

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the July 2000 G-8 Summit on Okinawa, the United States announced plans to commit \$300 million in resources to establish a school feeding program for developing countries, particularly countries that had made a commitment to provide universal education for their children. An estimated 120 million children around the world do not attend school, in part because of hunger or malnourishment. A majority of these children are girls.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the pilot Global Food for Education (GFE) program, which builds on ideas promoted by Ambassador George McGovern and former Senator Robert Dole. Under this program, USDA provides surplus commodities, as well as funds to cover commodity transportation and distribution, to the World Food Program (WFP), 13 private voluntary organizations (PVO's), and one national government for use in 48 school feeding projects in 38 countries. USDA also provides administrative and technical assistance, as well as project monitoring and evaluation.

Enrollment figures for GFE-participating schools increased 5.75 percent and 10.4 percent for private voluntary organizations and the World Food Program, respectively.

The goal of the GFE program is to bring more children into school by providing them with a nutritious meal or take-home ration. Education is a path to upward mobility that can help poor children improve their standard of living, and poor nations develop more productive, self-reliant economies. The United States has long been committed to providing school meals for children of low-income American families in the belief that a school meal improves children's minds and bodies. Under the pilot GFE program, this commitment has been extended to millions of children in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

GFE projects were selected using a set of criteria that included need, technical feasibility, contribution of resources by the host government, and that government's commitment to the Education-for-All goals of the World Education Forum held in April 2000 in Dakar, Senegal. Selection criteria also assessed the experience and capabilities of the PVO or other *cooperating sponsor* proposing to implement each project. Additionally, each project proposal was analyzed to ensure that the donations would not disrupt local markets or commercial sales opportunities. The first project agreement with a cooperating sponsor was signed in March 2001.



Bolivia

GUATEMALA

The challenge: In one municipality in Huehuetenango, of approximately 2,800 students who began first grade, 11 reached the sixth grade.

- DataPro Monitoring Report

This evaluation focuses on the implementation and outcomes of the projects awarded under the pilot GFE program. The report will review all the projects that have been funded, providing information on changes in student enrollment, attendance, and performance. Perhaps most importantly for future school feeding efforts, this evaluation provides preliminary findings on best practices and lessons learned from a variety of GFE school feeding projects conducted by various organizations in different countries, cultures, and settings around the world.

Briefly, the results to date show measurable improvements in school enrollment, including increased access by girls. In projects involving more than 4,000 participating schools, the WFP reports an overall enrollment increase exceeding 10 percent, with an 11.7-percent increase in enrollment by girls. The PVO's report an overall enrollment increase of 5.75 percent in GFE-participating schools. In some projects, increases in enrollment were as high as 32 percent compared with enrollment rates over the previous three years.

Attendance and performance are more difficult to measure reliably over the limited duration of the pilot projects. Both the WFP and PVO's are gathering baseline statistics for future measurements. However, many teachers, school administrators, and parents report declines in absenteeism rates and improved concentration, energy, and attitudes toward learning on the part of students. GFE projects are also resulting in additional benefits beyond those directly related to attendance, enrollment, and performance. These benefits include increases in local employment and economic activity related to the projects, greater activity and participation in local infrastructure and other community-improvement projects, and greater involvement by parents in the schools and their children's education.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

All cooperating sponsors are required to conduct baseline surveys using a standardized questionnaire based on a questionnaire developed by the WFP and modified by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. The methodology used in evaluating this program is explained in Appendix 1. Monitoring is spearheaded by a group of Washington-based regional and country coordinators who, along with Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) field staff, review the projects and ensure that local monitors



Dominican Republic

collect baseline surveys using the standardized questionnaire. In addition, the locally hired monitors conduct targeted focus group interviews to gather information on perceptions, barriers, and alternatives that may not be captured in a standardized questionnaire. In compiling this report, this evaluation team also used a large amount of data submitted by the WFP and PVO's.

All of the World Food Program and more than half of the PVO projects received support from other donors. Donors contributed directly to the feeding, provided complementary programs, or both.

The standardized questionnaire used in collecting raw data on the GFE programs contains 210 questions and is used by both the WFP and PVO's. While the results represent a valuable resource for making future decisions, the data are only as reliable as the source. Even in U.S. schools, students often collect daily attendance for the teacher. In some countries, enrollment numbers at the school level often vary from those at the classroom level, and GFE attendance may include students not officially enrolled. This can be due to a teacher's desire to allow a student into the classroom even though the family is unable to pay for school. Similarly, teachers may feel pressured to report low dropout rates in order to keep their jobs.

