



An online review of Foreign Agricultural Service initiatives and services

Programs and Opportunities

Practical Snapshots: How Food Aid Helps Developing Communities and Countries

Through the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (FFE) Program, the Food for Progress (FFP) program, and the Section 416(b) program, FAS works closely with private voluntary organizations, the World Food Program, and foreign governments to foster food security and development in countries around the world.

FFE activities help to support education, child development, and food security for some of the world's poorest children. In the last five years, FFE efforts have helped feed more than 10 million children in more than 40 countries, increase school attendance, and improve teachers' capabilities.

The FFP program provides developmental assistance through projects such as credit funds, infrastructure development, and technical assistance. The program provides food to vulnerable populations and assists farmers and agribusinesses in improving their operations. Through the FFP program, FAS provides \$150-250 million worth of food assistance each year.

Section 416(b) provides for overseas donation of surplus

Private voluntary organizations use the resources of USDA food aid programs to promote health, nutrition, and advancement for people in developing countries.

agricultural commodities that may be sold in the recipient country and the proceeds used to support agricultural, economic, or infrastructure development programs.

Aga Khan Foundation's School Feeding Program in Central Asia

Since the mid-1990s, the Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A., a private, nonprofit international development organization, has worked with FAS to alleviate hunger and illiteracy and promote development in isolated mountain communities in Central Asia. The Aga Khan Foundation, which is part of a network of social development agencies and service providers known as the Aga Khan Development Network, has used USDA-donated commodities to develop a university in Central Asia, improve dairy practices and feed vulnerable populations in the region.

In 2002, Aga Khan Foundation began implementing the Education Dairy and Nutrition Program, mainly in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, through a Section 416(b) food aid grant. A portion of the donated commodities are monetized, i.e., sold to raise funds for agreed-upon development activities that demonstrate potential for high impact at the community level. Also through the program, donated nonfat dry milk is bartered and used to produce individual servings of UHT milk for school children. The program provides a daily



AKF food aid efforts at work in a school in Tajikistan.
Photo courtesy of AKF

ration of 200 milliliters of milk (about half of a pint) to 79,000 school children.

In Tajikistan, Aga Khan Foundation has distributed milk rations to 321 schools and 21 kindergartens. In 2004-2005, the grant supported 49 small-scale community infrastructure projects such as school rehabilitation and irrigation canals benefiting approximately 42,728 people. It provided livestock and veterinary training for 882 poor households, and a range of services, including vaccinations for over 1,000 animals. The grant also supported training for district health professionals and community based health workers and also essential preventative health care services for mothers and children under the age of 5; for instance, over 16,000 children received Vitamin D supplements.



AKF food aid efforts in Afghanistan.
Photos courtesy of AKF

Monetization: selling commodities from U.S. food aid programs and using the proceeds for approved development purposes

In Afghanistan, FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS), an affiliate of Aga Khan Development Network, has used the grant to deliver milk to 81 schools, overseeing the distribution of 1.38 million liters of milk every academic year. FOCUS grapples with many challenges in this extremely isolated and harsh mountain climate. There is often no electricity, roads, vehicles or even safe school buildings where classes can be held. In half of the areas, all of the milk distribution must be done on foot, and it can take several days to reach some of the most isolated schools. The milk is transported across the Pyanj River, and for every river crossing, FOCUS must coordinate with numerous regional officials, local communities and special volunteer teams from Afghanistan. Thus, FOCUS transports up to 20,000 liters of milk a day across this tumultuous river, 30-50 times a year. These efforts have paid off in better nutrition and increased school attendance for children in Northern Afghanistan, one of the poorest regions of the country where child malnutrition rates rank among the highest in the world.

In 2004-2005, the Section 416(b) grant was also used to rehabilitate 11 needy schools in Afghanistan. In addition, 24 field schools for farmers were held and nine livestock development centers established that provide artificial insemination services. In 2006, this grant has supported a range of income-generating activities for low-income farmers, provided livestock services to 10,000 rural households and also contributed to improved natural resource management.

A 13-minute video program highlighting the Education Dairy and Nutrition Program, entitled Milk & Hope, is available from Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

IPHD Food Aid Efforts in Moldova

In 2001-2005, IPHD (the International Partnership for Human Development) worked with FAS to implement school feeding programs in Moldova. IPHD distributed 42,150 metric tons of donated U.S. commodities for direct feeding and monetized another 14,000 tons. U.S.

donations were bread flour, vegetable oil, potato flakes, rice, and pasta.

