WFP
World Food Programme

Home-Grown School Feeding Project

GHANA

Home-Grown School Feeding field case study
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims and objectives of the study

Home-grown school feeding (HGSF) combines quality local agricultural production and traditional school feeding. It is based on the premise that low farm productivity, poor agricultural market development and poor educational and nutritional outcomes are mutually reinforcing and jointly determine key aspects of rural hunger and poverty. HGSF is a relatively new concept that has been implemented only in a few countries and has yet to be fully developed. As part of its global technical assistance, the World Food Programme (WFP) has launched HGSF case studies as its initial steps to achieve the following objectives:

- to map the key recent global experiences and best practices in HGSF projects and relevant, related agricultural efforts;
- to produce models of the main economic aspects of HGSF projects;
- to develop a comprehensive framework for HGSF projects, taking into account elements of operations (i.e. procurement), sustainability and feasibility, development implications, impact and programming;
- to prepare a strategy for WFP in support of HGSF and an implementation plan for rolling out HGSF in five "first wave" sub-Saharan African countries.

To achieve the first objective, five case studies are to be conducted in Brazil, Ghana, India, South Africa and Thailand. Ghana was chosen because of its long history of school feeding programmes.

The overall aims of the Ghana case study are to:

- gather in-depth qualitative and quantitative information (as much as possible) in order to understand how its HGSF programme was designed;
- identify how the programme works and is organized;
- determine the costs of various elements;
- explore the initial impacts of the HGSF programme on small-scale local producers and ways to organize them to maximize potential impact.

1.2 Study methodology

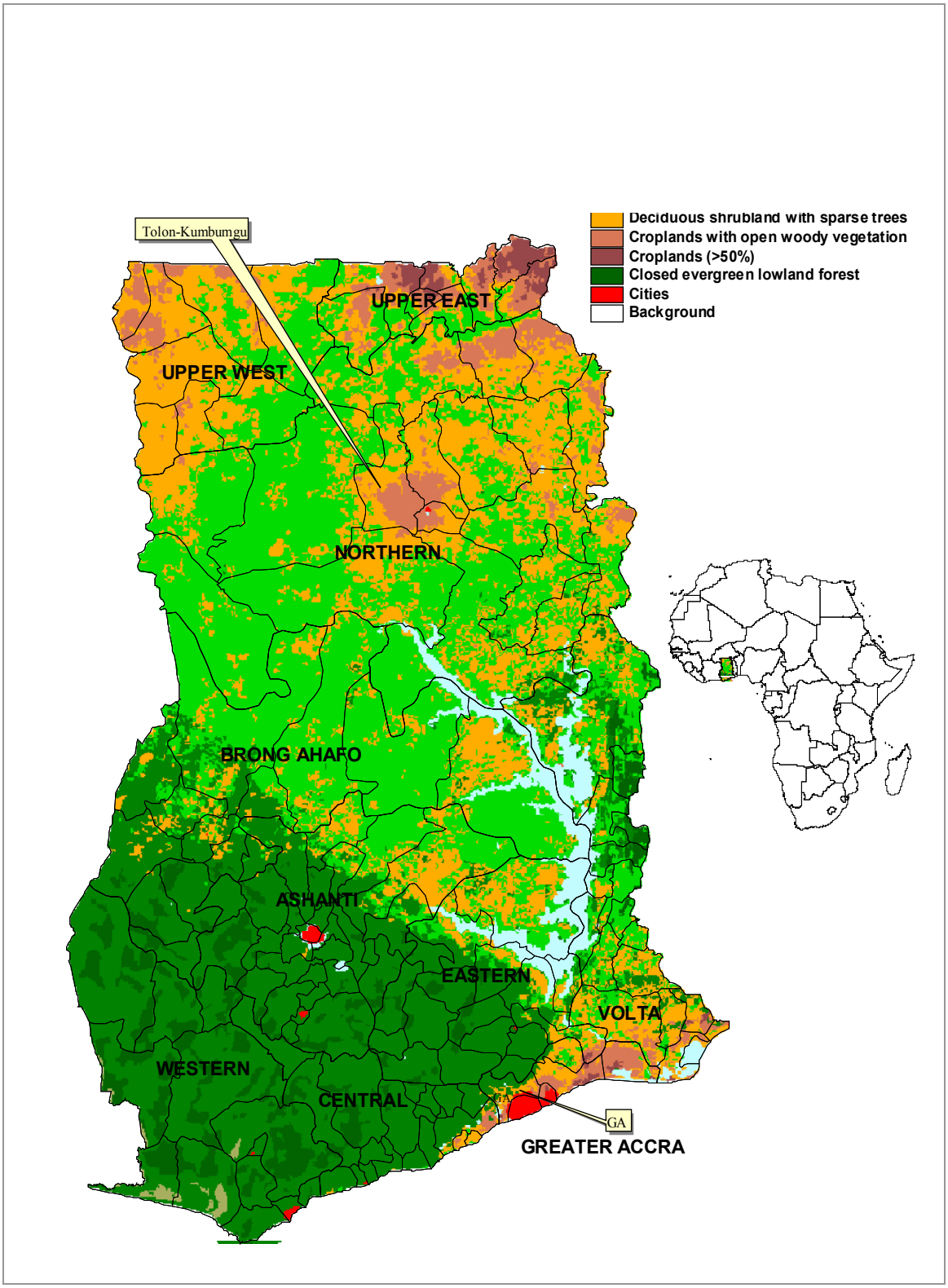
Primary and secondary data were collected. The secondary data collection included an extensive review of literature and other documentation and extensive in-depth interviews with key stakeholders using a prepared checklist. Annex 1 provides the list of organizations that were interviewed and Annex 2 indicates the names of officials and stakeholders who were interviewed.

The Northern and Greater Accra Regions were chosen for the case study and a field trip was organized in the two regions to collect primary data (See Figure 1). Officials at both the regional and district

offices were interviewed. Tolon/Kumbungu (TKD) District was chosen in the Northern Region because it was the pilot district. In the Greater Accra Region, the Dangme East District was the pilot district; however, because some official functions were taking place in the district at the time of the study, officials at the District Assembly were not available to be interviewed. Through the efforts of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) Secretariat, officials of the Ga East (GED) District in the Greater Accra Region were available to meet with the case study team.

These interviews were followed by visits to communities and three beneficiary schools. Kpalgun Zion Primary School and Tibung RC Primary School were visited in TKD while Redco DA 1 & 2 Primary Schools were visited in GED. Teachers and pupils of all the schools were interviewed and focus group discussions were held with community members.

Figure 1: Diagram Showing Regions/Districts for Case Studies



2. COUNTRY PROFILE AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS

2.1 Population trends and socio-economic performance

Ghana's population has grown from less than 5 million at independence in 1957 to 21.2 million in 2003, with an annual growth rate of 1.9 percent . The country's population is estimated to reach 26.6 million by 2015. The dependency ratio (i.e. the proportion of the population falling between 15 and 59 years of age) is 48.2 percent. About 41 percent of the population is between 0 and 15 years and 7.2 percent is over 60 years. Almost 55 percent of the population is rural, which is projected to decline to 48.1 percent by 2015[1] due to growing urbanization.

2.1.1 Educational indicators

Ghana's adult illiteracy rate is 57.9 percent, with net primary enrolment of 58 percent. There are regional differences in net enrolment rates and the situation worsens toward the north where more than 40 percent of the population of school-aged children are out of school. At the kindergarten stage[2], the Brong Ahafo Region has the best net enrolment rate (73.4 percent) and the Greater Accra Region has the lowest rate (34.7 percent). The net enrolment rates across the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions are 40.0 percent, 41.6 percent and 40.0 percent, respectively.

At the primary level, the enrolment figures have improved across all regions. The Central Region leads in primary level enrolment with 96.9 percent, followed by the Western Region with 83.1 percent. The Northern Region has the lowest enrolment at this level with 67.5 percent, followed by the Upper West Region with 70.1 percent and the Upper East Region with 72.8 percent. Enrolment drops at the junior high school (JHS) level. The Central Region has the highest enrolment rate (67.0 percent) at the JHS level while the Northern Region has the lowest (35.1 percent) and the Upper East and Upper West Regions have 36.6 percent and 41.4 percent, respectively.

At the secondary level, there is a continuous decline in net enrolment for the poorest of the poor. In 1991/92, net enrolment for the very poor was 32.3 percent. This declined to 29.2 percent in 1998/99 and 20.7 percent in 2005/06.[3] Most school-going children in the three northern regions, especially girls, are in this category and would require interventions such as a school feeding programme to ensure their enrolment and continued attendance at school.

Across kindergarten, primary and JHS levels, the gender parity index (GPI) is less than one – an indication that there are more boys in school than girls – although the country's population trend indicates that females out-number males. At the kindergarten level, the GPI is 0.99 percent, at the

[1] UNDP Human Development Report 2005

[2] Ghana's basic education consists of kindergarten, primary school and junior high school. The Government of Ghana launched its education reform in 2007, in which Junior Secondary School (JSS) was renamed Junior High School (JHS).

[3] Pattern and Trend of Poverty in Ghana, 1991 - 2006

primary level it is 0.97 percent and at the JHS level it is 0.96 percent. This is an indication that more girls than boys drop out of school at higher grades, especially in the north. The Upper East Region has the worst GPI (1.17 percent at the JHS level) followed by the Upper West Region with 1.15 percent. The number of children reaching grade 5 declined from 80 percent in 1990 to 63 percent in 2004, indicating a worsening situation in school retention.[4]

Government is pursuing three main policy interventions aimed to improve enrolment: school fees waivers, the capitation grant and the free school feeding programme. Together, these policy interventions may act as catalysts to accelerate school enrolment, attendance and retention at the primary level, especially in the poor regions of the north, with a spill over effect at the junior and secondary levels of education.

A significant number of studies conducted by the Government of Ghana and development partners attest to the wide divide in educational attainment and literacy between children in northern and southern Ghana. The World Development Report (2006) reveals that there is significant regional inequality within Ghana in poverty and education indices. It argues that if government and development partners do not better target resources, it is unlikely that Ghana will attain its Millennium Goal challenges. The study reveals that over the last ten years, poverty fell very little in the north compared to the south and that the average depth of poverty in the north actually increased. Part of the reason is that the majority of the population is reliant on food crop farming and there can be little growth-induced reduction in the inequality between the north and the south.

Studies in northern Ghana have also confirmed that the depth and incidence of poverty among the majority of rural households restricts children from attaining higher levels of education and completing basic education (Casely-Hayford, 2006).[5] Studies by WFP also suggest that food assistance programmes targeted at girls can make a tremendous impact on reversing the trends of non-access and poor retention for young girls at the upper primary level (WFP, 2004).[6]

2.1.2 Poverty indicators

Poverty, hunger and disease continue to plague Ghanaian society. Poverty and hunger remain endemic across the three northern regions and some rural communities in southern Ghana. According to Ghana Living Standards Surveys (2004;1998), women and their children are more affected by poverty than men. The Upper West Region has the highest poverty rate (88 percent) followed by the Upper East Region (78 percent) and the Northern Region (52 percent). There is also a growing urban poverty trend which must be monitored. At the national level though, Ghana has cut its poverty levels by more than half, from 51.7 percent in 1991 to 28.5 percent in 2005.[7] But the country still ranks 136th

[4] UNDP Human Development Report, 2005

[5] Achieving Quality Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: The case of Ghana, Working Paper 12

[6] *Girls Education in Northern Savannah: WFP Ghana Self Assessment*, WFP Ghana (2004)

[7] Patterns and Trends of Poverty in Ghana 1991-2006. GSS.

out of 177 countries in the 2006 human development index (HDI), with life expectancy of 57 years. Only 18 percent of Ghanaians have sustainable access to improved sanitation and 75 percent have sustainable access to improved water sources.[8]

Malnutrition is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Malnutrition, which manifests itself as protein energy malnutrition (PEM), stunting, vitamin and mineral deficiencies and other diet-related diseases, remains a pervasive problem. PEM is the most serious nutritional disorder among children under age 5 in Ghana, with its devastating effects of severe stunting, wasting and underweight. In 2003, 30 percent of children were stunted, 7 percent were wasted and 22 percent were underweight . Additionally, the infant mortality rate was 64 deaths per 1,000 live births, the child mortality rate was 50 deaths per 1,000 children aged one and 15 percent of children under 5 years had diarrhoea.[9]

2.2 GDP growth and the macroeconomic environment

Ghana's economy has seen tremendous improvement in the last six years. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown consistently each year from 3.7 percent in 2000 to 6.2 percent in 2006.[10] The government intends to grow the economy at a minimum of 8 percent GDP per annum to enable the country to achieve middle-income status by 2015. The country's GDP per capita is, however, still quite low at US$409.[11]

Inflation has declined from 2000 to 2006. The government's target is to achieve single-digit inflation. Although achieving the target has been challenging, especially due to high petroleum prices, the results have been encouraging. Inflation has declined from 23.6 percent at the end of 2003 to 10.5 percent at the end of 2006. Interest rates have generally declined and depreciation of the cedi against major currencies has been moderate and generally stable. The currency depreciated by 9.5 percent against the British pound, 7.8 percent against the euro and 0.9 percent against the US dollar in 2006.[12]

2.3 Role of agriculture in Ghana's economy

Ghana's agricultural sector is its most dominant sector, contributing almost 40 percent to GDP in 2000 and 37 percent in 2005. The agricultural sector is made up of the crops sub-sector (64 percent), cocoa (13 percent), forestry (11 percent), livestock/poultry (7 percent) and fisheries (5 percent). The major crops produced are roots and tubers (including cassava, yam and cocoyam), plantains and cereals (including maize, sorghum and millet). Roots and tubers contribute 46 percent to agricultural GDP, followed by plantains (9 percent) and cereals (7 percent).

[8] UNDP Human Development Report 2006.

[9] Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys.

[10] 2007 Government of Ghana Budget Statement to Parliament.

[11] UNDP Human Development Report 2006.

[12] The country's balance of payments recorded a surplus of US$178.8 million in 2006 compared to the US$84.34 million surplus the previous year, a growth of almost 112 percent within a one year period.

Roots, tubers and plantains are produced in the forest and southern savannah zones of the country. Cereals are produced across the country but maize, which is the dominant cereal, is produced mainly in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Eastern Regions. Other cereals (i.e. sorghum and millet) are produced and consumed only in the three northern regions. The markets for cassava and cocoyam are mostly in the south, but yam and maize are consumed nationwide. The three northern regions dominate in livestock production while the coastal regions of Greater Accra, Western, Central and Volta produce fish, mostly from marine sources.

The three northern regions have a uni-modal rainfall pattern and therefore have only one farming season, from about July to November. For the rest of the calendar year, many farmers in the north are either idle or resort to other income-generating activities. This makes livestock production quite an important economic venture for the northern poor since it is a year-round economic activity. In this area where the rainfall pattern does not allow for year-round production and productivity is generally low, the population is exposed to chronic food insecurity. In the northern regions, food crop farming is the main farming activity while in the south, many small farmers engage in food crop farming and cash crop farming (e.g. cocoa and oil palm) that provides them with regular sources of income. In the seven southern regions, the rainfall pattern allows for two farming seasons, the major one from about late April to August followed by the minor one from October to December.

