

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

An Assessment of the Operational Challenges of the Ghana School Feeding Programme

Adams Alhassan

Ghana School Feeding Programme, State House, Accra, Ghana

Fatawu Alhassan

Lecturer, Department of Hotel Catering and Institutional Management
Tamale Polytechnic, Tamale, Ghana

Abstract:

In this study, an in-depth analysis of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was carried out to identify the factors that affect the successful implementation of the programme and to examine the effectiveness of the GSFP collaborating with other institutions. The methodological approach used is qualitative. A descriptive survey design method was adopted for the study and a purposive sampling used to uncover the effects of the implementation of the GSFP on the lives of pupils and parents. The results revealed the GSFP since 2009 have grown progressively from operating in 70 districts to 138 districts at the end of 2010. This wide coverage of the GSFP also manifested in the increased enrolment, improved school attendance and retention of pupils in schools that otherwise would have terminated their educational career. The study also indicates that though the GSFP was designed to benefit from inter-sectoral collaboration and joint implementation. There has been low participation by the collaborating ministries. There is inadequate clarification of roles and coordination of activities between participating ministries and their decentralized units. The study recommends the need to establish a national policy document for the GSFP to prevent politicization, interference and ensure the regular allocation of budget. There should be regular reviewed of prices to reflect the prices of food commodities and timely released of funds to ensure the caterers prepare meals to conform to the prescribed menu and quantities.

Keywords: school feeding programme, implementation, Local Government, Rural development

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Project

The United Nations (UN) effort to address the challenges emanating from advancing globalization resulted in the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000. In the formulation of the MDGs attention has been paid to the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty. One of the important projections contained in the MDGs report is to reduce proportion of people suffering from hunger by half by the year 2015. The School Feeding Programmes (SFP's) are said to contribute to achieving this first Millennium Development Goal in developing economies (GSFP AOP, 2006). The implementation of the school feeding programmes (SFPs) allowed the used of only locally produced foods (Tineke Martens, (2007).

The UNHTF especially recommends comprehensive community- and school-based feeding programmes that include not only feeding, but also systematic de-worming, micronutrient supplementation, take-home rations, safe cooking facilities, clean drinking water, and improved sanitation (UN 2005). The school feeding programme is considered as an effective combination of education (that is the first objective of the GSFP) and agriculture (the third objective of the GSFP). The implementation of school feeding programmes (SFPs) could have increase school attendance, especially of girls and stimulate the market demand for locally produced food commodities especially in beneficiary communities.

Ghana is the first of Ten (10) countries in Sub-Saharan Africa implementing a SFP model. The formulation of the Ghana SFP started in the year 2004 and is a comprehensive educational programme which provides children in selected public primary schools and kindergartens with one hot, nutritious meal per day, using locally-grown foodstuffs. (GSFP, 2007 to 2010). The aim is to spend 80% of the feeding costs in the local economy. The specific objectives of the GSFP are to, contribute to poverty reduction and food security and reduce hunger and malnutrition, increase school enrolment, attendance and retention.

As a strategy to increase domestic food production, household incomes and food security in deprived communities, the GSFP has become a very popular programme with the Ghanaian public, and enjoys solid commitment from the government. Through private caterers, the GSFP awards contracts to procure, prepare and serve food to pupils in beneficiary schools, with each caterer feeding not more than 500 pupils as prescribed by programme implementers.

The co-ordination and implementation is undertaken by a National Secretariat, with programme oversight provided by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). Line Ministries offer technical support through the Programme Steering Committee (PSC), although a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and bilateral agencies are involved with technical guidance.

1.1.1. Statement of the problem

The GSFP has chocked a number of achievements in education, health and institutional capacity building ever since it was established. However, the recent delays by government in the payment of the traditional Caterers who are contracted to purchase, prepare and feed the pupils have attracted the attention of most stakeholders to operations of the programme the likely challenges the programme might be encountering .it is against this background this study seeks to identify the operational challenges of the GSFP and make recommendation on the forward.

1.1.2. Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to identify the operational challenges encountered by GSFP and to make recommendations for mitigating these challenges going forward.

Specifically, the following issues are addressed:

- **Operational Challenges:** This will review the entire program by identifying (i) the various processes or components, (ii) problem areas and/or bottlenecks; (iii) contributing factors and challenges of successful implementation.
- **Institutional Issues:** This will examine how all the institutions collaborating on the programme can effectively function to achieve the aim of the programme. The success of the programme hinges on the smooth functioning of involved institutions. This study will analyze the institutional arrangements that have worked and those that have not worked.
- **Organizational Issues:** This will examine the structure of the organization and the impacts on implementation of the programme. The relationships among the collaborating institutions for successful implementation will be examined.

1.1.3. Significance of the study

This study was carried out to understand the current situation, the adherence or disregard of the programme document as well as the institutional and collaborative challenges affecting implementation. An appreciation of the current situation will enable the identification of gaps, stakeholders and current interventions in the various areas.

The GSFP had expected the free meals would compel children to stay in school thereby reducing the dropout rates in GSFP schools; while the nutritional value of the food would boost attentiveness and performance of pupils. The dropout rates for GSFP School seem to be at all time low of 1.4%. However, DID estimate show there is no significant difference between GSFP and non-GSFP schools. This could also be due to the government interventions received by non- GSFP schools. (Ernst and Young, 2012).

Again, the rate of repetition in GSFP schools was not statistically different from that of the non-GSFP schools at 10% significance level. However, repeat rates in GSFP schools have remained below 5.5% since the 6% high at the inception of the programme in 2005 (Ernst and Young, 2012). The lack of evidence of impact on performance could be due to the fact that the nutritional value of the meals seems to have been neglected in the implementation of the programme.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Historical Development of School Feeding Programmes in Ghana

School Feeding Programmes (SFPs) have a long history in Ghana. In the 1950s, pupils of several Catholic primary and middle schools were provided with take home rations of food aid across the country (GSFP, 2006). The objective was to increase school enrolment and improve the nutritional status of school children. 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. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) became two lead agencies providing SFPs in Ghana, with emphasis on the northern part of the country due to the high incidence of poverty and food insecurity (WFP, 2006). In addition other development partners involved in food assistance programmes such as the World Vision, Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), SNV and SEND are not different from that of the 1950s, except that poverty, food insecurity and gender inequality have become major concerns for these organizations (GSFP, 2006).

2.1.1. Brief Description of the case of India

A mix of public and private partnerships in implementation, India has both state administered programmes and those supported by private sector organizations. The Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Programme, the largest school feeding programme in the world, operates through the Food Corporation of India (FCI), which procures food domestically and then distributes it to a network of FCI stores, where it is then transported to individual schools and villages (Rethinking School Feeding, Bundy et al, Cardiff India Desk Review, Swaminathan Foundation SFP in India, Kumar A case study of Mid Day Meal Scheme.). The program is largely decentralized by the state, with operations varying throughout the country.

There are no local procurement targets as Home Grown Procurement is less important in India (as a net exporter of grain). The massive public distribution system based on the procurement of vast quantities of grain from farmers at minimum support prices

makes the SFP much less important as a source of demand for grains. However, there is scope for the local procurement of vegetables and condiments.

2.1.1.1. Cash Transfer Scheme

There is a great deal of importance assigned to the preparation of the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWP and B) by the states and administration. Data collected through participatory processes at the school level and aggregated at the Block, District, and State levels prove that this is the case (Bundy et al.) A comprehensive picture of the implementation of the program is provided, containing details such as management structure, implementation processes, monitoring systems, sociological break up of target groups, infrastructure position, findings of evaluation studies, strategies to tackle problems, community participation, best practices, and new initiatives.

The Indian Government financial assistance includes: Supply of food grains such as wheat, rice, reimbursement of transportation cost from food storage point to the school, Provision of cooking ingredients including vegetables oil, Assistance in construction of kitchen, store Kitchen utensils, devices and Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (MME) at 2% of total assistance.

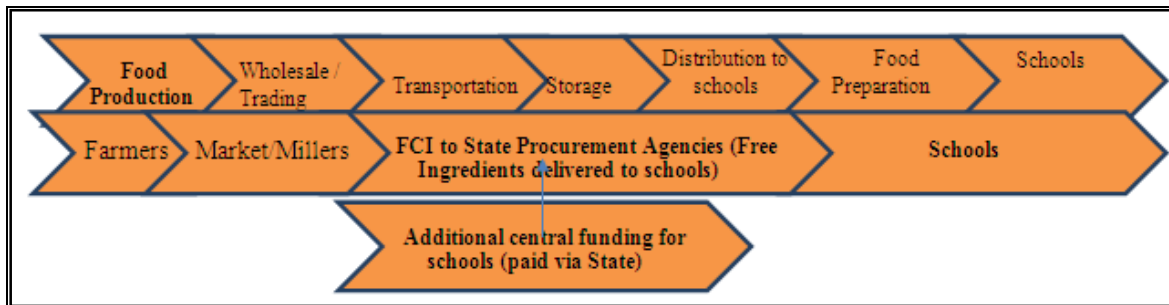


Figure 1: India's School Feeding Supply Chain

2.1.1.2. Nutrition Standards

Nutritional norms prescribed under MDMS: Primary: 450 Calories, Protein 12g, Upper Primary: 700 Calories, Protein 20g, Both: Adequate quantities of micronutrients like iron, folic acid, and vitamin A and Menus vary according to local eating customs. However, the involvement of local communities has been minimal; there have been recent attempts to increase participation in supervision and contribution.

The Key Lessons from India's Case includes, Highly integrated into policy, Mix of public-private partnerships in implementation, Food provided and distributed by central and state governments (who keep large stocks to ensure constant demand and uninterrupted supply), Funds provided for monitoring of program, kitchen construction/improvements, utensils etc, Summer funding available in drought affected areas and Very thorough annual reporting requirements in order to qualify for the scheme Rations based on nutritional requirements (by age).

