

# **Bolivia**

## **Project Concern International**

### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding for about 120,000 students began in April 2002. Interviews indicate that enrollment and attendance have increased, but conclusive data is not yet available. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the contributions of other organizations are critical to this program's success. Project Concern International's (PCI) monetization budget for the Bolivia project is approximately \$1,770,000; the estimated value of counterpart contributions, both in-kind and cash, is \$1,340,000. PCI/Bolivia's counterpart contributions address sustainability issues (by increasing municipal cash contributions, among other things) and contribute to improving the quality of education. Also, PCI/Bolivia is using this project as a model to work toward community development through the school. The program is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003.

### **Country Overview**

Seven out of 10 Bolivians live in poverty, and 30 percent of those (around 2.2 million) live in extreme poverty. Poverty is most severe in the rural areas, where 57 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, without access to a minimum diet.

An estimated 37 percent of the population is illiterate. Four years of education is average, and in rural areas most people have received less than three years of schooling. Of the total illiterate population, 70 percent live in rural areas and 68 percent are women. Only 1.4 percent of male students and 0.7 percent of female students finish secondary school. Repetition rates are high, with students who continue typically taking 12.8 years to complete six years of primary education. The World Bank estimates the cost of repetition at the primary level to be \$30 million per year.

Children's access to formal education is limited by the geographic dispersion of schools and other factors. Many children must walk up to two hours, often without breakfast, to reach school.

### **Commodity Management**

Almost 9,000 metric tons of wheat, non-fat dry milk, corn, oil, and corn-soy blend were delivered between December 2001 and March 2002. The commodities support the program by providing food for direct feeding in the schools. They also support the program administratively and logistically by providing funds through monetization.

## **Project Overview**

**Objectives and implementation status:** Using the school feeding program as a point of entry into the community, PCI has integrated complementary health, nutrition, agriculture, and teacher training programs in its education initiative. The objectives of the project as outlined in the agreement and the implementation status of each follow.

1. **School feeding:** A daily breakfast is provided to about 120,000 students. Feeding began in April 2002. The extension request agreement to feed an additional 50,000 is pending.
2. **Municipal agreements:** Forty-three municipalities have agreed to provide for the transportation and storage of commodities, cooking utensils, and stoves, and to contribute about \$0.50 per month per child enrolled. Parents also contribute about \$0.40 per child per month.
3. **School and parent-teacher organization agreements:** PCI has established agreements with these entities and established food committees in all schools. The parent-teacher organizations and food committees have been trained in storage and handling techniques, inventory control, hygiene, cooking, organization, scheduling, and school breakfast preparation.
4. **Teacher training:** The Bolivian Ministry of Education agreement for \$100,000 is in the negotiation phase. This arrangement, which has not yet started, will provide teacher training and education materials.
5. **De-worming:** The Ministry of Health agreement is in place for nurses to make two annual visits to provide vision and hearing exams, medication to control parasites, and health education. In May 2002, Health Department officials began testing and treatment for parasites.
6. **Solar water disinfection (SODIS):** All PCI supervisors have been trained in the SODIS technology. Teacher and student training has started.
7. **Peace Corps training:** The Peace Corps has trained teachers in basic sanitation and provided technical assistance with school gardens and ecological training.
8. **Complementary projects:** Greenhouse construction, school gardens, and reforestation tree plantings, as well as the oral health/toothbrush campaign, are underway.
9. **Ecological stoves:** Forty field supervisors were trained to construct the alternative ecological stoves. PCI's goal is to have at least 375 of the 1,459 schools using these stoves. So far, 16 teachers have been trained, and seven stoves have been constructed.

**Other donor support:**

<b>PCI GFE Partnerships in Bolivia</b>	
<b>Partner</b>	<b>Scope</b>
Municipal governments (43)	Transportation of commodities, valued at approximately \$76,000; cash contribution of approximately \$530,000 for school breakfasts; and additional cash contributions of approximately \$65,000 for complementary activities, such as greenhouses and ecological stoves.
Ministry of Education	Teacher training.
Ministry of Health (regional and local branches)	Human resources (visits by nurses) for students' hearing/vision exams and possible donation of micronutrients.
Office of First Lady of Bolivia	Payment of sales tax in the wheat monetization (approximately \$148,000).
Community members	Volunteers for preparation of school breakfasts; assistance in monitoring correct use of commodities.
Universities of Potosi, Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz	Participation of students from various fields in project implementation. From La Paz, students will participate in collection of toothbrushes for dental hygiene.
SODIS Foundation	Training for teachers in solar water disinfection.
SABIN Foundation	Grant for latrines (\$15,000).
UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Donation of 41,500 trees for training of children in natural resources/environment.
Private donor through the international distribution systems	Donation of 2,000 pounds of vegetable and flower seeds, valued at over \$20,000, to be used in school gardens.
Colgate-Palmolive	Donation of toothbrushes.
Peace Corps	Volunteers to work with school gardens/protection of the environment.
Radio FIDES	Three radio stations (two AM and one FM) to promote donation of toothbrushes for rural schoolchildren.
Boy Scouts of Bolivia	Collaborate in collection of toothbrushes.

**Sustainability:** Local support for a project has been identified as an essential part of program sustainability. PCI has built this project around local support and counterpart contributions: 1) The municipal counterpart has been increased to ensure proper planning for the purchase of local products when this project ends; 2) Parents contribute financially (cooking gas and transportation of commodities) and donate food from their own harvest; 3) Implementation of school gardens will produce vegetables that will be used in the school breakfast.

Some municipalities are now financially able to respond by themselves to the huge demand for school breakfasts. By increasing the required counterpart every year for the past five years, PCI has developed a mechanism by which the municipality responds to a clear demand by the constituents.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and PCI are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. The USDA local monitor started site visits and data collection in mid-May. Focus groups and interviews have been conducted at some of the sample schools. Enrollment data for the baseline year and the new school year will soon be available.

Attendance data will be collected for the low attendance months of May and June and the high attendance months of September and October. May and June attendance data will be collected in the next round of visits in August, after the winter holidays.

The factors used to identify the 20 sample schools were:

1. The three regional PCI department offices managing the program (eight schools in Cochabamba, seven in Potosi, and five in Oruro).
2. Schools that had new feeding programs versus schools that had feeding under P.L. 480, Title II (15 new schools and five with previous feeding).
3. Peri-urban schools (four urban and 16 remote rural schools).

### **Project Impact**

Feeding began in April 2002. In May, the local monitor was hired and began collecting data and conducting focus groups and interviews. PCI project data is not yet available to assess program impact formally, but preliminary findings from focus groups and interviews indicates an immediate and positive impact, as indicated in the following.

**Enrollment:** The Cochabamba PCI regional office recently noted that enrollment in one remote rural school nearly doubled from 18 students to 32 students since feeding began.

**Attendance:** One regional PCI office in Potosi reported preliminary data indicating a 10-percent increase in attendance in May.

**Special emphasis on girls:** Data is not yet available. The World Food Program reports that while female access to primary school is slightly lower than male access, there is a significant drop in school enrollment by girls when they reach puberty. This program is not serving high school students where the female enrollment and attendance rates appear to be lagging behind male rates.

## **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Interviews with parents, teachers, and school administrators indicate that the feeding program is a unifying force in the community. It provides 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 school, teachers are more accountable to the community. One parent stated, “Now we really have something important to do.” Once they realize the impact they can have and their ability to organize and accomplish objectives, parents take on other school projects. Some parent-teacher associations (PTA’s) have initiated maintenance projects and developed school gardens and sports fields or courts.

## **Lessons Learned**

- Use the school feeding program as a springboard to institute other necessary complementary programs. Such programs are also essential to address educational weaknesses and root causes for non-attendance and to ensure the feeding program is as effective as possible.
- Organizations must establish and maintain community trust. In new school districts (those that had not previously worked with PCI), trust must be established. For successful implementation, dedicated and capable field supervisors are critical to foster trust and to train the PTA as well as to monitor progress and provide technical assistance. Parent organizations had doubts about the seriousness of the project, the quality of the food, their own ability to run it, and a series of problems in organizing themselves. Although some problems are still encountered in effective management, the program has really taken off in the majority of schools. PTA’s find that they can manage the program and contribute toward the project’s goals, and that the benefits are worth it for their children and the community.
- Food service and inventory control backup procedures need to be in place. Occasionally parent volunteers do not show up to cook, or the director is not there, or a teacher monitor is not available. The local supervisors should work with the school director and *Junta* (PTA) to establish backup procedures. All field supervisors should ensure backup procedures are in place so that children are fed every official school day. Also, supervisors will re-emphasize the need to contract for at least one full-time cook in the larger schools and recommend a penalty system for volunteers who habitually do not show up.
- Breakfast should be served as early as possible. In some schools, the breakfast was served as late as an hour before the end of the school day. The timing and logistics of the service can be problematic given reliance on volunteer cooks and the distances they must travel, as well as the time it takes to make a fire and boil water. In some communities, parents are spending the night and serving as the children arrive. For maximum success, the meal must be served as early as possible, and PCI is making a strong effort to ensure this is done.

- Organizations should work with recipients to ensure that the form of commodities is acceptable. There were some problems with the acceptance of the donated food because the products differ from previous programs (P.L. 480, Title II). Although there is great acceptance of the non-fat dry milk, this is not so for the corn and wheat grains. These schools previously received wheat flour (not unmilled grain) and corn-soy blend (not corn grain). There is a cost associated with the milling to make bread, which PCI is solving by assuming responsibility for the milling process.

### **Best Practices**

Public partnerships can enhance school feeding programs. The PCI project has created some excellent public partnerships to complement the school feeding program. PCI is contracting with the Ministry of Education Reform Section to do teacher training and has an agreement with the Ministry of Health for visits by school nurses. The Peace Corps will be providing volunteers to support food distribution, teacher training, and basic sanitation efforts in the areas of hygiene, waste disposal, and gardening. PCI has arranged for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to donate more than 40,000 tree seedlings for reforestation education.

PCI also established private partnerships, with provided PCI with resources to support efforts in education, nutrition, and health. Colgate-Palmolive will supply toothpaste and toothbrushes to teach dental hygiene. A Boy Scout campaign will collect additional products to support the dental hygiene effort. A private company has donated seed for the school gardens. PCI is also seeking donations from beverage companies for the SODIS program.

A simple calendar menu system was developed to monitor feeding operations. The calendar is a familiar tool as opposed to a complex form. Each month has a space to record beginning and ending inventories, and each day has a suggested menu and a place to record daily meals served. Field supervisors retrieve these pages monthly from all schools. It is a simple way to collect data, monitor rations, and verify inventory use.

To promote sound environmental practices, PCI will encourage the use of ecological stoves in the community through the school feeding program. Built from local materials, sand, and mud, these stoves burn 80 percent more efficiently than open fires. Parents will learn to use and build these wood-burning stoves in schools where gas is not available. It is expected that this technology will be transferred to their homes, which is consistent with reforestation and environmental goals.

To complement the de-worming program, PCI has joined forces with a foundation to promote solar water disinfection. SODIS technology will be transferred from the teacher to the child and the community. The field supervisors have been trained to train the teachers to move the technology to the community through a child-to-child participatory teaching method.

## **Next Steps**

PCI is scheduled to receive the expansion and extension commodity donations from USDA in August 2002. About 50,000 additional students will be fed. The project will continue through November 2003.

PCI is still negotiating with the Ministry of Education regarding the provision of teacher training to take place by the end of the school year.

Monitoring of the project for compliance with the agreement will continue through March 2003.

## **GFE in Action**

*Worms 10 inches long.* As part of PCI's cooperative agreement with the Ministry of Health, parasite testing and treatment began recently. In a rural school of Tiraque, 50 students were tested, and virtually all had worms. Continued exposure and infestation results in sickness, disease, and other health concerns. Children with worms cannot absorb nutrients properly, and they can become anemic, lethargic, and irritable, which inhibits learning. One parent indicated that her children frequently have worms that are 8-10 inches long.

Treatment has begun in areas vulnerable to parasites. Municipalities are funding the cost for exams and treatment, in addition to the approximately \$0.50 per child per month they normally give. PCI is also focusing on education in hygiene and the use of the SODIS technology in these areas to prevent re-infestation of parasites in these children.

*“Please ALWAYS send the milk! We like it very much.”* After visiting more than 10 schools and talking to parents, teachers, and students, monitors found that the milk drink made with sugar and corn-soy blend was the favorite food, with the rice pudding made with milk and sugar a close second. Initially, the teachers and parents observed slight stomach upsets and some diarrhea during the first few days of serving milk to the children, who were generally not accustomed to it. Nevertheless, the children loved the milk, and their eagerness to eat was obvious—there were no leftovers. As a visiting group was leaving a particularly poor rural school where children didn't have utensils to eat their porridge, a child ran up to the car and shouted with a smile, “Please ALWAYS send the milk! We like it very much.”

*Children are more alert.* When asked about the impact of the program, one teacher said, “The children don't sleep in the afternoon anymore.” Another stated, “They are happier and much more alert.” And another remarked, “They are smarter now.” All noticed the immediate impact of the food on the children's ability to concentrate and stay alert.

*Trying to learn on an empty stomach.* Most children come to school hungry and almost all stay hungry during the day. During school visits, informal surveys of children by show of hands indicated that more than half the children didn't get breakfast. Most

walked at least one-half to one hour to school, and several walked one to two hours. In schools with new feeding programs, about 90 percent of children had previously had nothing to eat the entire school day (typically five hours).

*A celebration of democracy and education.* The school fair provided an excellent opportunity to see all complementary programs rolling out. The press and radio were present to witness the voting that went on during the fair and the citizens' rights and responsibilities themes. The fair also focused on child-to-child education, with children passing the message about nutrition and oral health to other children. A group of children from another school also gave a presentation on SODIS. Horizontal or child-to-child education is an innovative and effective means of communicating messages of democracy, health, and the environment to the community.

## **Bolivia**

### **Adventist Development and Relief Agency**

The agreement with Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) was signed on June 20, 2002, and commodities will arrive for the implementation beginning in January 2003. ADRA plans to conduct a one-year school feeding program that will include direct distribution to children in primary schools. The goal of the program is to improve school enrollment, attendance, and performance for children in primary school in order to increase the likelihood that students will go on to secondary school. To support this objective, ADRA will distribute 1,560 metric tons of bulgur, wheat flour, corn-soy blend, and non-fat dry milk to 87,572 children (approximately 80-90 children per school). ADRA will distribute the food to schools for the preparation of school breakfasts.

ADRA will begin the activities with an orientation for municipalities and educational authorities on the proposed implementation activities. During the course of the program, ADRA will provide support and training for schools and school directors on the organization of school boards, and on program management and administration. This training also includes lessons on food preparation based on the combination of foods donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and local foods provided by parents. Because this project has not yet been implemented, no data is available.

## **Bolivia**

### **World Food Program**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The World Food Program (WFP) project in Bolivia (technically, two separate projects) focuses on the most depressed areas. In an effort to boost the local economy and production, the Government of Bolivia expressed a preference for local food purchases. Therefore, WFP exchanges the donated U.S. wheat for local products. The daily food



ration provided by WFP for each student provides roughly 800 calories and 26 grams of protein. This program is implemented by local non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and local governments and is co-funded by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

### **Commodity Management**

To support this project, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated 7,880 metric tons of wheat, which arrived in July 2001. The principal purpose of the USDA-donated food is to provide a strategically timed nutritional supplement, giving an "energy boost" to pupils. In an effort to boost the local economy and production, the Government of Bolivia expressed a preference for local food purchases. Therefore, WFP exchanges the donated wheat for local products, mainly vegetable oil, milk beverages, rice, and iodized salt.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The objectives of the project are:

- To improve the attention span and learning capacity of primary school students by alleviating short-term hunger.
- To maintain the increase in school attendance levels achieved in the previous phase.

Under the first objective, the program aims to:

- Involve 480 rural schools in the program.
- Provide 33,000 rural school-age children with a nutritional supplement.
- Distribute 26.4 million rations during the project's life.

The aim of the second objective is to ensure that 95 percent of school-age children will be attending school in the project areas.

**Implementation status:** The daily food ration provided by WFP for each student includes about 100 grams of wheat flour, 35 grams of dried milk beverage (milk, cocoa, sugar, and vitamins), 15 grams of vegetable oil, 30 grams of rice, 20 grams of meat, and five grams of iodized salt. The food ration is served 200 days a year and provides roughly 800 calories and 26 grams of protein.

The food provided by WFP is used in combination with food supplied by parents. Because of the combined amounts of food, the children receive both breakfast and lunch at school. This further contributes to an increased nutritional and educational level of the school-age population. Food assistance has contributed greatly to the organization, motivation, and participation of the parent associations. The parents and communities have become directly involved in alleviating short-term hunger for their children. In

summary, food aid has become an incentive for increased school attendance and a catalyst for parental participation.

This project also contributes to a reduction in the intensity of intestinal helminthes infections in the school-age population through a combination of basic environmental sanitation and periodic de-worming campaigns. These are conducted by regional health authorities, with financial and technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO). Children receive a single oral tablet of an anthelmintic once to three times per year.