Lack of roads and difficult terrain add to the difficulties in collecting data. Local monitors can complete an entire questionnaire in a few hours once they arrive at a survey school. However, travel to the school, particularly in mountainous regions with no road access, can take up to a full day, sometimes hours on foot. Nonetheless, this GFE evaluation is able to report preliminary results on every project implemented by April 2002, due in no small measure to the efforts of the USDA in-country monitors to collect the most accurate data possible to document project impact.

PROJECT IMPACTS

The goals of the pilot GFE program were defined as establishing pre-school and school feeding projects in developing countries to improve enrollment and attendance – particularly for girls – and enhancing the nutritional well-being and learning ability of children. The pilot program initially targeted nine million needy children. The cooperating sponsors implementing the individual projects include the WFP, 13 faith-based and secular PVO's, and the Government of the Dominican Republic.



Nicaragua

As implemented, the pilot GFE program has reached seven million children through school or pre-school feeding programs, including around five million through the WFP and two million through projects conducted by PVO's and the Government of the Dominican Republic. These numbers reflect children fed; in some cases, other benefits went to additional children. In several projects, numerical targets were scaled back during project implementation for the following reasons: (1) unreliable data available at the time the program was formulated; (2) changes in targeting to avoid duplication of feeding activities conducted by other

implementing partners in the same area; (3) use of pilot testing within a subset of the entire program area; and (4) lower than expected monetized proceeds for program implementation.

Of the 24 school feeding projects conducted by PVO's and the Government of the Dominican Republic, five have now completed one school year, nine have completed a partial school year, and 10 are just beginning or have fall 2002 start dates. At the time of this report, USDA was able to gather data from 165 schools in 11 PVO country projects. The WFP has gathered data on 4,000 schools in 23 countries.

"When one takes into account all its benefits, educating girls yields a higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world."

*- Lawrence Summers,
President, Harvard University*

The results show that the GFE program has positively affected school enrollment and access for girl students. The WFP reports an 11.7-percent increase in enrollment of girls. The WFP has developed an innovative way of using food aid to help educate girls. Basic food items, such as a sack of rice or several liters of vegetable oil, are distributed to families in exchange for the schooling of their daughters. These take-home rations compensate parents for the loss of the daughter's labors, enabling girls to attend school.

For now, improvements in attendance and performance cannot be fully documented, with most of the feedback available through discussions and informal reports by



Georgia

teachers, school administrators, parents, and students. Changes in the attendance rate can be measured against previous months in schools where feeding began after school was already underway. Sustained attendance rate changes must be measured against attendance baseline data, which has been collected and will be measured against data for the next school year. Quantitative measures of performance require a longer period for assessment.

The GFE program has also demonstrated benefits beyond the established performance criteria.

Some additional project benefits include economic stimulation, civil society support, community capacity building, and re-energizing parents, teachers, and the community to address education issues. For example, economic activity generated by GFE projects has saved existing jobs, created additional jobs, and resulted in the development of new commercial products, such as aseptic milk.

The PVO's also report over a million dollars in local and outside donor support. Moreover, this amount is dwarfed by in-kind contributions from parents and substantial support from complementary programs providing assistance in the areas of health, water and sanitation, agriculture, nutrition, teacher training, and the environment. The WFP

reports support from Italy, France, Andorra, the United States, Cargill, and private individuals.

There have been some unanticipated outcomes. For example, in Bangladesh, increased attendance in schools initially resulted in crowded classrooms without enough desks or chairs for the children. Parents and the community responded by building extra desks and chairs for the school.



Republic of the Congo

ENROLLMENT

The official enrollment figure reported by the head teacher to the appropriate ministry or department responsible for collecting such information is being used to evaluate the GFE pilot projects. Enrollment data can only be tracked from year to year rather than month to month, since schools have a fixed, limited enrollment period. Anecdotal reports are an important cross check to official records because governments often exert pressure on schools to report high enrollment figures and low dropout rates. Recognizing these constraints, the evaluation found that overall enrollment in GFE-participating schools increased by 10.4 percent and 5.75 percent for WFP and PVO projects, respectively. The greatest increases were documented in areas with serious food deficits and previously low enrollment levels.