2.1.2. Brief Description of the case of Kenya

The WFP provides meals to 770,000 children in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands, with the aim of increasing enrollment, stabilizing attendance, increasing completion rates, and improving the government's capacity to manage the school feeding programme through training. (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh et al, 2009). The WFP is supporting a gradual handover of its SFP to the government's HGSFP, which targets 538,000 in semi-arid areas (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh et al, 2009). A targeting exercise identified twenty-eight marginal agricultural districts with access to markets for the new programme.

There is no official target for the procurement of food, but 'local' is defined as (i) from parents of school children (ii) within the school zone (iii) near school, in community, or (iv) from the local market. The current proposal includes food produced in the whole of Kenya.

2.1.2.1. Governance of School Feeding Kenya

The SMC and School Feeding Sub-Committee (SFC) directly manage the HGSF program at the school level. Each school has an SMC that includes the head teacher as the secretary, a chairperson who is a parent, and other parents who are members. Schools currently have two separate bank accounts—one is a general-purpose account and the other is for instructional materials and supplies. A third is required for the school feeding programme. There are three bank signatories: the head teacher, the chairperson, and the treasurer. Schools have experience with financial management and procurement, and the MoE is basing their school feeding procurement model upon already existing structures for monitoring and evaluation and procurement that are used to purchase textbooks and other school supplies.

The average daily average cost per child in the MoE HGSF program is approximately US\$0.09—a little over half of the WFP feeding program price at US\$0.16 per child (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh et al, 2009). The HGSF transfers do not include funds for energy efficient stoves or infrastructure.

2.1.2.2. Cash Transfer Scheme

The MoE funds are disbursed to the schools twice a year, directly into a specified bank account for each school. The account is designated for only the local purchase of cereals, pulses, and oil.

2.1.2.3. Supply Chain/Procurement Mechanism

The MoE HGSP issues local tenders for cereals, pulses, and oil, while the parents' source salt and firewood. A school's ability to purchase locally grown products is hindered because all schools in the HGSP program are within semi-arid areas, where production capacity is limited. As a result, the MoE has suggested using traders as a fallback in times of decreased rainfall (Rethinking School Feeding (Bundy et al). When food prices are at their lowest, directly after harvest, schools will purchase as much as possible to ensure a supply sufficient for the entire term. Storage, however, is a challenge for many schools. See figure 6 below for Kenya's supply chain.

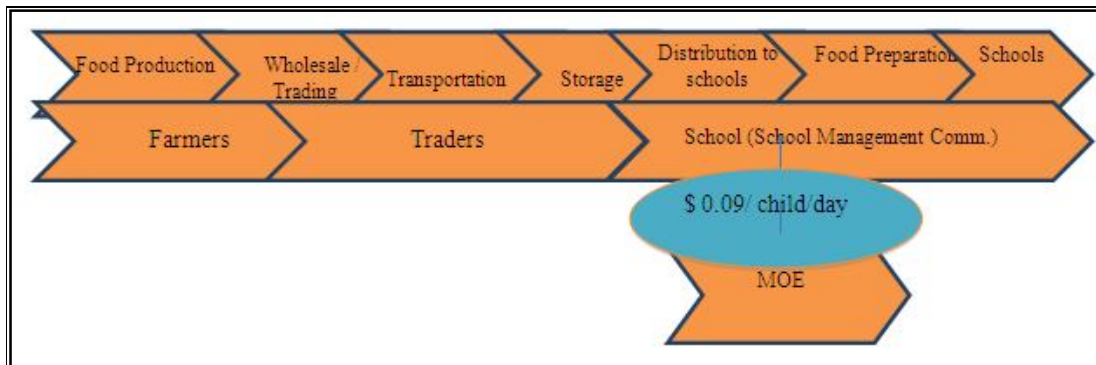


Figure 2: Kenya's School Feeding Supply Chain

2.1.2.4. Nutrition Standards

The nutrition standards are set by the MoE and historically have focused on two major components: access to education and addressing short-term hunger, while also improving health and nutrition. The MoE has not established menu options for the HGSP program, but has instead adopted the WFP's daily hot lunch ration, which includes 150g of cereals (mainly maize), 40g of legumes (mainly beans or yellow split peas), 5g of fortified vegetable oil, and 3g of iodized salt.

2.1.2.5. Involvement of Local Communities

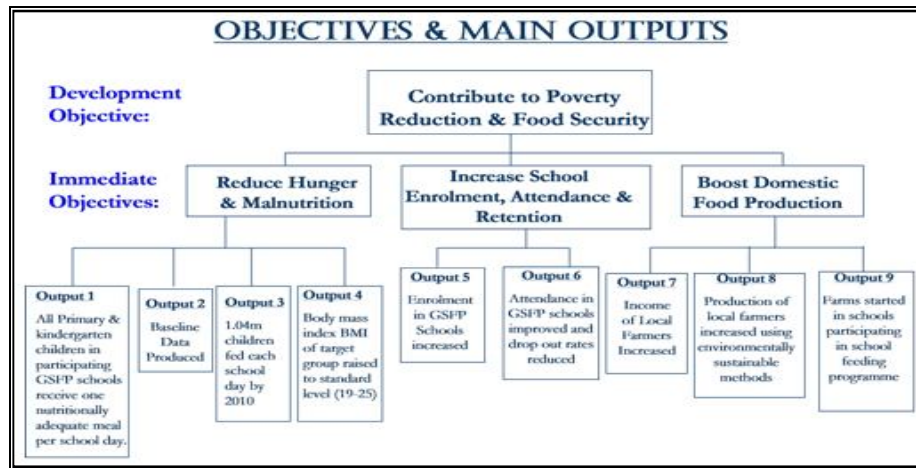
Community participation and involvement are strong. Each household is asked to contribute to the SFP, and typical contributions include firewood, water, cash for cooks' salaries, and salt. When households cannot contribute, the SMC makes alternative arrangements with the family, and the remaining supplies are purchased from the community through a tender process (Bundy, Burbano, Grosh et al, 2009). Because the tenders come from members of the community, the SMC knows them and what they are capable of producing and delivering. The SMC offers preferential tendering terms to the local community.

2.1.2.6. Key Lessons from Kenya's Case

Programme targeted to poorest areas. Strong community participation, each household is asked to contribute to the SFP. Typical contributions include firewood, water, cash for cooks' salaries, and salt. When households cannot contribute, the SMC makes alternative arrangements with the family. Managed at school level; funds are directly disbursed twice a year to the designated school bank accounts (so less frequent delays and issues with the caterers).

2.1.3. Current GSFP Status

The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was launched in 2005 with the goals of contributing to poverty reduction and increased food security in Ghana. The three key objectives of the programme are: **1.** Reduce hunger and malnutrition by providing all primary and kindergarten students in beneficiary school a nutritious meal each school day. **2.** Increase school enrollment, attendance, and retention. **3.** Boost domestic food production by sourcing GSFP meals locally, and providing a sustainable market for food producers in the community. These objectives align closely with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) surrounding hunger, poverty, and primary education. Figure 3; below illustrates the basic concept of the GSFP.



Source: Ghana School Feeding Programme Annual Operating Plan 2010

The GSFP covers all the districts in Ghana. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is the sector ministry who implements the GSFP in collaboration with other ministries and strategic partners. The GSFP budget for 2011 is GH¢67.1M (US\$43M).

2.1.4. The GSFP’s historical progress is as follows

- Late 2005: The GSFP began with 10 pilot schools drawn from each region of the country.
- August 2006: The GSFP expanded to 200 schools, covering 69,000 pupils in all of the then 138 districts.
- December 2006: The GSFP was in 598 schools with a total population of 234,800.
- March 2007: 975 schools were reached by the GSFP, benefiting 408,989 pupils.
- December 2008: 596,501 students were fed by the GSFP, which equates to 20% of all primary school pupils benefitting from the feeding programme.
- October 2009: The GSFP covered approximately 1,698 public schools throughout the country, and approximately 656,624 pupils (22% of all primary and kindergarten pupils) were fed daily in all 170 districts.
- December 2010: The GSFP reached 697,416 pupils in 1,741 schools.
- January 2011: The GSFP covered approximately 1,741 schools throughout the country and approximately 697,416 pupils.
- December 2012: 4,826 schools were reached by the GSFP, benefiting 1,642,271 pupils.
- June 2013: 1,788,518 pupils are covered in 4,826 schools, and it is therefore expected to reach 2 million pupils by the end of 2013.

No.	Regions	Number of schools	Number of pupils	National Percentages (%)
1	Ashanti	354	186,132	26.69
2	Brong Ahafo	242	105,845	15.18
3	Central	113	42,409	6.08
4	Eastern	135	50,316	7.21
5	Greater Accra	263	140,501	20.15
6	Northern	125	41,065	5.89
7	Upper west	59	19,781	2.84
8	Upper east	64	32,301	4.63
9	Volta	81	29,213	4.19
10	Western	104	49,853	7.15
	Total	1,741	697,416	100

Table 1: below shows the distribution of total number of beneficiaries as of December 2010.

Source: Ghana School Feeding Programme Annual Operating Plan 2011

2.1.5. Programme Actors and Relationships

The stakeholders of the GSFP can be divided into three different levels: national, regional/district, and local/community.