**Other donor support:** The WHO, in cooperation with regional health authorities, is providing de-worming medication and hygienic education.

The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank together contribute over \$13 million per year in support of the Government of Bolivia's educational efforts.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, and United Nations Population Fund provide material support and participate in training activities for teachers, parents, and schools.

### **Project Impact**

The project contributes to the education of 50,000 pre-school and primary school children in six of the poorest provinces of the Department of Potosi. The goals are to alleviate short-term hunger, promote regular school attendance, and increase parental participation in the overall management of the education system as a basis for sustainability and phasing out the food aid. Food aid has been a successful cohesive factor in organizing and promoting parent-teacher associations in support of school activities.

The project is an integral part of the new education reform package strongly supported by the World Bank and bilateral donors. It will be implemented through 480 rural schools, where parent associations will be responsible for administering the school feeding component. This is in line with both the Education Reform Law and the Popular Participation Law, which transfer responsibility for education and health activities to municipalities and, at the community level, to grass-roots organizations. The project was financially supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development until mid-1997, when the regional development organization for the region of Potosi took over. The WHO provides technical assistance for the control of intestinal parasitic infection through school-based de-worming campaigns.

The WFP Bolivia school feeding program has brought more children into the classroom. Enrollment levels have increased every year for the last three years. The number of certified teachers has not grown proportionately with the enrollment increases, so more teachers are needed. Enhanced data collection on school attendance, grade progression, and retention is also needed for future evaluation efforts.

# **Dominican Republic Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, Government of the Dominican Republic**

## **Summary of Findings**

The Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) project is a comprehensive effort to develop capacity at the national level to administer school feeding programs through local community organizations. Last year, the groundwork to award grants to local organizations began. Non-governmental organizations, community organizations, and other GODR agencies submitted proposals to serve poor rural schools in their communities, and 16 organizations were selected. This model government-to-government project is expected to feed approximately 30,000 children and benefit an additional 28,000 indirectly through educational improvements. Logistics, training, construction, and education activities began in June 2002. School feeding is scheduled to begin in September 2002 and to continue for two school years until June 2004.

## **Country Overview**

Given the uneven distribution of income in Latin America, poverty is greater than per capita income data alone may indicate. The debt crisis of the 1980's exacerbated the situation. Incomes fell, inequality increased, and the number of people living in poverty rose by at least 40 million or 22 percent during the decade.<sup>1</sup> In the Dominican Republic, conditions worsened considerably along with high inflation and limited government social services.<sup>2</sup> In the late 1990's, however, the Dominican Republic was often cited as an economic miracle. The 2000 United Nations Human Development Report on the Dominican Republic reported that, "Growth rates have averaged above 7 percent in the last four years. Nevertheless, serious problems exist with regard to the quality of social services provided by the public sector."<sup>3</sup> An estimated 25 percent of the population suffers from poverty, with poverty being more severe in rural areas and especially in border provinces.<sup>4</sup> The worst poverty rates are for rural families in which the head of household works in agriculture.<sup>5</sup>

In rural areas, 20 percent of the population has had no formal schooling, compared with 10 percent in urban areas. The difference is even more pronounced when considering those who have studied beyond primary school. In rural areas, the figure is one-sixth that of urban areas,<sup>6</sup> and the illiteracy rate is nearly three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

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<sup>1</sup> A Strategy for Poverty Reduction. IADB. 1997. Updated 2/5/02.

<sup>2</sup> Human Development Report Dominican Republic, 2000. UNDP. (Translated by USDA/FAS).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Country Assistance Strategy, 1997. InterAmerican Development Bank/DR.

<sup>5</sup> Op cit. UNDP.

<sup>6</sup> Op cit. UNDP.

The Global Food for Education (GFE) project was developed by the GODR with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) and Food and Nutrition Service. The project is consistent with the World Bank's recommendation that the government "...develop a more comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that (i) streamlines, integrates and coordinates its ongoing programs, including international aid; (ii) rationalize(s) and targets expenditure towards the poor and most vulnerable, particularly in the social sectors; and (iii) decentralize(s) decision making and foster(s) community participation for the delivery of services to the poor."<sup>7</sup>

The GODR GFE project is targeted primarily at six eastern provinces of the island in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and poverty were among the most severe. The provinces are Monte Plata, El Seibo, Hato Mayor, Samana, San Pedro de Macorís, and three communities within the Federal District. According to the poverty map of the National Planning Office, ONAPLAN, Monte Plata, El Seibo, and Samana are the three poorest provinces in the eastern region of the country. The other three are not far behind. The World Food Program (WFP) GFE program is targeted in Comendador Province bordering Haiti, where there is a significant presence of Haitian immigrants.

### **Commodity Management**

The GODR requested 62,200 metric tons of commodities (50,000 tons of wheat and 12,200 tons of soy bean oil). The commodities were to be monetized and the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Three shipments of commodities arrived as scheduled and monetization took place without a problem, earning \$11.5 million. The proceeds were deposited into a special account managed by the Program Executive Council made up of representatives from the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, Ministry of Education, USDA-FAS, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The proceeds from the donation will be used to carry out community-based school feeding programs developed by local non-governmental organizations (NGO's) aimed at boosting school enrollment, increasing school attendance, and improving academic performance in primary school students. The project will be completed in 2004.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** In order to meet the overall goals of the GFE project (that is, to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls, and to improve child nutrition and health status), the Program Executive Council proposed to carry out the following objectives:

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank Country Brief. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org). June 2002.

- Working through NGO's, establish model community-based food programs in under-served areas.
- Serve 30,000 rations daily to pre-primary and primary school children and their teachers.
- Strengthen parent-teacher organizations.
- Design and deliver teacher training in such areas as health, nutrition, and teaching methodologies.
- Develop and deliver community health/nutrition educational programs.
- Repair and/or construct educational infrastructure, including building kitchens, making basic repairs, and providing potable water, latrines, and classrooms.
- Improve school water and sanitation facilities.
- Develop local food procurement programs and strengthen local production capacity to meet procurement needs.

**Implementation status:** The Program Executive Council was established as a democratic board to develop the program objectives and implementation strategy, oversee the use of funds, monitor project development and progress, and manage evaluations and audits. A public campaign was held announcing the objectives of the GFE program and inviting NGO's, community organizations, and other GODR agencies to develop proposals with poor rural schools located in their communities, and 67 proposals were received.

As of May 2002, 16 projects were selected for funding, with the first disbursements occurring in the third week of May. The Secretariat of Education is collaborating closely on the GFE program, in most cases providing school rations with government funds so that the GFE funds can be used to carry out other objectives of the project.

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. Scholastic performance and attendance rates are low in the rural areas for several reasons including parental indifference, health problems from lack of potable water and health clinics, economic needs forcing children into work, long distances between schools and communities, and early pregnancies.

The GODR GFE program, in conjunction with local FAS and USAID staff, has approved the following projects as of May 2002.

<b>Implementing Organizations and Projects</b>	
<b>Organization/Institution</b>	<b>Project Activities</b>
World Vision	Repair school infrastructure; implement school and family gardens; install school water and sanitation systems; train health and nutrition promoters; train teachers, parents, and community leaders.
Dominican Institute of Integrated Development (IDDI)	Repair deteriorated schools and build additional classrooms; install school gardens and community poultry production; build school water and sanitation systems; provide teacher and community training in health and hygiene; contribute fruit and vegetable production to school lunch program; conduct child de-worming campaigns.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Repair schools and build new classrooms; provide locally produced rations to school lunch program; build school and community water and sanitation systems; provide training to PTA's and families in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
Center of Solidarity for Women Development (CE-MUJER)	Build school water and sanitation systems; train teachers and parents in community development, education, and health; stimulate improved attendance through community organization; form student councils; provide health/nutrition education.
Social Pastoral of Central Zone (CEZOPAS)	Build and repair school infrastructure and water systems; train parents and community leaders in community development, nutrition, and health; stimulate better health and nutrition through family/student-based agricultural production activities and training.
Center for Investigations and Cultural Support (CIAC)	Stimulate local agricultural production to be used in school lunch program; repair schools and build new classrooms; install water and sanitation systems; train community in health and nutrition; organize PTA's and provide teacher training.
Wings of Equality (Alas)	Organize and train PTA's to manage community food production projects to serve school lunch program; install kitchens and water systems at schools; train teachers, community leaders, and health promoters.
Social Pastoral of Central Zone (CEZOPAS)	Build and repair school infrastructure and water systems; train parents and community leaders in community development, nutrition, and health; stimulate better health and nutrition through family/student-based agricultural production activities and training.
Dominican Health and Well-Being Foundation (FUSABI)	Organize and train community groups and students' families in agricultural production aimed at improving child nutrition and servicing school lunch program; provide community health training, de-worming campaigns, and promote good hygiene practices.
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Repair schools and build new classrooms; provide locally produced rations to school lunch program, build school and community water and sanitation systems, provide training to PTA's and families in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
Secretariat of Education (SEE)	Implement school lunch program based on preparation of meals from locally produced foodstuffs; organize and train communities to prepare school lunches; provide training to teachers and PTA's in health and nutrition; conduct de-worming campaigns.
Women in Development (MUDE)	Provide health and sanitation training and stimulate community participation to improve child health and the school environment; build water and sanitation systems at schools; form student councils and work with parents to increase student enrollment and attendance.
Commission Presidential	Repair schools and build additional classrooms; construct water and sanitation systems; train community leaders and promoters in health, hygiene, and nutrition; organize PTA's and involve parents in preparation of school lunches.
Secretariat of Education (SEE)	Convert current lunch program to lunch program based on community produced foodstuffs; build kitchens and water systems required to prepare school lunches; provide training to teachers and PTA's in health and nutrition; conduct de-worming campaigns.
Dominican Institute of Integrated Development (IDDI)	Repair deteriorated schools and build additional classrooms; install school gardens and community poultry production; build school water and sanitation systems, provide teacher and community training in health and hygiene; contribute fruit and vegetable production to school lunch program; conduct child de-worming campaigns.

**Other donor support:** The GODR is carrying out its school feeding program in many of the same areas in which the other GFE projects are being implemented, sometimes with complementary feeding and sometimes with parallel programs to improve the educational environment and eliminate non-food obstacles to student enrollment, attendance, and performance.

**Sustainability:** The government already has an established school feeding program and has made a commitment to continue its work in any GFE community after the GFE project itself ends. There are also aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond GFE, including teacher training, community empowerment, infrastructure development, and community support for education. However, the cost of the complementary food and its distribution is one issue that must be addressed in the program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** The Program Executive Council will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation activities, but USDA-FAS will also play a significant role. USDA has two full-time staff assigned to the Dominican Republic GFE. They provide project management and will set up the local monitoring system for USDA. The staff member responsible for the monitoring and evaluation began to work with the project implementing organizations to carry out baseline surveys of targeted schools before the end of the 2002 school year in June. Preliminary baseline surveys had not yet been carried out because the list of schools is not yet finalized.

Schools were selected based on different criteria, and USDA trained all project implementing organizations in the use of the questionnaire. Implementing organizations must submit baseline data to the Program Executive Council and USDA by June 30. Once the information is submitted, USDA and the council will validate it and cross tabulate it with the Ministry of Education's database. USDA, the Program Executive Council, and the implementing organizations will coordinate their monitoring and evaluation efforts to the extent possible to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. Because each implementing organization has its own unique project, sampling matrices were developed for each project.

### **Project Impact**

The Secretariat of Education and community-based NGO's have held numerous planning meetings and activities, thereby building the public-private sector coordination and strengthening the link between communities and their schools. This link should be further strengthened as the community-based projects are implemented. Project implementation begins in September 2002.

### **Lessons Learned**

Government-to-government programs such as this one require a significant startup effort where there is no school feeding structure established at either the national or municipal level. A grant award process must be developed, learned, and implemented. Much

planning is necessary for the national and municipal capacity building and training of NGO's. Resources must also be coordinated from other organizations, such as U.S. government agencies, international aid organizations, and national government entities.

### **Next Steps**

Now that the planning phase is over, the Program Executive Council is planning to carry out the objectives of the program and promote the project in order to solicit and award further grants.

The expected outcomes of the first 16 approved projects are:

Participating schools	350
Direct beneficiaries (school children)	58,000
Daily food rations served	30,000
Duration of program	2.5 years
Schools repaired	103
New classrooms built/reconstructed	82
Kitchens repaired/constructed	140
School water systems built/repared	180
Community water systems built/repared	5
School sanitary systems built/repared	180
Family latrines constructed	1,900
School gardens developed	38
Family gardens developed	2,800
Family animal production	1,015
Teachers/community leaders trained	5,000
PTA's organized and trained	305
Children de-wormed	32,000
Health promoters trained	450
Health centers constructed	75
Students vaccinated	1,100

Additional GFE activities that are difficult to quantify include, but are not limited to, the following: parental education; curriculum development; small loans to school families; road repairs; supporting local school food processors; purchases of teaching equipment, school furniture, and school supplies; training in produce handling, food safety, and community organization.

The project will be completed in 2004.



# **Dominican Republic World Food Program**

## **Summary of Findings**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) food assistance has helped play an important role in providing nutritional supplements to school children in the target areas of the Dominican Republic with high levels of food insecurity and low school attendance rates. The World Food Program (WFP) uses USDA commodities to provide a snack and lunch to students attending schools in these regions. Over the last two years, enrollment in schools with existing programs has shown a modest increase of 1.74 percent for boys and 0.87 percent for girls. A similarly modest, though somewhat higher, increase was noted in schools with new feeding programs, where enrollment has been increasing by 1.74 percent for girls and 1.23 percent for boys. Perhaps even more important is the high level of parental participation and contribution to the WFP school feeding program.

## **Commodity Management**

WFP Dominican Republic requested and received 310 metric tons of rice for use in this school feeding project. The rice arrived in November 2001.

## **Project Overview**

This project assists pre-school and primary school children on the border area with Haiti and ensures that all children in the area, regardless of their national origin, are enrolled in schools and provided with meals. The long-term objective of the project is to support the government's 10-year education plan for pre-school and basic education, as well as to increase the consumption of micronutrients for the selected beneficiaries. The WFP project is complementary to the existing government programs that are progressively incorporating the schools receiving WFP food. The project is expected to contribute to the stabilization of student attendance at the schools.

Within the project's geographical area, the targeting of schools is based on the size of the school and road accessibility. Priority is given to multi-grade classrooms (an indicator for very small and poor schools) and to schools located in areas difficult to reach, such as the mountainous Cordillera.

**Goals and objectives:** The immediate objectives of the WFP project are:

- To alleviate short-term hunger through the provision of an enriched school snack and lunch, thereby improving the learning capacity of students at the pre-school and primary levels.

- To enable poor families to send their children to school, with a particular emphasis on girls' access.
- To stimulate community participation in the implementation of the feeding program and education activities.
- To introduce rural, marginalized schools into the government food program.

The expected results of the project during the five years are:

- To provide approximately 95,000 school children in primary and pre-schools in the target areas with a fortified blend, along with cereals, vegetable oil, and sugar. The government programs of de-worming, provision of safe and sanitary facilities, and health/nutrition education are integrated into the school feeding project.
- To assist and enable approximately 95,000 children to regularly attend classes, with particular attention to girls.
- To ensure that all schools (887 total) in the program have parents' associations established and functioning. Activities are implemented to improve knowledge and practice of health/nutrition principles through parent education, special courses for teachers, and educational summer camps.

All primary schools in the country have two sessions—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. A snack made with corn-soy blend is given to children attending in the morning session before the start of the class at 8:00 a.m. to improve their concentration and attention span. Other commodities are used for a lunch that is served at noon for the morning classes and at 1:30 p.m. for the afternoon classes, which start at 2:00 p.m. The afternoon classes also receive a corn-soy blend snack at break time in the afternoon.

The feeding schedule addresses the nutritional needs of children and the two-session school schedule, while reducing the meal preparation time. Community parent associations prepare meals and handle other aspects linked with this activity, such as providing gas for stoves and contributing local foods. Parents are responsible for the management and supervision of the WFP food. Most of the schools have been provided with kitchen utensils for food preparation, and the community contributes other foodstuffs, such as vegetables and condiments.

**Other donor support:** The Ministry of Education contributes \$3,655,288 to support staff salaries, food receipt/transport/warehousing, non-food items, and training. The Inter-American Development Bank (\$52 million) and the World Bank (\$37 million) support project activities in training, de-worming, weight/height census, and other related areas.

**Sustainability:** The high level of community participation is an asset and helps build sustainability for the continuation of school feeding after the GFE project. Government programs for de-worming, provision of safe water and sanitary facilities, and health/nutrition education also constitute a permanent achievement.

## **Project Impact**

Over the last 2 years, enrollment in schools with existing programs has shown a modest increase of 1.74 percent for boys and 0.87 percent for girls. A similarly modest, though somewhat higher, increase was noted in schools with new feeding programs.

In schools with existing feeding programs, student-teacher ratios have remained constant at 38 students per teacher, just as they were in 1998. In schools with new programs, student-teacher ratios have increased from an average of 21 students per teacher to 32 students per teacher. Class size in schools with existing programs has decreased from 50 to 47 students per classroom since 1998. In schools with new programs, class size has remained constant, averaging 40 students per classroom.