Enrollment increases were reported in most of the countries with available data. Declines were reported in two countries. The reported declines represent a statistically insignificant number of schools and appear to reflect official enrollment data collected before the school feeding actually began in those schools.

Examples of enrollment increases include:

- In a project conducted by International Orthodox Christian Charities in Lebanon, school directors report that parents want their children enrolled in schools where they can receive a meal. School registration occurred before parents became aware of the program, but many parents tried to enroll their children once they knew food would be provided.
- In Tanzania, the WFP reports that enrollment has increased by 26.6 percent for boys and 26.2 percent for girls.
- In Eritrea, reports from both USDA and Mercy Corps monitors indicate that student enrollment has increased since high-energy biscuits were introduced for breakfast in 95 schools. According to teachers and school administrators, students who dropped out earlier in the school year are trying to re-enroll.

Average Change in Enrollment*

WFP GFE PROJECTS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL CHANGE
Central and South America			
Colombia	17.1%	16.8%	16.9%
Dominican Republic	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%
El Salvador	1.8%	2.4%	2.1%
Honduras	5.5%	4.8%	5.1%
Nicaragua	9.8%	8.4%	9.1%
Peru	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Total for Region	6.1%	5.8%	5.9%
Asia			
Bhutan	1.5%	3.6%	2.4%
Cambodia	6.7%	8.5%	7.5%
Pakistan	-	32.3%	32.3%
Tajikistan	3.2%	2.9%	3.1%
Total for Region	3.8%	11.8%	10.8%
East Africa			
Ethiopia	16.1%	17.7%	16.7%
Kenya	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
Mozambique	8.5%	7.9%	8.2%
Tanzania	26.6%	26.2%	26.4%
Uganda	9.7%	13.2%	11.2%
Total for Region	12.2%	13.1%	12.5%
West Africa			
Cote d'Ivoire	9.0%	10.4%	9.6%
Cameroon	17.0%	27.4%	20.5%
Gambia	9.3%	12.5%	10.8%
Ghana	6.7%	15.4%	10.4%
Total for Region	10.5%	16.4%	12.8%
TOTAL FOR WFP SCHOOLS	8.0%	11.7%	10.4%
PVO GFE PROJECTS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL CHANGE
Central and South America			
Bolivia	5.54%	5.48%	5.54%
Guatemala	7.10%	5.34%	6.10%
Honduras	11.60%	13.82%	12.63%
Nicaragua	17.43%	10.22%	13.33%
Total for Region	10.42%	8.72%	9.60%
Asia			
Vietnam	-3.62%	-4.32%	-3.96%
Total for Region	-3.62%	-4.32%	-3.96%
East Africa and Middle East			
Eritrea	9.20%	12.12%	10.09%
Lebanon	5.17%	2.70%	3.81%
Total for Region	7.18%	7.41%	7.28%
West Africa			
Benin	9.5%	10.52%	10.35%
Congo (Brazzaville)	6.81%	8.23%	7.49%
Total for Region	8.15%	9.37%	8.92%
Eastern Europe			
Albania	1.35%	3.89%	2.44%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	15.32%	-10.43%	2.53%
Moldova	-4.74%	-2.43%	-3.77%
Total for Region	3.98%	-2.99%	0.40%
TOTAL FOR PVO SCHOOLS	6.72%	4.60%	5.75%

*Findings are based on projects implemented by April/May 2002.

- In Pakistan, the WFP began to address the gender gap in targeted provinces by distributing vegetable oil monthly to the family of each female student who attended school for a minimum of 20 days. Vegetable oil is a precious commodity for local families and an important part of the local diet. The increase in enrollment for girls in the GFE-participating schools is 32.3 percent.

ATTENDANCE

The GFE school feeding projects have increased school attendance according to discussions with and informal reports by teachers and administrators. An increase in attendance is one of the most significant measures of the importance of school feeding for two reasons: 1) increased attendance signifies heightened parental understanding of the importance of sending their children to school; and 2) the alleviation of short-term hunger allows students to be exposed to learning material for a greater length of time.