Farming in Ghana is dominated by small-scale subsistence farmers with an average of 1.6 hectares of land. They mostly use traditional technology and depend on household labour for their farm operations. They have little or no access to credit and depend solely on their own meagre capital. Small-scale farmers contribute over 90 percent of the nation's food production, which makes their contribution to the largest sector very important. Despite the difficulties, the sector has performed well in the last six years, growing from 4 percent in 2001 to 6.5 percent in 2005.[13] The cocoa sub-sector has led this growth; from negative one percent in 2001, it achieved 13.2 percent growth in 2005. The crops and livestock sub-sectors together grew from 4.6 percent in 2001 to 6.0 percent in 2005. Fisheries managed to grow from 2.0 percent in 2001 to 3.6 percent in 2005. As the major economic sector, the agricultural sector's performance has significant implications for the general performance of the country's economy.

Statistics on national food self-sufficiency indicate that the country is self-sufficient in all major staple foods except maize, millet, sorghum and rice. In 2006, Ghana had self-sufficiency ratios of 199 for cassavas, 369 for yams, 105 for cocoyams and 131 for plantains. From the national perspective, Ghana is a food secure nation. However, lack of physical and economic access to food is perhaps the largest contributor to household food insecurity in many rural and urban poor households, especially in the north. Although food security is a national objective, the poor are more vulnerable, particularly considering the high incidence of poverty at regional and community levels within some areas of the country.

[13] Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)

The relationship between poverty and household economic activities in Ghana is important in discussing food insecurity. Poverty in Ghana is highest among food crop farmers, whose contribution to the national incidence of poverty is in excess of their population share. In 2005/06, for example, food crop farmers accounted for 43 percent of the population but were 46 percent of those identified as poor.[14] This partly explains the poverty intensity in the three northern regions, where most farmers are food crop farmers. This is also the category of the population that is disposed to chronic food insecurity. Although all economic groups experienced some reduction in poverty between 1991/92 and 2005/06, the situation was better for public sector employees and other wage earners than for food crop farmers. In 1998/99, food crop farmers experienced the least reduction in poverty (8.7 percent) and in 2005/06, it was 13.9 percent.[15] Given the large number of food crop farmers, pro-poor interventions need to be targeted at this group if government is to reduce poverty in the country.

Food security is defined in terms of access (either physical or economic), availability and utilization. Access involves either the household producing the food by itself or having the financial means to purchase food in the market. The lean season in the north lasts for seven months and many households experience food shortages during the season. The poor have few resources to buy food from the open markets and reduced food supply due to low farm production during the lean season compounds food insecurity in the north. Even when poor households have access to food, it is poorly prepared with little or no protein. The diets for many poor households do not meet nutritional requirements. Many poor people lack information about what constitutes nutritious foods.

[14] Pattern and Trends of Poverty in Ghana 1991 - 2006.
[15] Ibid.

3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES IN GHANA

3.3 The case for school feeding programmes

School feeding programmes (SFPs) have a long history in Ghana. In the 1950s, pupils of several Catholic primary and middle schools were given take-home rations of food aid. The objective was to improve the nutritional status of school children and increase school enrolment and retention. The programme was in line with government policy to accelerate the education and training of Ghanaians to fill job vacancies created by foreigners who had to leave the country after independence.

Over time, WFP and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) became two lead agencies providing SFPs in the country, focusing on the north due to its high incidence of poverty and food insecurity. WFP has been involved in Ghana for 40 years. Other development partners involved in food assistance programmes are: World Vision, Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), Dutch Development Agency (SNV) and SEND. The objectives of the SFPs of these organizations are not different from those in the 1950s, except that poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality have become additional concerns for these organizations. The northern regions are relatively poor and rural households, especially women and their young daughters, lack physical and economic access to food.

3.4 CRS school feeding programme in Ghana

CRS provides school meals in 50 schools and nurseries in all districts across the three northern regions. The cost of food is US$20 per fiscal year (i.e. six calendar months of feeding at 22 days per month). This amounts to 1,409 cedis (US$0.15) per day per child. Pre-school children are fed twice each day – a morning snack of porridge made from wheat/soy blend (WSB) and a hot lunch made from soy-fortified sorghum grits (SFSG), vegetable oil and local ingredients provided by parents. To promote girls' education, CRS gives take-home rations to girls who achieve 90 percent school attendance per month.

CRS is presently scaling down its operations and will pull out its SFPs by the end of 2008 when its food stocks are exhausted. CRS uses off-shore food aid for its programme and there has been a withdrawal of external food donations to Ghana, particularly from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the programme's major donor which terminated food aid to Ghana in April 2006.

The CRS programme supports government education policy which aims to increase enrolment, attendance and retention. In this regard, the organization works closely with the Ghana Education Service (GES), especially in targeting its beneficiary population. Before a community is selected for the CRS feeding programme, it benefits from a year-long sensitization exercise. The purpose is to prepare

the community to take ownership of the programme by educating it on the objective of the programme, the benefits to the community and community roles and responsibilities. The strategy has assisted in unearthing the potential and interest of community members and builds their capacity to manage the programme. As a result, community participation is notable in the CRS programme. Given their enhanced interest and motivation to be involved in the programme, community members manage the programme themselves. Each beneficiary community has a Community Food Management Committee (CFMC) that is responsible for managing the programme. The CFMCs are subsets of the schools' parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and school management committees (SMCs) and are trained by CRS to enable them to acquire skills necessary to manage the programme. This frees teachers to concentrate on their teaching.

CRS then enters into a written agreement with the community to define the roles and responsibilities of CRS and the CFMC. As part of the community's roles and responsibilities, the community provides a kitchen, store, voluntary cooking services, cooking utensils and ingredients. CRS provides the raw food. Communities appoint the cooks for school feeding and may make their own arrangements with the cooks by supporting them in kind or in cash; however, food from CRS should not be used as part of the support to these cooks. Some communities build kitchens and stores but others identify appropriate structures that the programme may use.

CRS has mechanisms to deal with non-compliance. Non-compliance is reported to the District Partner Supervisor (DPS) for redress. The DPS is appointed by the community, in consultation with CRS. When the DPS is unable to resolve the problem, it is passed on to CRS. When a district is too vast to be covered only by the DPS, the GES has Circuit Supervisors (CSs) who can assist them. The collaboration between CRS and the GES, in this regard, has been quite reliable and important.

There is a mechanism in place for daily monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at the community level. Also, all beneficiary schools submit monthly reports on number of children fed, food stocks, financial issues and activities undertaken at the community level. Reports are compiled at the school by a teacher under the supervision of the head teacher. This arrangement is to ensure that teachers do not feel alienated. At the community level, there is an operational meeting every six months to review programme operations and consider strategies to address problems. The CRS model leaves decision-making in the hands of the community and there is constant information flow.

3.3 WFP food assistance programmes in Ghana

WFP's Country Programme (2006-2010) for Ghana has a component of support for basic education. There are two activities under this component: "On-Site School Feeding in Primary Schools (P1-P6)" and "Take-home Rations for the Ghana Education Service (GES) Girls' Education Activity to Benefit Girls in Primary 4 (P4) to Junior High School 3 (JHS3)". The value of the food commodities to be procured from 2006 to 2010 (all to be produced in Ghana) is US$10 million, with 75 percent of the food basket fortified.

The value of food commodities for the on-site school feeding activities is US$5.1 million for 10,600 mt of commodities, which is used to support the GSFP. WFP currently targets the three northern regions of Ghana - Northern, Upper West and Upper East – while its technical assistance is expected to have impact at the national level, especially through collaboration with GSFP which operates across the whole country.

In WFP's support to girls' education, 42,000 girls and their families in 25 districts of the three northern regions benefit from take-home rations as a monthly incentive for girls' achievement of 85 percent or higher attendance at school. Given the improvement in girls' enrolment and retention in the lower primary grades, the programme targets upper primary grades (P4-P6) and junior high schools with low gender parity. However, WFP has been phasing out its assistance to girls' education since 2006, as agreed with the Government.. Food supply was phased out for girls in P4 at the end of the 2005/06 academic year, in P5 at the end of the 2006/07 academic year and in P6 at the end of the 2007/08 academic year and will be phased out in junior high school by the end of 2010. The challenge for the Government of Ghana is to fill the gaps that are being created by the phasing out of externally supported programmes including CRS's school feeding and WFP's support to girls' education.

WFP and GSFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2006 that outlines collaboration in the following areas:

- providing a fortified food basket to complement GSFP menus;
- supporting district-level planning and implementing school feeding;
- harmonizing planning and managing cash and food inputs at the district level;
- testing procurement processes;
- building capacity of PTAs, SMCs and other stakeholders;
- testing models for sustainable funding;
- developing systems for monitoring and evaluation.

WFP currently collaborates with GSFP in support of its scaling up in the northern regions. It is progressively scaling up resources to reach a total of 290,000 school children over the five-year period of the Country Programme. Coverage began in 2007 with 30,000 children and plans are to reach an additional 50,000 children in 2008 and 100,000 children in 2009 and 2010. The programme will progressively build the capacity of local suppliers and stakeholders to manage increasing volumes of food and address management challenges.

GSFP and WFP have jointly targeted two schools in each of the 34 districts across the three northern regions; GSFP provides cash resources for feeding two days per week and WFP provides the fortified food basket three days per week. GSFP adds necessary condiments to WFP's food allocations. WFP will also examine and test models for sustainable funding of food assistance, which is part of its effort to transform external food aid into a more sustainable national food assistance process that relies on locally grown food and local capacities for school feeding procurement and management.

WFP provides fortified food rations (composed of 150 grams of fortified corn-soy blend, 3 grams of iodized salt and 10 grams of palm oil per child per day) to children to complement the nutritional value and type of foods procured locally. The food basket is valued at US$0.8 per child per day. The basic ration has been tested with the GSFP menus and adds significant nutritional value.

WFP also has been providing support to the private sector to produce and market iodized salt, palm oil and fortified corn-soy blend (CSB) and maize meal through the national fortified food delivery chains. There has been a procurement policy shift by WFP in Ghana since 2002. Until then, WFP had used only imported food aid for its feeding programmes. WFP in Ghana now procures 100 percent of its food (i.e. maize, CSB, iodized salt and palm oil) from within the country for the "Support for Education Activity". This is in support of the agricultural industry of Ghana and in line with the home-grown school feeding concept.

In addition to procuring food commodities from the domestic market through a tender system, WFP is testing selective tendering for a reduced quantity of commodities as a pilot exercise to target smaller producers at a decentralized level. WFP also monitors how much its suppliers procure from the small-scale farmers to produce WFP processed and blended cereals. The suppliers process, fortify and deliver the foods into the GES's central warehouse in Tamale. Such interventions contribute to the development of the food supply chain in Ghana.

WFP's initiative to incorporate private partners in processing and fortifying food contributed to national recognition of the need for increased production and distribution of iodized salt. It also has proven that iodization of salt and fortification of other commodities can be promoted by the private sector to benefit public sector food programmes. WFP is supporting community-based milling and fortification as a means to link value-added production with school feeding and supplementary feeding markets, while promoting income-generating activities, especially by women's groups, at the local level.

Apart from its support for basic education, WFP also assists the Supplementary Feeding and Health and Nutrition Education (SFHNE) programme of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), which created additional demands for local domestic farm produce. The SFHNE targets 60,000 pregnant and lactating women and children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years who are at risk of malnutrition. In this component, WFP's food basket includes fortified CSB, maize meal, iodized salt (all of which are procured from the domestic market), rice, vegetable oil and sugar.

3.4 Ghana school feeding programme

The Government of Ghana started its own school feeding programme in late 2005 using the home grown school feeding concept; it was different from other SFPs that had traditionally used imported food aid. The GSFP also differed from other SFPs in terms of coverage; while CRS and WFP feeding programmes target the north, the GSFP has a national character.

The immediate objectives of the GSFP are to:

- reduce hunger and malnutrition;
- increase school enrolment, attendance and retention;
- boost domestic food production.

In the longer term, the GSFP seeks to address the following problems:

- poverty that generally affects households and communities and has a bigger impact on children, particularly those under 5 years of age;
- hunger, particularly short-term hunger in children, including those under 5 years of age;
- malnutrition in children and rural households that results in stunting, wasting, and poor health, including higher incidence of infections and reduced access to opportunities to escape poverty altogether;
- food insecurity that reinforces poverty in rural households and reduces the capacity of children to take advantage of the opportunities provided through education to improve their chances of escaping poverty;
- low enrolment rate, attendance and retention due to short-term hunger and poverty, among other reasons.

Using locally produced food for the GSFP is also meant to provide markets for local farmers to enhance their productivity and production and improve their incomes, in line with the government's policy of reducing poverty. Food is to be bought from the local community and cooked at schools. It is this government-led school feeding programme that is the subject of this case study.

The programme was born out of the New Partnership for African Development /Hunger Task Force Initiative (NEPAD/HTFI) under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union (AU). Ghana was selected as one of the intial nine focus countries in sub-Saharan Africa to pilot the programme. The Government of Ghana and NEPAD were to equally finance the programme; however, delays from NEPAD required the government to fully fund it. It started with a pilot from September to December in 2005 in ten districts, one from each of the ten regions, and was intended to last for five years.

The initiative was to be scaled up to cover about 200 schools with 69,000 pupils in all 138 districts by the end of 2006. The number of beneficiary children is projected to reach 1.04 million by the end of 2010. The programme presently covers 975 schools and 447,527 school children. The programme provides one hot and nutritionally balanced meal for the children on site for 3,000 cedis (US$0.32) per child per day, using locally produced and procured food items. Other complementary activities are to be part of the package through partnership with other governmental institutions and development partners. These activities include provision of de-worming tablets, water and sanitation in schools, micronutrient supplementation, health and hygiene education, HIV/AIDS prevention, creation of school gardens and malaria prevention.

A programme review in mid-2006 outlined a number of achievements and challenges. Enrolment has increased by 20.3 percent in the pilot beneficiary schools, compared with 2.8 percent in non-beneficiary schools; school retention went up by an average of 10 percent in the beneficiary schools while declines were observed in non-beneficiary schools. There is a general acceptance of the programme. Some non-beneficiary communities have bought into the programme and, on their own initiative, are constructing functional kitchens and feeding sheds in anticipation of joining the programme. Farmers in some beneficiary communities have also started to produce crops in response to the programme's needs.[16]

The programme faces a number of difficulties. Central government budgetary allocations and releases have been slow and in some cases inadequate. Therefore, the infrastructure to support the programme has not been developed. The governance structure and procurement systems suggested for the programme have been sidelined. The monitoring and evaluation component of the programme is still quite weak. These and other challenges need to be addressed to improve programme implementation efficiency and effectiveness.