One important impact of the project is on the level of community participation in the schools. Primary schools with existing programs had an average of three teachers and 19 community members involved in some way with the school feeding activity. Schools with new feeding programs had significantly higher levels of involvement—an average of three teachers and 255 community members per school.

Food aid plays an important role in providing nutritional supplements to school children in the target areas, which are known to be among the most food insecure areas with the lowest school attendance rates. The school feeding encourages families to maintain their children in school. It also encourages the government to include these schools in the national school feeding program.

# **El Salvador World Food Program**

## **Summary of Findings**

The Government of El Salvador is fully committed to implementing a national school feeding program. The World Food Program's (WFP's) school feeding program complements the government's effort in enabling a full school feeding program implementation by the school year that begins in 2003. Enrollment levels continue to increase with the school feeding, as do the number of students remaining in school to enter higher grade levels.

## **Country Overview**

The end of the internal conflict in El Salvador and the process of pacification of the country since January 1992 brought increased pressure on government social structures. Areas of the country that were previously inaccessible now demand basic services, particularly in health and education, which the public sector is hard-pressed to provide in the short term. Years of conflict and economic crisis have resulted in severe impoverishment of the population. During the 1980's, real per capita income decreased an estimated 20 percent. By 1988, two-thirds of the population (3.5 million persons) was living in poverty, including 1.5 million in extreme poverty without access to a minimum diet.

Malnutrition and related conditions continue to afflict a considerable number of children. Nutritional surveys showed that about 50 percent of children under age 5 had some nutritional deficiency in 1988. Of these, 15.2 percent, or 133,000 children, suffered moderate to severe malnutrition, with the worst deficiencies being found among children 6-36 months old.

The primary education sector shows low enrollment rates and high levels of dropout and repetition. In rural areas, the actual registration of students reached only 57 percent of potential enrollment. Annual dropout and repetition rates in rural areas are estimated at 17 and 19 percent, respectively, with the worst rates in the first, second, and third grades. Given the very difficult economic conditions of most households in rural areas, many families register their children in primary school only to comply with the mandatory school enrollment legislation. Many of these children fail to complete the school year. Of every 100 children entering the first grade, only 19 complete the nine grades of primary education. One of the main reasons given for the dropout rates is that children have to contribute to the family income by obtaining employment or helping out on the family farm at an early age. The other principal reason is that older children have to take care of younger siblings. In rural areas, children from poor families go to school without a proper meal, and their performance suffers.

## **Commodity Management**

USDA provided 9,040 metric tons of commodities to WFP in support of its El Salvador activity entitled “Development of Community-Based Primary Education and Preventative Health Care.”

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	6,400	August 2001
Rice	2,500	September 2001
Soybean oil	140	September 2001

## **Project Overview**

The improvement in living conditions in districts affected by extreme poverty can only be achieved in the medium- to long-term through economic development programs and social measures that ensure access to basic education and expand the coverage and quality of health services and social security. This project has been designed within this context, focusing on the 133 districts most affected by poverty.

**Goals and objectives:** The objectives of the community-based education component of the WFP project are to:

- Relieve short-term hunger among primary school children through the provision of a school meal.
- Achieve a sustained increase in attendance in the first six grades of primary school in selected districts.

The school meals provided for children from poor families enrolled in the first six grades of primary education are an incentive for them to attend school regularly. In addition, the educational activities organized around the feeding program provide an incentive for parents to keep their children at school. It is also an incentive for them to participate in the parent-teacher associations (PTA's), to improve the school gardens, and to make small improvements and maintain school infrastructure. From previous WFP experience, PTA's increase cooperation with the schools in which a feeding program exists.

**Implementation status:** The activity targets approximately 200,000 children in the first six grades of primary school who are enrolled and attend classes regularly. The school feeding activity has a highly participatory approach because it is managed by parents' committees that support the teaching staff for this purpose. The parents also contribute some vegetables, pulses, sugar, and fuel for preparation of the school meal. A locally produced cereal blend, made from maize (70 percent) and soy (30 percent) is distributed, replacing the milk that was included in previous rations. In primary schools, this blend, with added flavoring, is prepared as a drink. Rice and canned meat are included in the

ration for the sake of variety in the preparation of school meals. For primary school children, the individual ration provides about 481 calories and 13 grams of protein, or about one-fourth of the energy requirements and one-fourth to two-fifths of daily protein requirements.

**Other donor support:** The overall project of which the school feeding activity is a component has broad support from other government ministries as well as other donors. The Ministry of the Presidency and the Ministry of Planning are involved in logistical support of the activity. The Ministry of Health is supporting the feeding activity with deworming and vaccination campaigns. The U.S. Agency for International Development is contributing training materials through its the Maternal and Child Health Survival Project program, and United Nations Children's Fund is assisting the project in developing training for community leaders and is supporting the project through its nutrition surveillance program. The Pan American Health Organization is providing technical assistance to develop nutrition and health education modules. Local community members are contributing in cash and kind for the transportation of the commodities.

**Sustainability:** The government will provide support to the community associations, which on a limited basis are already taking over the administration of pre-primary school facilities and services. Increased government spending on basic education and enhanced community participation should lead to the eventual takeover of project activities.

### **Project Impact**

Over the last three years, enrollment in primary schools increased 2.19 percent for girls and 1.44 percent for boys. With only one exception, average monthly attendance is higher for girls than for boys. How the attendance pattern is affected by the school feeding program has not yet been analyzed.

At the same time as enrollment has increased, student-teacher ratios and class size have declined since 1999. The average student-teacher ratio has dropped from 36 to 32 students per teacher. Class size has decreased from 38 to 33 students per classroom in that same period.

Another important impact is on the level of community participation in education. It is clear that the school feeding program involves many community members. The primary schools with school feeding programs have an average of four teachers and 51 community members involved in some way with the school feeding activity.

## **Guatemala Catholic Relief Services**

### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding and other project activities began in more than 250 schools in June 2002. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has hired local staff, entered into agreements with local non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and has begun its implementation planning and community organization activities. CRS personnel worked with WorldShare, SHARE, other private voluntary organizations (PVO's) in the area, and the Ministry of Education to identify schools to be served and avoid overlap of programs. The CRS project is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003 pending approval.

### **Country Overview**

More than 35 years of civil strife and violence left Guatemala one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Peace accords were signed in 1996, ending a conflict that reportedly left 140,000-200,000 people dead or missing and more than 65,000 internally displaced or refugees. Repatriation and return have begun, but the process is often complicated by land disputes, fear, and mistrust. In the areas most affected by the violence, there is often a generalized mistrust of the government, the armed forces in particular, and any outsiders. These factors have exacerbated Guatemala's challenge in dealing with chronic poverty and its causes and consequences.

In rural areas, only two of every 10 children attend school. Of these, only about 20 percent graduate from sixth grade. –DataPro Monitoring Report

In its "Poverty Reduction Strategy: The Road to Peace," the Government of Guatemala classifies as extremely poor "a person whose consumption is so low that it is not sufficient to cover his daily protein and caloric needs."<sup>8</sup> In the three departments (states) in the CRS Global Food for Education (GFE) project, the vast majority of rural people live in poverty, with 36-56 percent living in extreme poverty.<sup>9</sup> Among the people in those areas, the differences between the indigenous and non-indigenous people are significant. An estimated 88 percent of the indigenous of Baja Verapaz live in poverty, while only 30 percent of the non-indigenous live in those conditions. Among the indigenous people in that department, 56 percent live in extreme poverty, compared with 16 percent of the non-indigenous people.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Poverty Reduction Strategy: The Road to Peace. Government of Guatemala. November 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Guatemala has the highest maternal mortality rate in Central America, the shortest life span, and the highest death rate for children less than 5 years of age.<sup>11</sup> According to the United Nations Development Project's 2000 Human Development Index, Guatemala is in last place in Central America for human development and ranks 120 out of 174 countries in the world. The Institute for Nutrition in Central America and Panama (INCAP) estimates that 240 of 330 Guatemalan municipalities face food security emergencies. More than 46 percent of the population is chronically malnourished, and this figure reaches 69 percent in two departments. Destruction from Hurricane Mitch, several years of drought, and a world coffee crisis have only exacerbated the seriousness of the situation for vulnerable groups.

CRS has targeted Baja Verapaz, San Marcos, and Santa Rosa, three departments that have a poverty rate ranging from 65-75 percent of the general population and a chronic malnutrition rate of 56-69 percent for children under age 5.<sup>12</sup> Three of the four departments that WorldShare has targeted (Huehuetenango, Alta, and Baja Verapaz) have a poverty rate exceeding 75 percent of the general population, and chronic malnutrition affects 56-69 percent of children under 5.<sup>13</sup> In March 2002, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) declared food emergencies in numerous municipalities in Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Alta, and Baja Verapaz.

“Education for all” is a goal still to be achieved. According to the Government of Guatemala, the poor have only 1.9 years of schooling on average, far below the four years needed to acquire functional literacy and basic mathematical skills.<sup>14</sup> In rural areas only two of every 10 children attend school; of these, only about 20 percent graduate from sixth grade.<sup>15</sup> In one municipality in Huehuetenango, for example, of approximately 2,800 students who began first grade, only 11 reached the sixth grade.<sup>16</sup> In indigenous communities, it is not uncommon for parents to send their children to school for the first three years only, primarily to learn Spanish. There is a steep dropout rate between third and fourth grades. Indeed, many schools in remote areas only offer the first three grades.

Centuries of virtual isolation and lack of educational opportunity have left 31.7 percent of the population unable to speak Spanish. Most people participate only marginally in the national cash economy.<sup>17</sup> Adult literacy is 63.6 percent on average and only 41.5 percent for women.<sup>18</sup>

Within this social and economic context, CRS and WorldShare proposed to target municipalities in nine departments (later reduced to seven to sharpen project focus) in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and primary school enrollment and

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<sup>11</sup> UNDP Human Development Report 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Op cit. Poverty Reduction Strategy.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> DataPro Monitoring and Evaluation Report April 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> [www.stanford.edu/~libertad/internetguatemala/education](http://www.stanford.edu/~libertad/internetguatemala/education).

<sup>18</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/goes/gt](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/goes/gt).



attendance were among the most severe in the country. These departments have primarily indigenous populations and "experience the highest levels of social exclusion, the worst social conditions, and the greatest prevalence of poverty and food insecurity."<sup>19</sup> The school attendance of indigenous children is between 10 and 15 percentage points less than the attendance on non-indigenous children.<sup>20</sup>

CRS, WorldShare, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) shared the expectation that the GFE projects would be able to make a significant contribution in these impoverished areas of Guatemala. The agreement between CRS and USDA was signed Nov. 15, 2001, with an estimated commodity value of \$3,483,160. The agreement between WorldShare and USDA was signed Aug. 6, 2001 with an estimated commodity value of \$2,256,400.

### **Commodity Management**

CRS requested 27,630 metric tons of commodities in the following amounts: corn-soy blend, 390 tons; corn, 390 tons; rice, 390 tons; soybean oil, 160 tons; and bulk yellow corn, 26,300 tons. The corn-soy blend, rice, soybean oil, and non-bulk corn are to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The bulk yellow corn was monetized and the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, as well as enhance the learning environment. Three shipments of bulk corn for monetization arrived in December 2001 and February and April 2002. The commodities for direct distribution arrived in December 2001-January 2002. Shipments went relatively well, except 68 bags of corn in the first monetization commodity shipment were damaged.

There was also a delay in starting the project. First, the agreement with USDA had to be completed and signed. Later, monetization shipments were held up by CRS in Baltimore to review contract language. Because of this latter delay, the implementation of school feeding was postponed, and the feeding began in early June 2002 rather than in late January-early February when school started.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CRS and its implementing partners established multiple goals and objectives for their GFE project. They proposed to carry out the following objectives in order to meet the overall goals of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls.

- Carry out direct feeding of 26,700 pre-primary and primary school children and their teachers.

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<sup>19</sup> WorldShare GFE Agreement August 2001.

<sup>20</sup> SigloVeintiuno.Lepe, David. 24/4/02, p. 8.

- Distribute monthly take-home rations of five pounds each of yellow corn, rice, and corn-soy blend, and one liter of vegetable oil to students with 80-percent attendance and to teachers with 75-percent participation in training sessions on health, nutrition, and other themes.
- Design and deliver teacher training in health, nutrition, and teaching methodologies.
- Repair educational infrastructure in schools, including kitchens, potable water facilities, and latrines.
- Purchase and distribute educational materials to schools, such as encyclopedias or dictionaries.
- Implement a school garden program.

**Implementation status:** Startup of the project was delayed, as described above, so that CRS was unable to initiate the feeding when classes began in 2002. However, within a short period of time, CRS identified its schools, hired local staff, entered into agreements with local NGO cooperating institutions, and began its implementation planning and community organization activities. CRS personnel worked with WorldShare, SHARE, and the Guatemala Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to identify schools to be served and to avoid overlap of programs. There was also coordination at the local level to minimize overlap with other PVO's working in the area, and to maximize coverage.

The formal agreement between CRS and MINEDUC was signed in early June 2002. School feeding and other project activities will begin in 251-255 schools in June 2002.

**Other donor support:** MINEDUC is implementing a snack/breakfast program in some of the schools, but CRS has been able to avoid overlap to date. From its own organizational funds, CRS has developed a small grants program. Parent associations can apply for these grants to fund projects to improve their schools and the educational environment.

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue to be analyzed once the project is fully implemented. Aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond GFE include teacher training, community empowerment, school gardens, infrastructure development, community support for education, and better educated children. MINEDUC's effort to provide school snacks is also a very important step in a sustainable program. However, past efforts by the government to support a school feeding program have not been sustained because of other budgetary priorities. The cost of the food and its distribution are issues that must be addressed in any school feeding program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and CRS will carry out monitoring and evaluation activities. The DataPro organization in Guatemala provides the local monitoring for USDA. The principal monitor is an anthropologist skilled in community-based evaluations. She has begun the process of qualitative data collection and will be leading focus groups of parents, teachers, and students in the next few months. Indigenous groups speak more than 20 languages, and the majority of indigenous women do not speak Spanish well. Native speakers who can interpret into Spanish for the data collection assist the monitor in conducting the focus groups.

CRS, SHARE, and DataPro have coordinated their monitoring and evaluation efforts to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. As a group, the personnel reached a consensus on the factors that could impact a GFE project's success. They agreed that most important factors are the regions of the country for various political, economic, and social reasons; and school population. It was agreed that school size was a proxy indicator for many other important factors. Schools with fewer than 100 students are likely to:

- Be located in more remote, less accessible areas.
- Have poorer infrastructure.
- Have fewer teachers, who are less likely to live in the community.
- Be located in areas of lower population density, meaning longer distances for children to walk to school.
- Have less parental support for education and pride in the school.

All these factors contribute to success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by CRS and its cooperating institutions.

A matrix was developed, and all CRS schools will be distributed on the matrix once CRS finalizes its list of schools. Schools will then be chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. During the work session with CRS, WorldShare, SHARE, and DataPro, there was subsequent discussion with DataPro to be sure that the schools would be representative of their GFE projects. Alternate schools will be chosen in case a school should drop out of the project, or some other unforeseen circumstance should occur (such as impassable roads). Preliminary baseline surveys have not yet been carried out because the list of schools is not yet finalized.

### **Lessons Learned**

Because CRS had a longer startup period, it was able to negotiate over the targeted schools and municipalities and thereby avoid the overlap with MINEDUC feeding programs.<sup>21</sup>

### **Next Steps**

With the completion of the startup phase, CRS is planning to carry out the objectives of the project, including direct feeding and distribution of take-home rations; teacher training in health and nutrition; repair and construction of educational infrastructure, including kitchens, and modest payment to a local cook at the school; purchase and distribution of educational materials; and implementation of a school garden program.

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<sup>21</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report, May 2002. DataPro, Guatemala City.

## **Guatemala WorldShare**

### **Summary of Findings**

In February 2002, WorldShare distributed school supplies to 67,000 pre-primary and primary school students. School feeding began in March 2002. The primary school enrollment was higher than WorldShare had expected or planned for, based on previous government statistics. In March 2002, WorldShare fed 55,838 primary school students compared with 50,000 projected. In April, 61,092 pre-primary and primary school students were fed. Through WorldShare's Global Food for Education (GFE) project, 15,300 food-scholarship recipients began to receive take-home rations in April 2002; WorldShare had expected 7,000 students. The GFE project has also generated other unanticipated outcomes. Because water is needed for food preparation and cleanup, parents in some schools have been re-energized to try to resolve longstanding problems with lack of water in the schools. The WorldShare GFE program is scheduled to continue through November 2002.

### **Commodity Management**

The requested commodities and amounts were: corn-soy blend, 460 metric tons; non-fat dry milk, 40 tons; rice, 210 tons; vegetable oil, 60 tons; yellow corn, 250 tons; bulk yellow corn, 20,000 tons.

The corn-soy blend, non-fat dry milk, rice, vegetable oil, and non-bulk corn are to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The bulk yellow corn is to be monetized, with the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Delivery for the bulk corn to be monetized was set for October 2001, with the arrival of the direct distribution commodities to take place in December 2001.

