needed to determine whether this is the case and to what extent.

At present food is locally procured but there is little evidence that it is locally produced and therefore that the Programme is benefiting small-scale farmers. By 'locally produced' or 'home grown' the basic idea is that the GSFP will create a direct link to farmers within communities where schools are located.³⁰ These farmers are likely to be small-scale as they are the main group producing food crops (MoA, 2004). To date the local production component has not been developed so there are no established mechanisms for farmers to participate and sell their produce to local schools.

In terms of procurement of food from local producers, challenges include (i) weak small-scale farmer capacity (ii) where procurement relies on middlemen (suppliers and caterers) these individuals or companies may buy the food from retailers according to price rather than origin; (iii) there are storage issues that impede a constant supply of local food; (iv) there is price volatility in the sale of local food linked to the annual agricultural cycle and farmers' cash needs.

5.1 The lunchtime meal

The GSFP provides children with a lunchtime meal worth approximately 3,000 cedis (US\$ 0.32) per child per day (a percentage of this money is used for overheads). The range of food, nutritional balance, and extent to which it is grown locally varies according to the region of Ghana and the time of year. Basically the food will consist of carbohydrate such as rice, plantain, or yam accompanied by a stew with protein and vegetables, for example stew based on palm oil, tomato and onion, with fish or meat. Iodized salt may be used, as may other fortified foods such as palm oil and fortified corn-soy blend (WFP programme in northern Ghana). For information, Annex 1 has an example of a GSFP weekly menu from Ashanti Region.

5.2 Procurement of food in schools

The way food is procured by and for schools varies greatly between and even within different districts. This reflects the decentralised nature of the GSFP; it also suggests that established tendering procedures may not be in place. Tensions are also revealed between school/community engagement in food acquisition/preparation and externally-imposed decision-making that is less responsive to school-level needs and doesn't engage local communities.

³⁰ Pers. comm.. Hans Eenhoorn, 24th July 2007.

During the course of this literature review examples of three different types of procurement practices emerged; others may be apparent through primary research.

(i) The headmaster and cooks buy the food themselves from a local market and sometimes directly from farmers. This does not involve a middleman and is very responsive to school needs; also the headmaster may enrol parents and members of the community in support for the school lunch programme. Money to pay for food is supposed to come in advance from the relevant district assembly, although there are reports of hold-ups in the transfer of funding.³¹

In a study comparing 5 GSFP schools with 5 non-GSFP schools in 5 districts of Central Region, Martens and Van der Berg found that the school which had the most nutritionally balanced and widest range of food, with good involvement from parents, farmers and the community, was one in which the headmaster took personal responsibility for the feeding initiative and went after school with the cook to buy food from the local market.³² Also, because the headmaster engaged the community, local farmers came to the school offering good deals on their produce. At one point when money to feed the children was not forthcoming from the District Assembly, the headmaster enrolled community support to ensure the children continued to eat a lunchtime meal.

This 'model' for implementing the GSFP was frowned upon at the district level – because it could open the door to corruption - but Martens and Van der Berg argue that in communities where people are familiar with one another and where there is leadership by a strong chief or headmaster then community involvement and links to local farmers can readily be developed in a manner that can cut costs and provide good quality food for the children.

(ii) A middleman (also known as a 'supplier') may supply the food (as an individual or company). This food will be bought from retailers who offer a good price and be based on a combination of local and non-local supply chains. The middleman does not have direct contact with local farmers. The food items that are supplied will follow requests from the headmaster or SIC or DIC. Apparently such suppliers have only recently emerged due to demand from the GSFP. Information is very anecdotal, with empirical evidence needed, but supplier selection may be based on personalised connections rather than formal tendering procedures.

Part of the reason these suppliers have found a new niche is that they have enough capital to provide food on credit to the District Assembly, they are then reimbursed a week later (assuming there are no hold-ups in the disbursement of funds from the District Chief Executive or National Secretariat). As these suppliers do not fall under National Secretariat agreements to pay cooks for catering it is assumed that they take a percentage of the overhead from the budget for the school meals but details are not known. A specific example of this type of arrangement is not known.