To capture this data, both the PVO's and the WFP are gathering baseline statistics. For the school year, both are basing the estimate on a four-month average. The four months include the month with the highest attendance for the previous year, the month with the lowest attendance for the previous year, and two months with an average rate of attendance for the previous year. With this data established as a baseline, the same months will be selected in the next school year to compare rates. However, school attendance is by far the most difficult data to reliably document. The examples cited below are based on monthly attendance rates where data for feeding and nonfeeding months were available within the same school year.



Ethiopia

Examples of increased attendance include:

- CARE reported that attendance surged in the first six months of its project in Albania, after the school feeding program was introduced. That spike was followed by declines in the absenteeism rate across all 64 schools in subsequent months. The absenteeism rate at Faiza-Sefoll School in Has District dropped from 20 percent in December 2001 to 1 percent in February 2002. In Kukes District, a school that averaged an 8.6-percent absentee rate in November 2001 dropped to 1.5 percent in January and 0.8 percent in February following the introduction of a school lunch.
- In one of the poorest regions of Kenya, the Turkana region, the Minister of Education attested that girls' attendance increased by 130 percent and boys' attendance by 60 percent within one year after the introduction of a school feeding program.

GUATEMALA

Delivering a modest amount of school supplies to children during the first week(s) of school is a significant help to parents and removes one of the barriers to children's attendance at school.

- WorldShare Monitoring Report

- In Nicaragua, Project Concern International reported that absenteeism had dropped to almost zero, and teachers said that punctuality had improved because children did not want to miss breakfast. Children now stay at home only when they are truly sick.
- Attendance in Bangladesh increased by an average of 22 percent in Nagla District and 29 percent in Nayanagar District in the five weeks of the program, according to data collected by Land O'Lakes. Attendance throughout the sub-district increased in anticipation of the school feeding project as news of the project spread.

PERFORMANCE

Performance indicators generally rely on data collected for more than five years. Since such data would not be available under the pilot program, this evaluation relied on informal reports by teachers and school administrators. These reports indicated that students concentrate better, demonstrate improved attitudes toward learning, comprehend subject material more quickly, and are more energetic.

Examples of improved performance include:

- In Project Concern International's Nicaragua project, teachers report that since school feeding began, lessons do not have to be repeated as often because children learn them more quickly.
- Since the beginning of the school feeding program, many PVO's have reported that students have more energy throughout the day, so that the last hours of a school day are now productive. Students also have the energy to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- In Kenya's Turkana region, one of the country's poorest districts, attendance rates increased when WFP began school feeding in the 1980's. As a result, Turkana is now one of the country's top districts in educational performance. The USDA programs with WFP Kenya mirror this experience.

ERITREA

According to Selam, the biscuits have helped her to improve her performance in school: "Before, I felt hungry and it was hard to concentrate in class. Now, when I eat biscuits, I study."

- Mercy Corps

OTHER PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

Economic activity generated by the GFE project has stimulated local economies. Existing jobs have been saved, additional jobs created, and new commercial products developed. Examples include:

- In an area of high unemployment in Albania, the purchase of locally produced foods for the CARE school feeding project has generated paid employment in food processing and additional income for local farmers and bakers.
- A pasta factory in Moldova added 67 new employees as a result of the business brought to the company by the International Partnership for Human Development project.
- In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Catholic Relief Services GFE project contracted with 16 bakeries to provide school meals. The bakeries hired additional employees and in some cases expanded their product lines. The economic ripple effect also benefited



Nepal

companies that provided wrapper paper for the five million sandwiches, as well as meat and cheese producers and processors.

- In Nicaragua, the bakery that manufactures nutritious cookies for Project Concern International's GFE breakfasts hired 17 people to produce and package the cookies. The small factory that makes the fortified drink mix hired 15 people to handle the manufacturing, packaging, and shipping of that product.

In many regions, GFE projects have created new opportunities and enhanced existing opportunities to strengthen communities and other civil society groups. Examples include:

- In Kyrgyzstan, Mercy Corps requires that the school and community develop a partnership to access GFE small-grant funds. This is a crucial first step to broader community involvement in education planning and community problem solving.
- The Lebanon GFE project implemented by International Orthodox Christian Charities supported development of Al-Kafaat, a local non-governmental organization (NGO) that works to integrate disabled children into society.

UGANDA

"Girls who normally stay home to cook meals for other siblings in school will now be able to get an education too."