The shipment of commodities for distribution went relatively well, as did the first monetization commodity shipment of 10,000 tons, except that it was short 198 tons because of a problem of barge capacity. However, the corn was monetized on time, with no major problems. The second monetization shipment of 10,000 tons included an additional 198 tons to make up for the shortage in the first shipment. This shipment, however, presented another problem, because it was 30 days past the dates stipulated in the monetization contract with the local buyer. As a result of the delay, WorldShare had to offer a \$3.00-per-ton discount to compensate the buyer for the late arrival.

There were also delays in getting the letter for the distribution commodities that allows them to enter without taxes. Because of this latter delay, the food did not arrive at the

regional warehouses according to schedule, and feeding had to be postponed. Feeding started in March 2002 instead of late January-early February when school began.

The distribution of the commodities to the regional warehouses and from there to the communities is complex and involves significant community participation. One of the responsibilities of the parents is to ensure that the food gets to their community. WorldShare requires that parents pay a small amount of money into a school fund managed by the parent-school committee. This money pays for transportation from the warehouse to the school, as well as for school-related projects.

The first distribution covering the first three months of feeding was well organized and efficient, in spite of the fact that many of the communities are very remote. In some cases, parents carry 100-pound sacks of corn-soy blend up a mountainside for several hours because the schools are not accessible by vehicle. In other cases, the parent committee is able to rent a truck to deliver the products to the school. In a few cases, the municipal government is working with the community to deliver the food by municipal truck.

The corn-soy blend is widely accepted. It is well received in traditional hot *atole* (porridge/gruel) drinks. Children like the flavor, and mothers know how to cook with it. It should also be noted that one use of the monetization proceeds is for the parent committees to purchase local foods to complement the *atole*. This has been a success because it allows children to eat fruit when it is not traditionally available to them. Furthermore, it helps stimulate the local economy and productive capacity.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** WorldShare and its implementing partner, SHARE de Guatemala, established an ambitious set of goals and objectives for their GFE project. In order to meet the overall goals of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls, they proposed carrying out the following objectives:

- Feed 12,000 pre-primary children and 50,000-60,000 primary school students.
- Distribute school scholarships to families and boarding schools for 1,000 secondary school boarding students.
- Provide take-home ration food scholarships to families of 6,000 fourth and fifth graders who maintain high attendance and a predetermined grade performance average.
- Purchase and distribute school supplies to 62,000 students and teachers.
- Engage out-of-school children (ages 12-18) in informal education programs.
- Use food-for-work rations for repair and construction of educational infrastructure.
- Conduct literacy programs for at least 200 illiterate adults.
- Design and deliver teacher training programs.

**Implementation status:** WorldShare entered into an agreement with its affiliate, SHARE de Guatemala, to carry out the GFE project in the country. SHARE entered into agreements with four non-governmental organization (NGO) cooperating institutions, identified target schools, hired local staff, and began implementation planning and community organization activities. WorldShare and SHARE de Guatemala personnel worked with CRS and the Guatemalan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to identify schools to be served and to avoid overlap of programs. Despite the effort to carefully coordinate activities, MINEDUC began its school feeding program about one month after WorldShare began the GFE program, and there is overlap in some schools. WorldShare also coordinated efforts at the local level to minimize overlap with other PVO's working in the area and to maximize coverage.

WorldShare got a somewhat late start in the direct feeding because of the delay in the delivery of the commodities. Although feeding could not begin at the start of the school year because the distribution commodities were not yet in place, WorldShare provided 67,000 students with a bag of school supplies, including items such as notebooks, pencil, pencil sharpener, eraser, scissors, crayons, and a ruler. The lack of school supplies often presents an obstacle to student enrollment and attendance because parents do not have the money to purchase these items.

School feeding began in March 2002. Pre-primary school enrollment has been lower than planned because of the lack of kindergarten schools and parental disinterest (9,256 actual enrollment in March versus 12,000 planned). On the other hand, primary school enrollment was higher than WorldShare had expected or planned for based on previous MINEDUC statistics. In March 2002, WorldShare fed 55,838 primary school students versus 50,000 projected. In April, 61,092 pre-primary and primary school students were fed. Through WorldShare's GFE project, 15,300 food-scholarship recipients began to receive take-home rations in April 2002, compared with an expected 7,000 students.

WorldShare completed initial teacher and parent training in the control and use of the commodities, as well as management of the school nutrition committee, tracking and documenting expenditures, and financial recordkeeping. This transparency of financial records and careful recordkeeping required by WorldShare builds greater trust among other parents in the workings of the committee. In addition, it promotes a closer working relationship between parents and teachers.

WorldShare has initiated a food scholarship pilot project for 449 students who participate in the *telesecundaria* program, a government distance-learning project aimed at people who dropped out after third grade. WorldShare is also giving literacy classes to 253 adults, many of whom are mothers participating in WorldShare's ongoing maternal-child health project. This is significant because the greatest predictor of a girl's educational level is her mother's. The mothers in the program will be more likely to send their girls to school.

**Other donor support:** MINEDUC is implementing a snack/breakfast program in some of the schools. This has led to some confusion and overlap, but WorldShare is working with

the schools to help them distribute the food in such a way that it maximizes the feeding potential. PRONADE, a government program to assist community-managed schools, gives some basic school snacks on a somewhat irregular basis, student and teacher educational materials, and some teacher training. PRONADE schools are generally in the remotest areas and poorest communities. Three programs through the Ministry of Health provide health education, water and sanitation, and other health services. The Ministry of Health is carrying out de-worming campaigns in some schools.

Some municipal governments are donating transportation and delivering the food commodities to the schools.

There is some activity by the European Union in the construction of infrastructure in some schools.

Plan International is active in a number of communities and carries out a variety of activities, depending on the school. These activities include donations of educational materials, teacher training, and reproductive health training.

**Sustainability:** There is significant parental support for this project, as demonstrated by the high levels of participation and the payment of a small monthly fee for transportation of commodities and school improvements. MINEDUC effort to provide snacks is also a very important step in a sustainable program. However, past efforts by the government to sustain a school feeding program have resulted in programs that ended before the end of the school year because of other budgetary priorities. WorldShare intends to work on identifying potential donors in the private sector this year to begin to develop funding partners.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and WorldShare are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. The DataPro organization in Guatemala provides the local monitoring for USDA. The principal monitor is an anthropologist skilled in community-based evaluations. She has begun the process of qualitative data collection and will be leading focus groups of parents, teachers and students in the next few months. Guatemala has indigenous groups who speak more than 20 languages, and many of the indigenous women do not speak Spanish well. Native speakers who can interpret into Spanish for the data collection will assist the principal monitor in conducting the focus groups.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Teachers in almost every sample and non-sample school visited to date reported somewhat higher enrollment and the return of past dropouts. However, not enough data has been collected for a comprehensive analysis. Early indications are that as children find out about the project, they enroll even after the official enrollment period is over. Their presence is then reflected only in the attendance figures.

**Attendance:** Reports indicated that absenteeism has dropped to almost nothing. Furthermore, teachers have noted that punctuality has improved, particularly in those schools that serve the food early in the school day. Both teachers and parents said that the children now stay home from school only when they are truly sick. Enough data has not yet been collected for a statistical analysis.

**Performance:** Teachers report that students are more attentive in class, play with more enthusiasm and energy at recess, and learn more quickly. Teachers tell monitors that, since the school feeding began, it takes them less time and fewer repetitions to teach a lesson before the children learn it.

**Special emphasis on girls:** Data has not yet been collected and analyzed to be able to say with any certainty how enrollment or attendance by girls has been affected. However, it must be stated that Guatemalan girls lag far behind boys in enrollment, attendance, number of years studied, and literacy. Of the girls who do attend primary school, there is a significant drop in enrollment after third grade, which WorldShare is attempting to address through its food scholarship program for fourth and fifth graders.

**Other project achievements:** One of the results of the initial implementation of GFE is that teachers report a stronger parent-school bond. Because they work cooperatively and collaboratively on the feeding (teachers track the commodities, and parents manage the complementary food purchase and snack preparation), they must work together. This is a great advance from the perspective of the teachers, who commented on this frequently.

When the complementary food fund ran out of money, the president of the school nutrition committee offered to use his own money until they received the next advance from WorldShare. That way, he said, the children would not have to go without. Fortunately, the principal was able to advance the money from the school's very small petty cash fund.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Because water is needed for the preparation and cleanup of the *atole*, parents in some schools have been re-energized to try to resolve longstanding problems with lack of water in the school. In Baja Verapaz, for example, children have to bring a jug of water to school to make the *atole*. The parents of Nimacabaj are trying to finish a water system so that the school will have water.

Teachers in one school reported that because of parental participation in the feeding program, students now show a greater interest in school government and are helping to carry out the snack program.

It is worth noting that the commitment of parents in becoming involved in a public leadership role requires self-sacrifice and courage. During the long armed conflict,



community leaders were frequently the targets of assassination. That parents would be willing to assume these public leadership roles, and allow their children to do so, speaks volumes about their commitment to the GFE project and the benefit they see for their children.

Some parents report that they have received lectures from their children on the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the latrine—lessons the children learned at school in conjunction with the GFE feeding.

### **Lessons Learned**

Although it is very early in the WorldShare/SHARE project in Guatemala, some simple lessons have been learned.

Many children come to school hungry, and some eat little or nothing other than what they get at school. Parents have cited the lack of food as a reason to keep their children at home as surely as the need for the labor of children at home or concerns about bad weather.

Timely startup and kept promises are important to overcome traditional skepticism about organizations and agencies fulfilling their promises. According to the USDA monitor in Guatemala, the fulfillment of assumed responsibilities, the quickness of the delivery, and the lack of bureaucracy have given the WorldShare/SHARE GFE project a good reputation.<sup>22</sup>

By providing administrative support and avoiding paternalistic attitudes, WorldShare has shown that an organization implementing a GFE project can strengthen the local community's power, skill in project administration, and women's participation.<sup>23</sup> For example, in Nimacabaj, Rabinal, the parents' school nutrition committee has an accounting book in which they record their expenses and collect receipts for purchases. The parent committees administer the funds for the GFE Project, while getting support from the teachers. This avoids misunderstandings in the financial management.

USDA should explore putting a delivery delay assessment in the shipping language for GFE commodities so that the shipper has an incentive to deliver the commodities on time. This would help avoid any late startups due to delayed commodity shipments.

### **Best Practices**

Delivering a modest amount of school supplies to children during the first weeks of school provides significant help to parents, and removes one of the barriers to children's attendance at school.

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<sup>22</sup> Op cit. DataPro Report April 2000.

<sup>23</sup> Op cit. DataPro Report April 2000.

## **Next Steps**

Now that the startup phase is over, WorldShare is planning to carry out the rest of its objectives in the project, including teacher training, strengthening the parent-teacher organizations, organizing de-worming campaigns with the Ministry of Health, working with out-of-school adolescents, and implementing the food-for-work infrastructure repair projects.

Because WorldShare, Plan International, and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are working in some of the same areas, care will have to be taken to minimize overlap. Japan, through JICA, is financing a new Government of Guatemala effort in school lunches. It will be important that coordination start soon.

## **GFE in Action**

Of all the foods that given to the children, they enjoy fruit the most. The fruit has several positive effects, according to the teachers, because:

- It contributes to the children's health as a source of vitamins.
- Its purchase locally can help stimulate the local economy and local production.
- It is a biodegradable product that leaves no permanent trash.
- It can sometimes have more than one use; in Nimacabaj, for example, the fruit peels are used to feed the school's small colony of rabbits.

Many communities are located far from roads and are not accessible by vehicle. These communities are typically the poorest, but the parents make great efforts to send their children to school. In the hamlet of Jolotes in Huehuetenango, the community is dispersed and children face a 45-minute walk to school. They are often barefoot and have to walk through rain and mud during the six-month rainy season. The poverty of the area can be seen in the school, which offers all six grades of primary school with only one teacher. Nonetheless, the parents and their children who attend school have a commitment to the school. The student government put up screening in the school, which had come down, and parents and students are organizing themselves to do more school improvement work. The parents have asked for help to construct at least one more classroom at the school.

## **Honduras**

### **Catholic Relief Services**

#### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding began in April 2002 with 4,334 children in primary and pre-primary school receiving nutritious breakfasts. Breakfasts included rice, beans, corn-soy blend, milk *atole* (a hot, thin, porridge-like drink), and a complementary food, such as vegetable soup or corn-soy blend empanadas (turnovers). Teachers in almost every school visited to date reported somewhat higher enrollment, the return of dropouts, and improved attendance rates. However, more data are needed for a thorough analysis. Teacher attendance is one of the biggest challenges to improving student enrollment, attendance, and performance. For schools in which parents are responsible for monitoring teacher performance and paying them, teacher absence is low. Feeding is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003 pending approval.

#### **Country Overview**

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Central America and the Western Hemisphere. The situation for the rural poor is even more difficult than for the urban population. While residents of urban areas have an average 6.7 years of schooling, those in rural areas average less than 3.0 years. Rural malnutrition was reported at 42.6 percent by the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) in its proposal to focus its school feeding program in certain areas of the country.<sup>24</sup> Sixty-four percent of the municipalities (190 of 297) find themselves with a high or very high risk of malnutrition.<sup>25</sup>

Widespread destruction from Hurricane Mitch, several years of drought, and a slumping world coffee market have only exacerbated the seriousness of the situation for vulnerable groups. WFP regional experts have reported that the situation in Honduras is similar to that in Guatemala, where they declared an emergency in March 2002 and established feeding centers in 41 regional centers. At this time, the Government of Honduras feels that a designation of "emergency" is unnecessary.

Lempira was chosen as the focus of the Global Food for Education (GFE) program because this is one of the most impoverished areas of the country. It is cut off from most of Honduras by mountains that block television and telephone transmission. Until recently, lack of paved roads and indeed any roads made commerce and trade difficult at best. Most contact for information and commerce has traditionally been with El Salvador.

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<sup>24</sup> WFP Propuesta para Focalizacion de la Actividad de Merienda Escolar, Tegucigalpa, November 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is one of a handful of organizations working in Lempira. It has worked for more than 10 years with a local non-governmental organization (NGO), the Central Committee for Water and the Integrated Development of Lempira (COCEPRADIL), to install community water systems and implement health and sanitation projects.

For the GFE project, CRS proposed to target four municipalities of Jinotega in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and poverty are among the most severe in the country.

### **Commodity Management**

CRS requested 7,560 metric tons of commodities in the following amounts: corn-soy blend, 90 tons; non-fat dry milk, 50 tons; vegetable oil, 20 tons; and hard red winter (HRW) wheat, 7,400 tons.

The corn-soy blend, non-fat dry milk, and vegetable oil are to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The bulk HRW wheat was monetized, with the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components designed to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Delivery of the wheat to be monetized was set for December 2001/January 2002, as was the arrival of the distribution commodities.

The distribution commodity shipment went well, as did the monetization commodity shipment. Monetization began three months later than originally planned because of the delay in the signing of the original agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and CRS. The commodity was monetized successfully, but the delay required that the start of feeding be postponed until April instead of mid-February when school began, as originally planned.

Because Lempira is so isolated and remote, the shipment of the commodities to the COCEPRADIL warehouse and from there to the communities is complex and requires significant coordination and community participation. The first distribution to cover the initial three months of feeding was well organized and efficient. In some cases, parents carried 100-pound sacks of corn-soy blend up the mountainside. The additional challenges during the rainy season will be formidable, although CRS feels confident that its experience in distribution and COCEPRADIL's community base will minimize problems.

There is widespread acceptance of the corn-soy blend as a foodstuff. It is well-received in traditional hot porridge/gruel *atole* drinks. Children like the flavor, and mothers know how to cook it. Parents are required to donate local foods (if they have them) to complement the *atole*. This gives children a more varied diet. Bean and rice purchases in Honduras also stimulate the local economy.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CRS and its partner in Lempira established goals and objectives for their GFE project. The overall goals are to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance. To achieve these goals, they set the following objectives:

- Carry out direct feeding of 3,750 pre-primary and primary school children.
- Distribute take-home rations for facilitators of the EDUCATODOS distance-learning adult education project.
- Implement de-worming and Vitamin A supplement campaigns in conjunction with the Ministry of Health.
- Design and deliver teacher training programs in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
- Organize and/or strengthen parent education committees to manage the GFE school feeding in their schools.
- Provide some basic supplies to targeted schools.
- Establish community libraries.
- Implement school garden programs.

**Implementation status:** CRS identified project schools, hired staff, entered into agreements with COCEPRADIL, and began planning and community organization activities. CRS personnel worked with WFP and the Honduran Ministry of Education to identify schools and avoid overlap with other feeding programs. CRS also coordinated at the local level with other private voluntary organizations (PVO's) working in the area to minimize overlap of activities.

CRS got a late start in direct feeding because of the delay in agreement signing and delivery of the commodities. However, a significant amount of startup work was accomplished in a short time due to the strength of the community-based NGO, COCEPRADIL, which was started by CRS more than 10 years ago. Based on community water committees, it carries out projects for its 150 member communities and promotes health and sanitation. With around 750 volunteers, the community water committees serve more than 6,000 families in Lempira.