2.1.5.1. National level

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Environment (MLGRD) are the core of all inter-governmental cooperation and relations and have the role of overseeing the whole programme. The Program Steering Committee (PSC) was set up in 2008 and partly took over tasks from the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which facilitated the start of the programme, and the National Technical Committee. The National Secretariat (NS) is where the programme is coordinated and managed, and

includes experts who advise the other national bodies on all aspects of the program. The NS is responsible for the execution of procedures on the national level and ensuring reporting and accountability. This body also supports the District Implementation Committees (DICs) and School Implementation Committees (SICs). All of the collaborating ministries have supportive and executing roles depending on their expertise

2.1.5.2. Regional/District Level

The Regional Coordination Offices (RCOs) play a key role in reporting and ensuring accountability to the national level and monitoring at the district level. The Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) supports the RCOs and is more practically involved in supporting the District Assemblies (DAs) in the development of their activities. DAs are the core implementation and managing body of the GSFP. They receive and distribute the funds for the programme and are responsible for good governance at the lower levels. Their tasks include setting up functioning DICs and SICs, providing necessary infrastructure, and mobilizing community support for the schools. District Implementation Committees are directly involved in overseeing the schools in the district as the main school-coordinating body, and an important role in the committee is the District Desk Officer (DDO) who provides feedback and communication to the higher and lower levels.

2.1.5.3. Local/Community Level

The School Implementation Committees implement, plan, and execute the feeding activities of the programme. In addition, the committees are tasked with leading community mobilization and providing direct oversight and supervision of the caterers. Next to the governmental bodies, there are several strategic partners who play important roles in the GSFP. Whereas some of them, such as the Dutch Government, are solely financial sponsors, the civil service organizations (CSOs) often provide technical assistance and knowledge about prior school feeding programmes they have run. Since the strategic partners play various roles in the programme, the method and level of collaboration of each with the GSFP differs.

2.1.6. Nutrition Standards

The nutrition standards also differ from one beneficiary community to another. In general, nutrition intake is focused on vitamins, proteins, and iron, which can be found in fresh vegetables, fruits and meat.

2.1.7. The list of GSFP stakeholders includes: Sector Ministry

Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development Collaborating Ministries, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

2.1.7.1. Strategic Partners

Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands (Dutch Embassy), World Food Programme (WFP), Partnership for Child Development (PCD), Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Social Enterprise Development Organization (SEND Foundation), International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development (IFDC), Ghana Agriculture Initiative Network (GAIN), AgroEco, Plan International, Ghana and School Feeding Initiative Ghana Netherlands (SIGN). In February 2011, the Partnership for Child Development (PCD), Imperial College London launched a five-year initiative that employs evidenced-based approaches to support government action in delivering cost-effective home grown school feeding (HGSF) programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. The PCD HGSF programme is supported in part by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

2.1.7.2. Food Procurement

The GSFP's procurement is highly decentralized and engages with the private sector to a large degree; it gives contracts to caterers to procure, prepare, and serve food to students in beneficiary schools. While the model instructs caterers to procure from the schools' communities, and source from the district and national levels only when food items are not available, in practice caterers are sourcing the large majority of food from the market regardless of local availability. Caterers are advised to procure 80% of foodstuffs from local farmers, but this rule has not been enforced. Since each school-feeding programme is unique due to differences in the state of the economy, infrastructure, and agriculture, it is hard to generalize findings from the international benchmarking. However, the assessor would like to highlight two findings from the review. In India, Brazil, and Chile, the school feeding programmes are tightly integrated with their national policies. As the stakeholders associated with school feeding ranges from Ministry of Agriculture to Education, from Economy to Health, tangible commitment from the government is key for success. It is essential to establish a national framework for school feeding to achieve efficient and effective coordination among the different stakeholders. The biggest challenge of a decentralized HGSF lies in striking a balance between benefits for the local community and for the programme as a whole. Balancing both pros and cons of a decentralized HGSF simultaneously is a huge challenge. It can help stimulate local agriculture and enable municipalities to reflect locality into school feeding. At the same time, it fails to enjoy cost reduction through economies of scale (both in administration and procurement) and sometimes leads to disparity in the quality of school feeding.

3. Situation Analysis/ SWOT Summary and Critical Success Factors

3.1. Economic Indicators: Linking farmers to caterers

At the national level, neither procurement models nor procedures have been established to guide caterers or suppliers of purchased foods; the only existing guideline requires foods to be procured from locally-grown commodities. The GSFP's goal is for 80% of

procured commodities to be grown within Ghana, but there is no official target for food produced at the community, district or regional levels. However, the GSFP encourages procurement from farmers closest to the school first, whenever possible.

Despite the limited availability of Ghanaian rice, WFP in co-feeding schools in the Upper and Northern regions succeeded in procuring \$7.1 million worth of food from Ghanaian farmers in 2008. It has also set a goal of purchasing a minimum of 60 percent of the WFP- funded GSFP commodity requirements from Ghanaian farmers. The World Bank, in its 2009 document, “Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development, and the Education Sector” classifies Ghana between the third and fourth stages of five possible stages in transitioning from a school feeding program that relies mostly on external funding and implementation to one that relies on government funding and implementation.

3.2. *Cost per child*

The Feeding Cost was reviewed from GH¢0.40 per pupil per school day to GH¢0.50 per pupil per school day to reflect the current economic reality. To overcome price issues and to make ends meet, some caterers may reduce the amount of food served, or change menus.

3.3. *Lack of credit/High Interest Rate*

The flow of funds from the national to the community level is currently inconsistent and frequently delayed. Often this lack of cash means caterers must buy commodities on credit, which result in negatively influencing both quality and quantity of food they are able to purchase. In addition, many small landholder farmers are prohibited from selling to the schools, simply because the farmers lack the financial means to extend credit. These delays have led to caterers taking credit at an unfavorable interest rate from financial institutions hence compromising the quality of their service.

A more diverse funding strategy, including private sector investments should be encouraged to ease the financial burden on government. An example is the intermediation for funding on soft terms for the caterers or making caterer contracts valid as collateral. The government should also commit to releasing feeding funds on time.

3.4. *Political*

The GSFP has suffered a lot from politicization and undue interference, a situation, which is blamed for the wrongful ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ in targeting beneficiaries. This situation has also contributed to negative reportage, which has affected the image of the Ghana School Feeding Programme. Until a national policy and legislation is formulated, the programme will continue to be at the mercy of politicians rather than serving the national interest.

A study conducted by De Hauwere (2008) GSFP: A Practical Exploration of the ‘behind the façade’ approach demonstrated that political processes tend to overshadow the programmes poverty orientation. Interviews with strategic partners showed that political processes have played a role from the very beginning of the GSFP. Although it started with the inspiration and commitment to fight hunger, strong political forces apparently came into play.

Although political interests evoke uncertainty about the poverty orientation, they also explain why certain partners did or did not join in, and the haste with which decisions seem to have been made. In this sense, the findings of SIGN, (2005) was right saying that halving hunger by 2015 is a ‘politician’s choice. At first, external partners in the field were cautious about the GSFP, informally noting their fears of political abuse by the Ghanaian government.

3.5. *Regulatory indicators*

The Government of Ghana, after five years of programme implementation has recognized the urgent need to institute a national school feeding policy in line with common practices in countries where the transition from external funding to national funding has advanced. There are several policy documents that make mention of school feeding, however, Ghana is yet to realize a standing school feeding policy.

A national school feeding policy will enhance the funding allocation from government, safeguard the programme from some level of political interference and outline the national direction and position on school feeding implementation. The national school feeding policy as stated by the national coordinator will further advance the implementation of the redesign of the second phase of the programme. Following the national school feeding policy, further assistance will be required in the formation of an integrated school feeding national implementation strategy document.

3.6. *Market*

Farmers are supposed to be a core part of the GSFP; however their participation in the program is still limited. The design of the GSFP successfully addresses the creation of demand and its proper serving, but neglects the creation of supply by farmers and their linkage to the programme. There are no established procurement models or procedures for caterers that facilitate the purchase from farmers. GSFP provides only a guideline for food procurement, which is “80% of foods must be procured from locally-grown (Home-Grown) commodities produced by local farmers.” However the program does not address the challenges that caterers and farmers face in effective handling and storage of these commodities.

3.7. *Overall Challenges in linking sellers (Farmers) and buyers (Caterers)*

The mismatch of incentives of farmers and caterers prevents their integration in the programme value chain. Added to that, the lack of farmers’ organization prevents caterers from reaching them effectively.

- **Mismatch of cash flow:** Farmers need to sell their crops as soon as they harvest due to lack of appropriate storage facilities and for the immediate cash, and caterers do not have the cash in hand to buy and store their produce. This mismatch of cash flow makes it difficult for caterers to trade with farmers.

- **Lack of trust between farmers and caterers:** Farmers are not willing to sell foodstuff to caterers on credit. Inconsistent disbursement of funds from the government worsens their perception about the possibilities of payment.
- **Difficulty of caterers in accessing farmers:** Practically, purchasing food grown locally by small holder farmers would require caterers to travel from farm to farm to find and negotiate commodities available for sale. Neither time nor resources are adequate for such purchasing methods for caterers.

The procurement of food from local farmers could help caterers overcome the volatility issue. The caterers are willing to procure their food from local farmers. By buying from farmers, caterers could benefit from prices 40-50% lower than the market, and would be able to reduce price fluctuations. Nonetheless, the reality is that almost all the food is still bought from markets.

The inconvenience of procuring from many small scale farmers also hinders the caterers' local procurement. It is a challenge to efficiently reach a number of small scale farmers and negotiate with them—in practice, purchasing food grown locally by smallholder farmers would require caterers to travel farm to farm. Neither time nor resources are adequate for such purchasing methods for caterers. On top of this, many caterers do not have contact information for the local farmers or the other way round.

3.8. Technological Factors

Logistical constraints: Effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GSFP require adequate personnel and logistics. The programme has procured some motorbikes, 4x4 vehicles and personal computers for the regional offices and in March 2011, the programme has improved and updated the MIS system. The development of an active website to show case its successes as well challenges experienced over the past years were clearly spelt out. The website has facilitated the several civil society groups to obtain useful information on the operations of the Ghana School Feeding Programme.