(iii) A district assembly may contract caterers to buy and cook food for a group of schools within the district. This can work in places where schools are located near each

³¹ URL: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com>

³² Pers. comm.. Van den Berg and Martens, Wageningen University, 14th July 2007.

other, such as urban areas. It has not been possible to ascertain how catering companies have been engaged, whether this follows transparent tendering procedures, and whether overheads are taken from the food budget. Beyond economies of scale, the benefit of this type of arrangement is that, as with suppliers and unlike schools, a catering company has money to pay in advance and be reimbursed by the District Assembly.

At Dangme West District in Greater Accra Region – 8 schools are part of the GSFP with 1,500 pupils in total. Each child is said to receive 3,000 cedis worth of food a day, for example at Methodist Basic One Primary, the pupils receive Wakye (rice and beans) with eggs and sauce. Apparently the District Assembly buys maize and other food items from farmers in the District as a way of helping them also to benefit the programme; it is currently working on pooling some farmers and plots of land to start a district school farm to help sustain the feeding programme. The food for each of the 8 schools is prepared by a local caterer, Flashy Foods Catering.³³

5.3 Constraints on ‘home grown’ food supplies

The GSFP wants small-scale farmers to ‘scale up’ their farming activities to supply schools with food, to enable the GSFP to procure 80% of food locally (GoG, 2006). This is a crucial element of the GSFP, with success dependent on improved agricultural production and the creation of new markets by schools (WFP, 2006: 11). However, this is by no means easy; WFP’s own experiences of support to the small-scale sector agricultural sector in Africa through preferential procurement are reported to have been mixed, with practical difficulties including lack of understanding by farmer’s of procurement systems, and inability to arrange bid bonds, performance bonds and bank references (NRI, 2006; WFP, 2006b).

Promotion of improved agricultural production by the GSFP is in keeping with wider Ghanaian policies for agricultural modernisation and poverty reduction (e.g. IMF, 2006; and see the AAGDS). Agricultural policies and programmes since the early 1990s include the Medium Term Agricultural Development Programme, the Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Development Strategy, and the Food and Agricultural Sector Development Policy (FASDEP). FASDEP was formulated as a sector wide approach/programme to provide a holistic framework for food and agriculture that will recognise all on-going efforts and individual projects in the agricultural sector.

The AAGDS articulates the Ministry of Food and Agriculture’s (MoFA) contribution towards the overall objective of the Government of Ghana to achieve equitable growth and poverty reduction, as set out in the GPRS II. It provides a framework for modernizing the agricultural sector and making it the catalyst for ‘transforming the rural environment from its subsistence orientation to a commercially attractive, viable dynamic sector.’

However, in the context of the GSFP objectives linking school feeding to local production is a complex issue. To start with an example: at Tibung Primary School in the Northern Region of Ghana, the menu is prepared by the regional nutritionist, based

³³ ‘Accra: Recalcitrant DCEs warned’ URL: <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/news/?read=3107>. Date Accessed: 06.07.2007

on locally grown food when available. Three quarters of the food is bought locally: maize, yam, rice, okra and meat. Eggs, tomatoes and onions are bought in the capital city of the region, Tamale. However, up to 7 months of the year have no rainfall and as farmers are dependent on rain-fed agriculture, all school food has to be bought elsewhere. About 20% of the farmer families produce just enough food to live on, all others do not.³⁴ The question therefore is how these farmers can be enabled to develop to supply the GSFP.

The Ghana Agricultural Poverty and Social Impact Assessment (PSIA)³⁵ for the World Bank (MoA, 2004) highlighted that the majority of farmers in Ghana are smallholders who are either 'Non-Poor Complex Diverse Risk Prone'³⁶ or 'Poor Complex Diverse Risk Prone'³⁷ – the latter, in particular, find it difficult to respond to development policies, with lack of cash flows being the most binding constraint on smallholders' ability to intensify their farming systems and increase productivity (MoA, 2004: 25 – 26). In northern Ghana, lack of income from farming is compounded at household level by lower inflows of remittances, lower participation in trading activities, and lack of production of key export commodities, when compared to the south (ODI and CEPA, 2005).