COCEPRADIL visited member communities promoting the GFE project and explaining the requirements for a community to be selected. The requirements included:

- Willingness to build a school kitchen, if necessary.
- Preparation of adequate food storage, including the construction of pallets to keep commodities off the ground and safe from pests.
- Commitment by parents to prepare nutritious breakfasts every school day.
- Willingness of parents to contribute small amounts of food, such as bouillon cubes, vegetables, and fruits.
- Participation of parents in training sessions on safe food handling and meal preparation.
- Commitment of parents to work with the school.

Although CRS planned to carry out feeding in only 50 schools, it ultimately selected 56 schools in five municipalities of Lempira to begin its GFE project. School feeding began in April 2002, with 4,334 children in primary and pre-primary school receiving nutritious breakfasts.

CRS has trained teachers and parents in the control and use of the commodities, as well as in managing the school nutrition committee, tracking and documenting expenditures, and keeping financial records. The transparency of financial records and the detailed recordkeeping required by CRS help build community trust in the project and the workings of the committee, while promoting a closer working relationship between parents and teachers.

CRS and COCEPRADIL provided training to parents, primarily mothers, in how to use corn-soy blend and the other foods to vary the weekly school menu. Daily menus include corn-soy blend empanadas with rice or bean filling, corn-soy blend meatball-vegetable soup, and a crispy doughnut-shaped corn-soy blend *rosquilla*. Other dishes included sweetened rice and milk porridge, refried beans and rice, and the traditional corn-soy blend *atole*.

In addition to the startup work in food storage and preparation, COCEPRADIL worked with parents to survey school infrastructure and needs, including potable water, sanitary latrines, and kitchen and storage facilities. On a recent monitoring trip, seven of the eight schools visited had kitchens, and parents were building a kitchen for the eighth school.

The commitment of the mothers to have breakfasts ready for the children by 7:00 a.m. means that they have to start work very early. In most cases, they must leave home by 4:00 a.m. In some cases, mothers rise as early as 2:00 a.m. or sleep overnight at the school in order to be there on time.

The Government of Honduras has a program called the Family Assistance Program (PRAF) funded by the Inter-American Development Bank. Under this program, mothers whose children are enrolled in school and whose attendance meets PRAF requirements receive a bonus of 50 lempiras per child per month for up to two children. The bonus is used to buy school supplies and other necessities. The program pays the bonus twice a year, selecting delivery dates more for administrative reasons than for maximum impact.

The USDA regional coordinator and the local monitor met with the director of PRAF and shared preliminary results on the months of highest absences and some of the reasons for them. The low-attendance months (May, June, July, August, September, and October) coincide with the season when families have little or no food, need more labor in the fields, and have depleted initial school supplies. Low attendance months also coincide with the height of the rainy season. COCEPRADIL and CRS plan to approach the PRAF director to suggest that bonuses be paid at the beginning of the school year and again in May or June to help counter the factors that result in lower attendance.

Teacher attendance is another major challenge. In 2001, of more than 200 official school days, Honduran teachers attended only 98 days on average.<sup>26</sup> In rural areas, teacher attendance averaged just 60 days. Some of the absences were due to a long strike in a labor dispute with the Ministry of Education over salaries, schedules, and benefits. The labor problems are complicated by the fact that more than half the teachers in Lempira and other rural areas do not live in the communities where they teach. Teachers have to travel to reach their schools and receive and cash their salary checks. When training days, union meetings, and illnesses are factored in, parents in GFE sample schools report that most teachers miss six or seven school days per month.<sup>27</sup>

The USDA regional coordinator and the Honduran monitor have met with the Vice-Minister of Education to share some of the preliminary information and to plan future interventions. The minister and his staff are taking steps to correct these problems.

**Other donor support:** Through its PRAF program, the Government of Honduras distributes bonuses to mothers whose children are enrolled in school and whose attendance meets PRAF requirements. The Ministry of Health is carrying out deworming campaigns in some schools. The Ministry of Education is carrying out a program of HIV-AIDS prevention in some schools. The Honduran Fund for Social Investment is doing some classroom construction.

The National Pedagogical University has worked on curriculum design in some schools and also provides in-service training for some teachers.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) supports Project Lempira Sur that has been working in the area for a number of years teaching sustainable agricultural practices. The WFP has conducted nutrition training in some schools that received school lunches or snacks.

German Technical Assistance has worked on nutrition in some schools, and the Japanese Mission INICIE has also done some work in nutrition in a few schools.

The Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) has worked in curriculum development in one of the schools.

COCEPRADIL has worked in all of the schools in water, sanitation, and health education. The children understand the importance of hygiene; they wash their hands before eating and after using the latrine, and they brush their teeth after eating.

**Sustainability:** The new president of Honduras has made education a top priority. The Minister of Education told USDA that he wants to have a self-sustaining national school feeding program in place within four years. While his long-term interest is to engage the private sector in financing the program, that will probably not be achievable in the first one or two years. He and WFP convinced the Armed Forces Bank to donate 1.00 lempira

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<sup>26</sup>El Heraldo, Tegucigalpa, Feb. 1, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Jimenez, Pedro. USDA GFE Monitoring and Evaluation Report, May 2002.

to the WFP school feeding program for every telephone bill people pay at that bank. They are encouraging more banks to join the effort.

CRS and COCEPRADIL have a strong relationship with the Association of Mayors of Southern Lempira, forged through many years of working together on local development issues. The association has met with the Minister of Education and called on him to expand GFE to other schools and municipalities of southern Lempira. Such support is important to any long-term sustainability of the project.

Parents have demonstrated strong project support through their high levels of participation and food contributions. COCEPRADIL would like to expand school feeding to other schools, and the Ministry of Education agrees with this goal.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** USDA, CRS, and COCEPRADIL are conducting monitoring and evaluation activities. The Sustainable Development Network NGO in Honduras provides local monitoring. The monitor is skilled in community-based evaluations and carried out the “vulnerability mapping” for WFP in that area before working with USDA. He collected baseline data on the 20 sample schools and has begun collecting qualitative data. He has developed a survey to examine the reasons that parents do not send their children to school and has enlisted students to survey their areas. His response rate is over 80 percent, and the students are enthusiastic about their role in the GFE project.

CRS, COCEPRADIL, and the Sustainable Development Network NGO have coordinated monitoring and evaluation efforts to the extent possible to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. Personnel identified factors that could impact GFE project success, including the availability of a PRAF bonus program, the residence of teachers, and the accessibility of the school by vehicle.

A matrix was developed, and all GFE schools were distributed on the matrix. Schools were then chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. Preliminary baseline surveys have been conducted, and data has been collected on the 20 sample schools.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Teachers in almost every sample and non-sample school visited to date reported somewhat higher enrollment and the return of dropouts. However, not enough data has been collected for a full analysis. Early indications are that as children find out about the project, they enroll, even if the official enrollment period is over. Their presence may then be reflected only in attendance figures.

**Attendance:** It is uniformly reported that absenteeism has dropped to almost zero. Teachers also report that punctuality has improved. According to teachers and parents, children now stay home from school only when they are sick.



**Performance:** Teachers report that students are more attentive in class, play with more enthusiasm and energy at recess, and learn more quickly. Like Guatemalan teachers, Honduran teachers reported that the children learn lessons more quickly since the school feeding began.

**Special emphasis on girls:** The data has not yet been collected and analyzed to be able to say with any certainty how access for girls has been affected. In gross numbers, more boys than girls are enrolled in 11 of the 20 sample schools. However, when speaking with education and community officials, most report that the problem for enrollment is with the boys. In general, unequal access to education for girls is not seen as being a problem. More troublesome to Hondurans and development groups is the fact that while “the gap between the sexes has almost disappeared, the poor, inhabitants of rural areas, and indigenous groups rarely receive a quality education. And the gaps are not closing.”<sup>28</sup>

**Other project achievements:** One of the measures taken by COCEPRADIL to ensure that there was potable water in all classrooms was the purchase of plastic water containers for each classroom. The containers are filled each day with water to which a suitable amount of chlorine has been added to purify it for the children to drink.

Teachers reported stronger parent-school bonds because they must work together on the feeding, with teachers tracking the commodities and parents providing the complementary food and managing the breakfast and snack preparation.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Mothers trained by COCEPRADIL in new cooking techniques reported that they are using them at school for the children’s breakfasts, and also using the same techniques at home.

Involved parents are serving a public leadership role. Through the work of COCEPRADIL, community members have learned to speak up and work on their problems. The GFE project provided them an opportunity to contribute to improving their children's education. Two communities have contacted the Ministry of Education about school problems. In one case, the community protested the poor attendance of the teacher and requested a replacement plus an additional teacher. This citizen action is a significant step in community activism and self-governance.

In a recent school government election, candidate Rafael Gomez ran on a platform that he was helping to keep the school breakfast program because he was assisting the USDA monitor. He won by an overwhelming number of votes.

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<sup>28</sup> Estudio Programa de la Reforma Educativa en America Latina y El Caribe 2001 (PREAL), cited by WFP in its presentation "Merienda Escolar Honduras 2002."

## **Lessons Learned**

Although it is very early in the Honduras project, some simple lessons have been learned:

- Many children come to school hungry, and some have nothing to eat but the food they receive at school. Hunger keeps children home as surely as does bad weather or the need for their work at home.
- A well-established, community-based organization can substantially increase the impact of school feeding by building on past community engagement and integrating GFE into the overall development goals of the NGO and the communities. COCEPRADIL has widespread credibility, and many of the parents are members themselves.
- Among schools in which the parents monitor teacher performance and pay them, absences by teachers are almost zero.<sup>29</sup>
- Shipping sealed containers from ports to the implementing organization's warehouse reduces losses from damage and leakage.<sup>30</sup>

## **Best Practices**

Putting a container of purified water in each classroom is a cheap, sanitary way to provide potable water to children and sets a good example for their parents.

Teaching parents to use the commodities in creative recipes that children enjoy helps keep the children eating properly.

## **Next Steps**

Now that the startup phase is over, CRS and COCEPRADIL have begun teacher training programs in health and nutrition. These are being coordinated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to train project personnel on a methodology to educate teachers, families, and children on school and community health and sanitation.<sup>31</sup> To minimize teacher absences, these programs are being planned in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's scheduling. CRS and COCEPRADIL are planning de-worming campaigns with the Ministry of Health and implementing food-for-work infrastructure repair projects.

COCEPRADIL and CRS plan to contact PRAF to discuss preferred distribution dates for the second school bonus. The Association of Southern Mayors may be able to assist them in this effort.

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<sup>29</sup> Op cit. Jimenez.

<sup>30</sup> Commodity Logistics Information Report. CRS/Honduras. May 2002

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

# Honduras

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

Since the devastating impact of Hurricane Mitch, Honduras has been working to improve its infrastructure, including its educational system. Most schools have latrines and over half serviced by the World Food Program (WFP) have kitchens. Parents are involved in their children's education and take prominent roles in preparing food in schools. Enrollment has increased slowly (5 percent per year on average), and the role of food in the learning environment is seen as extremely important to the children and teachers.

### Commodity Management

Food aid serves as an incentive for families to send their children to school and ensures that short-term hunger does not preclude learning. Food-for-learning take-home rations are distributed among girls to increase female literacy. The targeted 96 municipalities have higher illiteracy rates than the national average of 30 percent.

The entire school feeding activity uses cereals, pulses, vegetable oil, corn-soy blend, and sugar in meal preparations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) contributed the following commodities and quantities for Honduran schools.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	6,960	September 2001
Vegetable oil	240	September 2001
Corn-soy blend	850	January 2002

### Project Overview

Lack of education and infant malnutrition are endemic in rural areas in Honduras. The national average level of education completed is only 4.6 years, with an average of less than 3.5 years in rural areas. Enrollment rates for children range from 75 percent in rural areas to 84 percent in urban areas. An estimated 130,000 children do not attend school at all. The high dropout rate (4 percent) is at least partly related to low food intake, which hampers learning. An estimated 69 percent of the adult population is literate, with little difference between male and female literacy rates. School attendance rates for females equal or exceed those for males at all grade levels.

**Goals and objectives:** This WFP project seeks to:

- Increase school enrollment and attendance, and reduce dropout rates.
- Improve student nutrition and health through complementary rations, health care, and sanitation.
- Promote functional literacy, primarily for rural women.

School gardens, whenever possible, add to lessons on the importance of a balanced diet for better nutrition. Partner organizations are undertaking latrine construction and the provision of kitchens and potable water. Teachers and parents receive training in health practices and food handling and preparation. Non-food items such as kitchen utensils, cups and plates, de-worming tablets, and training materials are purchased locally.

**Implementation status:** The beneficiary population is 125,000 boys and girls each year over a five-year period. These children are provided meals in school for 160 days. In addition, 10,000 women yearly receive food-for-learning rations as incentives to attend literacy classes for 80 days. Students benefit from improved access to food and education and from improved health and sanitary conditions. Women have increased opportunities for participation and decision-making at home and in their communities.

The activity's implementation strategy involves careful targeting, with the involvement of municipal councils, of the poorest schools in the selected municipalities.

**Other donor support:** The government's estimated contribution to this program amounts to about \$1.34 million per year, mainly in staff; internal transportation, storage, and handling costs; and the local purchase of non-food items. The Government of Honduras covers all transportation, storage, and handling costs of the WFP-donated commodities up to the municipal warehouses. Government funds will also be used for the local purchase of complementary food commodities to provide a more balanced diet.

### **Project Impact**

- School enrollment rates for boys and girls increased by 10 percent.
- Attendance increased by 15 percent, and dropout rates fell by 10 percent.
- Short-term hunger was relieved; anemia was reduced by 50 percent.
- Access to water and sanitation facilities improved in 30 percent of the schools.
- Functional literacy, primarily for rural women, increased.
- The beneficiary population of 125,000 boys and girls each year is being provided with rations in school for 160 days, and 10,000 women receive food-for-learning rations to attend literacy classes for 80 days.

# Nicaragua

## Project Concern International

### Summary of Findings

Project Concern International (PCI)/Nicaragua began its feeding program in November 2001. When school reopened in February 2002, feeding began for approximately 20,000 students. PCI reported an increase of approximately 14 percent in children fed compared with November 2001. Teachers reported a stronger parent-school-community bond because of their work on the feeding. For this project, the Global Food for Education (GFE) program has helped stimulate local development through contracts to manufacture nutritious cookies and fortified *jícara* drink mix, which are served daily. The program is scheduled to continue through November 2002, with an extension through November 2003 pending approval.

### Country Overview

Of all the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, only Haiti is poorer than Nicaragua.<sup>32</sup> A decade of civil strife and political and economic turbulence exacerbated Nicaragua's chronic poverty. According to the 1995 National Census, in 10 of the seventeen provinces in Nicaragua, more than half the population lives in poverty. In Jinotega, the province targeted for PCI's GFE project, 93 percent of the population lives in poverty, including 74 percent living in extreme poverty.<sup>33</sup> While slightly more than 10 percent of the national population is malnourished, in Jinotega 37 percent of the children age 5 and under are chronically malnourished.<sup>34</sup>

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report, a person needs around 11-12 years of schooling in order to be avoid a life of poverty in Latin America, on average. According to the Nicaraguan National Survey on Level of Life, Nicaraguan women average 5.0 years of schooling and men average 4.8 years.<sup>35</sup> In rural areas, poor and extremely poor people average only 3.1 and 2.3 years of education, respectively. This is well below the assumed threshold of 4 years needed to acquire functional literacy and basic mathematical skills.<sup>36</sup>

In terms of primary school enrollment, gender differences are not very large, but urban/rural differences are: 72 percent of urban children are enrolled in some type of schooling, while only 48 percent of rural children are enrolled. Attendance differences are also striking. While 15.9 percent of students are absent in urban areas, the figure

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<sup>32</sup> National Strategy for Poverty Reduction 2001-2015. Government of Nicaragua.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> National Plan for Educational Development. Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Op cit. National Strategy for Poverty Reduction.

climbs to 36.7 percent in rural areas. Nationally, of every 100 children who enroll in first grade, 52 percent make it to grade four, and 29 percent finish the six years of primary school.<sup>37</sup>

Destruction from Hurricane Mitch, several years of drought, and the world coffee crisis have exacerbated the economic situation for vulnerable groups. World Food Program (WFP) regional experts have reported that the situation in Nicaragua is similar to, though less severe than, the situation in Guatemala, where they declared an emergency in March 2002 and established 41 emergency feeding centers. However, any combination of factors from more drought to excessive rain could upset the precarious balance in the poor family's survival strategy. There are parts of Jinotega in which GFE is working that have not had rain for several years. There are other areas where people were completely dependent on the coffee industry for their cash income. For those landless rural poor, the lack of any cash leaves them in desperate circumstances.

Within this social and economic context, PCI proposed to target four municipalities in the department of Jinotega in which the problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, and poverty are among the most severe in the country.