3.4.1 Programme targeting

The GSFP programme has extensive targeting criteria for the selection of beneficiary communities. In several respects, the criteria are no different from targeting criteria used by WFP and other SFPs, except that WFP and the others target the north, while GSFP focuses nationally. The GSFP criteria include:

- willingness of a community to provide basic infrastructure (e.g. kitchen, store, dining room);
- commitment of the District Assembly, demonstrated by its interest to sustain the programme;
- poverty status of the district and community;
- low school enrolment and/or attendance and gender parity index;
- high drop-out rates;
- low literacy levels;
- presence of planned health and nutritional interventions or expansion of existing ones;
- no participation in an already existing SFP;
- poor access to potable water;
- high community spirit and management capability.

Using the above criteria, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS), working with the district assemblies, developed an initial list of communities and schools that met the criteria of poverty, high drop-out rates and low literacy. The list generally guided the selection of communities and schools across the country. The field visit to Tibung and Kpalgun in the TKD confirmed that they are both poor communities with low school enrolment and retention. Redco is sub-urban and cannot ideally be defined as poor. The school children at Redco, however, have another kind of need. Most of them do not live with their biological parents and are generally neglected. At a separate meeting with

[16] Ghana School Feeding Programme. Programme Pilot Review Report, June 30, 2006

some children of the school, it became apparent that many of them had been sent from the village to live with their relatives in the community. Due to their neglect by these relatives, absenteeism from school was common among the children before the introduction of the school feeding programme. These children were found to engage in commercial activities to make a living. The programme has now improved attendance in the school.

3.4.2 Initial results of field visits to three schools

The three schools covered in this case study can be described as deprived with a felt need for school feeding. This also appears to be the general picture across the country, with most of the beneficiary schools sited in deprived communities. The three schools covered in this study already show some level of impact from the GSFP. For example, enrolment has increased from 258 to 333 registered pupils in Kpalgun Zion School (i.e. 29 percent growth). Over 50 of the children at Kpalgun are younger than 4 years of age and, according to GES regulations, cannot be officially registered, although the school authorities continue to feed them. In Tibung RC, enrolment has gone up by almost 52 percent from 265 to 402 pupils and at Redco, the growth is about 16 percent, from 580 to 672 pupils.

Indications are that some of the immediate objectives of the GSFP have been achieved. Statistics indicate that the objective of using the school feeding programme in the three schools to increase enrolment and improve retention and attendance is being achieved. Also, the three schools have not experienced any school drop-outs in the last two years. Furthermore, punctuality in the schools was said to have been improved. The case of Kpalgun, with over 50 unregistered children in school, is a further indication of the immediate positive impact of the programme; the programme has generated so much interest among children and their parents that even children below school age now wish to be in school. This is a complete departure from the past when children of school age either refused to go to school and/or ran away from school when their parents took them there. Indeed, from discussions with the communities, it was confirmed that all children of school age in the three communities are in school.

Another positive impact of the programme is in the area of health. By observation, children in the visited beneficiary schools looked healthier and better nourished. Both the parents and their children testified that hunger among the children had declined considerably because they had access to nutritious meals provided by their schools. School authorities also indicated that morbidity among the children had gone down and they experienced full attendance on a daily basis. Parents and school authorities believe these improvements have taken place since the introduction of the school feeding programme. These positive results are commendable and need to be sustained.

On the other hand, the positive results seem to be posing new challenges that must be addressed for the sustainability of the programme. The large increases in school enrolment have put pressure on facilities within the beneficiary schools. Schools have inadequate classrooms, teachers, dining halls, etc. to handle the larger numbers of children attending school. GES regulations provide that no child

of school age wishing to register at a school can be turned away. School authorities therefore have no choice but to admit all children who show up to register in a school. The result has been that some classrooms have teacher-pupil ratios that are unmanageable. In some schools in the GES, classes are said to be as large as 80 pupils in a class, instead of the normal 35 pupils per class.

3.5 Programme linkages

The GSFP has been designed to complement national and international development strategies and policies. At the national level, the government is implementing a Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) which aims to achieve continued macroeconomic stability, accelerated private sector-led growth, vigorous human resource development and good governance. Key sectors of the economy have designed strategies to achieve the GPRS goals. Before GSFP, the Ministry of Health (MOH) had been dealing with the health and nutritional status of school children. Its national initiative, dubbed the School Health Programme, involves de-worming school children and providing education on personal hygiene, with an emphasis on children's health.

Earlier under the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD), the MOH teamed up with the MOESS to implement a supplementary feeding programme for children under 5 years of age and pregnant and lactating mothers in deprived rural communities. PAMSCAD was implemented in the 1990s and both MOH and MOESS were involved in implementing all four phases. The objective of PAMSCAD was to address the threat of malnutrition among children under 5 years. The programme was community-based, with beneficiary communities contributing land and building toward preparing food for the beneficiaries.

The first phase of PAMSCAD (1990-1994) covered 90 communities. The second phase (1995-2000) was expanded to cover 122 communities in 5 regions – Ashanti, Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Western. The third phase of PAMSCAD (2001-2005) concentrated only in the three northern regions and covered 138 communities. Coverage expanded again during the fourth phase to 224 communities, all in the north. Although PAMSCAD addressed the nutritional needs of children, it has no linkage with the present GSFP. PAMSCAD sought to improve nutrition for children under 5 years of age while GSFP is targeted at school-age children (i.e. from 6 to 11) and those already in school.

Improving and expanding education and health delivery are the tenets of the Education Strategic Plan (2003-2015) of the MOESS and the Imagine Ghana Free from Malnutrition programme of the MOH. These tenets are in line with those of the GSFP and can be properly linked in implementation. The initial Education Strategic Plan document, however, does not mention the school feeding programme. Perhaps this is because the GSFP had not begun at the time the plan was prepared. In MOESS's Annual Education Sector Operational Plan (2007-2009), however, school feeding is identified as one strategy to help government achieve 100 percent completion rates for male and female children at all basic levels of education by 2015. The GSFP is therefore receiving attention at the highest policy level.

The Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) also seeks to address issues affecting small-scale farmer operations, adequate food and food security, including emergency food supplies. FASDEP is under review and the draft document proposes specific strategies to enhance poor small-scale farmers' participation in food security initiatives. Although the document falls short of addressing school feeding specifically, the strategies proposed, if well implemented, could improve household food security and achieve the objectives of the GSFP, including improved enrolment, attendance and retention and improved incomes for small-scale farmers.

The strategies, as proposed, include:

- designing and implementing special programmes to target resource-poor operators in the agricultural sector;
- enhancing production diversification of vulnerable groups;
- ensuring access to nutrition and health information;
- ensuring more effective utilization of production;
- stabilizing prices through buffer stocks and other measures;
- promoting processing, preservation and use of crops, livestock and fish products;
- strengthening early warning systems and putting in place emergency preparedness and disaster management schemes;
- designing mitigation measures for HIV/AIDS;
- promoting the establishment of storage facilities, including community-level facilities.[17]

These strategies aim to ensure nationwide availability of adequate food items at competitive prices at all times. Their implementation will help to plan supporting the poor when disaster strikes. The GSFP therefore fits into the development agenda of the country and links up with established national strategies and relevant implementing agencies. These linkages create the enabling environment for successful programme implementation.

The GSFP and its programme objectives are also in tune with the first seven MDGs and will therefore accelerate Ghana's progress toward meeting them. The seven MDGs include eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and ensuring environmental sustainability. Indeed, the GPRS seeks to achieve these MDGs.

[17] MOFA

4. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Programme coverage

The GSFP expanded nationally after the initial pilot phase. Its projection of reaching 200 schools by the end of 2006 was surpassed. Presently, 975 schools are included in the programme which covers 447,527 children nationwide.[18] Kindergartens that were initially left out of the programme have been included. Beneficiaries also include agricultural enterprises and food crop farmers, private sector firms in the supply chain and food industry, school teachers, parents and communities through the generation of employment.

In November 2006, the GSFP Secretariat took advantage of WFP's immense experience and entered into a one year MOU for a collaborative effort for two schools in each of the 34 districts of the three northern regions. This strategy provides a model for the programme and could allow it to expand even faster.

4.1.1 GSFP and WFP collaboration and implementation

Implementation of the GSFP/WFP collaboration in the 34 northern districts can be incorporated into the existing procedures and structures of the GSFP programme. WFP does not attempt to interfere with the established system. The MOU allows WFP to provide fortified food baskets in support of the GSFP, using an existing GSFP implementation model. WFP food feeds the children for three out of five school days each week; the other two days are covered by the GSFP. WFP makes available quantities of corn-soya blend (CSB), iodized salt and palm oil to the districts from GES's central warehouse in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region. Each district is given a distribution sheet that allows it to collect its allocation from the warehouse. The allocation is for one school term and is based on 150 grams of CSB, 3 grams of iodized salt and 10 grams of palm oil per child per day. The districts then distribute the food items each month to their beneficiary schools. Local schools and authorities decide how and when to use the WFP-delivered food items.

The GSFP, through the District Assembly, makes funds available for the schools to purchase condiments to complement the WFP food basket. The assemblies are working with WFP to agree on how much of the government's 3,000 cedis (US$0.32) per child per day ought to be given to the schools to purchase condiments. For now, the districts indicate that the amounts for this purpose range from 1,000 cedis (US$0.11) to 2,000 cedis (US$0.22) per child per day.

WFP has expertise in food, logistics and warehouse management which may be mobilized in support of the GSFP. It can support GSFP capacity-building initiatives at national, regional, district and community levels. WFP has mapped the current school feeding and supplementary feeding

[18] School Feeding Program Secretariat

programmes supported by food aid agencies within Ghana. This expertise may be extended to map all the schools benefiting from GSFP nationwide. Under the pilot food security monitoring system with MOFA and GHS (which is a tool for monitoring food production for early warning and emergency response), district-level production profiles are being developed as a tool for decision-making on local procurement.

The MOU between NEPAD and WFP forsees collaboration in support of pilot countries throughout Africa under the NEPAD-CAADP home-grown school feeding model. Within this partership, GSFP can benefit from planned inititatives including:

- studying the global experience and best practices on local purchase for school feeding;
- conducting economic analysis of the home-grown school feeding concept;
- developing models and core principles of HGSF models;
- reviewing procurement strategies to manage risks and costs;
- determining mechanisms for sustainability and scalability;
- identifying further areas for WFP support for school feeding in Ghana and other pilot countries;
- testing procurement processes;
- building capacity of PTAs, SMCs and other stakeholders;
- testing models for sustainable funding;
- developing systems for monitoring and evaluation.

WFP has expertise in administering standard school feeding baseline surveys worldwide that capture school-based information and educational outcomes. The results of these surveys are incorporated into annual global reports. This expertise may serve the GSFP in designing and implementing a nationwide baseline survey in the targeted schools. WFP has produced a report based on in-country experiences entitled 'School Feeding: Models for Designing, Implementing and Targeting School Feeding Programmes in Ghana' which may also serve as guidance.

The GES, in coordination with district assemblies, submits reports each term to WFP. The reports are based on head teachers' monitoring reports and provide details about the number of children enrolled, number of school days in the term, number of school feeding days and quantities of food used for feeding.

4.1 Procurement mechanisms

The GSFP advocates for School Implementation Committees (SICs) at the school level, chaired by the head teachers, to oversee procurement, cooking and the feeding of the children. The GSFP also advocates for a District Implementation Committee (DIC) to oversee programme implementation at the district level. The DIC is chaired by the District Chief Executive (DCE) with representation from the District Assembly and District Officers from MOFA, GHS/MOH and GES/MOESS. The DIC is to disburse funds from the district to the SICs for their operations. The expectation was that the members of SICs,

being local people, would work with local farmers to support them in responding to the new market opportunities provided by the programme; however, in many cases this has not occurred. Instead, three different procurement and implementation models have emerged in regions and districts implementing the GSFP: the supplier model, the caterer model and the school-based model.

4.1.1. The supplier model

In the Northern Region, suppliers are generally contracted to supply the food items to the schools; this was the model observed in TKD. The supplier may be a registered company (e.g. sole proprietorship) or an unregistered business run by an individual. In the case of TKD, the supplier is an individual. Under the contract, the supplier buys the food, delivers it to the beneficiary schools each week and submits invoices to the Assembly (DIC) for payment. Supply requests are sent each week to the Assembly and are based on head teachers' requests. The requests are influenced by the weekly menu which is usually built around locally produced food items. Typical food items in the northern schools include yams, maize, rice and beans. Suppliers buy these food items mostly from outside the beneficiary communities, usually from commercial traders during market days in the regional and district capitals. The vegetables, which are perishable, are bought from the communities. In some arrangements, the supplier releases monies to head teachers to buy vegetables and other condiments locally.

Cooking is done on site at both Kpalgun Zion and Tibung RC schools in the Northern Region by cooks employed by the GSFP. Tibung has a matron and four cooks and Kpalgun has four cooks but no matron. The cooks are local women who were recruited and trained by the district matron. Their salaries had not been paid for several months, although the agreement was to pay them each an average of 300,000 cedis (US$32.30) per month. They looked frustrated about the delay in their salaries, even though they were happy to be contributing to the success of the programme. But that situation cannot continue forever. Unless the GSFP pays the outstanding and future salaries of the cooks, they are likely to quit their jobs to the detriment of the programme.

Outsourcing the procurement to a supplier (i.e. the supplier model) is a new development. In late 2005 when the programme was piloted, procurement was done at the community and school level in the Northern Region. This changed during the expansion phase in 2006 to include the use of suppliers. The supplier model was developed to resolve problems caused by delays in budget releases, because suppliers are capable of pre-financing the programme. However, some evidence during the case study field work suggests otherwise. For example, during the visit to Tibung RC, the children had not been fed for almost two weeks because the supplier had not delivered any food to the school. This was a result of the supplier not having been paid by the Assembly. At a meeting later with the DCE, it became apparent that the DCE was not aware of the development.

It is not clear who introduced the supplier concept to the GSFP, but the selection of suppliers is not transparent because it does not follow the procurement laws of the country. For a national tender, an

advert must be placed in the national newspapers, proposals received from interested applicants, applications vetted and winners selected on a competitive basis based on quality and cost. Such proposals would normally outline the technical and financial competencies of service providers, quality control systems, reliability, etc. Procurement, through a tender system, ensures that a client gets value for money.

The supplier model has a number of disadvantages. First, the supplier idea defeats the spirit of the GSFP programme objectives. One of the objectives of the programme is to increase local and community food production through market opportunities provided by the programme. The idea of the GSFP was to carry out procurement locally in order to increase the use of local foods for school feeding. By buying outside the beneficiary communities, the supplier is providing no direct market opportunities for farmers and farmer-based organizations (FBOs) in the beneficiary communities; furthermore, their operations may not have a positive impact on farmer production in these communities.

Second, the role of school authorities and communities in the supplier model is only to take delivery of the food items, store them, release them to their kitchen staff, supervise cooking and feed the children. The decisions about what is procured, how it is procured and at what cost are made by those outside the beneficiary schools and communities. Although the funds allocated for feeding are meant to be used by the schools, the authorities and communities have no input into how their funds are used. Community involvement in the programme is key for the future sustainability of the model.

Third, there is no mechanism in place for monitoring supplier procurement or ensuring that the supplier delivers the required quality or quantity of food. The supplier only presents an invoice to the Assembly and receives payment. Both in Kpalgun and in Tibung, no one from the school or the community signs to take receipt of food delivered to the schools. Also, the supplier arrangements do not promote communication between the District Assembly and the beneficiary schools which would be useful in discussing and addressing problems that come up during programme implementation. Finally, efficiency and cost-effectiveness may have been compromised in selecting the suppliers.