Poor cash flows, illiteracy, and limited business skills mean that for small-scale farmers it will be very difficult to respond to demand for GSFP without significant support. Very difficult environmental conditions, rain-fed agriculture, seasonality, and poor production inputs (especially for women) mean difficulties in producing enough food for household consumption. These are precisely the rural areas of high food insecurity where children go to school hungry and the need for school feeding is greatest.

Little meaningful agricultural research for improved technological development is taking place in Ghana. Agricultural research financing and expenditure growth stagnated in the 1990s, and although Government legislation paved the way for the commercialisation of agricultural research at the 29 government agencies, this has remained minimal; government and donor contributions continue to be the main source of funding (Stads & Gogo, 2004). Although staff capacity has improved across the

³⁴ URL: <http://www.sign-schoolfeeding.org/> Date accessed 09.07.2007

³⁵ PSIA's have been produced around the world as part of analyses linking to Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper processes; they are promoted by a group of bilateral donors in conjunction with the World Bank.

³⁶ Non-Poor Complex Diverse Risk-Prone (NPCDR) Farmers have diverse means of livelihoods, and farming or agriculture is only one of them. They may be involved in petty trading and have own means of transportation such as bicycles in the case of those in northern Ghana. They sometimes have regular incomes outside the farm, in the form of salaries and wages. The NPCDR may have large farms/herds but manage them traditionally, although they can invest and have the capacity to modernize. They have their own houses though these may not be of high quality (e.g. houses may be roofed with thatch). They send their children to schools.

³⁷ Poor Complex Diverse Risk-Prone (PCDR) Farmers have relatively small farm sizes and are unable to satisfy their community commitments. They may be share-croppers, and may not be able to adequately feed their families all year round. They may provide labour on farms of the other categories of farmers. In some cases, some of them become welfare-dependent during some periods of the year. And without assistance they may not be able to take advantage of policies that target them (i.e. pro-poor). The PCDR are the most risk averse and therefore the least likely to respond to policies that do not factor in their exposure to risk. Also, by virtue of being poor and mostly disengaged from the market, they are more likely to be unable to participate in a modernisation process that requires intensification and therefore use of more purchased inputs.

research institutions, funding and capacity is very limited for technological development, especially for institutions that focus on social issues such as food security (ibid.).

The Agricultural PSIA argues that there are interdependencies between policies that deliver tangible inputs (improved seed, breeds, agrochemicals, irrigation infrastructure) and those that deliver services, where the latter facilitate farmers' responses to the former. Enablement of poor farmers will consist of policies that facilitate their participation in responding to policy measures such as the GSFP. Examples are an effective financial system, good infrastructure, and equitable land tenure system.

It may be possible to draw Large-scale Commercial Farmers, Small commercial Farmers, or Semi-Commercial Farmers into the GSFP, for which more empirical evidence is needed. In terms of small-scale farmers, there are opportunities to work with NPCDR farmers but it will be far harder to draw PCDR farmers into the programme as they generally have low levels of self-enablement to respond to policy interventions. Whether they are externally enabled depends on how the GSFP policy measures are implemented and linked to wider agricultural and poverty reduction policies, strategies, mechanisms and practices.

5.4 School gardens

The GSFP emphasises the concept of promoting school gardens in order to produce a supplemental supply of food, to enhance the nutritional content of school food, to reduce the cost of purchasing food items, and to provide practical agricultural education for school children.³⁸ Dank et al. (2007: 20-6) have evaluated whether this would be a viable strategy for the GSFP to pursue:

The production output of a school garden is dependent on a range of factors, including the availability of land. In urban areas absence of land is a significant barrier to starting a school garden. This is compounded by an increased need for land and buildings due to higher enrolment numbers after the GSFP is started in a school. In contrast, several schools in the Northern Region, where land is plentiful, have land available for school gardens and are using it for that purpose.