### **Commodity Management**

PCI requested commodities in the following amounts: soybean meal, 70 metric tons; wheat, 190 tons; soybean oil (bulk), 1,900 tons; and corn, 230 tons. Because of problems described below, PCI actually received: corn-soy blend, 69.749 tons; corn, 30.102 tons; wheat, 85.970 tons; and refined vegetable oil, 3,349.404 tons.

The corn, wheat, soybeans, and some of the soybean oil were to be used in direct distribution through feeding and take-home rations. The majority of the bulk soybean oil was to be monetized, with the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components designed to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment. Delivery of all the commodities was requested for April/May 2001.

The shipment of commodities for distribution arrived on July 31, 2001, with nearly half of the bagged commodities arriving with water damage from a hatch door left open. They were declared unfit for human consumption by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and destroyed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agreed to replace the commodities, and a new shipment of corn-soy blend (to replace soybean meal), corn, and wheat were shipped to Nicaragua, arriving in October and November 2001. The vegetable oil to be monetized arrived July 8, 2001, without problems, and the monetization proceeded normally. The need to replace the distribution commodities had a significant impact because it meant that PCI could not begin feeding until November 2002, the last month of the school year.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** In order to meet the overall goals of the GFE project, PCI proposed to carry out the following objectives:

- Distribute school breakfasts to all pre-primary and primary school students in four targeted municipalities of Jinotega.
- Using food-for-work rations, improve the educational infrastructure of the schools, including water and sanitation.
- Establish school gardens at GFE schools.
- Provide school supplies and hygiene supplies (towels, soap) for hand washing.
- Ensure that each school has a supply of potable water for the students to drink and for use in preparing the *jícara atole*.
- Develop and deliver teacher training sessions in hygiene, nutrition, and environmental education as components of an integrated food security project.
- Purchase and deliver educational materials to improve the learning environment.

**Implementation status:** PCI has worked in Jinotega department for almost ten years and is well known and widely respected. It has a well-established network of community members who have received training in other PCI programs, as well as close connections with local and ministry officials with whom PCI has worked on other projects, particularly in the area of health. PCI conducted an extensive food-for-work project in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch and at the start of the coffee crisis, which also connected the organization to people within the area.

As soon as the agreement with USDA was signed, PCI began a process of hiring a GFE director and local coordinators to do community promotion of the GFE project. There are four coordinators who cover an extensive area with dispersed communities and schools. They are responsible for working with the parent committees to strengthen the ability of these committees to manage the GFE project, maintain transparent and up-to-date financial records, and identify infrastructure needs for the upcoming food-for-work program to repair schools and improve the learning environment. PCI has trained teachers and parents from each school in the management of the commodities, proper storage and preparation, and recordkeeping. Because the training was given in anticipation of an earlier startup, some of the teachers may need a refresher course this year.

PCI and WFP reached an agreement that in schools where PCI was doing the GFE school breakfast program, WFP would pull out and use its resources in other areas. Schools that still have WFP food on hand will continue to serve a snack or a lunch until their stocks run out. PCI also met with local officials and worked to establish solid relationships with the Ministry of Education delegates at the municipal level and with school directors as well as teachers, particularly those in one- and two-teacher schools. This attention to relationships and the consultation process has meant that there have been virtually no complaints from teachers about the project and the added responsibility they have for recordkeeping.

Project Concern International had a delayed startup in the feeding because of the shipping problem described earlier. However, the delay also had some positive results. For example, the delay gave PCI time to develop a *jícara* mix that included all of the ingredients (corn-soy blend; corn; *jícara* seeds, a local grain high in protein; sugar; cinnamon; and calcium carbonate) to make a thin porridge-like product that is served cold. It also allowed PCI to hold an extensive bidding process in the development of a good-tasting nutritious biscuit to be served as part of the breakfast. A similar competition was held for the *jícara* mix contract. After taste and price competitions, a small, local bakery was chosen to make the biscuits, wrap them in individual packages of two per child, and deliver them in cartons to PCI. The cookie wrappers, like the bags of *jícara* mix, have both the USDA and PCI logos printed on them. A woman-owned small business won the *jícara* mix contract.

After open competition, two small businesses received contracts from PCI to make the GFE cookies and *jícara* mix. The factory has hired five women and 10 men to produce the *jícara* mix, and the bakery has hired seven women and 10 men to produce the cookies. Both businesses are located in small to midsize towns where the impact of the new jobs is substantial.

Another unexpected advantage was that PCI was able to do one month's feeding of 17,200 children (all those attending in November 2001) and get feedback on operational issues and logistics that could be addressed during the school vacation period before the full school year GFE project began.

During the school vacation period, PCI began trial school gardens and had good experiences with six of the eight started. GFE funds were used to purchase garden tools, seeds, and materials. The children became quite involved and active in the garden. Some schools even produced enough to sell at the market to purchase additional food to complement their school feeding program. This experience is being replicated this year during the May-October growing season in 17 schools.

When the commodities finally arrived, the schools had only one month before closing for vacation. Nonetheless, the one-month experience showed that children who had dropped out during the year came back, some as much as two months after last being in school. The children liked the cookies and the *jícara* drink and ate with gusto. This one-month "trial period" may have contributed to the increase in enrollment being seen this year.

Actual school feeding and other project activities began again in February 2002 when school reopened. PCI currently provides a nutritious breakfast to approximately 20,000 school children in the municipalities of Yalí, Pantasma, La Concordia, and San Rafael del Norte. This is an increase of approximately 14 percent above last November's one-month end-of-year numbers. In most schools, the teachers and their students prepare the *jícara* drink and serve it along with a package of the nutritious cookies. It is usually the teacher who keeps track of the number of students fed, amount of food consumed, and the other reporting information required by GFE.



**Other donor support:** The Government of Nicaragua's Ministry of Health (MINSA) conducts de-worming programs. PCI and delegates of the local Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport are coordinating with MINSA to help facilitate this program. FISE (Emergency Social Investment Fund) has carried out an extensive campaign of repair and painting of schools in Jinotega using European Union funding, although some of the one-room schools in remote areas have not yet been reached. MiFamilia, the Ministry for Family and Children, has a feeding and educational program for mothers and children less than 6 years of age that complements GFE. Municipal governments provide transportation of the commodities to the school in many cases.

Some of the GFE schools are also U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) BASE II Project model schools. BASE II supports the improvement of primary school education through a focus on teacher effectiveness, increased community participation in schools, and a strengthened Ministry of Education in support of decentralized education.<sup>38</sup>

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue to be analyzed once the project becomes fully implemented. There are a number of aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond the GFE project, including teacher training, community empowerment, school gardens, infrastructure development, community support for education, and better educated children. However, the cost of the food and its distribution is one issue that must be addressed in any school feeding program.

PCI is working at the community level with parents and teachers to look for future alternatives for project sustainability. PCI is also exploring the interest and commitment of various governmental agencies to work toward a national school breakfast/feeding program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and PCI are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. The non-governmental organization NicaSalud in Nicaragua provides the local monitoring for USDA. The principal monitor is an economist skilled in community-based evaluations. He has completed the initial data gathering and will begin the process of qualitative data collection, leading focus groups of parents, teachers, and students in the next few months.

PCI and USDA have coordinated their monitoring and evaluation efforts to the extent possible to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. In setting up the monitoring and evaluation system, the personnel from both organizations conducted a wide-ranging discussion of the factors that could impact a GFE project's success. The consensus was that the most important factors are the municipalities for various political, economic and social reasons, and the distance the children have to walk to get to school. Staff agreed that distance walked could be strongly related to other important factors. Where children walk more than 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) to school, it is also more likely that those schools would be in less accessible, more remote locations; have poorer infrastructure; have fewer teachers who are less likely to live in the community; and offer

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<sup>38</sup> USAID/Nicaragua concept paper 2002.

less parental support for education and pride in the school. All of these factors would contribute to success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by PCI.

A matrix was developed, and the PCI schools were distributed on the matrix. Schools were chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. All twenty sample schools have been visited, as well as some non-sample GFE schools. Preliminary baseline data is available, although most of the comparative figures on attendance will be collected later in the year.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Teachers in almost every sample and non-sample school visited to date reported higher enrollment (one reported a 30-percent increase) and the return of past dropouts. However, not been enough data collected for a comprehensive analysis. Early indications are that as children find out about the project, they enroll even if the official enrollment period is over. Their presence is then reflected only in the attendance figures. PCI reports that it is feeding 14 percent more children than in November 2001, when the GFE project began.

**Attendance:** According to reports from teachers and school administrators, absenteeism has dropped to almost nothing. Furthermore, teachers report that punctuality has improved because children do not want to miss breakfast. Both teachers and parents said that the children now stay home from school only when they are truly sick. Enough data has not yet been collected for a full analysis.

In almost every school, there are the “associates.” These “associates” are younger siblings of the enrolled children; parents (primarily mothers) who make the school meal; and the teachers at the school. Almost all of them eat GFE meals/snacks when there is enough left over. There is no appropriate, sanitary, safe storage available for these leftovers. The number of “associates” may be as high as 5-10 percent above the student attendance for the day. There is no place to report on these additional beneficiaries, making cost/meal appear higher than it actually is. Most importantly, there is no way to capture the benefit to pregnant and nursing mothers, infants, and children 0-6 years old who represent the bulk of the “associates.”

**Performance:** Teachers report that students are more attentive in class, play with more enthusiasm and energy at recess, and learn more quickly. Teachers comment that lessons are learned more quickly since the school feeding began.

**Special emphasis on girls:** In Nicaragua, the data has not yet been collected and analyzed to be able to say with any certainty how access for girls has been affected. However, girls have higher enrollment rates than boys, who are removed to work on the family farm or to take other employment to supplement family income. GFE may be an incentive for parents to send their boys to school, and that issue will be tracked.

**Other project achievements:** One of the results of the initial implementation of GFE was that teachers reported a stronger parent-school-community bond. Because they work cooperatively and collaboratively on the feeding, they must work together. This represents a major breakthrough from the perspective of the teachers and school directors.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

GFE has helped stimulate local development through the contracts created to manufacture the nutritious cookies and *jícara* mix that are served daily to 20,000 children. The bakery hired 17 people who are involved exclusively in the production of the cookie. The small factory that makes the *jícara* mix hired 15 people to handle its manufacture, packaging, and shipment.

Because water is a crucial need for food preparation and cleanup, parents in some schools have been re-energized to try to resolve longstanding problems with lack of water in the school. In some cases, such as the Wiscanal and Pabona Arriba Schools, for example, children have to bring water to school to make the *atole*. The parents in some communities are focusing their efforts on getting a community water system, or at least a system to supply the school.

Student 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 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 learning

### **Lessons Learned**

Although it is very early in the PCI project in Nicaragua, some simple lessons have been learned.

Lack of food keeps children home as surely as does bad weather or the need for their work at home. Many children come to school hungry, and some have nothing to eat all day other than the food they receive at school. One school director in Yalí reported that he believed that about 20 percent of the school's 1,770 students (three shifts of classes) have only the GFE breakfast in a 24-hour period.

In many cases, the problem of water rights must be addressed for schools to have a reliable source of potable water. The issue is complex and time-consuming to resolve. Communities alone often cannot solve the problems and need assistance in how to assert their rights under Nicaraguan laws of eminent domain. The private voluntary organization can be instrumental in helping communities make this linkage.

### **Best Practices**

Building and strengthening the relationship with the Ministry of Education, particularly at the local and departmental level, early in the GFE project yields great benefits in terms of support for GFE in the schools.

PCI is putting porcelain water filters in each school to provide safe water for children to drink and for making the *jícara* mix.

### **Next Steps**

Now that the startup phase is over, PCI is beginning to carry out the rest of its objectives in the project. These include developing school gardens; providing teacher training in health and nutrition; using food-for-work rations to enlist community members in the repair and construction of educational infrastructure; and purchasing and distributing educational materials for schools.

PCI will begin working with individual schools to address the potable water issue. In those schools that do not have latrines, PCI will work with the community to address this need.

### **GFE in Action**

At one two-teacher school with 140 students, 60-70 parents attended an early morning meeting at the school with the USDA monitors. Such a high turnout of parents relative to the number of students would be the envy of a PTA in the United States. It was an indication of strong parental interest in and support for the GFE project. The children walk up to two hours each way to attend school, leaving home with a flashlight to light the way. Their parents had to do the same thing in order to arrive on time for the meeting. The parents said that, before GFE, when they did not have food to give their children and would keep their children home because they did not want to send them such a long way to go all day without eating. With GFE, even if they have no food at home, they could send them, confident that their children will receive something to eat at school.

A mother reported to the USDA regional coordinator that her son thinks of the GFE school breakfast as brain food. After two weeks of enjoying the breakfast, her son told her, "I don't know what's with this cookie, but I'm becoming intelligent."

## Nicaragua World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

The Government of Nicaragua has made a commitment to free and compulsory education for all children, particularly those in primary school, and plans to implement a national school feeding program. The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and other non-governmental organizations are working to help facilitate this effort. The WFP school feeding program supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is part of this ongoing effort.

Enrollment increased for both primary and pre-primary school students, and for both boys and girls. Community participation in the WFP Nicaragua program has been very high. The school feeding program involves many community members. Primary schools with feeding programs had an average of three teachers and 103 community members involved in the activity.

### Commodity Management

WFP Nicaragua requested 15,936 metric tons of commodities in the following amounts:

Commodity	Metric Tons	Arrival
Corn	230	July 2001
	830	August 2001
	3,000	September 2001
	3,200	December 2001
Corn-soy blend	100	July 2001
	968.5	October 2001
Wheat	190	August 2001
	90	December 2001
Vegetable oil	3,380	July 2001
	10	August 2001
	1,790	November 2001
	1,830	December 2001
Corn-soy milk	1,100	September 2001
	1,280	December 2001
Flour	1,350	September 2001
	1,440	December 2001
Soybean meal	70	August 2001

WFP is using the commodities to provide hot lunches to 10,000 pre-school children. In addition, WFP is providing 70,000 primary school children with snacks consisting of high-protein biscuits and fortified beverages to encourage them to return to school and continue studying. The Global Food for Education (GFE) commodities allowed WFP to expand its area of service and number of children served. In addition, WFP and Project Concern International (PCI) coordinated their target areas, allowing WFP to withdraw from the municipalities in which PCI carries out school feeding activities and expand its school feeding to needy students in other areas.

### **Project Overview**

According to the Ministry of Education statistical report of 1998, 26 of every 100 children ages 7–12 do not receive any education. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates out that 700,000 children between ages 2 and 9 years live in difficult circumstances, characterized by insufficient access to food, education, health services, drinking water, and adequate housing.

Primary schools have a 10-percent annual dropout rate, and grade repetition ranges between 5 and 7 percent. Primary school students require an average of 10 years to reach the end of sixth grade. Some socio-cultural patterns affect school dropout rates, such as girls caring for younger siblings. Many students also drop out for financial reasons.

The main problem affecting school-age children is their low food intake and hunger. An estimated two-thirds of pre-school and school-age children in depressed areas start lessons every day without having eaten an adequate breakfast, and often after walking several kilometers. These nutritional problems reduce learning capacity, weaken the children’s dedication to school, and make it difficult for them to participate actively in educational activities.

The government is committed to free and compulsory education for all children, particularly those in primary schools, and plans to begin implementation of a national school feeding program in 2002.

**Goals and objectives:** WFP Nicaragua’s “Investment in Human Capital through Education” activity addresses these issues. Through this activity, WFP supports the school feeding program, placing emphasis on rural primary schools in the most food-insecure areas as identified by vulnerability analysis and mapping. It also promotes pre-primary education to prepare children for primary schools and to increase learning capacity. Assistance includes the provision of enriched, fortified foods to reduce short-term hunger, increase school enrollment and attendance, reduce dropout rates, and increase learning capacity.

**Implementation status:** Cooked meals are prepared for children over 2 years of age in the pre-school centers, with the cooperation of community members who prepare the meals. These children receive corn-soy blend-based drinks fortified with micronutrients. Fortified drinks and biscuits are given in primary schools in the morning to counter

children's short-term hunger and improve concentration. Products are produced locally with the extrusion, milling, and mixing equipment donated by WFP. Approximately 95,000 children divided evenly between boys and girls ages 2 to 12 receive food rations 160 days a year in pre-school centers and primary schools.

**Other donor support:** Community participation is the backbone of this activity. Parent committees and school councils bear the responsibility for the management, control, preparation, and distribution of food. To guarantee integrated care in community pre-school centers, WFP, IDB/PAININ program and the MECD-APRENDE project coordinated activities. The APRENDE project supplies furniture and teaching materials, undertakes infrastructure improvements, pays teachers' salaries, and provides incentives to mobile trainers.

### **Project Impact**

Enrollment increased for both primary and pre-primary school students. Between 1998 and 2001, enrollment for boys increased 10.88 percent in primary schools and 12.38 percent in pre-primary centers. Increases for girls were 9.28 percent for primary and 10.58 percent for pre-primary enrollment. Student-to-teacher ratios have increased slightly for primary schools from an average 35 students per teacher in 1998 to 38 students per teacher in 2001. For pre-primary schools, the ratio was relatively stable at 26-27 students per teacher.