Internal factors	
Strengths	Weaknesses
Huge presence throughout the country	Lack of office furniture countywide
Technical support from some stakeholders	Lack of computers and accessories
Equipment support co-feeding in the Upper and northern regions by WFP	Inadequate human resource for implementation
It serves as a type of income transfer	Weak monitoring and evaluation system
It reduces worry about how to feed primary-school-age children	Weak MIS system to update the records of the programme
It provides an incentive for children to go to school	Poor collaboration with technical ministries
External factors	
Opportunities	Threats
Linking local farmers to the programme	Delays in the release of funds by MoF to GSFP
Available local food commodities	Absence of GSFP policy framework
National and international partnerships to provide financial/technical support	There could be increased enrollment but this may not be matched with infrastructure and pupil supervision
It serves as employment avenue for caterers and cooks	Change of government

Table 2: SWOT Summary for Ghana School Feeding Programme

3.9. Critical Success Factors points

- The programme is in the process of completing its policy framework
- The programme have also in 2012 finalized a MoU with National Food Buffer Stock Company
- The programme have also in 2011 embark on a retargeting exercise by removing all schools in the enlighten part of the country to highly deprived communities in the country.

4. Estimates of Revenues and Costs

4.1. Financial Performance and Budgetary Requirements

At a feeding cost of GH¢0.40 per pupil per day for one hundred and ninety five (195) school days in a year, the programme required the sum of one hundred and twenty-four million, eight hundred thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢124,800,000) to feed the planned 1,600,000 pupils in 2012 (this excludes the cost of running the secretariat). However, the programme received the sum of ninety-three million, two hundred and nine thousand, four hundred and twelve Ghana Cedis, ninety-eight Ghana Pesewas (GH¢93,209,412.98) from GoG and Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN) to meet its expenditures in 2012. Government of Ghana (GoG) provided a total sum of GH¢81,269,412.98 and Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN) GH¢11,940,000.00. This resulted in a shortfall of GH¢31,590,587.02 in the programmes feeding budgetary requirement. The total sum of GH¢90,226,189.86 was spent on feeding in 2012, while the sum of GH¢1,059,352.84 was also spent on Employees' Compensation, Goods and Services and Assets. The table 3, showed the details of the budgetary releases and expenditure for 2012.

Year Items	2006	2007	2008 (GH¢)	2009 (GH¢)	2010 (GH¢)	2011 (GH¢)	2012 (GH¢)		
							Releases	Expenditure	Variance
Staff Compensation			119,420	209,886	222,789	340,674	610,818	610,818	0.00
Administration			139,596	128,089	202,372	270,718	438,303	438,303	0.00
Other Service			21,195	145,750	142,680	357,396			
Investment			118,195	133,037	143,721	87,866	10,232	10,232	0.00
Feeding Cost			32,973,070	33,470,456	61,604,805	86,797,316	92,150,060	90,226,189	1,923,870
Total	3,945,166	22,026,348	33,371,476	34,087,218	62,316,367	87,853,969	93,209,413	91,285,543	1,923,870

Table 3: Financial Performance from 2006 to 2012
Source: GSFP Annual Progress Report 2012

4.2. Outlook for 2013

Due to the continuous increase in enrolments in beneficiary schools, and the Programmes objectives to increase school enrolment, attendance and retention, which is in line with the government's promise of "Better Ghana Agenda. A formal interaction with the national coordinator of the programme revealed that 2013 will see an increased in enrollment to 2,000,000 pupils. The programme secretariat also proposes for an increase in the Feeding Cost from GH¢0.40 per pupil per school day to GH¢0.50 per pupil per school day to reflect economic reality, maintain quality and viability, and also to forestall other risks that might undermine the success of the programme.

4.3. Budgetary Requirements for 2013

The current budgetary requirements of the Programme for the 2013 Financial Year stands at One hundred and ninety-nine million, one hundred and sixty-nine thousand and fifty-four Ghana Cedis (GH¢199,169,054.00). This amount is made up of Feeding Cost of GH¢195,000,000.00 and Cost of running the Secretariat of GH¢4,169,054.00. The Feeding Cost is based on a planned enrolment figure of 2,000,000 pupils at a cost of GH¢0.50 per pupil for 195 school days in the year. The budgetary requirement for 2013 excludes unpaid bills to caterers and unpaid employer's SSF contributions as stated in Table 3 and 4 respectively.

The budgetary requirements of GH¢199,169,054.00 together with the unpaid bills to caterers of GH¢21,120,000.00 and the unpaid employer's SSF contributions of GH¢246,138.56 brings the total financial requirements of the GSFP in 2013 to GH¢220,535,192.56. The table below depicts the details of the financial requirements of GSFP for 2013.

Description	2013 (GH¢)	2013 (GH¢)
Compensation for Employees		1,562,704.00
Goods and others services		1,613,550.00
Assets		992,800.00
Total Cost of Running Secretariat		4,169,054.00
Feeding Cost (2013/2014):		
<u>No. of Pupils Cost/Pupil Days in academic Year</u> 2,000,000 *GH¢0.50 * 195		195,000,000.00
Total Budgetary Requirement in 2013		199,169,054.00
ARREARS:		
SSF Employer's Contribution (2006 to 2012)	246,138.56	
Feeding Cost (1st Term 2012/2013):		
<u>No. of Pupils Cost/Pupils Unpaid School Days</u> 1,600,000 * GH¢0.40 * 33	21,120,000.00	
Total Arrears		21,366,138.56
Total (Budget and Arrears)		220,535,192.56

Table 4: Indicative Financial Plan For 2013
Source: GSFP Annual budget 2013

However, in the context of the retooling of the GSFP for a sustainable future by Francisco et al, (2011), categorized cost of implementing the programme into two components:

- Direct cost and,
- Indirect cost

RECURRENT COST OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMMES	
DIRECT FEEDING COST	INDIRECT FEEDING COST
Food Ingredient	Support Infrastructure
Staff (Cooks)	Monitoring and Evaluation
Fuel	Audit Function
Water	

Table 5: Recurrent cost of School feeding Programmes
 Source: (Francisco De Calvalho et al, 2011) GSFP:

The most common mistake that could be made in characterizing costs associated with a programme is to ignore these costs. However, they must be included in the overall costs whether they are paid for by the project or other sources (government, other donors, and community). This would mean all related start-up activities including, but not limited to, construction of the kitchens, kitchen storage facilities, and equipment such as fuel-efficient stoves, cooking vessels, and cooking utensils. In addition, costs involved with setting up administrative structures would also have to be considered in the design of the programme (Francisco De Calvalho et al, 2011).

4.4. Direct Feeding Cost

First is the costs directly incurred by the caterer, and characterized as the cost for food and fuel/water/staffing. Even within this bucket, there is the need to be an understanding of the different nature of these costs. While the direct food costs are easily prorated (meaning that the addition of one student to the school results in a proportional increase in the food that needs to be produced) the other costs do not behave in this manner (Francisco De Calvalho et al, 2011).

4.5. Cooking Staff/Personnel

The number of cooks needed by a caterer depends heavily on the number of students in the school. For example, in schools that have 1200-1500 students, the number of cooks required may be in the range of 6-9. (Francisco De Calvalho et al, 2011).

4.6. Fuel and Water

A similar step-function behavior can be observed here as well. From the field research, is realized they is a wide disparity in the manner of obtaining firewood as fuel and water for cooking. In some communities, there is no cost associated with fuel as the community helps in bringing firewood. Similarly for water, there are regions where water is freely available, and no cost is incurred in providing water for cooking. However, in regions where such natural resources are not available or where communities do not provide, there is a definite cost associated with fuel and water (Francisco De Calvalho et al, 2011).

4.7. Costs associated with food

This component is by far the key contributor to cost in the programme, and is part of the basket of responsibilities belonging to the caterer. The food ingredients as observed compose the majority of a caterer's costs. It also realized that when the funds for buying food prove to be insufficient, the reaction from the caterers is to simply reduce the quantity of food given to each student; this hurts the school feeding programme more directly in the short term and in the long term, and therefore needs to be given requisite focus (Francisco De Calvalho et al, 2011).

4.8. Indirect Feeding Costs

These costs, while seemingly unimportant, could possibly be one of the most critical elements to the success of the programme. In the above characterization, these costs are divided into three buckets: Support Infrastructure, Monitoring and Evaluation and Audit Function.

While the first is fairly straightforward to implement in terms of setting up national and regional coordinating secretariats, the second and third elements of indirect costs relate to players and roles that, in essence, could make or break the programme.

4.9. Monitoring and Evaluation and Audit Function

The role of monitoring and evaluation and external and internal audits are for reporting and compliance, the programme needs to ensure that all players within the value chain are carrying out their roles correctly. For example, for the caterers there is the need to be regular monitoring to ensure that the food quantity and quality is maintained. The caterers themselves need to be trained to properly keep purchase and consumption records, which need to be audited by both internal government resources and external independent resources as suggested by Francisco et al., (2011).

5. Operational Challenges

5.1. Effects of higher expectations of School feeding programmes

As of May 2008, the GSFP has not yet lived up to expectations. In terms of the GSFP’s objectives, the only positive development was the increase in enrolment with 12.8% increase in primary school attendance and 23.1% in kindergartens Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) 2012. Unfortunately, this was not accompanied by additional steps to safeguard the quality of education such as a proportional increase in school infrastructure and teachers. The nutritious value of the meals is, however, endangered by several factors, including late and limited release of funds by the GSFP units, and limited access to safe drinking water and other health measures.