- Community Leader,
Nakasongola District



Pakistan

- In Eritrea, Vision Eritrea, a local NGO in partnership with Mercy Corps, has increased its capacity to plan and manage projects, conduct training, and implement monitoring and evaluation projects.
- Hundreds of parent-teacher groups and committees across the regions have assumed greater responsibility for their children's education as a result of the training they received through GFE projects.
- A Nicaraguan education official reported that student participation in Project Concern International's GFE project teaches values that, as educators, they are trying to instill in students, such as punctuality, orderliness, personal responsibility, social responsibility, and hygiene and personal cleanliness.

Parents, teachers, and school administrators report that the GFE program is a unifying force in the community and has been a catalyst in addressing long-standing educational problems. Examples include:

- In the Guatemala WorldShare project, parents have been re-energized to find a solution to the lack of water in the schools.
- In Albania, the CARE GFE project organized parent councils, conducted needs assessments, and launched activities to improve kindergarten facilities, adding playgrounds, kitchens, and classrooms.
- In Bolivia, the Project Concern International project provided a tangible opportunity for parents to become acquainted with each other and work toward a common goal. Because of the regular presence of parents in the schools, teachers are now more accountable to the community.
- A school/community partnership in Kyrgyzstan is receiving assistance from Mercy Corps' GFE project to repair a dilapidated school so that 713 children will have a warm and safe learning environment. At the same time, additional space is being made available for children from neighboring villages.

BEST PRACTICES

In identifying best practices, the evaluation team looked not only at the program's objectives but also at the experiences gained in implementing the program. These best practices are actions that implementing partners took to creatively implement the program and are suggested as practices that could be replicated in future projects.

These actions can be categorized into the following four areas: (1) Strengthening program sustainability; (2) Using food creatively to support educational programs; (3) Involving parents and community members in support of local schools and increasing their commitment to educational attainment; and (4) Taking steps to integrate health, nutrition, and hygiene education.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The GFE strategy in the Dominican Republic focuses on creating sustainable school feeding and educational programs by strengthening the link between the schools and the community.

- USDA Monitoring Report



Cambodia

(1) Examples of actions to strengthen program sustainability include:

- Targeting countries or areas within a country where food is scarce to achieve the greatest improvements in enrollment, attendance, and community involvement.
- Involving the host government at the earliest stages of program planning and implementation to ensure a continuing commitment.
- Leveraging resources from multiple donors to creatively build on existing development programs in the targeted area.

(2) Examples of activities that use food creatively to support educational programs include:

- Offering take-home rations to offset the cost of students attending school; using food-for-work projects to improve school and community infrastructure; and providing payments to teachers for acceptable levels of attendance.
- Identifying and eliminating economic barriers to enrollment and attendance. Small-grant programs in conjunction with school feeding can provide classroom supplies and uniforms to less-advantaged children.

(3) Actions to involve parents and community members in support of local schools and to increase their commitment to education include any number of ways to integrate projects into the community. Community involvement increases commitment because it gives parents and community members a greater role and feeling of empowerment in their children's education.

(4) Examples of steps to integrate health, nutrition, and hygiene education include:

- Conducting de-worming programs in areas where needed.
- Integrating water sanitation programs in areas where access is needed to clean water and latrines.
- Training and educating parents and students on healthy and hygienic food handling practices.

OTHER DONOR SUPPORT

All of the WFP projects and over half of the PVO projects received direct or indirect support from international organizations. Donor support for the GFE program comes in many forms and at different levels. These donor contributions either directly support school feeding and education infrastructure or support complementary programs related to health, water and sanitation, agriculture, nutrition, teacher training, and the environment. For example, the WFP has worked with a variety of partners to implement de-worming treatments in its school feeding programs. Coordination with the World Health Organization, commitments from the national ministries of education and health in the host country, and the availability of financial support are key elements in the success of these projects. See the table beginning on page 279 for a list of donors and their contributions.

COMMODITY MANAGEMENT

Commodities used to support direct feeding activities in GFE programs were found to be appropriate to the recipient countries and were delivered without major incident. A few of the PVO's expressed a desire for a wider selection of commodities for the direct feeding portion of their projects. Monetization has proceeded smoothly in all countries to date, except Madagascar due to civil conflict. Delays and other problems associated with commodity shipment and delivery to the implementing PVO primarily revolved around host country government policies and procedures. Late commodity arrival caused some PVO's to adjust implementation schedules by months.