Despite the challenges, there are also benefits of the supplier model. First, it frees head teachers, who are chairpersons in the SICs, from spending time procuring food and allows them to concentrate on their academic work. Also, if suppliers were in a position to pre-finance procurement, this would address problems due to delays in the release of funds by district assemblies. Finally, food production in many northern communities is inadequate to support the programme in those communities. Buying from outside the locality, typically from big wholesalers and retailers, ensures reliability because adequate food can always be bought and delivered to beneficiary schools.

4.2.2 The caterer model

This model has been implemented in the Greater Accra Region and in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly of the Ashanti Region. Under this model, assemblies have contracted caterers who buy and cook food at central kitchens for a number of schools and present invoices to the assemblies for payment on a weekly basis. Their payment is based on the number of children in a school at 3,000 cedis (US$0.32) per child per day for five school days in the week. Again, this model emerged during the programme expansion phase in 2006. This arrangement is said to be more convenient in urban and sub-urban communities, where community people are relatively apathetic and more difficult to organize into SICs. The caterers are better organized with bigger operations than the suppliers. They hire and pay staff who cook and serve the meals in schools. They also operate from known premises and can be easily located. Again, they may be unregistered businesses run by individuals or registered companies (e.g. sole proprietorships).

The caterers in this model procure and store the food (both perishable and non-perishable), cook it at a central kitchen (away from the school premises), deliver cooked food to the schools, dish the food to the school children and then leave the school premises. The menu they serve is planned with the district assemblies, with no input from the school or community. There is hardly any role for the school authorities and the community people. Indeed, in several urban and sub-urban communities, it is difficult to obtain the commitment of parents and others to support such public programmes without reward.

The caterer model is running in the Ga East District. The Redco School has a caterer who has been contracted to cook at a central kitchen; no cooking takes place in the school. The caterer delivers cooked food, serves the children and leaves. The school authorities have no role in the decision-making process. The school authorities, however, have established a working relationship with the caterer. The authorities meet with the caterer frequently to discuss issues pertinent to the feeding programme, including food rations, food quality and feeding time, among others. Typical food items include maize, yams, rice, plantains, beans and gari.

The Redco School has no SIC in place, but community involvement should be possible in Ga East. Except for the Accra metropolitan area and Tema metropolitan area, all the other districts in the region, including Ga East, are rural. Generally in Ghana, the communal spirit is higher in rural communities, including those in Ga East, than in urban centres.The absence of an SIC in the Redco School may be due to a communication gap between the District Assembly and the school. School authorities lack basic information on the programme. For example, they did not even know that an SIC had to be formed to oversee the programme at the community level.

The disadvantages of using the caterer model are similar to those with the supplier model:

- The local farmer does not benefit from the programme because food items are bought outside the beneficiary communities.

- Communities and school authorities are left out of the decision-making process and this has implications for the sustainability of the programme.
- There are no mechanisms in place for monitoring the activities of the caterers.
- The selection of the caterers is not transparent.
- The arrangements do not promote communication between the district assemblies, the schools and the beneficiary communities.
- Caterers in urban centres have been accused of buying more imported food items such as rice, canned tomatoes and canned fish for the feeding programme. This clearly deviates from programme objectives.

There are advantages of the caterer model:

- School authorities are free to concentrate on their academic work.
- The caterers are experienced professionals who are in a position to provide nutritious, balanced meals for the school children.
- Some of the caterers are said to be pre-financing their operations, which helps to address some of the problems associated with the delay in the release of funds.
- The model provides some convenience because procurement and cooking are done outside the school premises.

4.2.3 Implications of these two models for programme success

The supplier and caterer models are not ideal for ensuring programme sustainability because the communities are not involved in programme implementation. From other SFPs reviewed in the case study, there is enough evidence that community involvement promotes community ownership and this is key to successful and sustainable school feeding operations. Beneficiary communities are yearning to participate in the GSFP programme, but these two models do not allow for that to happen. In all three communities visited (i.e. Kpalgun, Redco and Tibung), community members indicated their willingness to cook for free and provide some condiments and other food items when they are in season. Other SFPs in Ghana encourage this, but the supplier and caterer models under the GSFP do not. Given the importance of the GSFP, efforts must be made to move away from the supplier and caterer models to a school-based model to ensure community involvement and management and long-term sustainability.

Both the suppliers and the caterers are not paid any extra money for their services. They meet their expenses and make their margins from the 3,000 cedis (US$0.32) per child allocation. It was not possible to determine how much of that money actually goes to feeding the children. According to the GSFP Secretariat, 2,500 cedis (US$0.27) or about 83 percent of the amount must feed the children while the other 500 cedis (US$0.05) or 17 percent may pay for overhead and margins for the contractors. There is, however, no mechanism in place to check compliance with that standard.

It was very difficult under the supplier and caterer arrangements to determine their costs because they bought from open markets and were not prepared to discuss the financial details of their businesses. The GSFP Secretariat appears concerned with the supplier model and has suggested the districts suspend the suppliers' service, but the practice still persists.

As indicated in Table 1, buying maize from farmer cooperatives or farmer-based organizations is cheaper than buying from commercial traders. This is a further indication that the use of caterers and suppliers is more costly because they tend to buy from commercial traders. There are two advantages to putting mechanisms in place to link the GSFP with farmer organizations. First, it can bring school feeding costs down. Second, it can create market opportunities for local farmer organizations and their members and thereby enhance their production and incomes, in line with the programme objective.

Table 1: Maize cost build-up per metric ton in Ghana (estimates by WFP)

Procurement Costs	Farmer Cooperative (US$)	Commercial Trader (US$)
Farmgate price	180.00 (W/sale)	260 (W/sale)
Food treatment	3.00	48.40-70.00
Quality/quantity inspection	No information	15.00
Bag and bagging	2.20	4.40
Marking	No information	No information
Loading/off-loading	2.20	4.40
Storage	No information	4.00
Storage losses	No information	No information
Market dues & taxes	2.10	4.30
Tips and incentives	No information	No information
Retailer/broker cost	No information	No information
Procurement labour	No information	16.20
Overhead	No information	No information
Transport to traders	21.62	No information
Transport to school/dist. pt.	8.65	17.30
Total	**219.70**	**385-406.60**

4.2.4 School-based model

Literature on the GSFP suggests another model in which either all the food items or parts of the food basket can be procured at the school level and cooked on site. This model, the "school-based model" was not observed during field visits in this study. The key element of the school-based model is its

grass-roots decision-making process. Procuring and storing food is carried out at the school and community level, so the community decides what to buy, when to buy and the cost. The community is also responsible for overseeing cooking and the feeding of the children.

There is no middleman and the system is more transparent and efficient. The model achieves its goal of buying home-grown food for the programme and creating a market for local small-scale farmers. This model has a direct link with local farmers, the community and school authorities. The model also is in line with the original programme concept. Community involvement is key in the sustainability of the programme, as has been seen in other school feeding programmes.

4.2.5 Best practice in procurement for SFPs

Procurement at the decentralized level is the best way to ensure that locally produced foods are bought for the programme; it also is in line with the policy of encouraging and increasing the use of local foods in feeding school children. In the northern regions, with over 50 years of capacity-building in community-based school feeding programmes, communities already contribute and procure some amount of local food in support of active school feeding programmes.

During the pilot phase of the GSFP, the school-based model was used and it yielded positive results. Findings from the national pilot review indicated that besides the improvements achieved in school enrolment, attendance and retention, local small-scale farmers had started aligning their production in response to the needs of the local schools in the programme. For example, in Sene District, Brong Ahafo Region, average farm size before the GSFP was 4-5 acres. With the introduction of the programme, average farm size increased to 6-8 acres because the GSFP increased demand for locally produced foods. Furthermore, the MOFA office in the Sene District assisted the GSFP beneficiary school in the district to establish a school garden to cultivate tomatoes and peppers. Seedlings were nursed and ready for transplanting at the time of the survey.

Similar results were observed in the Tolon/Kumbungu District during this case study field work. In Tibung community, local farmers indicated cases where they had doubled, and in some cases tripled, their farm sizes as a result of the government's pilot school feeding programme. The school-based model has the potential to develop agriculture in beneficiary communities. These results indicate that the school-based model can work and therefore must be encouraged in order to achieve the programme objective of increasing farmer production.

4.3 Health concerns and implications for programme management

The quality control and food safety aspects of the GSFP seem to be missing in all three implementation models discussed. There is no system designed to check the quality and safety of foods being fed to the children enrolled in school feeding programmes in Ghana. The health status of

the schools' cooks and the health status of the caterers' employees have not been established. This is serious, in view of the programme's objective to improve the health status of school children. In line with this, it is proposed that district health officials test and clear the cooks, especially of communicable diseases, and approve them to cook for the school children.

Food vendors were still found selling cooked food at the Redco School, unlike in the other beneficiary schools in the Tolon/Kumbungu District. This may be because some of the school children continue to patronize them. There was a report at the Redco School against the caterer who is contracted by the District Assembly and GSFP to cook for the school children. According to the report, on a few occasions, the caterer delivered an inadequate amount of food to the school. To make up for the shortfall, the caterer bought kenkey and fish from food vendors to feed some of the children.

Redco School has an eight-seat water closet (WC) and a ten-seat Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine (KVIP) which were built for the school by the Member of Parliament (MP) for the Constituency; however, they are not yet in use. It is not possible to use the WC until the school has access to water. The authorities are waiting for the MP to commission the KVIP before it can be used. The school has provided bowls for the children and teachers so they can wash their hands, however, the school can not afford to change the water regularly because of the water shortage. This is not healthy. Kpalgun and Tibung Schools have no hand washing water bowls. Hand washing is important and must be encouraged to ensure that the children do not transmit diseases by eating with dirty hands.

There are implications of these health warnings for programme management. First, the programme seeks to promote food security and this requires that wholesome food be provided for the children. The transfer of any communicable disease from the cooks could lead to an epidemic, given the number of children in the programme. Second, schools must teach children to appreciate environmental sanitation and to wash their hands properly at all times, especially after using the toilet, to avoid any disease outbreak. This is important because most of the children eat food with their hands. Any outbreak can be devastating and must be avoided. The potential to link an outbreak to the school feeding programme is high.

4.4 Programme funding and costing

The GSFP is funded by the Government of Ghana (GOG) and the Government of Netherlands (GON), with in-kind food support from WFP in the north. The Dutch government funds 50 percent of the feeding component of the programme. Between 2006 and 2007, a total of 162 billion cedis (US$16.8 million) were spent on the programme.[19] The GON has provided 6 million euros in support of the programme, but only 2.3 million euros have been spent so far. Another 40 million euros have been allocated by the GON over the next four years, which is to be matched by the GOG. As a condition of

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its continued funding, the GON is insisting on improved management systems and programme monitoring. In response to this, a workshop was organized in April 2007 to discuss how to put in place a more comprehensive plan to improve GSFP implementation. The Dutch government funding is important for the programme's future. Budgetary allocations and releases by the GOG are said to be late and inadequate and this can have a negative effect on programme implementation.

The GSFP Secretariat prepares a budget for the programme based on factors including:

- the total number of children expected to be fed in all beneficiary schools in the country in a term;
- the number of days the children are in school in the term;
- intended investments (e.g. vehicle purchases);
- overhead costs, including staff salaries and operational costs.

The GSFP Secretariat submits the budget to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment (MLGRDE), which has ministerial oversight of the GSFP and approves its budgets. Once the budget is approved, the MLGRDE writes to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP) to release funds into a GSFP account operated by MLGRDE, which it then releases to the GSFP Secretariat. MLGRDE does approximately two releases of funds in a school term of 65 days. Approval of any request is based on the Secretariat accounting for previous releases. On receipt of a release, the Secretariat transfers the monies to the 138 districts in accordance with their own budgetary requirements.

Each district has a GSFP account which is under the control of the DIC. Budgetary allocations to the districts are paid into the GSFP accounts and released weekly, based on the DIC's allocation decisions. The system used to release funds from districts to beneficiary schools depends on the procurement model that is in place. In the supplier model, the district releases funds to pay the supplier directly for food items already delivered the previous week. In the caterer model, the district releases funds to pay the caterer directly for food cooked and fed to the children the previous week. In both cases, the districts do not release any monies directly to the beneficiary school or community. In the school-based model, schools submit their weekly budgets to their assemblies and receive cheques for the week ahead. The local authorities are therefore able to plan and procure, or make arrangements to procure, adequate food items for the coming week.

4.5 Food ration composition

At the start of the programme, menus were prepared for all the regions, based on local food variety and nutritional values. The menus were also based on the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) minimum nutritional requirements per child per day. In the northern regions, food items such as maize, beans, rice, gari, soya beans, cowpeas, fish, yams, meat, eggs, groundnuts, vegetables and fruits were considered in the menu. In southern Ghana, food items considered included maize, beans, rice, gari, groundnuts, palm fruits, plantains, yams, fish, meat, eggs, vegetables and fruits. The menu

cost of 3,000 cedis (US$0.32) per child per day was chosen by the GSFP Secretariat based on local economic factors.

During the case study site visits to Kpalgun and Redco, the school children were eating lunch. The children were served in turns by class and into bowls brought from their homes. Because there were no canteens, they mostly ate in their classrooms, after which they cleaned up their bowls and tidied up the classrooms so that classes could resume. The entire process took close to an hour or more of school time. The teachers at Kpalgun, in the absence of a matron, prepare menus for the cooks. This must not be allowed to continue. School authorities must be made to stick to the menu already prepared by the experts to ensure that the children eat quality, nutritious foods. .

Many of the beneficiary schools have to deal with providing food for many more children than are registered. The GSFP has resulted in increased enrolment. While teachers are supposed to update their figures for more funding and submit that to the GSFP Secretariat when enrolment increases, there is always a time lag between requests for extra funding and approvals. In the meantime, schools have to cope with the extra numbers by feeding all the children within the original budget. In some communities and some cluster compounds, there have been reports of non-registered children crossing over to eat from beneficiary schools, although school authorities have taken steps to stop this practice.

Schools must be managed more effectively to address the increased numbers of school children, or else the quality of academic work in the schools will be affected. This includes expanding and/or providing school infrastructure, especially classrooms and dining halls, and extra budgetary allocations to cater for the increased numbers. Confining too many children into one small classroom is not healthy and does not allow for effective teaching and learning because large numbers result in divided attention both for the teacher and the school children. Also, if extra budgetary allocations are delayed, school authorities are forced to feed extra children within the original budget. This can negatively affect the quantity, quality and nutritional level of food given to the children. Finally, too much time is wasted by using classrooms as dining halls. This affects contact hours, achievement rates among children and academic standards.

4.6 Essential complementary activities

While one purpose of the GSFP is to improve nutrition among school children, school feeding on its own cannot improve nutrition. The combined outcomes of health care and food security promote improved nutrition. The MOH, as a partner, is responsible for providing specific health interventions (e.g. de-worming of the school children, micronutrient supplementation, health and hygiene education, HIV/AIDS prevention and malaria prevention). As a precondition to improving nutrition among school children, a district must have plans for the presence or expansion of health and nutritional interventions in order to qualify for the programme.