5.2. Programme Coverage and retargeting

The availability of funds and the effective monitoring and evaluation could expand the areas covered by school feeding programmes. When Ghana School feeding programme was first implemented in September 2005, ten pilot schools were considered, with one school selected from each of Ghana’s ten regions. After a six-month pilot phase, the program expanded to two schools per district in 2006. By March 2007, 975 schools were covered, accounting for more than 400,000 kindergarten and primary school pupils [AOP, GSFP, 2007]. By end 2007 at least two schools in each district was enrolled in the program, for a total of over 1,000 schools and over 635,000 pupils fed daily across the nation. The expansion of coverage from 2006 to 2007 however, failed to follow a clear methodology, prompting accusations that political factors have influenced the geography of the GSFP. There are imbalances in the regional distribution of the enrollment figures (Table 6.)

Regions	On Roll 2006	On Roll 2007	On Roll 2008	On Roll 2009	On Roll 2010	On Roll 2011	On Roll 2012
Ashanti	8,972	119,360	120,093	154,598	171,185	181,474	310,347
Brong Ahafo	5,701	61,921	63,375	87,632	104,424	114,964	183,653
Central	7,796	26,705	33,730	40,198	41,648	44,248	89,047
Eastern	10,161	35,154	38,991	47,547	49,760	53,580	114,719
Greater Accra	14,817	97,407	103,002	121,301	127,354	130,714	189,144
Northern	3,084	14,588	16,191	33,699	40,154	50,597	179,642
Upper West	2,457	5,598	6,281	11,687	18,930	21,865	161,857
Upper East	3,886	11,366	12,012	19,428	28,331	34,082	113,125
Volta	4,531	11,769	14,671	20,483	28,084	29,685	115,977
Western	3,370	29,630	32,843	43,452	48,353	52,111	134,877
Total	64,775	413,498	441,189	580,025	658,223	713,590	1,592,388

Table 6: Regional breakdown of enrollment figures
Source: GSFP Annual Operating Plan 2012

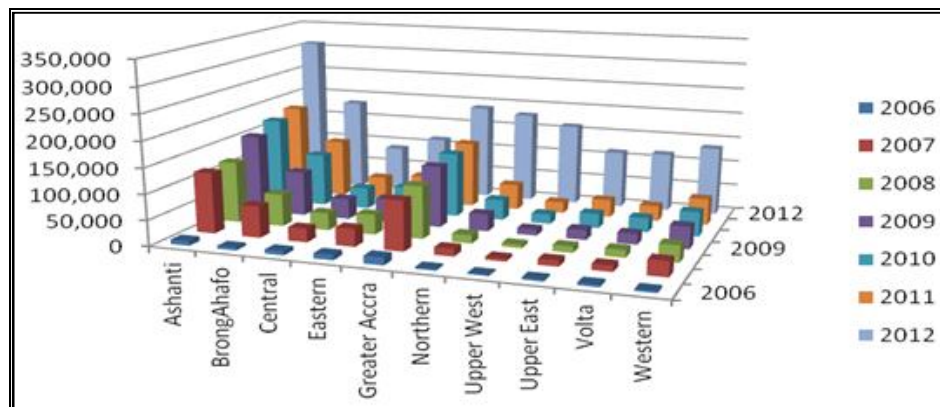


Figure 4: Regional distribution of enrollment figures from 2006 -2012

The elected government (i.e. the National Democratic Congress, 2009) recognized the call for a methodology that is both well defined and fully implemented, and has voiced a priority to de-politicize and retarget the current GSFP inline to the selection criteria as spell out in the programme document. Diverging opinions have however emerged regarding whether and how to retarget and expand coverage, with GSFP officials indicating a need for a more uniform expansion across the nation, an expansion that takes into account population, number of districts, and a list of various criteria that point to human-development indicators. The criterion includes but does not set target levels for various elements, including drop-out/graduation rates, literacy levels, infrastructure, and community support.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) indicate the human-development indicators were likely not prioritized in the final selection of schools. Otherwise, a greater number of schools in the more impoverished three northern regions of the country would

have been chosen to receive assistance. Simultaneously, the development and humanitarian communities have called for increased coverage to begin in the areas of most need and to later expand across the rest of Ghana.

SN	Year Regions	Before Retargeting				After Retargeting	
		Year 2010		Year 2011		Year 2012	
1	Ashanti	171,181	26%	181,562	25%	297,384	19%
2	Brong Ahafo	104,424	16%	114,964	16%	189,025	12%
3	Central	41,648	6%	44,248	6%	92,347	6%
4	Eastern	49,760	8%	53,803	8%	118,019	7%
5	Greater Accra	127,354	19%	130,714	18%	190,766	12%
6	Northern	40,154	6%	50,597	7%	178,910	11%
7	Upper West	18,930	3%	21,865	3%	162,747	10%
8	Upper East	28,331	4%	34,082	5%	111,486	7%
9	Volta	28,084	4%	29,685	4%	119,595	7%
10	Western	48,353	7%	52,111	7%	138,883	9%
Total		658,219	100%	713,631	100%	1,599,162	100%

Table 7: Regional breakdown of schools before and after the retargeting, GSFP, 2011
 Source: GSFP Retargeting Report 2011

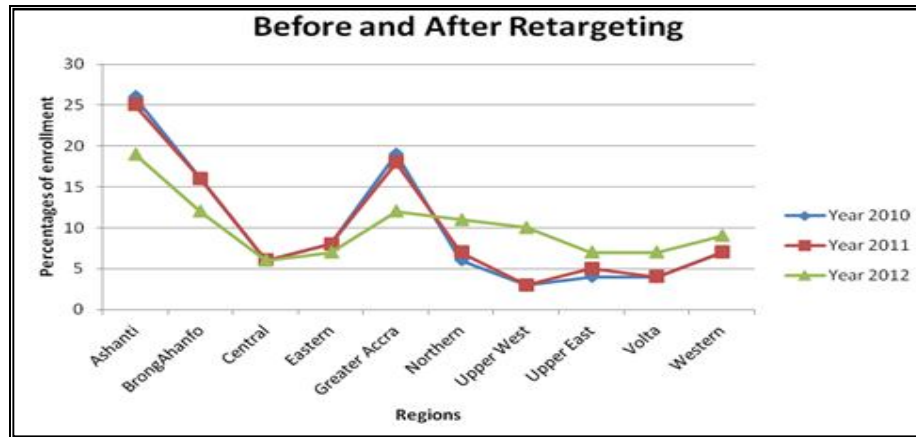


Figure 4: Graphical representation of the before and after retargeting from 2010-2012

5.3. Food Procurement, Preparation, and Feeding

In the jointly issued ‘Activity Guide for School Feeding,’ the Government of Ghana (GoG) and World Food Programme (WFP) have established clear guidelines for monitoring and evaluation, as well as for proper commodity storage and handling for the implementation of school feeding activities in the three northern regions. However, it was not clear whether such guidelines existed for school feeding activities in other regions of the country. In fact, conditions at the storage facilities at schools observed ranged from very poor to passable, and most could hold no more than two weeks worth of commodities at any given time.

Indeed, there were several instances when maize-meal and beans were infested with pests, suggesting that better storage guidelines and sanitation standards, as well as increased monitoring and evaluation would help to preserve the quality and prolong the shelf life of the commodities. Finally, the GSFP guidelines omit fruits (and likely other fresh foods), from the menu due to safety, storage and cost implications which buttress a policy of providing “hot” meals.

Similar observations were made by USDA (2009) in Kenyan’s School feeding programme which indicated that storage facilities in all the visited schools were generally of adequate quality and size to store a three month supply of food (one school term). Management of the storage facilities varied; some were clean with high off-floor storage, while others showed signs of potential rat infestation. It was also noted that the in El-savado (MoE, 2009) Ministry transfers funds to WFP, which procures and distributes the food to extended delivery points at departmental level. By leveraging its experience in food procurement in the region, WFP has been able to increase the efficiency of the procurement process: in 2008, WFP was able to procure all food commodities at cheaper rates, generating savings of about US\$3 million, which were then used to expand coverage of the programme and increase the food basket.

The Global Child Nutrition Foundation (2008) reported that there are no nationally established nutrition guidelines for school feeding programs in Ghana. Schools are instructed to provide a “nutritious” meal daily, and in most districts, menus are said to be prepared with assistance from a nutritionist. However, menus are often not displayed and are not always followed.

An inventory conducted by SNV in 2008 also indicated that even though schools had menu, the menu was not displayed or followed and that a number of schools did not know whether cooking was done according to a menu (table 2.3.). In addition, a number of schools also complained that the nutritional quality of the food was not balanced and that too many starchy foods were

served such as rice and yam and hardly any vegetables, fruit, fish and meat were part of small stew that accompanied the rice. (Amanda, 2008).

On the average all stakeholders believed 58.9% of all food was bought locally. This figures falls short of the GSFP target of 80% of all food being bought locally. It must however be noted that the figure is an improvement over the 2011 figure of 52%. The national average shows that members of Farmer Based Organisations (FBO) believed about 50% of food was bought locally, with District and School Implementation Committee members respectively indicating that 42.7% and 65.6% of food is bought locally.

Regions	Menu displayed (%)	Menu followed (%)	No of schools with a menu	% of schools with a menu
Ashanti	35.1	50.0	76	77.6
Brong Ahafo	42.9	57.7	107	64.8
Central	46.5	68.3	46	71.9
Eastern	26.3	41.3	60	69.0
Greater Accra	61.2	40.0	49	55.7
Northern	38.7	58.1	31	70.5
Upper East	21.4	57.1	14	77.8
Upper West	75.0	50.0	16	88.9
Volta	36.7	63.3	30	90.9
Western	50.0	83.3	42	68.9
Total	42.3	56.6	471	69.7

Table 8: Menu and Menu use

Source: SNV 2008

5.4. Price Water House Coppers (PWC) Assessment on implementation procedures

The Price Water house Coppers Audit report 2007 contains findings on investigations into the management and operations of the Ghana School Feeding Programme as requested by the sponsoring partners. The report indicated that the Ghana School Feeding Programme did not adhere to acceptable standards of public service delivery in Ghana, particularly standards regarding transparency and accountability as well as provisions of the programme document (PWC 2007).