Another important impact is the level of community participation. The school feeding program involves community members. Primary schools averaged three teachers and 103 community members involved in some way with the activity. Pre-primary schools had somewhat lower involvement, with an average of three teachers and 44 non-teachers per school.

# Peru

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

The project provides morning snacks with a nutritional complement to relieve short-term hunger and improve the learning ability of preschool and primary school children. The direct beneficiaries of the project are approximately 224,000 pre-school and primary school children in the poorest districts of the Sierra. The snacks are served in two portions and total 113,898,500 beneficiary days. Some families of targeted school children also benefit from an income transfer effect when the school snacks are substitutes for meals at home, rather than supplements.

### Country Overview

More than 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and 20 percent suffer conditions of extreme poverty. In the highlands where conditions are most severe, 68 percent of the population is under the poverty line, and 47 percent live in extreme poverty. The population in the rural highlands survives mainly on subsistence farming.

Nationally, the average illiteracy rate is 10.7 percent, and 17.4 percent for women. In rural areas, the illiteracy rate is 28.1 percent on average and 45.6 percent for women.

Malnutrition is a serious and widespread problem in Peru. In 1991, an estimated 37 percent of children under age 5 were affected by chronic malnutrition, and there are few indications of improvement since then. Malnourished children are more prone to infections that tend to be more severe and long-lasting than well-nourished children. Illnesses and infection, in turn, exacerbate malnutrition through loss of appetite and nutrients. The 1993 National Height for Age Survey of School Entrants (ages 6 to 9 years, 11 months) indicated that malnutrition affected 48 percent of school-age children in the country, and 67 percent in the highlands.

Among other factors, eating habits in the highlands contribute to these conditions. School children in rural areas have the same eating pattern as adults—generally two meals a day of available and inexpensive low-protein commodities. Consumption of meat, fish, and dairy products is constrained by the general poverty of the population. Many children arrive at school without breakfast, which contributes to short-term hunger and reduces learning capacity. Mountain schools lack kitchens and cooking facilities and have scarce fuel supplies. School personnel and parents have limited knowledge of proper food handling and how to prepare safe, nutritious meals, even though they may have access to clean water.



## **Commodity Management**

Over five years, WFP is supplying 100,000 tons of wheat, of which the GFE program is providing 10 percent or 10,000 tons. The wheat is exchanged on a value basis for the equivalent of 113,898,500 rations, each consisting of 250 grams of a prepared dairy drink enriched with vitamins and minerals, and 90 grams of a baked product made of wheat flour mixed with other flours from local grains *quinua*, *cañihua*, and *kiwicha*, as well as local barley and corn. Each ration will have a nutritive value of 600 calories, with 22.5 grams of protein, 20 grams of fat, and a vitamin and mineral supplement with 13.2 milligrams of iron. The rations prepared and served in two morning snacks are well accepted by target groups. The makeup of the ration facilitates its distribution and allows for easier monitoring.

An additional 2,500 tons of wheat will be provided by other donors and monetized to cover the costs of a non-governmental organization (NGO) that will be contracted by the Government of Peru to implement the project on its behalf. The NGO, selected through public notice, will be responsible for conducting the project, which includes defining the specifications of the commodities, establishing the criteria and procedures for selecting the food processors, carrying out quality control inspection of the food chain, and monitoring and evaluating the project's impact.

## **Project Overview**

Peru is a low-income, food-deficit country. The educational system has been adversely affected by economic conditions and civil disturbances. A World Bank project to improve educational quality, institutional development, and infrastructure will complement the school feeding project. The Government of Peru's national school feeding program reaches 1.85 million students out of the 3 million requiring food support, with feeding programs coordinated by the Ministry of Education and assisted by the European Union, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and WFP. An additional 224,000 students will benefit from this project. It will include nutrition, health, and hygiene instruction with manuals and demonstrations at schools. The WFP-supplied wheat will be exchanged through monetization for a locally produced enriched snack consisting of a dairy drink and a baked biscuit or *panetón*, enriched with minerals and vitamins.

### **Goals and objectives:**

- Overcoming short-term hunger and reducing the incidence of anemia with a dietary supplement for pre-school and primary school children, leading to an improved ability to learn.
- Stimulating the knowledge of proper feeding and hygiene of the targeted children.
- Extending the government's school feeding programs into the more remote districts of the Sierra, with the provision of schooling on an equitable gender basis.

Food aid will function as:

- A dietary supplement to overcome short-term hunger and reduce the prevalence of anemia.
- An incentive to teachers to promote the values of hygienic food preparation and more nutritionally-oriented eating habits.
- A budgetary support to the Ministry of Education to enable it to reach a greater number of communities in the rural highlands with educational services.

**Other donor support:** The Ministry of Education will be responsible for supplying items to meet requirements related not only to educational functions, but also to the hygienic and efficient preparation and distribution of the food rations. These include fuel-efficient stoves, kitchens and serving equipment, utensils, detergents, soap, tables for food distribution, and training manuals and educational posters.

### **Project Impact**

The outputs of the project will be:

- A morning snack for 158 days per year to approximately 37,000 preschool and 187,000 primary school children in targeted areas, consisting of 109,400 boys, 114,600 girls, and teachers and parents who are directly involved in food preparation at the schools.
- An increase in the developmental skills of pre-school children and in the performance of primary school children, and an increase in the learning capacities of pre-school and primary schoolchildren in terms of attention, retention, and comprehension.
- A progressive improvement in hygienic practices supported by manuals and supervised by teachers.
- A reduction in the prevalence of nutritional anemia.
- An additional 3,291 schools incorporated into the national school feeding program (representing a 20-percent decrease in the proportion of preschool and primary school children previously not covered by school feeding).

# **Bangladesh**

## **Land O'Lakes, Inc.**

### **Summary of Findings**

School meal distribution began on April 15, 2002. The goal of this Land O'Lakes, Inc., (LOL) project is to provide a daily ration of milk and a fortified wheat biscuit to 200,000 of Bangladesh's most needy school children. Overall attendance increased 29 percent, with a 30-percent increase for girls, in the first five weeks of meal distribution. Project resources will be used to address educational quality issues such as teacher shortages, lack of teaching materials, and the need for school supplies for children. Effective collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and other donors will contribute to project sustainability. Monetization of U.S. agricultural commodities was successfully undertaken, although the proceeds were lower than projected because of declining international prices and the Government of Bangladesh's policies to restrict imports. This Global Food for Education (GFE) school feeding project will continue through March 2003.

### **Country Overview**

Bangladesh is one of the poorest, most densely populated countries in the world. The government's development efforts for several years have focused on poverty reduction. Social services and development programs have received increased funding, the birthrate has declined to 1.4 percent, and a model micro-credit movement flourishes.<sup>39</sup> However, the number of people living in poverty remains very high. Half the Bangladeshi people live in poverty today, lacking enough income to purchase the minimum calories necessary for human survival. One-third of the population lives in extreme poverty, defined as those who could not purchase even two-thirds of the calories necessary for survival.<sup>40</sup> High population density, numerous natural disasters, low educational attainment, weak governance, high levels of corruption, and limited financial resources all contribute to the existing situation.<sup>41</sup>

Half of all children in Bangladesh under 5 years old are underweight for their age. About one-fifth die before their fifth birthday, and two-thirds of these deaths are related to malnutrition.<sup>42</sup> Children's malnutrition in Bangladesh increases by about 23 percent between age 5 and 6, when the children start primary school.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> UNICEF, Country Profile, Bangladesh.

<sup>40</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Household Expenditure Survey, 1995-1996.

<sup>41</sup> UNICEF, Country Profile, Bangladesh.

<sup>42</sup> IFPRI, "Food for Education-Feeding Minds Reduces Poverty" Washington DC, October 2001.

<sup>43</sup> Child Nutrition Survey of Bangladesh 1995-1996, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, December 1996.

The combined effect of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies can reduce a child's learning ability. The provision of nutritious food supplements, such as milk and biscuits fortified with vitamins and minerals, can greatly improve their learning ability and health.

Bangladesh spends \$28 per child per year on education, with international donor support accounting for 50 percent of the budget.<sup>44</sup> The Government of Bangladesh has been successful in expanding access to primary education but faces major challenges with educational quality. The number of primary schools increased by about 41 percent between 1990 and 1995.<sup>45</sup> When the government began providing free primary schooling in 1992, enrollment increased by almost 6 percent a year for girls and 5 percent for boys.<sup>46</sup> According to the World Bank, gender disparity in primary school enrollment has disappeared, and almost 100 percent of primary-school-age girls are enrolled in school.<sup>47</sup>

The poor quality of education is also a limiting factor for educational attainment. Seventy-three percent of children attending school complete primary school.<sup>48</sup> However, only 43 percent of primary school students attained minimal standards for literacy and numeracy in 1997.<sup>49</sup> Less than 2 percent of primary students achieve all the minimum basic primary school competencies established by the Government of Bangladesh,<sup>50</sup> and it takes an average of six years for a child to complete the 5-year primary school cycle.<sup>51</sup> Secondary school enrollment is only about 20 percent of the eligible student population.

Many children living in "high food-insecure areas" are considered "ultra-poor" and are frequently absent from school or drop out in order to look for food or income. In 1993, Bangladesh was one of the first countries in the world to implement a pilot Food for Education (later named Food for Schooling, or FFS) program. By 2000, the pilot program covered 17,811 public and private schools, accounting for about 27 percent of all primary schools in Bangladesh. Eligible students and their families received food grains through the FFS program. To maintain their eligibility, children had to attend 85 percent of their classes each month.<sup>52</sup>

For reasons not entirely clear, the Government of Bangladesh has decided to phase out the FFS program by June 2002 and begin a Cash for Education program. The criteria will be the same, but in addition to wheat and rice some of the students will receive money. There is some concern regarding how the family will spend the cash and whether food will reach the neediest members of the households. Like most donors, the World Food Program (WFP) and USDA still prefer to offer food directly to needy recipients.

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with World Food Program Staff, Dhaka, Bangladesh. February, 2002

<sup>45</sup> Intensive District Approach to Education for All, UNICEF, 1998.

<sup>46</sup> IBRD, 1995, Experiences with Economic Reform: A Review of Bangladesh's Development.

<sup>47</sup> "Our Dream: A World Free of Poverty," World Bank. [www.worldbank.org/bangladesh](http://www.worldbank.org/bangladesh).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Getting Started. A.K. Jalaluddin and Mushtaq Chowdhury, the University Press Limited, 1997.

<sup>50</sup> A Question of Quality, Campaign for Popular Education, 2001.

<sup>51</sup> UNICEF, Progotir Pathay, 1997.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

In April 2002, based on the success of its pilot school feeding program in the floodplain region, WFP planned to expand its Bangladesh school feeding program to include some 600,000 children attending 7,000 government and non-governmental schools nationwide.<sup>53</sup> It will be one of the largest WFP school feeding programs in the world.

Within this social and economic context, LOL proposed to target districts in which the problems of malnutrition and primary school enrollment and attendance are among the most severe in the country. Jamalpur and Sherpur were chosen because they are two of the three most needy districts. LOL also took into consideration accessibility by transport for food shipments.

### **Commodity Management**

In fiscal year 2002, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) donated nearly 35,000 metric tons of agricultural commodities to LOL under the GFE program. The commodities included hard red winter wheat, 30,000 tons; non-fat dry milk, 950 tons; and soybean oil, 4,000 tons.

LOL monetized most of the wheat and part of the non-fat dry milk and refined soybean oil. Proceeds from the sale of the commodities to Bangladeshi buyers provided funds to implement the GFE school feeding program. Most of the remainder of the wheat (2,500 tons) was bartered, and U.S. wheat was also included in the wheat blend for the fortified biscuits.

Commodities were made available by USDA in January 2002, shipped in February/March, and arrived in Dhaka in April 2002. Commodity sales were negotiated in February and the first funds were received in May 2002. LOL advanced its own funds to the project beginning in November 2001 so that work could begin immediately after the agreement was announced in December 2001.

While the commodity sales proceeded within the expected timeframe, the revenues were significantly less than expected. The commodity sales provided about \$6.5 million for the first year of the GFE project, which was approximately 70 percent of the amount originally projected in the LOL/USDA agreement. Sales revenues were reduced by falling prices, particularly for non-fat dry milk, and by high Bangladeshi tariffs and duties on refined soybean oil. LOL has modified its project to accommodate this revenue shortfall.

The LOL project staff was determined to begin the Bangladesh school feeding program as soon as possible so the children would have the benefit of the snacks. The staff needed to act quickly, but at the same time develop long-term strategies to ensure a sustainable milk supply for the schools. Milk supply contracts were signed with processors in February and

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<sup>53</sup> World Food Program, *New Directions in Bangladesh*, January 2002.

March, and arrangements were made to import processed milk until Bangladeshi processors developed the capacity to supply the project. The fortified biscuit supply was contracted in March, including the requirement to use U.S. wheat when that wheat was available in Bangladesh. A barter agreement was made in late April to exchange USDA-donated milk powder for ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk. Distribution of UHT milk in 200-milliliter packs and fortified wheat biscuits began in the project area in mid-April 2002, four and a one-half months after the start of the work and prior to the arrival of the commodities in Bangladesh.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The goals of the LOL GFE project are to increase overall enrollment and attendance by 20 percent, increase girls' attendance by 15 percent, improve child nutrition by 10 percent, and improve dairy and food processing operations in the country. Through the implementation of its school feeding program, LOL had planned to feed 350,000 primary school students a daily snack of UHT milk and fortified biscuits for one full school year. Because monetization proceeds were less than expected and costs higher than expected, LOL now plans to feed around 200,000 children.

The GFE program has the full cooperation of the Primary and Mass Education Division of the Education Ministry. In addition, LOL is working to integrate the program with other related development programs through collaboration with additional donor agencies to ensure maximum impact and avoid redundancies.

**Implementation status:** The selection of target areas for school snack distribution was based on low school enrollment, low girls' attendance, poor nutrition levels, good access for food commodity transportation, and sufficient numbers of primary school students to reach the original goal of 350,000 children in one administrative area. The GFE staff wanted to include all primary schools (government and non-government) in the area. By providing snacks to schools in the district, students would not switch from one primary school to another to take advantage of the meals. Similarly, the area would need to be large enough so that measured increases in enrollment and attendance would reflect real increases throughout the area and not simply students coming into the area from outside. The establishment of specific need-based criteria also reduced political pressure on the Government of Bangladesh and the GFE program staff to include non-targeted schools.

The project management plan called for gradual expansion to cover all schools in the target district while simultaneously establishing distribution management and monitoring systems. Inventory control with receipt and distribution management systems is to be developed around a project area warehouse. Schools report on receipt of snacks and consumption by the children. A local private group delivers the supplies to the schools and ensures that receipts and reports are returned to the district control center.

<b>Bangladesh School Feeding Program</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Status of Achievement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
350,000 children to receive milk and biscuits daily.	School meal distribution began on April 15, 2002, four and a half months after the start of the program and prior to the arrival of the commodities in Bangladesh. 34,000 children were receiving milk and biscuits as of May 16, 2002. Distribution will expand to cover 90,000 children in June, 120,000 in July, and 200,000 in September.	Children's school feeding is expanded gradually as distribution and control systems expand to enable program management and monitoring of school feeding. Lower than expected (by \$2 million) proceeds from monetization, increased costs, and an expanded number of feeding days required LOL to reduce the total feeding goal to 200,000 children.
20% increase in enrollment and attendance.	30% attendance increase was recorded in the first five weeks of distribution, based on the schools' demand for snacks; 3% enrollment increase was recorded in school reports.	Enrollment period is January to March. After that period, no official enrollment is permitted, but some children are added to the rolls. The major increase in enrollment is expected in January 2003.
15% increase in number of girls attending school.	Girls' attendance increased 30% based on school records and the surge in demand for milk and biscuits for delivery to schools.	Girls' attendance increased along with boys' attendance. However, the girl-boy ratio was already equal, so there is no increase in girls as a percentage of total students.
10% increase in weight/height ratio per child.	Baseline survey measures of weight and recordings of age were made in February-March on a sample of schools. Data showed 27% malnutrition for boys and 20% for girls.	Weight for age will be used as the nutrition indicator in place of weight for height. Baseline data will be compared with weights after six months of program work and then after one year. The same children weighed in the March baseline will be weighed in November after six months of school feeding.
50% adoption rate of new concepts in dairy and food processing introduced at training sessions	No training sessions were held from December to May.	Training and technical assistance will be initiated in July/August 2002. Public information campaigns to encourage private entrepreneurs began in May.
Barter of wheat.	All wheat for monetization was in one bulk shipment, so partial barter was not possible. Milk powder (NDFM) used in production and bartered for UHT milk in 200 ml packs supplied for the project.	Biscuit manufacturer certified that flour from U.S.-origin wheat is being purchased and used in all biscuits produced for the project after arrival of shipment.

The strategy for biscuit supply was based on providing for the unmet nutritional needs of Bangladeshi primary school children. The current food intake and nutritional requirements of 7- to 9-year-old rural children were analyzed, and the gap between the nutritional need and current intake was identified as the target for the combined milk and biscuit snack. The fortified biscuits are meant to provide the nutrients not provided by the milk; therefore, biscuit companies were asked to produce biscuits to meet the children's kilocalorie (Kcal) requirements. LOL also identified suppliers of a vitamin-mineral pre-mix and negotiated for a nutrient mix that could be added to the biscuits to meet the children's need.