The Ghana Health Service (GHS) of the MOH is key in this partnership to achieve improved nutrition and health. In a strong partnership, some of MOH's budget could be targeted at specific health interventions in GSFP operational areas to provide an holistic approach to solving the nutritional and health problems of beneficiary children. In the field, however, the role of the MOH in the programme is not clear. In the TKD and the GED, health personnel played no role in programme implementation and had limited knowledge of the programme.Health personnel in the districts are implementing programmes in their operational areas without involving the GSFP. Several GHS programmes in the districts are targeted at children who are less than 5 years of age, which effectively eliminates most children of school going age (i.e. age 6 and above).

GHS does promote hygiene education for food sellers at school compounds and health inspections of the school children. A national de-worming exercise took place in 2007 that covered all schools including GSFP beneficiary schools.There is also the child-to-child support programme in which children receive health and nutrition information at school and are expected to disemminate that information to their peers (who are out of school) and parents at home.

The Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC) funds community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to conduct HIV/AIDS education nationwide. These organizations can be important partners in the GSFP and efforts must be made to increase collaboration with them.

While the GSFP schools benefited from the national de-worming exercise in 2007, none of the schools visited had benefited from any other targeted health interventions.

4.7 The food production component

The GSFP plan produced by the government estimated that US$147 million of extra financial benefits would go to agricultural enterprises and food crop farmers, especially women, by the end of programme implementation in 2010. This was to be achieved by increasing demand for food from small-scale farmers by creating markets for them. Beneficiary schools would purchase their food requirements from local small-scale farmers. As a result, small-scale farmers would be motivated to expand acreage under cultivation, increase production, improve husbandry practices and increase their capacity to supply food to schools. This arrangement would then enhance incomes of local small-scale farmers and other agricultural enterprises.

Another proposed strategy to ensure increased food production for beneficiary schools was to establish school gardens. Beneficiary schools would acquire lands and produce food crops for their use in the programme. The advantages of this strategy include reduced feeding costs, food supply reliability and community involvement in the programme. Unfortunately, the idea did not catch on within GSFP schools and none of the visited schools had a school garden. In the past, the school garden concept was part of schools' curricula and many schools generated revenue from selling produce from their gardens. These internally generated funds were used to meet critical school

expenditures, especially when central government budgetary allocations were delayed. The Tibung community is now considering supporting the beneficiary school to establish a school garden.

The supply response has also not achieved expected targets. Perhaps the projections were overly ambitious, given the nature of agriculture in Ghana. The sector is beset with numerous problems that must be addressed to enable it to respond to economic and market opportunities. First, there is an ageing and illiterate farmer population. Young and educated farmers are more likely to take risks, adopt new agricultural technologies to improve productivity and production and respond to opportunities. The youth in Ghana shy away from farming because of limited opportunities in the sector. Farming is seen more as a way of life and not as a business. Rural-urban migration is therefore a problem, especially from several communities in the north.

The Ghanaian farmer uses very little or no improved technology. Technology comes at a cost and most small-scale farmers lack the resources to acquire the improved technologies. Small-scale farmers have difficulty accessing formal credit. Their scale of operations, coupled with their lack of records of their operations makes them unattractive to financial institutions. Most small-scale farmers rely on their meagre resources to finance their farming operations. Technology is crude and labour-intensive. Because of their reliance on household labour, farmers lack the capacity to expand production to meet increasing demand, especially in the short to medium term.

Small-scale farmers operate in difficult environments. For example, almost 70 percent of the country's land surface is prone to soil erosion, making land productivity a major issue to address. Solutions to this problem lie beyond small-scale farmers and in the absence of solutions, these farmers continue to face the difficulties. Agricultural infrastructure is a limiting factor in Ghana's agriculture. Most farmers have no access to irrigation for year-round production and therefore practice rain-fed agriculture which is seasonal. The seasonality of agriculture means poor cash flow, which is another reason that small-scale farmers are unattractive to financial institutions. In the northern regions for example, farmers are unable to farm for more than six months in a year because they have a unimodal system of rainfall.

As shown in Figure 2, the northern regions have a short rainfall period. Because of the unimodal rainfall pattern, northern farmers find it difficult to produce adequate food quantities and food may not always be available year-round. They do not produce enough even for domestic consumption. Many small-scale northern farmers are net consumers and run out of food stocks during the long hungry season which forces them to buy food from the open market. The core poor lack the financial resources to buy food and this sometimes can be disastrous. In the south, however, the problem may be ameliorated by the two farming seasons and availability of cash crops such as cocoa and palm oil, which provide extra income. It is possible for some beneficiary communities in southern Ghana to produce adequate food quantities and sell portions of it for the school feeding programme.

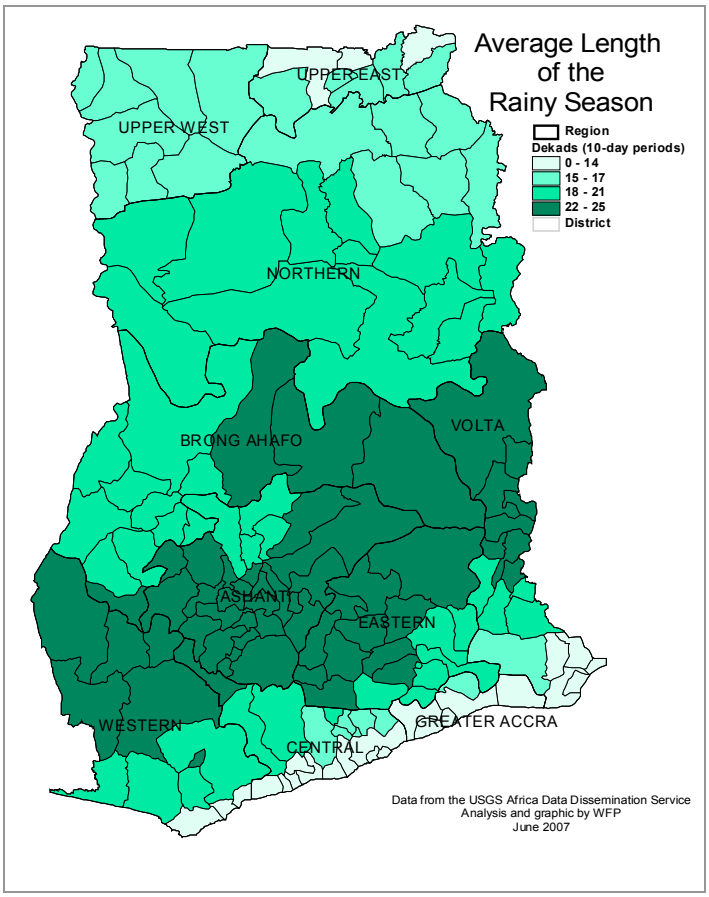
A school feeding programme needs to be backed by a reliable storage and warehouse system in order to ensure food availability at all times. Storage and transport infrastructure in Ghana are either

unavailable or poor. In many of the rural communities where small-scale farmers operate, roads become inaccessible during the rainy season which is also the farming season. Government efforts at improving accessibility are commendable; however, there is more to be done.

Climate changes, especially global warming, expose the country to natural and man-made hazards and erratic rainfall patterns This will have a strong negative impact on poor small-scale food crop farmers. The already low productivity of peasant farmers will get worse and their household food security will be threatened. Also, erratic rainfall will eventually lead to production decreases and expensive food prices, which will make the food out of reach for the poor farmers.

Most of the small-scale farmers in Ghana are women, but they have little or no access to production inputs due to customary practices and beliefs in several parts of the country. In some cultures, for example, a woman cannot own property, including land, by herself nor can she contract a loan on her own, even for investment purposes. This limits opportunities for investments in the sector.

Figure 2: Rainfall Patterns in Ghana



Finally, there are market access constraints that must be addressed to enable small-scale farmers to respond to market opportunities. For example, market skills are lacking and the agribusiness component of agriculture is still undeveloped. There is inadequate product development to allow for effective use of farm produce and there is a weak commodity value chain. In the absence of any strong value chains, farmers are saddled with the problem of marketing their own produce without skilled marketers. This is both tedious and inefficient. The result is huge post harvest losses from an already low production. Post-harvest loss in Ghana is estimated at between 25 and 40 percent, depending on the crop. These and other factors have limited small-scale farmers from taking advantage of market opportunities.

Government policy on small-scale agriculture is to support farmers' access to new improved technologies, irrigation for year-round production and microfinancing to enable farmers to increase their productivity and production. Government is promoting and encouraging the formation of farmer-based organizations (FBOs) as a vehicle to improve farmer access. The structure

of agriculture, with small-scale farmers operating individually, has failed to make any impact in Ghana's agriculture. FBOs are to be used as entry points for technology and extension delivery, to improve members' access to production inputs and to strengthen members' capacities to negotiate for better prices for their produce.

Through the Department of Cooperatives (DOC), the government is facilitating the formation of FBOs and supporting them. A project in MOFA provides 90 percent matching funds for selected FBOs to improve their operations, especially in processing food The DOC is the main government institution responsible for facilitating the formation of groups and training and registering them into cooperatives. MOFA also uses the approach group approach in its extension delivery as do several NGOs that work with small-scale farmers. Financial institutions that provide microfinancing in agriculture have done so through FBOs. The FBO concept has become important and must be considered for the implementation of the GFSP since there appears to be no strategy in the GSFP to link farmers and farmer organizations to the programme. In isolated cases where there has been a linkage, as in the Sene District, Brong Ahafo Region, the results have been quite beneficial.

In some isolated cases, the GSFP has succeeded in increasing agricultural production due to the market it has provided for farmers. Generally, however, the GSFP has failed to make any significant positive impact on agricultural production in the beneficiary communities. At Kpalgun Zion School, the school authorities indicated that the supplier only buys a very small quantity of food from the community during the farming and harvesting season because the community does not produce adequate quantities of food. The supplier buys most of the food elsewhere, especially during the lean season. This information was confirmed by the community members at a focus group discussion session.

The situation is similar in the Tibung community in the TKD. This community is near the Botanga dam and has access to water from the dam to irrigate their farms. Nevertheless, except for rice, community members are unable to produce adequate food for the school programme. Their major challenge lies in acquiring adequate financing to expand their farming businesses. Their farm acreage is still small and they produce at subsistence levels. In the GED, the GSFP could not have influenced food production because the caterer model was being used. The caterer buys from outside the community, although the district produces food.

Programmes, including the GSFP, that are meant to provide market opportunities for small-scale farmers need to be encouraged and supported, since marketing is a major constraint facing Ghanaian farmers. It is difficult to estimate the quantities of food being produced for the programme because of how the programme is being implemented. The menu for the feeding programme was based on FAO recommendations of a minimum of 600 kcal per child per day. Based on this figure and the number of school children presently in the programme, the tonnage of food used for the programme annually will amount to about a little over 13,000 mts.[20] This figure is not a significant proportion of

[20] 4kcal=1 gram food. Therefore, 600kcal/child/day=150 grams food /child/day. A school term is 65 days; therefore, 3 terms=195 days in the year. A child takes 29,250 grams or 29.3kg food per year. For 447,527 children covered by the program, total food tonnage amounts to 13,090 a year.

the country's yearly food production, but it is a good beginning. Maize production alone is about 1.2 million mts per annum. Any expansion of the GSFP will increase the number of children and the demand for food to feed them. Purchasing locally produced foods to feed the increasing number of children will challenge small-scale farmers and will ultimately have the effect of increasing their production.

It is possible to estimate the amount being spent on food purchases for the GSFP. Maize is a major food item used for the GSFP across the country; it is estimated to form 60 percent of the food items. Since a ton of maize in Ghana costs an average of US$350, present maize purchases for the GSFP could be estimated at about US$2.7 million annually. WFP's food procurement in the country also should be added to this amount. In 2006, WFP paid about US$549,376 to local contractors for supplying food for school feeding. WFP expects to source 100 percent of its food procurement needs locally. This is estimated to be US$1.9 million for 2007, US$1.9 million for 2008, US$2.3 million for 2009 and US$1.6 million for 2010. It is further estimated that 90 percent of this value will be bought from small-scale farmers.

4.8 Logistical support

The GSFP planned some logistics to ensure the smooth implementation of the programme. Beneficiary schools were to be provided with kitchens for cooking the food, a dining hall, bowls to provide food for the children, potable water to eliminate contamination, stores for the storage of the food items and latrines to promote environmental hygiene. Ideally, these facilities ought to have been provided before the start of the programme. This was not possible because the Secretariat did not have adequate budget support to provide the logistics. The policy then changed and communities were called upon to provide these logistics themselves, as their contribution. While some communities have managed to provide some of the facilities, others have not been able to do that and this poses a challenge for programme implementation.

At Kpalgun in the TKD, although the community has potable water, no pipes are connected to the school which is about half a kilometre away. The school has three huge water tanks supplied by the government. In order to have water on the school compound, the children walk to the community to fetch water to fill up the tanks at the school. The exercise appears to be a lot of work and productive academic time is wasted. During a focus group discussion, parents offered to fetch the water themselves to relieve the children of the task in order for them to concentrate on their studies if the authorities would agree to their offer.

Tibung community also has potable water with pipes connected to the water tanks provided by the government in the school; however, they have serious leakages. The Redco School at the GED has potable water that only runs about once a week, but the school has no water tanks to store water. Because potable water is unreliable in the school, authorities and the children depend on water from other sources. The Madina community, where the school is situated, has a long history of perennial water shortages. Because of the water problem there, whenever the taps run, community members

rush to the school compound and compete with the children to fetch water. Sometimes the children get bullied; there have been instances in which some of the school children were hurt in their struggle to fetch water. The school is generally too exposed to the public with all its attendant disruptions. The District Assembly has to consider building a wall around the school in the near future.

4.8.1 Infrastructure for cooking and eating space

Kpalgun Zion Primary School has a make-shift structure that is being used as a kitchen. The structure is quite small, has no concrete floor, leaks when it rains and is dusty and unhealthy. Tibung RC Primary has no kitchen and cooking is done under trees. This creates problems when it rains and the dust around the cooking place is unhealthy. The community has put up a mud structure for use as a kitchen but it has not yet been roofed. A request has been made to the District Assembly for assistance to roof the building, but the Assembly has not yet responded. Since cooking for Redco is done from a central kitchen, the school obviously has no kitchen.

None of the three schools covered in this case study has a dinning hall. All the children eat in their classrooms which disrupts class contact hours. This means that after food has been served and the children have eaten, the classrooms have to be cleaned before classes can resume. This takes time and affects contact hours. In all cases, children bring their own bowls from home for their food because it has not been possible for the government to provide them with bowls.

Both Kpalgun and Tibung Schools have places to store the food items supplied by the Assembly, but they are not appropriate for storing food. At Kpalgun, a classroom has been converted into a store and the key is kept by a teacher appointed to be in charge of the programme. The room is small, the environment is dirty and ventilation is poor. Food at Tibung is kept in a teacher's residence and the teacher keeps the keys to the store. The environment is comparatively cleaner but the room is also small with poor ventilation. The poor ventilation of the stores could affect food quality and safety. For the sake of transparency and accountability, it is dangerous to have one person keep the keys to a store. For control purposes, at least two persons should keep the store keys. Because the Redco School is fed by a caterer, the school has no store.