The report pointed out that the existing procedures and provisions of the document were not adequate for the effective implementation of the programme and that where these procedures and provisions were clear enough, they were not followed. Lack of general compliance acceptable procedures led to breaches of the rules and regulations as prescribed in the programme document. The Reports further pointed out that, accounting and store procedures were not strictly followed.

The Report also disclosed that some schools inflated enrolment figures in order to obtain their funds. Most of the figures quoted by the schools did not in any way agree with the District Education Service figures.

6. Institutional Issues

6.1. Benefits and Drawbacks of Management Structure of GSFP

As mandated by the National Secretariat, procurement and feeding at the school level is the SIC's responsibility. Anchors to the programmes success are community participation and commitment, made evident when the community and SIC affirm their interest and participation in the project by executing any required in-kind contributions (in particular by providing kitchens and latrines). While the roles of the SIC, school headmasters, caterers, and communities are generally prescribed within national policy, these roles and responsibilities are not always fully executed by the various actors. A lack of adequate knowledge persists, the lack of uniformity in procuring foodstuffs and in managing the school feeding program at the district level.

Additionally, sufficient infrastructure necessary for school feeding (storage at schools, adequate kitchens, on-site clean water resources, or cooking pots and utensils) are not always available. As reported in Ernst and Young (2012) report for example, some schools are forced to purchase water from the market to use for cooking, thereby reducing funds available for purchasing foodstuffs.

Caterers, cooks, and headmasters indicated that the lack of infrastructure challenges efforts to ensure quality and reduce inefficiencies. While the community is responsible for constructing the school kitchen (and other school infrastructure like latrines), it was not evident whether funding or monitoring the school-feeding infrastructure rests with the MLGRD or with the MoESS. The GSFP's implementation policy does not address this responsibility.

In several instances the development community, local government, local communities, farmers, and caterers voiced concerns about the lack of guidelines as well as lack of monitoring and evaluation. The GSFP has no defined methodology regarding expanding coverage, and lacks a systematic way to measure a particular school's capacity to manage school feeding. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) to improve efficiencies and effectiveness of school infrastructure and management becomes difficult.

6.2. Community Participation and Involvement

Ernst and Young (2012) reported that, community participation and responsibility ensure local ownership of the school feeding intervention, and the facilities provided for cooking, feeding, water, and sanitation can serve as evidence of this commitment.

Further, community participation is essential for promoting and executing the intervention and for ensuring the program's sustainability. Such commitment takes place to varying degrees in all phases of the implementation cycle.

In Kenya, community participation and involvement was strong at every school visited. Each household is asked to contribute to the SFP, and typical contributions include firewood, water, cash for cooks' salaries, and salt. When households cannot contribute, the SMC makes alternative arrangements with the family. Each parent and community group visited was extremely supportive of the SFP (USDA, 2009).

School feeding programmes that have strong government and community support and are viewed as part of a necessary package of inputs for improving education, are credited with helping to maintain high enrollment and attendance and encouraging community participation in education. School cooperatives support the school caterers and parents associations assist with the transportation of food aid (WFP, 1993c).

The GSFP secretariat therefore, maintains that local ownership is key to programme sustainability, as has been demonstrated in several communities around the country (GSFP AOP, 2008). Conversely, there are several instances where community involvement is lacking. In Techiman, a group of farmers and parents knew little about the school feeding programme beyond that their children were being fed. While these farmers were relatively successful they lacked the information, training, and support to link directly to the school feeding program. One member of the farmer's group was also on the DIC; he admitted he did not know how the school feeding programme worked. Parents participate as cooks and staff, and households do make a nominal monetary contribution to the programme. However, there is no sense of community ownership and little effective participation of community members.

While challenges and opportunities were identified to strengthen the GSFP, they also found much strength. Parents articulated the value of an education, and affirm that they value the school feeding program for many reasons: it serves as a type of income transfer; it reduces worry about how to feed primary-school-age children; and it provides an incentive for children to go to school.

6.3. Caterer-and-farmer linkages

Ernst and Young (2011) showed that evidence from the survey conducted on the evaluation of the Ghana School feeding Programme. Demonstrated that caterers who buy 100% of their ingredients locally were only 17.9%. Similarly, 16.2 indicated that they make no purchase locally and that only 20% of the caterers purchase up to 50% of their foodstuff from local farmers and FBO. For between 51% and 90% of the foodstuff only 7.9% purchased from local farmers or FBO. Some of the reasons attributable to this trend include seasonal availability (13.7%), low quality of foodstuff (8%), high prices (13.7% and non-availability of foodstuff (24.2%). According to Ernest Young (2011) based on these issues the following challenges were identified:

- There are no established procurement models or procedures for caterers that facilitate the purchase of farmers.
- Most caterers operate on a credit arrangement which is at variance to the ways farmers operate.
- In the absence of storage facilities as well as the need to sell for immediate reward to care for other needs, farmers in selling their produce on harvesting require immediate cash payment which is not helpful to caterers who have to fund the feeding from their resources.
- The absence of units of measurement for various commodities worsens the plight of the caterer taking into account that the cost of feeding per child is based on some unit of measured amount.
- The small farm holding affects the regularity and availability of foodstuff.

6.4. Funding of school feeding programmes

The Ghana School Feeding programme was started with financial and material support from the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherland (EKN) and the World Food Programme (WFP) which were very substantial. However, EKN has withdrawn its financial support since 2009 while the WFP has also started withdrawing gradually and has indicated its intention to finally withdraw from the programme by 2015. These situations have brought a huge financial challenge to the programme, having to be financed solely from Government of Ghana (GoG) annual budgets. Cutting down on the number of pupils in beneficiary schools or reducing the number of schools on the programme abruptly may not augur well for government and may cause some social discontentment or upheavals.

The current budgetary requirements of the programme for the 2013 Financial Year stands at GH¢199,169,054.00 (One hundred and ninety-nine million, one hundred and sixty-nine thousand and fifty-four Ghana Cedis). The lack of adequate funding for the programme has led to the situation where bills of caterers remain unpaid for as long as a whole school term. (GSFP, 2013)

Nauman (2005) reported that the Parent Teacher Associations act as a school lobby to camp managers, with little influence over educational decisions. There is little Ministry of Education involvement in school feeding, apart from the fact that schools must meet the Ministry's standards and teachers are government employees. The Ministry of Education supports negotiations with the donor community to fund school feeding, but it does not provide financial resources to the programme.

6.5. Low Feeding Cost per Pupil

The current feeding cost of GH¢0.40 per pupil per school day (which has been in existence since 2006) is woefully inadequate. This has brought a lot of agitation from the caterers all over the country and they are therefore seriously opposing the Withholding of 5% Income Tax from their payments. This has the potency of undermining the success of the programme in terms of quality and acceptance.

7. Organizational Issues

7.1. Decision-making process of GSFP

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. 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.

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. 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. Based on the responses obtained from the data, the results indicated that SICs are part of the management of schools but their contributions are limited.

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 Monitoring and evaluation is already weak or non-existent. Decentralization must create opportunities for the government 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.

For example in Côte d'Ivoire, the Direction Nationale des Cantines Scolaires implements a large national school feeding programme for 700,000 children. In Brazil, the National Agency for Education Development transfers federal school feeding related funds directly to states, federal districts and municipalities. Synergies between the many sectors and actors that have a stake in school feeding should be strengthened with stakeholder workshops, systematic consultations and an effective coordination mechanism. School feeding efforts should be harmonized under a common framework of government ownership and commitment.

7.2. Management and accountability systems

The Ghana School feeding programme grew so rapidly that it was not accompanied by the required establishment of robust management and accountability systems. This lapse contributed in a deviation in the implementation of the 2007-2010 GSFP Programme Document. Although the programme intended to be managed at the district level, inadequate GSFP information sharing between different levels of Government left district and school level decision makers, as well as intended beneficiaries often in the dark about objectives and strategies of the programme. The Programme was also intended to benefit the marginalized and those from deprived communities but there was a deviation from this target group.

Corner (1988) in order to promote accountability mechanisms in management of schools, a system must be created that allow parents and staff to engage in a process in which they gain and supply child development systems and individual behavior and knowledge such that working in the team needs to be clearly stated. Each successful activity outcome for staff, parents and District Implementation Team depends largely on adopting the appropriate implementation document. In this assessment, a similar observation was made from the responses which offer the local people the opportunity in the procurement process in all the schools both in the northern and southern sectors of the country to engage in discussions on food commodities supply and the general well being of children.

7.3. Transcript of some former national coordinators, GSFP

The first Executive Director of the Ghana School Feeding Programme from 2005 to 2008 disclosed being instrumental in the setting up of the GSFP and has since its inception ensured that, it was administered according to the programme document. However, due to the apparent disinterest in the objectives of the programme by some officers, who rather tendered to pursue individuals interest for self gain, he personally got involved in monitoring the programme with a view to addressing these problems.

Alabi Committee of inquiry (2009) revealed that it was not totally true that there was no entity tender committee in place, and that during the tenure of first Executive Director; purchases were made through the constituted entity tender committees.