If a garden is to reduce the cost of school feeding it must first yield enough crops to have a meaningful impact on the cost of procurement and then, if successful, there needs to be a mechanism for the GSFP to capture the impact of the garden yield in its disbursement of funds. This latter is a difficult task: it is difficult to predict irregularities that would reduce outputs and there is no incentive for a school to report the yield from its school garden to the GSFP if by implication school meal funding will be reduced.

³⁸ Government of Ghana (2007). This follows an approach favoured by the WFP, see 'School gardens: a cornerstone for the promotion of good nutrition'. URL: http://www.wfp.org/food_aid/school_feeding/WFPInAction_minimum_sgardens.asp? Date accessed 09/07/2007

5.5 Potential for Food Warehousing

The National Secretariat has plans for a regional and district warehousing scheme to buy and stock surplus produce. Also to create a micro processing plant to process perishable and other foods that would be preserved on shelves for use in the event of unpredictable weather conditions. At present the GSFP, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and local partner banks are in the process of entering into an agreement with the seven major rice millers in Ghana.

Dank et al. (2007: 9-13) examine food warehousing and the potential for the GSFP and partners to create a stable market for small local farmers through the procurement process based on an analysis of the intended rice warehousing scheme:

The plan is that the millers will receive loans from partner banks to purchase paddy rice from local farmers at a guaranteed, pre-determined price. Currently the millers do not have the capital to purchase the paddy rice from local farmers, so it goes to waste. After purchasing the paddy rice, the millers will process the rice, which will then be purchased by the GSFP, also at a guaranteed, pre-determined price. The rice will be stored in warehouses across Ghana for use in school feeding. Until these warehouses have been identified by the Ministry of Agriculture the rice will be stored at the rice millers' warehouse. As part of the agreement the GSFP intends to require the millers to incur a majority of the warehouse operating costs.

The report conducts a cost reduction analysis, which identifies price volatility among crops such as rice and maize as being significant and highly seasonal. This makes purchasing during the peak pricing season expensive for the GSFP; it also disadvantages small farmers who are forced to sell their crops directly after harvest when prices are at their lowest, because this is the time when they are most in need of cash. The cost reduction analysis is used to generate two scenarios: in the first the GSFP buys at the market price, which changes on a seasonal basis; in the second the GSFP and its partners set a guaranteed price to the small-scale farmers. Potentially the second scenario could save the GSFP costs, although the costs of warehousing and transportation have to be taken into account and fully evaluated. Furthermore, when market prices are high, the guaranteed price offered by the GSFP may not be able to compete with alternative demand. This has been found to be a limitation in India where a guaranteed price has been offered to producers by school feeding programmes (see India case study), and is also a short-coming for fair trade co-operatives where a guaranteed price is offered to producers (e.g. Fisher, 1997).

Dank et al. recommend that to ensure the success of the warehousing component of the programme a number of steps should be taken: (i) robust monitoring of the rice warehouses should be incorporated because failure will undermine political support for future warehouses (they point out that the operating a network of warehouses does not fall within the GSFP's core competencies and staff cannot be expected to conduct the required amount of monitoring); (ii) establish metrics for evaluating the success of the rice warehouses; for subsequent food warehousing: (iii) the GSFP should consider expanding to other non-perishable food items if the rice warehousing proves a success. It is suggested that the critical component of such a program is for the GSFP and its partners to take care in the way they position middlemen as buying agents (with checks

and balances in place to ensure purchasing is not biased too far in favour of middlemen and to guarantee accountability).

Potential challenges to the successful implementation of this programme are: middlemen displaying favouritism towards suppliers; middlemen engaged in fraudulent practices; at times of tremendous price volatility the GSFP and its partners may not have the flexibility to set prices that are competitive enough to retain middlemen as agents.

5.6 Warehousing for kitchen inputs

The GSFP provides kitchen inputs and other start-up items to all schools that enrol in the Programme. By consolidating the purchase and storing of kitchen inputs into one central warehouse, the GSFP reduces costs by taking advantage of economies of scale in procurement, ensuring consistency of equipment among schools, and streamlining the process of acquiring and distributing start-up items.