4.9 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is an important component in programme implementation. Its purpose is to assess consistency in operations, track progress, generate relevant information to assist in decision-making and ensure that implementation is on track and within programme milestones. Where implementation is found to be off track, new strategies are adopted to correct deviations. M&E also promotes accountability and transparency. M&E entails the design of appropriate forms to collect, analyse, publish and disseminate information at all levels.

The M&E aspect of the GSFP is completely absent. For a national programme of such importance, there is a need for a mechanism to collect information on quantity and quality of inputs and outputs and to determine how programme objectives are being achieved. At the national level, some information is available and published but it is often not disseminated to the regional and district levels. The programme requires that programme staff constantly collect, analyse, publish and disseminate the following information:

- number of children covered and in the communities;
- costs for the various components of the programme;
- numbers for enrolment, attendance and retention;
- sensitization and training of stakeholders;
- community participation;
- quantity and quality of food;
- type of foods served;
- store inventories;
- quantities of local foods used for school feeding;
- infrastructural support;
- improvement in the health of children;
- essential complementary activities ongoing in beneficiary communities.

The GSFP collaborates with some ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and other partners that are already on the ground in order to collect useful data. For example, the MOFA collects agricultural input and output data at the community level, the MOH collects data on health status and other health indicators at the district level and the MOESS collects data at the school level. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the GSFP and these collaborators need to agree on an integrated M&E system in support of the programme.

The GSFP started without any defined M&E system; therefore, there are hardly any monitoring reports submitted from the regional and school levels. At Kpalgun Zion School, there were no formal written reports on the feeding programme, although the head teacher and his staff were able to verbally provide basic information on enrolment and quantities of normal food items supplied weekly to the school. No waybills accompanied deliveries from the supplier. The supplier has a key to the store. On Sundays, she delivers the weekly allocation directly to the store at the school, locks up the store and leaves. No one takes delivery of the food items and no written reports are sent to the district for accounting and monitoring purposes. The situation is the same in Tibung RC Primary, except that the head teacher in this school kept records of quantities of items received, but no reports were written on these deliveries. The head teacher intimated that the recording was only meant to protect him and his staff from any future audit queries.

At Redco, where cooking is done by a caterer, no records were kept on the programme except information on enrolment figures, which is normal information that all schools provide to the GES. A Schedule Officer from the GED regularly visits the beneficiary school, Redco, to observe proceedings and write a report for the district. However, copies of the reports are not sent to the schools. A

review of two of the reports indicated that they were event reports with little or no quantitative or qualitative analysis.

No written reports on the programme had ever been sent by either the TKD or the GED to their respective regional offices. The national Secretariat had reports from some regions, but their contents were scanty with little or no analysis. The suppliers and caterers that were given funds by the two districts to supply food to the schools did not account for the funds before approvals were given for new releases. In the TKD, the supplier passed her supplies through the district stores before they were sent to the schools. This is in line with the Financial Administration Regulation which enjoins all MDAs to pass all consumables purchased through stores. This arrangement allowed for first-level monitoring and also made it possible for the storekeeper to receive and record the quantities. In GED, this was different. The caterer bought the food, cooked and sent it directly to the school, without any recording at the district.

The GSFP's M&E problem has been acknowledged and steps are being taken to address the situation. The Secretariat, with support from the Dutch government, has commissioned a study to develop an operating plan for the programme. The aim of the plan is to establish a programme management, monitoring and reporting system along with a baseline study. The draft plan proposes a participatory M&E approach and suggests a workshop among stakeholders to agree on the framework. It is to establish performance indicators and institute periodic surveys to capture core data (e.g. school enrolment, attendance, retention, quantities and quality of meals and water and sanitation complements) and impact on community agricultural and economic performance.[21] This is an opportunity to improve programme management, especially the M&E aspect of it.

[21] Ghana School Feeding Program: Annual Operating Plan 2007. Draft Report, May, 2007.

5. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Institutional arrangements

The institutional arrangements of the GSFP are well set out in its programme design, with structures at the national, regional, district and community levels. However, the structures seem not to be working. At the ministerial level, the cabinet formed a Ministerial Oversight Committee to oversee the implementation of the programme. The ministries represented were the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS), the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC) and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment (MLGRDE). There was a power struggle among the ministries, with each of them fighting to take control of the programme. Ministerial responsibility moved from the MOESS to the MOWAC and finally to the MLGRDE. Presently, the MLGRDE has ministerial responsibility for the programme. In line with the government's decentralization policy, programme implementation is decentralized to the district level. This struggle led to the weakening of the Ministerial Oversight Committee, which has not met for a long time.

This power struggle was perhaps a result of the fact that all the ministries have significant roles to play in achieving the policy objectives that underlie the design and implementation of the programme. The immediate policy objectives of the programme are to achieve increased enrolment, retention and attendance at schools in poor rural communities, improve nutrition, improve the health status of school children and increase local food production. The long-term development goal of the programme is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security, especially among women and children, as outlined in the GPRS document.

The Government of Ghana established a National Secretariat at the Presidency and appointed an Executive Director for the programme. The Secretariat has no legal backing by itself, but constitutionally, the President only appoints such a high public officer (i.e. the Executive Director) upon the advice of the Public Services Commission and in consultation with the Council of State. Therefore, that appointment must be legal. The government provided and staffed an office for the Secretariat in order to allow it to function. The government also took a bold initiative in committing itself to fund the programme through the national budget.

The Secretariat, working in concert with the supervising ministry (i.e. the MLGRDE), provided the policy direction for the programme. The Secretariat then facilitated the formation of a Technical Advisory Body, with membership from all the collaborating ministries. The membership of the Technical Advisory Body is defined in the programme document and its role is to advise the government on the technical details for successful programme implementation. This Technical Advisory Body is not functioning at the moment and several of its members no longer attend meetings.

The Secretariat appointed Regional Coordinators in the ten regions to coordinate programme activities and regional M&E officers were recruited to support the Regional Coordinators. The role of the regional office is to coordinate, supervise and monitor the implementation of the programme ; however, inadequate logistics constrain the regional offices from operating effectively. Both in the Northern and Greater Accra Regions, regional M&E officers do not even have offices. They depend on the Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) for logistic support; however, the RCCs have inadequate logistics of their own. The Regional Coordinators and their M&E officers have remained ineffective. The M&E officers have no defined data to collect for monitoring purposes and they rarely write reports to send to headquarters.

At the district level, the District Chief Executives (DCEs), who are government appointees, facilitated the formation of District Implementation Committees (DICs). The role of the DICs is to oversee the implementation of the programme at the district level, including funds disbursements. DIC membership is defined by the programme document. In 138 districts, the DCEs chair the DICs; other members are representatives from collaborating ministries and technical staff at the district assemblies (DAs) including the District Director of Education, the District Director of Health, the District Director of Agriculture, the District Coordinating Director, the District Budget Officer or District Finance Officer and the Programme Desk Officer. While most DICs do not function and hold no meetings, DCEs are under pressure to ensure that the children eat daily. Therefore, many of them are running a "one-person" committee to make the relevant decisions on behalf of all the other committee members. To help them do this effectively, DCEs have appointed Desk Officers.

Head teachers have facilitated the formation of School Implementation Committees (SICs). The role of the SICs is to recruit cooks for the beneficiary school, determine the menu, procure food from local farmers, oversee the cooking, oversee the feeding of the children, discuss problems that arise in programme implementation and find solutions to them. Membership of the SICS is defined in the programme document. SICs are chaired by head teachers of beneficiary schools and the other core members include a representative of the PTA, two representatives of the SMC, a representative of the local chief and the teacher in charge of the programme in the beneficiary school. Besides these core members, some head teachers have added school prefects as members, in consultation with other SIC members. In Moslem communities, another representative of the local Imam has also been added.

Some schools do not yet have SICs and some SICs are not functional. In that case, some head teachers have programmes run by one person to ensure that the programme can go on and the children can eat. There is no SIC at the Redco School in the GED. Both Kpalgun Zion School and Tibung RC School at TKD have SICs, however, they are not functional. The membership of the SIC at Kpalgun is comprised of the following people:

- Head teacher - Chairperson
- Teacher-in-charge - Member
- PTA representative - Member
- 2 SMC representatives - Members
- Chief's representative - Member

- Imam representative - Member
- Girls' prefect - Member
- School prefect - Member
- Asst. School prefect - Member

The SIC of Tibung has the following membership:

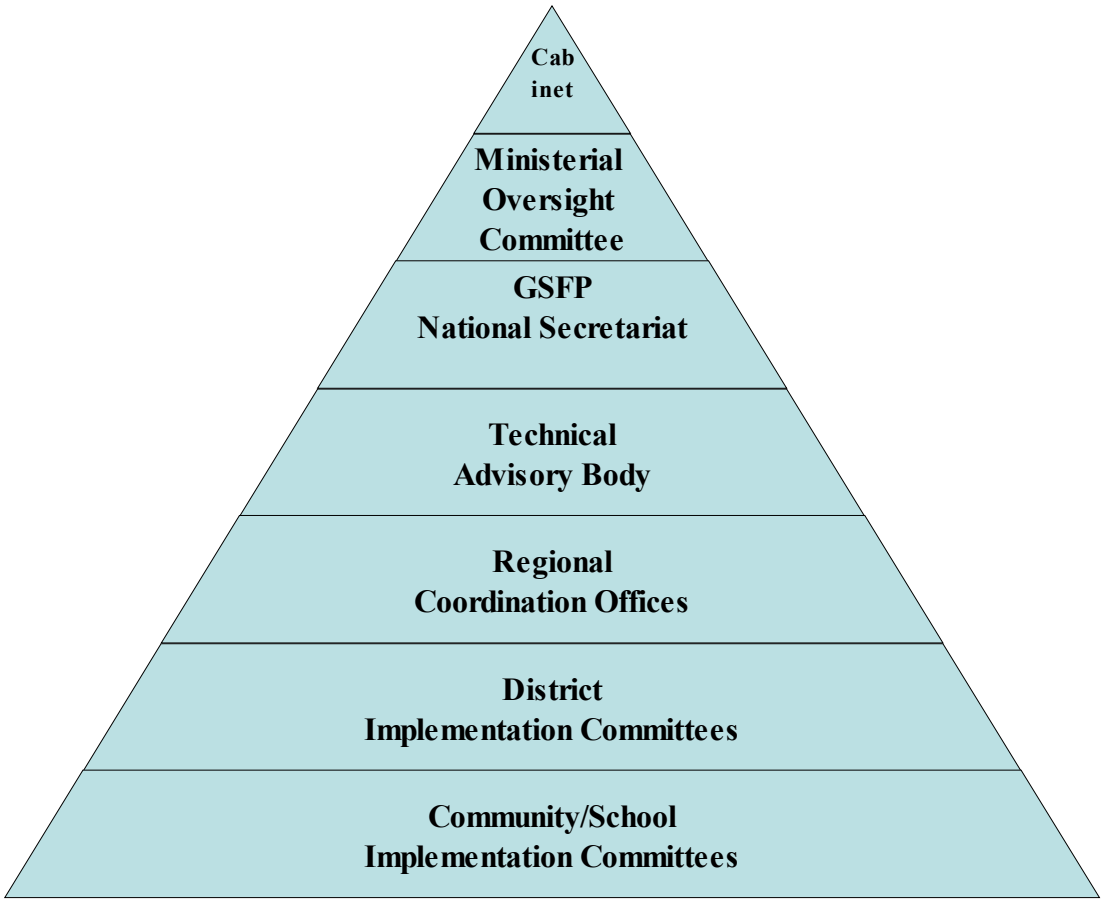
- Head teacher - Chair
- Teacher-in-charge - Member
- 2 SMC representatives - Members
- 2 PTA representatives - Members
- 1 opinion leader - Member
- 1 Chief representative - Member
- Assemblyman - Member

5.2 Decision-making process

The institutional arrangements envisioned that decision-making would be decentralized and participatory, in line with the government's decentralization policy. It was also to promote accountability and transparency (Figure 3). In reality, however, this does not seem to be the case. Key stakeholders were not adequately prepared to play their respective roles at the beginning of the programme. Before programme implementation, the GSFP was supposed to mount sensitization and education programmes for these stakeholders to explain to them the objectives of the programme, implementation guidelines and their roles. This did not happen and, as a result, the stakeholders implementing the programme have little or no understanding of what they are implementing or of their roles in the programme.

During the field visits, it was evident that there was limited knowledge of the programme at the regional, district and community levels; this was a major complaint from all the players. In their ignorance, SIC and DIC members are unable to participate in programme implementation. Collaboration among the implementing institutions has broken down both at the national and district levels. At the national level, representatives from MOH, MOESS, MOFA, and MOWAC seemed to have very little knowledge about the programme implementation and did not know what was happening on the ground. They have all stopped attending any meetings. Technically, both the Ministerial Oversight Committee and the Technical Advisory Body have collapsed. The situation is the same at the district level, where DICs are non-functional.

Figure 3: Governance Organgram



One issue of note is that the GSFP has

attempted to create new structures for programme implementation instead of using existing structures. For example, district assemblies have legally constituted assembly sub-committees that meet regularly to discuss and implement programmes of the assembly. However, the GSFP ignored all of these legally constituted bodies and established new bodies with no legal mandate. The DIC, for example, was a new concept. It is not clear where the DIC sits in the district assembly structure and what its authority level is. When DIC members are called for meetings, they expect to be paid sitting allowances but the assemblies do not have the budget for that and therefore have failed to pay. As a result, DIC members lost interest and stopped attending meetings. Perhaps this problem could be addressed by assigning the role of the DIC to one of the legally constituted sub-committees. Assemblies have budgets to assist their legally constituted sub-committees in accomplishing their tasks.

At the community level, every school in the country has a School Management Committee (SMC) which is a legally constituted body responsible for managing all academic matters of the school. The role of the SIC could have been better performed by the SMC, especially because the membership of the two bodies is similar. Bypassing the SMCs and forming SICs to manage another programme in the same academic environment has created some confusion and difficulty. It is proposed that SICs be dissolved and that the SMCs be charged with the responsibility to manage the school feeding programme at the local level. It is further proposed to form a sub-committee of the SMC in beneficiary schools which would report to the larger body and be solely responsible for local procurement.

The breakdown of the institutional arrangements affected the decision-making process originally established and resulted in the breakdown of communication channels. Transparency and accountability seem compromised, especially at the operational level where M&E is already weak or non-existent. Decentralization must create opportunities for the governed to make decisions that affect their well-being. This is largely not happening in the implementation of the GSFP. Instead, decision-making is made in a top-down manner.

5.3 Best practice in decision-making to support school feeding programmes

The best practice in decision-making in any community-based programme is for the community to lead in making decisions. The school-based model appears to provide opportunity for beneficiary communities to do that. This is important for sustainability, transparency and reliability and it also reduces the potential for corruption in programme implementation.