Per the transcript several challenges had arisen as a result of the deviation from the programme documents and other policy objectives. In particular, the award of contracts to service providers, which did not follow due process, led to claims that could not be substantiated, resulting in some upheaval from service providers. There was therefore, the need to ensure that the programme was on track and administered in accordance with the programme document. However, some remedial interventions and actions were put in place to ensure concerns raised by Donors were addressed to restore credibility of the programme and inspire confidence and get the donors back on board. Remedial measures taken included were: Restructuring of the Ghana School

Feeding Programme Secretariat; A review of the engagement of the service providers and; Conformity with rules for transparency and accountability.

7.4. Sustainability of school feeding programmes

Food transfer programs cannot be considered ‘sustainable’ in the same way as, for example, a revolving credit program, which ultimately pays for itself. A continual input of resources is required in order to provide food for school children. According to Rogers (1994) the donor point of view, a program may be seen as sustainable if the government commits to continuing the program (in similar or another form) after donor support is removed. From the perspective of the individual beneficiary, the sustainable aspect of the program is likely to be the lasting impact on behavior changes brought about through education or other interventions that are part of the programme.

The Sustainability Strategy of a school feeding programme needs to be broken down into achievable segments that will deliver early results and keep the enthusiasm and momentum. It is important to develop a roadmap that outlines specific objectives or milestones to be achieved in the medium term to strengthen national capacities, policies and programmes that will in turn increase school feeding quality and sustainability.

Sustainability of school feeding programme can be achieved by organizing workshop on training programmes to identify the priority areas to be addressed, and recommend next steps in the short- and medium-term to bring the national programme to a higher stage of quality and sustainability. In this sense, it paves the way to formulate the detailed roadmap including capacity development activities. WFP has developed workshop materials that can be useful for this purpose (WFP, 2012). Bundy et al., (2009) identifies five internationally agreed Standards of best practice for school feeding on developing sustainable measures to adopt for continuous implementation and possible assurance of future prospects. These are presented in Table 9.

Standard 1: Policy frameworks	A policy basis for school feeding helps strengthen its potential for Sustainability and the quality of implementation.
Standard 2: Financial capacity	Programmes need sufficient and stable resources from the government to be able to operate
Standard 3: Institutional capacity and coordination	The implementation of a school feeding programme is generally the responsibility of a specific government institution, which needs the appropriate set-up, resources and capacities to carry-out all the activities related to the programme
Standard 4: Design and implementation	School feeding programmes should be designed based on a correct assessment of the situation, have clear objectives, an appropriate food basket, targeting criteria and cost-effective supply chains.
Standard 5: Community participation	School feeding programmes that respond to community needs, are locally-owned, and incorporate some kind of parental contribution are normally the strongest and most sustainable

Table 9: Sustainability strategies for school feeding programmes

Source: Bundy et al, 2009

7.5. Policy environment

In 2006 GPRS II (2006-2009) was put in place with the central goal of accelerating the growth of the economy towards achieving middle-income status. The realization of the MDG target under pin the acceleration of the economic growth agenda. For education the government aimed to meet the numerical target of the MDGs as well as improved the quality of basic education to children in deprived and rural areas thus it sort to meet this targets to improve an equalize access to the six year for basic education for all children up to the age of around 12years. Therefore SFP was part of Ghana’s effort to attain not only the MGDs on extreme hunger and poverty but achieve universal access to primary education and reducing under five mortality by 2015.

The GSFP also complements other social safety programmes such as the capitation grant, LEAP and free school book/uniforms. Both The GSFP and the capitation grant address the demand side constraints of education whiles programmes like the free uniforms and book address the supply side constrains. Free food at school and the capitation grant boost enrollment. LEAP is a direct Cash transfer while the GSFP can be seen as an indirect cash transfer, as it safes parents, guardians the cost of proving one hot meal to their children. The GSFP can be thought as an education, nutrition, and social protection intervention.

Apart from these numerous policies, which have some linkages with the GSFP, they appear to be no compelling policy to ensure that the sectoral policies formulated accommodate the achievement of programme objectives in programming or planning, budgeting and implementation from the national to the district levels. The GPRS, for example as a broad national framework does not specifically address the entire requirement as well the linkages required for effective implementation of the GSFP.

However, deliberate alignment of these policies will result in more efficient use of resources for example, the FASDEP II, while not specifically addressing GSFP has similar objectives and even targeted activities- productivity enhancement through improved agronomic practices and improving market access by organizing farmers into FBOs. Indeed, should the two organizations work together, they may not need to create separate work plan. The GSFP will be another market opportunity to the Agricultural sector. The same applies to the health sector. MoE gives priority to areas with high incidence of malnutrition related diseases and worm infestation. The SHEP is focused on school health- monitoring hygienic standards for food preparation, even by hawkers and itinerant caterers, sanitation and environmental issues around the school which is one of the intents of the GSFP.

8. Implementation

8.1. Programme Management and Implementation

School feeding programmes should be designed based on a correct assessment of the situation in a particular country. It is important that the programme clearly identifies the problems, the objectives, and the expected outcomes in a manner that corresponds to the country's specific context. It is also important that the programme targets the right beneficiaries and chooses the right modalities of food delivery and a food basket of the right quality. Complementary actions such as food fortification and de-worming should be a standard part of any school feeding programme.

School feeding requires a robust implementation arrangement that can procure and deliver large quantities of food to targeted schools, ensure the quality of the food, and manage resources in a transparent way. Countries and partners should carefully balance international, national, and local procurement of food to support local economies without jeopardizing the quality and stability of the food pipeline. Bundy et al, (2009). Below is the implementation arrangement:

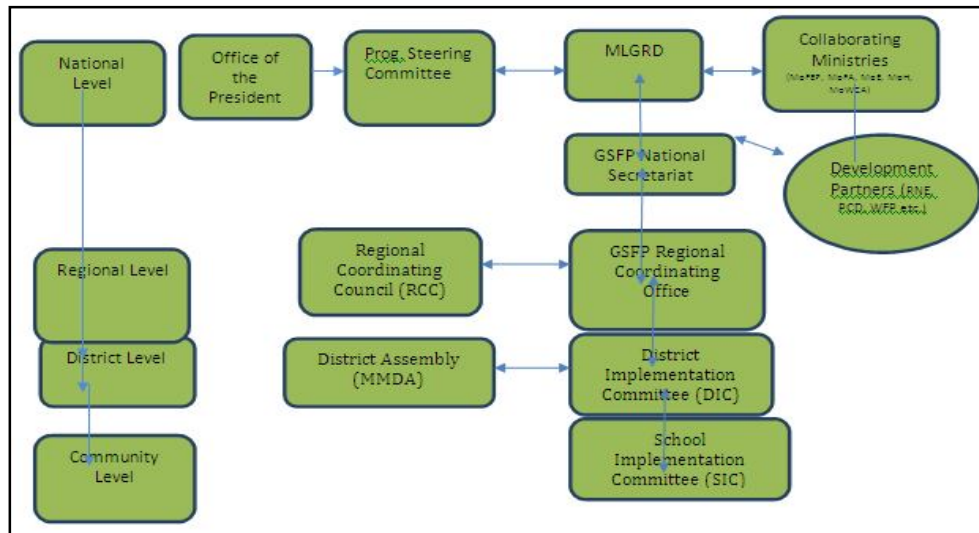


Figure 5: GSFP programme actors and relationships. Source: Ghana School Feeding Programme Annual Operating Plan 2011

8.1.1. National Level

The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has the role of overseeing the whole programme. The Program Steering Committee (PSC) was set up in 2008 and took over tasks from the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which facilitated the start of the programme, and the National Technical Committee (NTC). The PSC provides policy guidance to the programme. The National Secretariat (NS) is where the programme is coordinated and managed, and includes experts who advise the other national bodies on all aspects of the program. The National Secretariat is responsible for the execution of procedures at the national level and ensuring reporting and accountability. This body also supports the District Implementation Committees (DICs) and School Implementation Committees (SICs). However, all of the collaborating ministries have supportive and executing roles depending on their expertise.

8.1.2. Regional Level

The Regional Coordinating Offices of the GSFP (RCOs) play a key role in coordinating and monitoring activities at the district level and reporting to the national level. The Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) supports the RCOs and is more practically involved in supporting the District Assemblies (DAs) in the development of their activities.

8.1.3. District Level

District Assemblies are the core implementation and managing body of the GSFP. They receive and disburse the funds for the programme and are responsible for good governance at the lower levels. Their tasks include setting up functioning DICs and SICs, providing necessary infrastructure, and mobilizing community support for the schools. District Implementation Committees are directly involved in selecting and overseeing the schools in the district as the main school-coordinating body, and an important role in the committee is the District Desk Officer (DDO) who provides feedback and communication to the higher and lower levels.

8.1.4. Local Level

The School Implementation Committees execute the feeding activities of the programme. In addition, the committees are tasked with leading community mobilization and providing direct oversight and supervision of the programme at that level.

8.2. *Community Participation and Involvement*

Community participation and responsibility ensure local ownership of the intervention, and the facilities provided for cooking, feeding, water, and sanitation can serve as evidence of this commitment. Further, community participation is essential for promoting and executing the intervention and for ensuring the programmes sustainability. Such commitment takes place to varying degrees in all phases of the implementation cycle. The local ownership is key to programme sustainability, as has been demonstrated in several communities around the country (GoG, GSFP, 2008).

8.3. *Turn Over of National Coordinators*

At the National Secretariat, in 2005, the first National Coordinator was appointed with the title of Executive Chairman. He oversaw the implementation of the programme from its start-up in 2005 to the first quarter of 2008. In 2007, the Government of Ghana together with its Dutch counterpart commissioned an audit into the activities of the financial year 2006, which led to the revelation of some adverse findings, which in effect led to the exit of the then executive chairman. In the same year, a new head was appointed now with the title National Coordinator with three (3) deputy national coordinators and was with the programme until 2009.