Dank et al. (2007: 5-9) have analysed the procurement, storage and distribution system for the kitchen inputs. The GSFP operates one central warehouse in Accra that stores and distributes inputs to all schools across the country. There are plans to establish regional and possibly a district-level warehouse network. According to Dank et al.'s report the Warehouse Manager and Director of Finance both confirmed that all supplier agreements are created through a limited tender bid and approved by the Executive Director. The authors' inspected the inventory of receipt documents and note that some products have been consistently procured from the same supplier; while other products have significant supplier turnover, some as frequently as monthly.

Communication between schools, the GSFP National Secretariat and the Warehouse takes place but interviews conducted by Dank et al. suggest this is not seamless; meaning that schools may be waiting for supplies of kitchen inputs.

6. CONCLUSIONS: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF 'HOME GROWN' COMPONENTS OF THE GSFP

The success of the GSFP should not be underestimated: 405,000 children receive a hot lunch on a daily basis; many more will in the near future. This has been accomplished in around three years, from initial conception to practical implementation; no mean feat for a low income African country.

The review has identified areas in which there are shortcomings in the GSFP, including: weak cross-sectoral partnerships, poor information flows, lack of monitoring and evaluation, weak development of institutional structures, non-competitive procurement procedures, and absence of mechanisms to link to local food production.³⁹

These shortcomings are in large part a reflection of difficulties inherent in rapid organisational growth, made particularly complex within a political context where business relations are based on forms of patron-client relations, and public sector

³⁹ There is also a debate about the quality of food being supplied in certain areas but this was not drawn out in this report.

reform and decentralisation processes have been grappled with for several years. How sustainable the programme will be into the future is also a major question.

A number of barriers to the 'home grown' components of the GSFP have been identified in this report. To summarise:

6.1 Local procurement but not procurement of local food

Food is being procured locally by schools, suppliers and caterers in each district. Most food comes from retailers or local food markets and may not have been produced locally, coming from other parts of Ghana or being imported. Whether the food is local will be subject to price and seasonal availability; strong mechanisms to link local producers to GSFP demand at the local level have not yet developed.

6.2 Community involvement

The extent to which pupils, parents and communities are involved in the GSFP varies by school and by district. For some schools, where there is a headmaster or local leader committed to the GSFP, community involvement is good; also in places in the north good links exist to local communities due to long-standing school feeding programmes. In other districts, however, there is a tendency for implementation of the GSFP to be 'top-down' and in the hands of a few individuals. This is exacerbated by poor information flows and exchange. This has implications for enrolment of local producers in the GSFP because, particularly in rural areas, these people are also parents and members of local school communities.

6.3 Food production capacity

There are significant constraints on food production capacity by small-scale farmers, who make up the majority of the farming population in Ghana. This is particularly the case in northern Ghana (and selected areas in the south) where the production environment is subject to a multitude of risks, where households may not produce a surplus, and where levels of food insecurity are high. It is precisely these areas where the school feeding programme is most needed by children.

The author of this report does not know whether a detailed analysis has been conducted of farmer capacity to produce food crops for the GSF Programme in different parts of Ghana. Quite clearly, however, a major effort will have to be made for the GSFP to engage with wider development programmes for agricultural modernisation led by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and with poverty reduction strategies such as the GPRS II.

GSFP initiatives such as those likely to be taken forward by a range of organisations supporting agricultural projects, will need to be situated within a multi-pronged approach that links inputs (e.g. improved seeds, agro-chemicals, irrigation) with services (extension) and broader development (an effective financial system, infrastructural development, equitable land tenure) to enable small-scale farmers to respond to policy proposals within the GSFP. These 'ideal world' interventions are not likely to be easy given the difficulties confronting the small-scale agricultural sector (e.g. MoA, 2004), and given also the politics of agricultural development in Ghana, where

there are political barriers to attempts to link agricultural development to social protection through food security.