WFP and CRS use the community-based model. Community involvement in the WFP and CRS feeding programmes has been critical in the success of their programmes. The approach has resulted in huge community contributions and ownership of the programme and it has enhanced the potential for long-term programme sustainability. For example, in WFP programmes, communities are responsible for preparing meals and contributing toward some of the items in the menu. Some communities

share weekly canteen fees per child which are used for rewarding cooks and centre attendants and for supporting the purchase of items on the menu. All the communities have a centre management committee whose membership must be 40 percent women.

Community involvement also has improved coordination and monitoring, particularly in other areas of development assistance, and expanded the communities' capacity to steer their own development programmes. The review of best practices by WFP (2006) also suggests that school feeding and food assistance programmes have the potential of acting as centres for other developmental interventions such as early childhood care, health awareness campaigns and child-targeted programmes that improve health care. WFP centres across the north provide opportunities to:

- transfer health and nutritional information to mothers;
- teach learning, social and cultural skills to children;
- assist communities in organizing development efforts to improve their communities.[22]

5.4 Programme sustainability

One major challenge facing the GSFP is how to sustain the programme in the face of budget constraints and other structural difficulties. The Secretariat complained in early 2007 about attempts by some people at the MLGRDE to sabotage the programme. The MLGRDE responded and pointed out that the Secretariat was overrunning its budget. It accused the Secretariat of rapid expansion without corresponding budget approval. The projection was for the programme to cover 889 schools by 2007, but as of 2007 975 schools are already in the programme.

The programme vision and objectives have attracted international interest and some donors have shown interest in partnering with the Government of Ghana to expand the programme. The Gates Foundation has also shown interest in working through WFP with Ghanaian authorities to improve programme management and implementation. These are positive signs. The involvement and support of these international donors will help build the necessary capacity at all levels to better manage the programme and help the structures work more effectively.

The long-term sustainability of the programme rests on the Government of Ghana's commitment to ensure long-term financing for the programme. This commitment has already been demonstrated by the government's policy to establish a functional GSFP Secretariat and its decision to fund the programme through the national budget which could ensure financial sustainability. The programme addresses some immediate and long-term development policy objectives that appear in the GPRS and the MDGs. These are development objectives that the government is committed to achieve. From that perspective, government budgetary allocation is likely to continue to fund the programme.

President Kuffuor has also shown his personal interest and commitment. This is a programme that His Excellency unveiled at the African Union Meeting in Ethiopia in 2005. Indeed, that has given the

[22] WFP (2006). Models for Designing, Implementing and Targeting School Feeding Programs in Ghana, WFP Ghana.

programme some political clout and any actions to frustrate the programme can be politically sensitive. This partly explains why DCEs, as His Excellency's personal representatives in the districts, have taken an interest to ensure the success of programme implementation in the face of all the difficulties. It appears that any attempt by another President, either from the ruling party or the opposition, to withdraw funding and scrap the programme would be politically suicidal. The political commitment to the programme is not in doubt. But the issues of governance, management and supervision of the programme must be addressed quickly to whip up interest and ensure long-term commitment at all levels.

Many of the people implementing the programme have little or no knowledge of the programme and therefore the implementing structure is unclear at all levels. Communities do not even know that one objective of the programme is to support their farming operations to increase agricultural production, although they generally appreciate the programme and believe that their involvement would be beneficial. The institutional arrangements are not functioning. Community people have the impression that the food is a government hand-out and they should not risk losing it by asking questions. Governance of the programme is not strong, especially at the district and community levels.

School feeding programmes implemented by other organizations, like WFP and CRS, have had some success because of strong governance, management and supervision mechanisms. There are success stories in Ghana for the GSFP to study. The operational arrangements of the GSFP must be reviewed to make it responsive to the needs of community people and other people implementing the programme. When a community takes ownership of a programme, it works to make it sustainable. This is one way to ensure the sustainability of the GSFP.

For all stakeholders to understand their roles, capacity-building and sensitization must be conducted. Areas that must be emphasized in training at all levels include governance, organizational management, financial management, policy formulation and design, project implementation, the art of monitoring and evaluation, programme supervision and information and computer technology. New partnerships with all implementing agencies must be promoted and strengthened. With support from MOFA and other partners, GSFP can facilitate the formation of farmer organizations in the communities and link them up with similar ones in the district. Additional training in group cohesion and dynamics will be useful for such farmer organizations to make them stronger and help them stay together to promote their common interest in improving production and marketing. Funding from international donors must be channelled mostly into building capacity, including providing relevant working equipment and tools.

The programme must explore the possibility of adding value to raw food items, especially in terms of fortification, in order to improve the nutritional value for the school children. The micronutrient deficiency problem in Ghana must be addressed through the GSFP, as it is being done in other school feeding programmes. The private sector could be invited to partner with government to achieve this. At the same time, the MOH can help train local people to fortify food.

6. PROGRAMME IMPACT

6.1 Immediate and future impacts and implications for poverty reduction

The team that conducted a review of the GSFP pilot phase conducted extensive field visits to all ten pilot districts and schools to collect data. The team also selected a number of non-beneficiary schools as control schools and collected data from them. The primary data were analysed and the results were published. Using the programme log frame, the team compared actual versus planned indicators in the schools visited.

The GSFP has already attained some level of success, even during the pilot phase. During the review, it was observed that enrolment and retention figures had improved in GSFP pilot schools compared to non-beneficiary schools. Enrolment, for example, went up by 20.3 percent in beneficiary schools and only 2.8 percent in non-beneficiary schools. Retention was also better in beneficiary schools. These immediate impacts were confirmed in all the schools covered for this case study and were evident from data provided by the schools to the GES. Heads of all schools provide data to the GES on the number of children in school and their attendance each term.

Teachers in beneficiary schools now have to handle larger classes; this affects effective supervision and quality teaching because the expansion in enrolment numbers is not being matched by expansion of academic facilities. This has to be corrected before it begins to significantly affect academic work negatively. The challenge now is how to sustain these immediate impacts. A disruption in the programme could result in absenteeism and school drop-out once again. Efforts must be made to ensure that the programme continues without any disruptions.

The long-term development policy objective of the programme is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security. The country's poverty profile indicates that poverty in Ghana is influenced by region, gender and educational level. There are more poor people in the north than in the south, more women are poor than men and illiterates are poorer than the educated. Many of the problems in Ghana, including the problems of poverty, malnutrition and disease, are problems arising out of ignorance. The immediate impact of increased enrolment, attendance and retention in GSFP schools will translate into helping more children become educated. To break the cycle of poverty means more Ghanaian children, especially girls, must be educated.

Educating more girls will close the poverty gap between males and females. This will also have a ripple effect because an educated mother is more likely to send her child to school and improve the family's nutrition to lessen the incidence of disease in the family. The educated child of an educated woman is also likely to educate his or her child, improve the child's nutritional status and lessen the incidence of diseases in the family. Therefore, the immediate impacts of the GSFP must be sustained and improved upon in the country's quest to reduce poverty and improve nutrition and food security.

6.2 Beneficiary assessment

The case studies gave the opportunity for authorities of beneficiary schools, children and communities to assess and comment on the GSFP. Some of the comments from the discussions are paraphrased and reproduced below as an indication of what the GSFP means for teachers in beneficiary schools, school children, parents and other stakeholders.

Kpalgun Zion Primary School:

- The programme has brought about increased enrolment, attendance and retention. Even children who are below school age are already in school. About 50 of these children have not been registered because their ages do not permit them to be registered in school, but we feed them.
- Incidence of vomiting has stopped. Before the programme, many children used to vomit in school, perhaps due to poor quality food taken at home. Many of these children eat leftover foods from the previous day for breakfast.
- Child morbidity has gone down and attendance has improved tremendously since the start of the programme.

School children at Kpalgun Zion School:

- We generally enjoy the meals provided by the programme and we wish it continues forever. Although we have had a few problems with quality in the past, we got the school authorities to redress them.
- The feeding has relieved our parents from the trouble of having to struggle to provide us food every day before we come to school.
- The distance from the school to the pipe water is too far and something must be done about it. We spend too much time fetching water for the tanks in the school.

Kpalgun community:

- We thank government for the programme that has come to improve the quality of life of our children.
- We are happy because our children are now in school. The programme has increased enrolment and retention in school and has also improved the health of our children.
- We have a problem with the use of "magi cubes" because it makes some of our children sick[23]
- We are also worried about the long hours spent by the children fetching water. We would be glad to do that as parents if the authorities will permit us to fetch the water.
- We would have loved to contribute food items and other condiments to the programme, especially during harvest, if we had been educated on our role at the start of the programme. For now, our only understanding is that government has given money to the teachers to buy and cook food for the children.
- We could also have provided free cooking in support of the programme. The programme needs to come and enlighten us better on our role.

[23] Magi cube is an artificial seasoning produced by a local industry.

- We do not have a problem with the supplier concept, except that the supplier does not buy from us.

Tibung RC Primary School:

- The programme has led to increased enrolment in school by about 66 percent.
- Children have not been fed for two weeks because the supplier has not delivered any food and there is no money to buy. The head teacher used to fund the food whenever there were delays, but we cannot continue to do that.
- The community was responsible for the cooking until the supplier concept was imposed on us. At the time, it was possible to vary quantities to satisfy all the children because purchases were localized. The food quality was also better.

Tibung community:

- Before the introduction of the programme, children used to run away from school, but this has stopped. The children refused to go to school until we gave them money, but this has also stopped and they rush to school even before we are aware.
- All school-going children in this community are now in school.
- Many of our daughters used to run away to the south to engage in "kayayoo"[24] but this has stopped because they have now taken interest in going to school. We are very grateful for this and hope that they do not begin to cut classes again.
- We used to worry about providing lunch for our children, but not now.
- Enrolment has increased. As parents, we do not have to push the children to go to school anymore. They go on their own accord. It is our hope that this community will begin to produce intellectuals to manage affairs of this country.
- Teachers and cooks are benefiting from the programme. Teachers take their salary and eat some of the food. Cooks are to take salaries too, except that the salaries have been delayed, but they will come.
- The programme has from time to time bought firewood, vegetables, groundnuts and rice from some of us. One person has expanded his farm from 6 to 12 acres for the production of rice, maize and yams; another person has expanded his farm from 1 acre to 4 acres of yams, 1 acre of beans and 2 acres of rice.
- Our children's health has improved. Some of them vomited in the morning from food eaten at home, but this has stopped.
- We were initially suspicious of the programme and the problems it was likely to cause because of water problems in this community, but now we have potable water.
- The programme has not involved the community. We would be glad to contribute to its success. Already, we have contributed a bowl of maize each, making 3 maxi bags of maize for the school.

Redco DA 1 & 2 Primary Schools:

- The programme has promoted concentration in class.

[24] Local term used to describe girls engaged in head porterage in the cities for a fee.

- It has promoted regular attendance and increased retention. We have had to restrict registration for lack of space and other facilities.
- Dishing of the food takes too long. Food could be parcelled in plastic bowls and left in classrooms for kids to take.
- Include Junior Secondary School to have the full impact of the programme on children.

Redco school children:

- Sometimes the food quantity has been inadequate and we had to wait for a refill from the matron.
- The programme has improved attendance and retention in the school.

Redco community:

- We are ready to assist in cooking for the children to cut costs and make the programme sustainable.
- We used to give money to children to go to school, but not anymore.

6.2.1 Analysis of stakeholder assessment

The stakeholders agree that the school feeding programme has made a positive impact in improving school enrolment, attendance and retention. It is noteworthy that all children of school age in the northern communities that were covered in this case study are in school. This is especially commendable given the imbalance in education between the north and south. Government policy, in this regard, has been effective and the government is being urged to pursue it, in line with the overall educational policy, to achieve 100 percent school enrolment in the country. But, as pointed out earlier, there is a need for capacity-building at all levels to improve the governance, decision-making and M&E aspects of the GSFP to make it more efficient and effective.

One social problem in the Tibung community is the recent trend for girls of school age to migrate to the south to practise “kayayoo”. “Kayayoo” is the practice where young girls, in particular, work in the cities as porters carrying heavy loads for a fee. They generally live on the streets and in very deplorable conditions without protection. Efforts of the government and some NGOs to stop the practice have not been very effective. According to the community people, the introduction of the GSFP in the Tibung community has stopped the girls there from migrating down south as “kayayoo”. This is commendable and it is proposed that the GSFP be expanded into other communities with similar migration problems.

It is rather unfortunate that community sensitization did not take place before the start of the programme. In Tibung, the community was suspicious of the programme in the beginning because they did not understand it. This is likely to be the case for several other beneficiary communities. Government programmes easily fail due to such suspicions. In future expansion of the programme,

sensitization must be adequately carried out to win the confidence of the local people. The communities also must be given the opportunity to contribute to the programme.

The case at Tibung is an indication of the potential impact of the GSFP on farmers' production. Because the supplier buys some rice and vegetables from the community, some farmers are beginning to expand acreages, no matter how small. Acreage expansion is likely to be even faster if the school-based model for procurement is used and a larger proportion of the programme's food needs is bought locally. The GSFP must consider reverting to the school-based model for procurement to achieve the objective of increasing the use of locally grown foods in school feeding programmes.

6.3 Conclusions, recommendations and the way forward

6.3.1 Conclusions

The GSFP involves providing one hot and nutritionally balanced meal for school children on site for 3,000 cedis (US$0.32) per child per day, using locally produced and procured food items. Additional activities complementary to food interventions are also part of the package. These include de-worming, provision of water and sanitation, micronutrient supplementation, health and hygiene education, HIV/AIDS prevention, creation of school gardens and malaria prevention.

There are several areas in which the GSFP has the potential to make a significant contribution toward educational and agricultural policy goals within Ghana. School feeding is identified as one strategy in the Ministry's Annual Education Sector Operational Plan (2007-2009) to help government achieve 100 percent completion rates for male and female children at all basic levels of education by 2015. The GSFP is therefore receiving attention at the highest policy level.

The use of locally produced food for the GSFP is also meant to provide markets for local farmers, enhance local farmers' productivity and production and improve their incomes, in line with the government's policy of reducing poverty. Generally, however, the GSFP has failed to make any significant positive impacts on agricultural production in the beneficiary communities. The FBO concept must be considered for GSFP implementation since there appears to be no strategy in the GSFP to link farmers and farmer organizations to the programme.

The case study research also revealed that buying maize from farmer cooperatives or FBOs is cheaper than buying from commercial traders. This is a further indication that using caterers and suppliers is more costly because they tend to buy from commercial traders. Mechanisms need to be put in place to link the GSFP with farmer organizations. Two advantages can be derived from such a linkage: it can bring school feeding costs down and can create market opportunities for local farmer organizations and their members, thereby enhancing their production and incomes, in line with the programme objective.

The case study research also found that the supplier and caterer models are not ideal for ensuring GSFP sustainability because the communities are not involved in the programme implementation. There is enough evidence from other SFPs reviewed in the present study that community involvement promotes community ownership and this is key to successful and sustainable school feeding operations. The GSFP must consider reverting to the school-based model of procurement if the objective of increasing the use of locally grown foods in school feeding programmes is to be achieved.