8.4. *Development Partners*

Besides the governmental bodies, there are several strategic partners who play important roles in the GSFP. Whereas some of them, such as the Dutch Government, were solely financial sponsors, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) often provide technical assistance and knowledge about prior school feeding programmes they have run. Since the strategic partners play various roles in the programme, the method and level of collaboration of each with the GSFP differs.

8.5. *Social Accountability Project*

In an attempt to address some of the core problems in the programme, a two (2) – year Social Accountability Project (SAP) was initiated in the year 2009. Amongst its objectives include but not limited to:

- The Project seeks to promote a functional and objective management system at all levels of the GSFP.
- It also intends to ensure effective information-dissemination about the Programme including its policies, objectives, targets, financial resources, the results impacts.
- In addition, the SAP was intended to pay attention to both vertical and horizontal linkages, across government agencies at all levels as well as civil society and NGOs involvement.

9. **Summary of Findings**

The intervention of the GSFP undoubtedly offered the opportunity to many school children in the rural communities across the country. National enrolment and retention of children in schools has improved significantly even though the target has not been fully accomplished.

The study revealed that the roles of the SIC, school headmasters, caterers, and communities are generally prescribed within national policy, but these roles and responsibilities are not always fully executed by the various actors. There is lack of adequate knowledge, the lack of uniformity in procuring foodstuffs and in managing the school feeding program at the district level.

Sufficient infrastructure necessary for school feeding (storage at schools, adequate kitchens, on-site clean water resources, or cooking pots and utensils) are not always available. The GSFP's implementation policy does not address the responsibility for constructing the school kitchen (and other school infrastructure like latrines), it is not evident whether funding or monitoring the school-feeding infrastructure rests with the MLGRD or with the MoE.

There are no established procurement models or procedures for caterers that facilitate the purchase of agricultural commodities that are locally grown. Most caterers operate on a credit arrangement which is at variance to the ways farmers operate. The absence of units of measurement for various commodities worsens the plight of the caterer taking into account that the cost of feeding per child is based on some unit of measured amount.

The GSFP has suffered a lot from politicization and undue interference, a situation which is blamed for the wrongful 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in targeting beneficiaries. There is high turnover of the chief executive officer of the GSFP, which affects the smooth operations of the programme.

The feeding cost per child does not match with the current prices of food commodities coupled with the constant delay in releasing funds to caterers for meals prepared in advance.

There is high interest and commitment on the part of collaborators from the Netherlands as well as World Food Programme in completing the efforts of the government of Ghana. The involvement of Farmer Based Organisations in the supply of food items directly or indirectly boosts the consumption of the locally grown food.

10. **Conclusion**

Due to the multi-sectoral nature of the GSFP, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development collaborates with technical Ministries, strategic partners and CSOs at all levels in the implementation of the GSFP. Though the GSFP was designed to benefit from inter-sectoral collaboration and joint implementation of programme, it has not had that active and direct participation of the collaborating ministries. There appears to be inadequate clarification of roles and coordination of activities between participating ministries (specifically agriculture, education and health ministry's) and their decentralized units. There is thus duplication of functions but no ownership. There is also inadequate consultations by programme implementers and when done sometimes not timely. Although the SICs have been established most of them are not functional. Reporting by the DICs to

their respective DAs and the National Secretariat has not been effective. Collaboration with the decentralized structures of the technical ministries needs strengthening.

The GSFP as a Social Protection Intervention strategy and a safety net for the vulnerable, given the necessary budgetary allocation, and implemented as designed, has the potential to change the hunger, education and ultimately the food security and poverty landscape in Ghana for good. Some modest gains have been made, there is however the need to overcome the challenges in so doing the GSFP requires the total sum of GH¢220,535,192.56 to implement its programme of activities in 2013. The School Feeding Programme expenditure item though not statutory, is more obligatory than ordinary.

11. Recommendations

Based on the assessment of the objectives set for the study, the author will like to make the following recommendations:

- The appropriate execution of roles and responsibilities by the headmasters, caterers and communities should be encouraged in order to achieve effective implementation.
- There is the need for uniformity in the procurement process of foodstuff as well as managing the school feeding programme at the district level.
- The national secretariat of the GSFP should ensure that there are equal supplies of infrastructure for food storage at schools, decent kitchens, clean water and cooking utensils to selected schools across the catchment area.
- The GSFP's implementation policy should spell out the guidelines and the responsibility for constructing the school kitchen and other school infrastructure such as latrines.
- There is the need to clearly separate aspects of funding and monitoring of the school Feeding Programme between the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Education.
- Purchasing recommended locally grown food commodities for GSFP should scrupulously be based on well established procurement models and procedures.
- There is the need for sensitization of caterer to farmer linkage to realigned their operations on credit or otherwise to ensure that both parties agreed on their transactions.
- Appropriate units of measurement for various commodities should be instituted to ensure that caterers take into account the cost of feeding per child is based on some unit of measured amount.
- The GSFP need to be established on well ground national document to prevent its operations from undue politicization and undue interference, a situation which affects the budgetary allocation as well as the target beneficiaries.
- The feeding cost per child should always be reviewed to match the prices of food commodities coupled with the timely released of funds to ensure that the caterers prepare meals according to the prescribed menu and the quantity could sustain the students for the intend purpose of the GSFP.
- There in an urgent need to define the duration of the Chief Executive officer of the GSFP and the qualification required should be clearly stated to prevent future high turnover of Executive officer.
- The collaborators from the Netherlands and the World food programme should be involved in activities at the school level to ensure transparency and established trust that their funds are used for the intended purposes.

12. List of Acronyms

- CS Civil Society
- CSO Civil Society Organisation
- DAs District Assemblies
- DCD District Coordinating Director
- DCE District Chief Executive
- EKN Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands
- WFP World Food Programme
- SMC School Management Committee
- AOP Annual Operations Plan
- DDO District Desk Officer
- PSC Programme Steering Committee
- DIC District Implementation Committee
- FBO Farmer-Based Organisation
- PWC Price Water House Coppers
- GSFP Ghana School Feeding Programme
- ICSO Independent Civil Society Organisation
- SNV Netherlands Development Organisations
- ICSO-M&E Independent Civil Society Organisations' Monitoring & Evaluation
- M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
- MDA Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- MDG Millennium Development Goal
- MLGRD Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
- MMDA Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies

- MoE Ministry of Education
- MoFA Ministry of Food and Agriculture
- MoFEP Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
- NS National Secretariat of GSFP
- SAP Social Accountability Project
- SFP School Feeding Programme
- SIC School Implementation Committee
- SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
- UN United Nations
- MDG Millennium Development Goals
- UNHTF United Nations Hunger Task Force
- NEPAD New Partnership for African Development
- WFP World Food Programme
- NGO Non-governmental Organisations

13. Refreences

1. Alabi, (2009).Alabi committee of inquiry into the GSFP. Annual Operation Plan GSFP from 2007 -2012.
2. Bundy, D. A. P. C., Burbano, M., Grosh, A., Gelli, M. C. H., Jukes, & Drake. L.J. (2009). "Rethinking School Feeding: Social Safety Nets, Child Development, and the Education Sector." Directions in Development series. World Bank, Washington, DC.
3. Corner J. P. (1988). Educating Poor Minority Children. Scientific American, 259. 5 42-48.
4. Ernst & Young. (2012). End of programme evaluation for Ghana School Feeding Programme.
5. Escolar.
6. Francisco, D. C., Beattie, S. D., Michael, M.F., Sam F., Israel K., Christine, L, Daniel L, Luis E. ,Victor O. N., Aditya, R, Yosuke T. & Satoru, T. (2011). Ghana School Feeding Program: Re-Tooling for a Sustainable Future.
7. Ghana School Feeding Programme, (2010). Ghana School Feeding Programme document 2007-2010.
8. Ghana School Feeding Programme, (2011). Ghana School Feeding Programme. End of Phase I report.
9. Ghana School Feeding Programme, (2011). Ghana School Feeding Programme progress report 2011 – 2012.
10. Ghana School Feeding Programme, (2013). Ghana School Feeding Programme progress report.
11. Global Child Nutrition Foundation, (2008). Executive summary Global child nutrition forum.
12. Karen, D. H. (2008). The Ghana School Feeding Programme: A practical Exploration of the Behind the Façade approach.
13. Nauman, C. (2005). Measuring impact of school feeding operations in Afghanistan: quantitative and qualitative evidence in support of the effectiveness of the approach.
14. Price Water House Coppers. (2007). Price Water House Coppers (PWC) Audit report.
15. Rogers, B L. (1995). "Food and Income Subsidies and Primary Schooling in Rural Honduras: An Evaluation of the Impact of the Bonos (BMJF) and PL480 Title II School Feeding Programs." Latin America and Caribbean Health and Nutrition Sustainability, USAID. (Unpublished).
16. Tineke, M. (2007). Impact of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in 4 districts in Central Region, Ghana.
17. United Nations Development Programme, (2005). Human Development Report 2005, International cooperation at crossroads: aid, trade and security in an unequal world.
18. United Nations, (2005a). UN Millennium Project, Halving Hunger: It can be done; Summary version of the report of the Task Force on Hunger.
19. United Nations, (2005b). United Nations Millennium Development Goals, Vol. 2007.
20. World Food Program, (1993c) "Interim evaluation summary report on Project Morocco Appraisal for Additional Phase." (official).
21. World Food Programme(2005) Executive Board Second Regular Session. Country Programme-Ghana 10418.0 (2006-2010).
22. World Food Programme, (2006). Food for Education, experts' seminar: Reviewing the evidence.
23. World Food Programme, (2006b). World Hunger Ghana, Vol. 2006.
24. World food Programme, (2012b). "Sustainable School Feeding. Preparing, Designing and Holding a Stakeholder Workshop: Manual for Government Officials, Programme Officers, and Facilitators." WFP, Rome