IPHD provided rations of 4.5 kg (1 kilogram = 2.046 pounds) per child per month and 1-3 kg of local foods per month, and increased participation to 330,000 preschool and primary students in more than 3,000 schools. Proceeds from monetized commodities were used to buy cooking utensils and local foods, repair school kitchens, develop a system to monitor nutrition and health, and establish parent-teacher associations. IPHD efforts through the FFE program improved school infrastructure. About 90 percent of targeted schools instituted lunch programs, and 65 percent repaired their school kitchens. The schools offered hygiene and nutrition courses offered to students. Over 50 percent of Moldovan kindergartens reopened, and about 65 percent of them provided lunch programs.

Moldovans have reaped employment benefits as well. The FFE program led to the employment of 6,300 cooks, 110 bakery workers, 300 government warehouse staff and administrators, and 310 transport workers.

In 2005 working with the Moldovan Ministry of Health, IPHD developed a growth monitoring program to measure FFE health and nutrition results that was adopted as the national standard. Through the program, schools received more than 3,000 booklets on child nutrition and health, and cooks received instruction on preparing nutritious meals. Before the FFE program, 20 percent of Moldovan children were underweight, and 8 percent were mentally challenged; today, 12.7 percent are underweight and 4.1 percent are mentally challenged.

Throughout the four years of its assistance, IPHD worked closely with the national and local governments. Through their combined efforts, the school feeding program in Moldova is moving from U.S. to local food assistance. After March 2007, local efforts will sustain the program. Schools in the two largest cities, Balti and Chisinau, have already made the transition.

PTAs (parent-teacher associations) are crucial to the transition. IPHD developed 1,300 PTAs and community support groups for transitioning the school lunch programs to local communities and to the government. Over 100,000 people participate in these new community organizations.

TechnoServe Efforts in Honduras and Nicaragua

TechnoServe, Inc. helps entrepreneurial people in developing countries to start or expand businesses that create jobs and broad-based economic growth. USDA and TechnoServe have worked together on FFP programs in Honduras and Nicaragua.

Since the late 1990s, TechnoServe has worked to help Honduras shift from a supplier of low-value cocoa to high-value, specialty cocoa priced at 250 percent above world index prices. Today, 700 Honduran small farmers produce 800-1,000 metric tons per year valued at \$1.5 million at farm gate.

TechnoServe is working with various cocoa stakeholders -- the government of Honduras, producer associations, research foundations, and financial institutions -- reproducing genetic material to replant 10,000 ha (1 hectare = 2.471 acres) with fine cocoa trees so they can provide highest quality cocoa to gourmet markets. In five years, TechnoServe anticipates expanding the program to 4,000 farmers who would be producing over \$35 million worth of fine cocoa per year. In addition, TechnoServe



IPHD efforts in Moldova: school cooks preparing a meal of pasta.



Children eating a prepared meal.
Photos courtesy of IPHD

assisted the country's cocoa processing plant develop a business plan to rescue it from bankruptcy. Through fresh working capital, the plant could boost its operations from 40 percent of capacity earning \$4 million in revenue to 100 percent of capacity bringing up to \$10 million per year.

From 2000-2005, TechnoServe provided Nicaragua with technical assistance in the production, processing, marketing, finance, and business management of its promising coffee industry. TechnoServe assisted farmers with small holdings of 1-2 ha each to shift to specialty coffee production, helping them to maximize yields, create a coffee collection center, and establish links to exporters.

In the 2003/2004 harvest season (October-March), these farmers reaped their first sales: their average market price was \$1.10 per pound when that of conventional coffee was 75 cents. In 2005, the farmers earned \$800,000, which helped them attract \$340,000 in financing from private banks.

In five years, TechnoServe efforts have helped participating farmers increase their coffee sales tenfold, increase organic and conventional coffee yields by 60 percent, buy a warehouse, and provide 300 families, about 1,500 people, with secure income. ■

e-Sources

More information about FAS-administered food aid programs is available on the FAS Web site:
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/food-aid.asp>

More information about the organizations profiled in this story can be found at:

The Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A.

Web site: <http://www.akdn.org/index.html>

The International Partnership for Human Development

Phone: (540) 751-1630; E-mail: iphdq@iphd.org

TechnoServe, Inc.

Web Site: <http://www.technoserve.org/>



TechnoServe efforts helping people in Central America develop businesses and jobs.



Coffee project in Nicaragua.
 Photo courtesy of TechnoServe

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