The case study work revealed that the GSFP has achieved some successes during its relatively short period of implementation. The immediate impact has increased school enrolment, attendance and retention across GSFP schools. During the GSFP pilot phase, school enrolment increased by almost 21 percent within the first five months. In the schools covered for this case study, the percentage increases were even higher. These results are significant in view of the government's overall policy of achieving Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) which strives to ensure that all children of school age are in school.

Findings from the mid-term review of the GSFP pilot indicate that the programme has gained national acceptance as evidenced by the fact that some communities on their own are building the necessary infrastructure to enable them to qualify for the programme. This demonstrates the popularity of the programme and the potential for GSFP to assist the government achieve FCUBE. Other immediate and positive impacts include the reduction in hunger and malnutrition among beneficiary school children. Children in beneficiary schools appear physically healthy. School authorities in Kpalgun Zion School, for example, intimated that morbidity among the school children had gone down considerably since the introduction of the school feeding programme in their school. Some children were arriving at school and then becoming ill on arrival; this has stopped with the introduction of the GSFP.

Parents interviewed also indicated that their children do not eat breakfast at home since the programme began in their community because there is assurance of a hot meal at school.[25] This new development is an unintended impact of the programme since children are supposed to eat three square meals a day. It appears the parents are substituting breakfast at home with the lunch provided in school. The case study research indicated that without more education and programmes to create awareness to accompany the GSFP interventions, there is a potential for a decline in parental responsibility to feed their children.

Another impact of the programme which must be carefully considered is the potential negative effect of increasing enrolments in schools that are not prepared and have not planned for the large numbers of children. As indicated earlier, teachers in beneficiary schools now have to handle larger classes and this is affecting effective supervision and quality teaching because the expansion in numbers is not being matched by an expansion in academic facilities.

In addition to the immediate objectives of the programme, there are long-term objectives that mainly address issues of malnutrition, hunger and poverty. In the long term, addressing these problems will

[25] This might have stopped the vomiting because many of the children were eating leftover foods for breakfast.

depend on policy interventions related to improving household food security and incomes. The GSFP aims to address these problems through boosting agricultural food production, particularly in target districts. Unfortunately, to date, the amount of increased food production in beneficiary communities has been insignificant.

The achievements of the GSFP are commendable. However, the programme has a number of challenges that must be addressed in order to enable it to achieve its full potential. First, the decentralized procurement system proposed for the programme has been bypassed. Instead, suppliers and caterers are being used for procurement, with no input from the schools and communities about how the funds are utilized. As a result, the objective of ensuring that school feeding programme partners buy from local farmers to promote increased food production is not being achieved. Along with the focus on the local farmer, farmer production and incomes will have to improve for Ghana to effectively deal with the problems of poverty and food insecurity. Buying from local farmers for the school feeding programme is more cost effective and encourages increased food production.

Second, the governance aspect of the programme is weak. The GSFP structures, from the Ministerial Oversight Committee at the national level to the School Implementation Committee at the local level, are not functioning. This has had a negative effect on the management of the programme. For example, officials from MOFA who provide extension delivery to farmers in support of the programme are not playing their role and health officials are often not available to ensure that the health needs of the school children are met. At the same time, there is poor monitoring and evaluation of the programme which must improve if the programme is to ensure transparency and accountability. There is the need to constantly monitor and evaluate the performance of the programme. Health surveys also need to be conducted to determine the level of health and nutritional improvement among the beneficiary children.

Finally, the GSFP funding mechanism must improve in order to reduce bureaucracy and delays in disbursement which have a negative impact on programme implementation. For example, the MLGRDE must release funding to the Secretariat on a quarterly basis, in line with the Ministry of Finance's own release mechanism. The Ministry could then create a mechanism for the Secretariat to report regularly on its use of funds. This will help the Secretariat plan more effectively and make funds available to districts on time.

There are a number of areas in which WFP can assist the GSFP to improve the quality and scale of its programme, particularly in developing a more school-based approach and ensuring that the nutritional aspects of its programme are achieved. The basic WFP ration has been tested with the GSFP menus and adds significant nutritional value. Additionally, WFP has been providing support to the private sector to produce and market the national fortified food delivery chains of iodized salt, palm oil and fortified corn-soy blend and maize meal. The WFP-initiated private partnerships have helped build national recognition of the need for increased production and distribution of iodized salt

and have proven that fortification can be taken up by the private sector if strategic interventions are made. These private-public partnerships should continue to be pursued by GSFP.

6.3.2 Recommendations

Following from the conclusions, the recommendations below are proposed for consideration:

- The GSFP should collaborate more closely with CRS as it pulls out of school feeding, particularly in the deprived areas of northern Ghana. CRS has already spent resources developing basic infrastructure either on its own or owned by their beneficiary communities. These physical structures could be ideal for GSFP to use to build on the experience of communities and scale up operations in the most deprived and needy areas of the country.

- The GSFP must improve the governance aspect of its programme. A stakeholders meeting must be called under the auspices of MLGRDE to discuss the way forward in this regard. In the meantime, it is recommended that the functions of the District Implementation Committee be transferred to a relevant, legally constituted body of the Assembly and chaired by the District Chief Executive. It is also proposed that the functions of the GSFP School Implementation Committee at the community or school level be transferred to the School Management Committee, which is the legally constituted body. This new arrangement will further free the head teachers and their staff to concentrate on their academic work and ensure the quality of education is not impaired by the school feeding programme.[26]

- Capacity-building in the area of M&E must be carried out with GSFP to train officials at all levels – this must include training in research methodology, data collection and analysis, report writing and dissemination. The capacity-building process for M&E must also include the process and tools needed for coordinated monitoring at the district and community levels, including the type of monthly reports to be written and the hierarchy for reporting.

- The Secretariat must be given some level of independence in the management of its budget in order to reduce delays in disbursement. Accordingly, the MLGRDE must release the Secretariat's budget on a quarterly basis.

- Community selection must be better targeted for GSFP to make an impact. This requires working much closer with the GES to ensure that the selected communities meet the criteria set out in the programme document and are communities with low enrolment and retention figures. After a community has been chosen, a transitional period (of at least 6 months) must be allowed for sensitization. During this period, community roles and responsibilities must be

[26] The Ministry of Education in its latest Education Sector Review has expressed the concern that school feeding programs in Ghana could be taking away from precious contact hours of teachers. Already Ghana has one of the lowest contact hours in Sub Saharan Africa.

clearly explained and operational issues must be reviewed with community bodies to help them better govern and manage the programme at the school level.

- School authorities must be made to stick to the menu prepared by the experts to ensure that the children are eating quality nutritious foods.

- The GSFP must enter into written agreements with communities, clearly articulating their roles and responsibilities. Since there is the urgent need for more community involvement and ownership in the programme, communities must be allowed to cook, based on arrangements made between the cooks and the SMCs. Communities should be able to provide cooking utensils and identify or build a kitchen or store, as a condition to qualify for the GSFP. District matrons can train community cooks and give them refresher courses annually. In addition to encouraging ownership and community involvement in the programme, community participation can also reduce the overhead costs of the programme.

6.3.3 Way forward

The GSFP has generally made a positive impact on school enrolment, attendance and retention. This is important within the Ghanaian context, where the government's efforts to provide free basic education for all children of school age is still a major task, particularly in deprived rural areas of the country. The gains made through school feeding must be sustained and built upon, which means addressing the weaknesses that have been identified in the GSFP. The way forward is to embark on a sustained capacity-building programme for key national, district and community stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programme. The objective should be to develop capacities in delivering a more efficient and effective service at the least cost.

Accordingly, it is proposed that a project be designed to provide technical assistance to the GSFP for at least three years. The project should strengthen the capacities of the GSFP to become a more localized provider of school feeding and more targeted to the neediest areas of Ghana. The project should also ensure that a broader set of people at the local level are trained to implement the programme and ensure the success of school feeding programmes. It is further proposed that WFP be appointed to manage such a project, given its world-wide expertise.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CFMC	Community Food Management Committee
CHNEC	Community Health and Nutrition Education Centers
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CS	Circuit Supervisor
CSB	Corn-Soy Blend
DA	District Assembly
DCE	District Chief Executive
DIC	District Implementation Committee
DOC	Department of Cooperatives
DPS	District Partner Supervisor
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FASDEP	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy
FBO	Farmer-based Organization
GAC	Ghana AIDS Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	Ga East District
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GOG	Government of Ghana
GON	Government of the Netherlands
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GPRS	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSFP	Ghana School Feeding Programme
HDI	Human Development Index
HGSFP	Home-Grown School Feeding Programme
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HTFI	Hunger Task Force Initiative
ICT	Information and Computer Technology
JHS	Junior High School
JSS	Junior Secondary School
KVIP	Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit Latrine
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLGRDE	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports

MOFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MP	Member of Parliament
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAMSCAD	Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment
PEM	Protein Energy Malnutrition
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RC	Roman Catholic
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SFHNE	Supplementary Feeding, Health and Nutrition Education
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SFSG	Soy Fortified Sorghum Grits
SIC	School Implementation Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
SNV	Dutch Development Agency
TKD	Tolon/Kumbungu District
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
WC	Water Closet
WFP	World Food Programme
WSB	Wheat-Soy Blend
WVI	World Vision International

ANNEX 1: ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

1. Ministry of Food and Agriculture
2. Ghana Health Service of the Ministry of Health
3. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment
4. The Netherlands Embassy in Accra
5. Catholic Relief Services
6. World Food Programme
7. Ghana School Feeding Programme Secretariat
8. Ghana Education Service of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
9. International Fund for Agricultural Development
10. Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Programme
11. The Dutch Development Agency, SNV
12. Tolon/Kumbungu District Assembly
13. Ga East District Assembly
14. District Health Management Team, Kumbungu
15. District Education Directorate, Kumbungu
16. Regional Education Directorate, Tamale
17. District Health Directorate, GED, Abokobi

ANNEX 2: NAMES OF OFFICERS AND STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

1.	Mr. Emmanuel Aggrey-Fynn	Director, SRID, MOFA
2.	Mrs. Levina Owusu	Deputy Director, MLGRDE
3.	Mrs. Marius de- Long	Embassy of the Netherlands/Ghana
4.	Mr. Vewonyi Adjavon	Country Director, CRS/Ghana
5.	Ms. Trudy Bower	Country Director, WFP/Ghana
6.	Dr. K. Amoako Tufour	Executive Director, GSFP
7.	Mrs. Veronica Jackson	GES Officer in Charge of School Feeding
8.	Mr. Jeffery Wright	Consultant, WFP/Ghana
9.	Ms. Chikako Ishikawa	Programme Officer, WFP/Ghana
10.	Mr. Francis Sarpong-Kumankuma	Head of Tamale Sub-Office WFP/Ghana
11.	Ms. Francesca Cignola	UN Fellow, WFP/Ghana
12.	Ms. Gyamila Abdul Razak	Programme Officer Tamale Sub-Office, WFP/Ghana
13.	Mr. Mohammed Manssouri	IFAD Country Portfolio Manager for Ghana
14.	Mr. Daniel Ayugane	Head of Programmes for CRS, Tamale Office
15.	Ms. Adama Jehanfo	Education Programme Manager
16.	Mrs. Justina Anglaaere	Gender/Education Advisor, SNV, Tamale
17.	Mr. Christopher Bakaweri	Snr. Advisor, CRS, Private Sector Development.
18.	Mr. Erik van Waveren	Snr. Advisor, Nat. Res. Management, CRS
19.	Mr. Alh. Wahab Suhuyini Wumbei	DCE, Tolon/Kumbungu District
20.	Mrs. Denisia Agong	District Health Officer, TKD
21.	Mrs. Martha Akemo	District Girl Child Officer, TKD
22.	Mr. Sule Salifu	Regional Monitoring Officer, GSFP, Tamale
23.	Mrs. Margaret Adishetu Harruna	Regional Girls Education Officer, GES, NR
24.	Ms. Linda Amoah	GES, Tamale
25.	Hajia Agnes Adizza Ali	GSFP Reg. Coordinator at GES, Tamale
26.	Mr. Kwaku Anane	RTIMP, Kumasi
27.	Mrs. Florence Abbey	Parent at Redco School
28.	Mr. Kwame Nuako	Director of Finance, GSFP
29.	Mrs. Alberta Amoako	Headmistress, Redco Primary School
30.	Ms. Faustina Ampem Kwaah	Teacher, Redco School
31.	Ms. Georgina Mansah	Teacher, Redco School
32.	Ms. Gloria Dankwa	Teacher, Redco School
33.	Ms. Helen Arkorful	Teacher, Redco School
34.	Ms. Faustina Anipa	Teacher, Redco School
35.	Mr. Clement Kporvuvu	Teacher, Redco School
36.	Mr. Prince Abbrey	Teacher, Redco School
37.	Ms. Margaret Gawuga	Teacher, Redco School
38.	Ms. Emelia Okpoti	Teacher, Redco School
39.	Mr. Abdulai Mohamed	Teacher, Kpalgun Zion Primary School
40.	Mr. Sumani Iddrisu	Asst. Head Teacher, Kpalgun Zion Primary

41.	Mr. Lansah Abdulai	Head Teacher, Kpalgun Zion School
42.	Mr. Sayibu Saani	Coordinator, Youth Employment Programme
43.	Mr. Iddrisu Baba	Teacher, Kpalgun Zion School
44.	Mr. Abubakani Amadu	Teacher, Kpalgun Zion School
45.	Mr. Abdallah Mohamed	Teacher, Kpalgun Zion Primary School
46.	Mr. Sumani A. Rahaman	Teacher, Kpalgun Zion Primary School
47.	Mr. Mohamed Iddrisu	Storekeeper, TKD
48.	Ms. Elizabeth Ntaah	District Matron, TKD
49.	Mr A. B. Mohamed	TKD
50.	Mr. Peter Nimo	District Coordinating Director, GED
51.	Mr. Kofi Asante	Assembly Member, GED
52.	Ms. Judith Seyire	Headmistress, Kwabenya Basic School,GED
53.	Mrs. Irene Tagoe	Head, DA Estate School, GED
54.	Ms. Comfort Asamani	Head, Ashongman Village School, GED
55.	Mr. Samuel Ottu	GFSP Secretariat, Accra
56.	Ms. Olivia Iris Amissah	WASS KG School, GED
57.	Ms. Beatrice Boateng	Head, Taifa Com 1&2/KG Schools, GED
58.	Ms. Evelyn Bedzo	Head, WASS Exp. Primary School, GED
59.	Mr. Kollan K. Seidu	District Finance Officer, GED
60.	Mr. Jamani Dramani	Asst. Director, GED
61.	Mr. Dickson Abiti	Deputy Director, GED
62.	Mrs. Francisca Danquah	Asst. Director, GED
63.	Mr. Alhaji Baba Ibrahim	DA Chairman for Social Services, GED
64.	Mr. Nii S. Adjetey Mohenu	DA Member, Social Services, GED
65.	Mr. S. Owusu Amofa	PRO, GED
66.	Mr. Alhassan Adams	National Service Officer, GED
67.	Dr. Yaa Osei Asante	District Director, GHS
68.	Ms. Monica Opoku	MOFA District MIS Officer, GED