Examples of delays or other problems associated with shipment or monetization of donated commodities include:

- Shipment of commodities was at times delayed because the commodities were not available at the proposed shipment date. In Kyrgyzstan, Mercy Corps' first shipment of commodities scheduled for arrival in October 2001 actually arrived in January 2002 and distribution began in April. Mercy Corps had planned to deliver commodities before the winter months when food is most expensive. Commodity distribution in late spring or summer poses a problem for boarding schools that close for the summer, while kindergartens and orphanages operate year-round. Mercy Corps and the beneficiary schools are investigating how to safely store the commodities over the summer. One idea is to process the wheat flour into macaroni that then can be stored.



Mozambique

- Wheat monetization projects conducted by International Orthodox Christian Charities in Georgia and International Partnership for Human Development in Moldova were hindered by slow sales. As a result, the school supplies distribution component of the Georgia project was cancelled, and implementation of the educational component was delayed until the second semester. The project in Moldova remained on target with private funds.
- In Nicaragua, commodities to support Project Concern International's program arrived on July 31, 2001, with nearly half of the bagged commodities water damaged from a hatch door left open. They were declared unfit for human consumption and destroyed. USDA agreed to replace the commodities, and a new shipment of corn-soy blend (to replace soybean meal), corn, and wheat was sent to Nicaragua, arriving in October and November 2001.

GAO AREAS OF CONCERN

In its February 2002 report on the GFE initiative, the General Accounting Office (GAO) identified several areas of concern, including issues relating to targeting, health and nutrition, impacts on the learning environment, and the lack of broader donor support to ensure the sustainability of the program.

NICARAGUA: TEACHING VALUES

Students' participation in the GFE project teaches values that, as educators, we are trying to instill:

- Punctuality--because they don't eat if they aren't there when the breakfast is served.
- Orderliness--because they have to stand in line to wait to be served.
- Responsibility--because they have to bring their mugs from home.
- Social responsibility--because they have to help serve their classmates.
- Hygiene and personal cleanliness--because they have to wash their hands before being served.

- Lic. Maria Emilia Picado, San Rafael del Norte, Municipal Delegate, Ministry of Education

Targeting—The GAO report stated that appropriate targeting within the solicitation of program proposals is lacking. The report further emphasizes targeting high-risk communities, as opposed to targeting individual children within the school. *USDA findings:* In evaluating the projects funded under the GFE program, we found that clear, well-defined targeting of beneficiaries is essential to ensure measurable results under the program. Most of the GFE project agreements did create indicators directly related to beneficiary selection in areas with chronic malnutrition and poor school enrollment and attendance levels. In those few instances where individual children were targeted rather than feeding the whole school, such as Bosnia, the objectives of the program were not based solely on increased attendance but rather toward the development of parent-teacher associations. In Bosnia, the objective was to bring parents together to accept different ethnic groups. This objective could also be achieved through means not directly linked to the school feeding program.

Health/Nutrition—The GAO report stated that health interventions such as micronutrient and/or vitamin A tablets are a more cost-effective way to improve health than school feeding. *USDA findings:* Vitamin tablets may improve nutrition but do not bring children into school. Parents can easily relate to and understand the need for feeding their children. Understanding the importance of strong nutritional interventions requires additional education as the program develops. In addition, many of the agreements include the distribution of vitamin A supplements, fortification of food products with needed micronutrients, and de-worming campaigns.

Learning Environment—GAO contended that increasing the number of children in the school may create an environment where learning is negatively impacted, especially for those students already attending school. *USDA findings:* Focus group meetings will provide better information about the learning environment and how it is affected. To date, concerns from school administrators about overcrowded classrooms have been limited. In most cases, administrators would prefer crowding to the lack of students. Under some of the agreements, small-grant projects with parent-teacher associations are

being used to improve or enlarge the physical setting. This is an area that needs additional attention and emphasis by local governments and other donors. One fact remains true: No formal learning will occur if children do not attend school.



Bhutan

Sustainability Through Other Donors and Government Commitment—The GAO report stated that other donor contributions to the GFE program agreements were sorely lacking, noting that this was a priority when the GFE initiative was announced. *USDA findings:* When both the regional coordinators and local monitors entered the field and began asking about outside donor commitments and the role of the host government, the responses indicated a significant level of additional contributions. Many contributions are not received until a project is firmly established, with the base donation guaranteed. More donor contributions are expected in the future.