6.4 School gardens

WFP and NEPAD are promoting school gardens as part of the HGSP multi-country initiative. School gardens are being developed by some schools, however they are not viable in all schools due to lack of land, teacher/parent/pupil resistance, etc. Where school gardens are initiated they will have to produce enough yields to have a meaningful impact on the cost of procurement and produce will be seasonal. There will need to be a mechanism in the GSFP to capture the impact of garden yield in the disbursement of funds, which is a difficult task: irregularities are difficult to predict and encompass through existing financial systems, and there is no incentive on schools to report yield if funding would subsequently be reduced.

6.5 Food storage

Food storage is a major issue confronting the GSFP where at present warehousing and storage capacity is limited. This leaves the GSFP open to price volatility, food shortage when harvests are poor, and waste through food spoilage. There are plans for regional and district warehouses for surplus stock; also for a micro-processing plant to preserve foods. The Government is currently entering into an agreement with seven major rice millers, if successful this could be developed into other areas but there is still a long way to go. Critical to success will be the way the Government positions middlemen as buying agents ensuring procurement checks and balances are in place.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROCUREMENT IDEAS

7.1 A guaranteed price for farmers and food warehousing

As outlined in Section 7 there is significant price volatility among crops such as rice and maize, supply is also highly seasonal. Farmers sell directly after the harvest because they need the cash. The GSFP and Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoA) could provide a guaranteed price to farmers selling to the Programme. This could be linked to the development of GSFP farming co-operatives (e.g. following a model used by fair trade co-operatives e.g. Kuapa Cocoa in Ghana), alongside micro-credit and agricultural development support. A short-coming of this approach is that the GSFP/MoA may not be able to compete with alternative demand when market prices are high (Dank et al., 2007); therefore learning is needed from school feeding programmes worldwide where a similar approach has already been implemented (e.g. India). In order to guarantee a price for farmers, warehouse arrangements will have to be developed incorporating robust monitoring processes and carefully positioning middlemen as buying agents.

7.2 School Gardens

There is lack of data regarding the outcome of school gardens in garden and how they could link to food procurement within the GSFP. Implement a pilot programme to

gather data and determine whether school gardens should become a more integral part of the GSFP.

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Appendix 1: Sample Weekly GSFP Menu from Ashanti Region*

Approximately 525 students

Monday

Rice and Bean Stew	
Rice	75 kilos (1.5 bags)
Bean	8 bowls
Vegetable Oil	12 bottles
Onion	15 shallots
Tomatoes	30 balls
Pepper	small
Fresh fish	half box
magi cube	10 cubes
Iodated salt	4 sachets

Tuesday

Ampesi and Kontomire Stew	
Yam	54 big tubers
Kontomire leaves	40 bulks
Soybeans powder	1 bowl
Palm Oil	18 bottles
Onion	15 shallots
Tomatoes	30 balls
Pepper	small
Fresh fish	half box
magi cube	10 cubes
Iodated salt	4 sachets
Agushie	1 bowl

Wednesday

Gari and Bean Stew	
Gari	10 bowls
Bean	16 bowls
Palm Oil	20 bottles
Onion	15 shallots
Tomatoes	30 balls
Pepper	small
magi cube	10 cubes
Iodated salt	4 sachets
Dried fish	2 bowls

Thursday

Banku and Groundnut Soup	
Maize	1/2 bag
Groundnut paste	10 bowls (raw)
Onion	15 shallots
Tomato	30 balls
Pepper	small
Meat	24 pounds
magi cube	10 cubes
Iodated salt	5 sachets
Cassave dough	1 mini sack
Milling (maize and cassava)	1/2 bag and mini sack
Dried fish	2 bowls

Friday

Rice and Tomatoes Stew	
Rice	75 kilos (1.5 bags)
Vegetable Oil	12 bottles
Onion	15 shallots
Tomatoes (fresh)	40 balls
Tin tomato (salsa)	2 tins
Pepper	small
Fresh fish	1/2 box
magi cube	10 cubes
Iodated salt	4 sachets
Soybeans	1 bowl
Eggs	18 crates

Source: Dank et al., (2007: 31).