A national non-governmental organization (NGO) was contracted at the local district level to distribute food snacks to the schools and to assist in monitoring. A computerized information system was developed to provide distribution management and monitoring, inventory control, and school attendance, enrollment, and consumption data, and to produce all required GFE reports. Distribution of UHT milk in 200-milliliter packs and fortified wheat biscuits began in the project area in mid-April 2002.

The original goal of feeding 350,000 children a day for a school year could not be realized for several reasons. There was a \$2-million shortfall in revenue from commodity sales, and the price per serving of milk was higher than calculated in the proposal. In addition, a miscalculation in the number of days children attend school (six days/week rather than five days/week) caused the number of daily rations to increase. Lastly, due to the extremely poor nutritional status of the children, LOL decided to serve the fortified biscuits for the entire duration of the project rather than for 16 weeks as envisioned in the original proposal. As a result, the total number of student beneficiaries is now estimated at 200,000.

**Other donor support:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) invited LOL to meet with its project preparation technical assistance team to discuss how the Bangladesh GFE school feeding program can work together with proposed ADB investments in educational quality in the Second Primary Education Development Project.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) requested staff from the Bangladesh GFE school feeding program to visit FAO's program to discuss how the two groups can work together to expand dairy development. The FAO program focuses on the development of small and medium farmers and the role of the dairy industry in improving the quality of lives of dairy farmers. FAO would like to see if LOL and the GFE Program can find common interests in dairy development programs.

The Agro-based Industries Technology Development Project (ATDP), supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is led by the Louis Berger Group and includes LOL as a sub-contractor. The project provides technical assistance to agribusiness clients, and the ATDP staff expressed interest in milk processing and biscuit manufacturing. ATDP staff wants to work more closely with GFE staff to identify milk processing and biscuit manufacturing entrepreneurs who can develop successful products. ATDP would provide technical assistance to these agribusiness entrepreneurs to assist them in expanding their business and to develop new business opportunities.



**Sustainability:** LOL and USDA staff understand the need to develop local capacity and relationships with related government and multinational development groups to ensure the sustainability of the GFE program. The program began Dec. 1, 2001, and LOL has preliminary agreements with the Government of Bangladesh to support the GFE. The Minister of Education has informed LOL that the ministry will support a budgetary allocation in the Annual Development Plan to provide government funds to supplement funds available through GFE. The budget development process begins in September, and LOL will meet with education ministry officials to help prepare the budget allocation documents.

The Government of Bangladesh has also announced that it will encourage the development of the dairy and livestock industries and the expansion of agro-processing in the dairy sector. To do this, it will make available credits from the development banks to dairy development and livestock projects.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and LOL are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. A local monitor hired by USDA provides the local monitoring for USDA. USDA and LOL have coordinated their monitoring and evaluation efforts to avoid redundancies while insuring independence of action. USDA will use input from its National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to determine the number of schools to be selected. These schools will then be used for the baseline questionnaire and qualitative data collection.

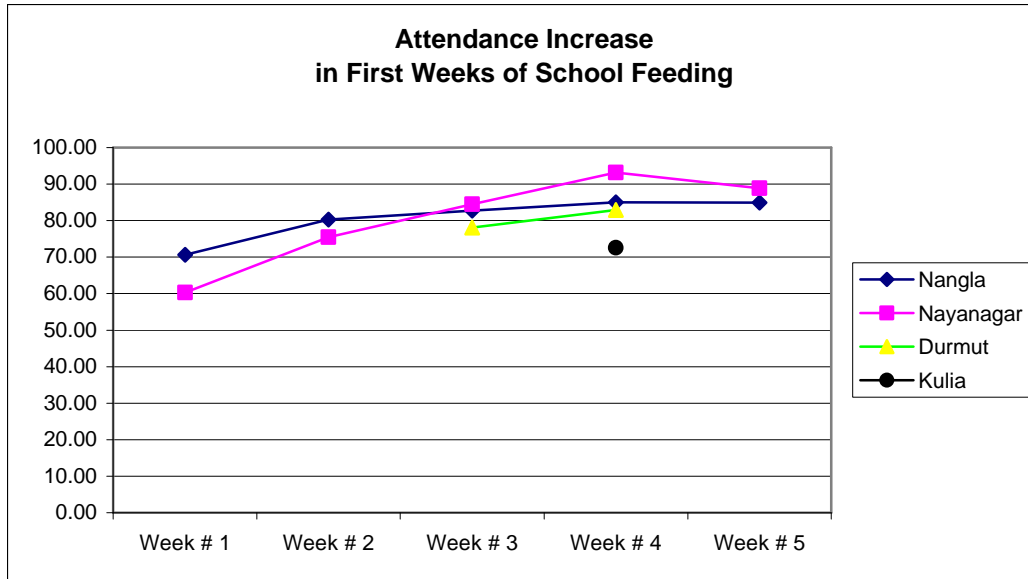
### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Changes will not be seen until January 2003 because school enrollment is open only between January and March of each school year and feeding began in April 2002. However, some names have been added to the roles in spite of the March cutoff, and LOL calculates the enrollment increase in the areas where the school feeding program started to be 3 percent during the first half-month (April 15–May 2).

**Attendance:** Data shows a rapid increase in attendance for schools receiving GFE snacks. During the first program week (April 15-18), only biscuits were distributed because the milk had not arrived. Nonetheless, attendance increased by an average of 22 percent in Nangla and 29 percent in Nayanagar in the first five weeks of the program. The spread of information regarding the school feeding program has already increased attendance in schools throughout the sub-district in anticipation of a school snack; in the areas that started later, attendance had already increased by the time the food arrived.

LOL will compare current attendance records with the original NGO “head count” survey prior to the start of the project to measure changes in attendance in the project areas.

**Performance:** Data on performance is not yet available as the project is in its very early stages.



*\*From Land O'Lakes Monitoring Report*

**Special emphasis on girls:** Girls' attendance now is higher than boys' attendance in all schools. Average attendance is 88.3 percent for girls and 87.1 percent for boys. In the areas where the program first started, the enrollment rate is 90.1 percent for girls and 88.3 percent for boys.

**Other project achievements:** The project is in its second month of feeding. Height/weight ratio per child will be available at a later time in project implementation. Technical assistance to the dairy sector is ongoing but can only be measured over time with input from the commercial sector.

### Unanticipated Outcomes

Prices received for the commodities were lower than the levels projected in the USDA-LOL project agreement. This resulted in a \$2-million shortfall in proceeds from commodity sales.

The UHT milk cartons generate a tremendous amount of trash every day that must be disposed of properly. LOL has worked hard to find a feasible solution to the disposal of empty milk cartons. Temporarily, the cartons are burned at a local rice mill and used for fuel to parboil unhusked rice. The GFE is working with the Small Industry Research Council to explore other uses for the cartons.

At the same time, LOL is working with an educational specialist to redesign the milk cartons as learning-teaching tools. Ideas include making the cartons into educational tools by printing Bangal numbers or letters from the alphabet on the sides. During each printing run, a different number or letter would be printed on the carton, eventually enabling the children to have complete sets of the alphabet and the numbers 1-10.

Another idea is to print metric measures along one side of the carton. LOL continues to place a priority on minimizing any environmental impact.

LOL expected that dairy production would increase as a result of the GFE project. However, the positive impact on women farmers from the increased demand for milk was not anticipated. Women have primary responsibility for family dairy operations. As countless studies have shown, increased economic benefits to women directly affect the health and well being of their children.

## **Lessons Learned**

The program has been operating for six months, and distribution in the schools has been ongoing for six weeks at the time of this report. While it is early in the project to draw firm conclusions about implementation issues and potential problems, the following observations can be made:

- The calculation of expected prices for monetization will need to be adjusted to reflect market trends and the specific conditions prevailing in Bangladeshi commodities markets.
- Attendance can be significantly increased in rural primary schools if snacks are given to children.
- Distribution, management, and monitoring systems are critical and can be developed to control delivery, receipt, and use of school feeding commodities. These systems can be linked with school-based records of enrollment, attendance, and consumption of donated meals to meet USDA reporting requirements.
- Educational quality is a major problem faced by the project in Bangladesh. There is some concern that the increase in attendance and enrollment produced by the school feeding program may reduce the quality of education. LOL will be using funds available under the project to improve the quality of education provided in the primary schools and will work with other donors to improve learning and educational achievements.
- Teachers are not available in sufficient numbers to teach the increasing numbers of school children. Most schools in the project area have only three teachers for six classes. With an average 53 children per teacher, overcrowding was a problem even prior to the start of the GFE school feeding program. The increased attendance is expanding the size of the classes and may be reducing the already limited effectiveness of the teachers.
- Teaching materials are not available in most classrooms and those that are available do not seem to be very effective. Children lack writing and exercise books, pencils, and other educational support materials.

## **Next Steps**

A number of steps have been identified that need to be taken to continue the effectiveness of this program. These steps build on what has been accomplished so far and will serve to improve and extend the program:

- Continue as rapidly as possible the expansion of school feeding to reach 200,000 children with a school snack of milk and fortified biscuits.
- Refine and improve the computerized inventory control and distribution management systems. Expansion of the program will require ensuring that reports meet program management needs. Special attention should be paid to school level inventory, attendance, and consumption reporting.
- Improve monetization procedures and competition for U.S. commodities to increase prices realized from commodity sales. Improve information available to Bangladesh commercial groups about monetization procedures and commodities. This will include work to improve access to individual buyers, to break cartel and syndicate purchasing, and to bypass brokers in order to improve competition and increase the prices that can be realized from the commodity sales.
- Reduce costs for biscuits and milk supplied to the program to enable the project to reach more children with available funds.

In addition to these policy and program issues, there are a number of specific actions that are needed to continue and expand the effectiveness of the program. These actions are currently part of the plans of the GFE Bangladesh school feeding program and will be initiated during June to September 2002.

- De-worming will be conducted for all school children in the program. A contract has been developed for a national NGO to purchase de-worming medicine and deliver it to each school under the GFE feeding program. A continuing contract will be established to ensure that as schools are added to the feeding program, all children will be de-wormed twice each year.
- Educational testing will be undertaken for the same sample of children surveyed in the project baseline study. An NGO with experience in testing the “Achievement of Basic Competencies (ABC’s)” will undertake the survey that will focus on simple tests of math, science, and literacy. Tests will be conducted on children in grades three and five and will be repeated after one year of the GFE program.
- Educational quality improvements will be implemented in a sample of schools. Advertisements have been placed for recruitment of “teacher’s aides” who will be employed under contract to serve at government schools. Education Department officials have agreed to cooperate with LOL in this experiment to improve the quality of the education in the primary schools.
- An effort will be made to increase the caloric content of the biscuits through improved formulation. Experiments will be undertaken to determine if the quantity of biscuits can be increased; i.e., if 7- to 9-year-old children can eat more than 40 grams of biscuit along with 200 milliliters of milk. LOL will also investigate possible calcium fortification of the milk.

## **GFE in Action**

*A boy struggles on one meal a day.* Zaidul, 11, has come to school again without any food. There are days when he feels so weak he can barely make it to the school compound. He and his family have only one meal a day. He does not play after 3 p.m. in case he gets hungry, so he sits and watches the other boys play. The school milk and biscuits are helping him to survive. "I am so happy to come to school now. I get to eat milk and cookies. I hope they never stop giving us milk and cookies," he says.

*Drink milk, be smart.* Many of the children in the program are new to the school. The novelty and excitement of food being distributed free is enough for mothers to bring these children to the school. When the benches are full, newly arrived children sit on the floor, eager to receive their milk and cookies. The boys from Class 3 have volunteered to distribute the milk and biscuits. The older kids help the young ones open their packets of biscuits and stick the "pipe" (straw) into the milk cartons. The mothers stay until the meal is finished. They smile and talk about this new event at school. They all agree this is good for their children's education and their family. From inside the classroom, the children are heard to chant in chorus, "Dudh khao, budhi barao!" (Drink milk, be smart!)

*Mothers pitch in to ensure the program continues.* Husne Ara wants a better life for her 8-year-old daughter Anita. Husne moved back to her parents' house after her husband's death seven years ago, but she has made herself useful. She helps her mother around the house and taught herself sewing. Today, she earns about 1,000 taka a month sewing sari blouses for the women in the village. She sends her daughter, Anita, to a school everyday and she wants her to finish primary school and then high school. Husne Ara is prepared to work very hard to give her daughter an education. She has organized a group of mothers to contribute 15 taka each to build a cupboard where the GFE milk and biscuits can be safely stored. She feels that the mothers should do what they can to help ensure that the program continues.

*A frustrated but dedicated teacher worries about hunger and nutrition.* Dilruba worries about her students. The teachers and headmaster have their hands full, with 235 children to accommodate. Her students are thin, malnourished, and often sick. What can one expect from a diet of rice? The first day the milk and cookies were introduced, there was such a stampede she thought the little school building would fall down. Now the children understand the snacks will come daily, and they sit in their benches and eagerly wait. At the next meeting with parents, Dilruba will make sure parents understand that the school meals are only a supplement. She will suggest practical ways for parents to offer healthier meals at home and to save something from the evening meal so the children can have a bite to eat in the morning before they go to school.

# **Bhutan**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

School meals or additional provisions for lengthy travel to school or to compensate households for the loss of a child's labor can relieve a burden for parents, making it possible for children from remote, food-insecure households to attend school. Approximately 27,400 boarding students at primary schools, lower secondary schools, and middle secondary schools are receiving two meals a day for 295 days of the year under this World Food Program (WFP) project. An average 13,900 day students at targeted remote primary and community schools are receiving two meals a day for 230 days per year. An average 1,800 day students at lower secondary schools are receiving one meal per day for 230 days a year.

Bhutan is well on its way to establishing a sustainable national school feeding program for all Bhutanese children. The Government of Bhutan has invested, on average, 60 percent of recurrent educational expenditures for primary education. Enrollment of both girls and boys has steadily increased over the last three years and attendance rates, even during the lowest periods, are at least 86 percent. The number of certified teachers is also on the rise, enabling the country to retain acceptable teacher/student ratios.

### **Country Overview**

Bhutan is a mountainous, low-income, food-deficit country with a population of about 658,000. About 30 percent of the population is estimated to be vulnerable to food insecurity throughout the year, with a higher percentage seasonally.

Nearly 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas and is dependent on subsistence farming. The difficult mountain terrain, limited communications, and highly scattered settlements impede access to schools. The education-sector strategy notes that the biggest challenge to providing universal basic education in Bhutan lies in enrolling and retaining children from poor and food-insecure families living in remote communities.

While there is no major gender difference in enrollment at the primary level, a gender gap appears in enrollment at the middle secondary school level. At present, girls represent 46 percent of both primary and lower secondary school children, but just 43 percent of middle secondary school children.

## **Project Overview**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided commodities to WFP's school feeding program titled "Improving Rural Children's Access to School." The school feeding program is part of a larger effort to enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training. Children from remote, food-insecure households are able to attend school because the burden on the parents to provide food for school meals or additional provisions for lengthy travel to school is removed. Households are compensated for the loss of school children's productive labor.

## **Commodity Management**

Food aid in the Bhutan school feeding program will:

- Enable poor, food-insecure families to enroll their children in schools and encourage regular attendance by reducing the cost of education to their families.
- Provide a nutritional supplement for students in WFP-assisted schools to augment the local diet, which is low in protein and micronutrients.
- Alleviate short-term hunger and help meet classroom energy requirements with commodities in the following amounts:

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn-soy blend	10	December 2001
	370	January 2002
Rice	420	December 2001
Vegetable oil	50	January 2002
Wheat	900	January 2002

**Goals and objectives:** The goal of this activity is to increase the percentage of poor, food-insecure people in remote areas who receive 10 years of basic education. By reducing the cost of education to poor, food-insecure families, WFP assistance will help them to access basic education for all of their children, thereby reducing the educational gender gap. The education they gain will be a personal asset that will help to reduce poverty.

The objectives are:

- To help increase enrollment and reduce the dropout rate of students up to tenth grade in all rural boarding schools.
- To help increase enrollment and improve regular attendance by day students, especially girls, from remote areas in less accessible schools.
- To improve children's attention at school by increasing their food intake. WFP is confident of achieving this objective based upon substantial experience and research of school feeding projects.

**Implementation status:** The students in community, primary, lower secondary, and higher secondary boarding schools receive two meals per day from WFP. The parents contribute the third meal in the community and primary schools. In the lower secondary and higher secondary boarding schools, a stipend from the Government of Bhutan covers the third meal. The targeted day students in community and primary schools receive breakfast and mid-day meals from WFP. Lower secondary day students receive one mid-day meal per day.

At the school level, the head teacher is in charge of school feeding, including the receipt and distribution of commodities and reporting. The Bhutan Department of Education finances the construction of kitchens and storerooms; provides furniture, cooking utensils, and stoves; pays the salaries of cooks; and covers the costs of cooking fuel.

**Other donor support:** The Government of Bhutan plans major investments, including the construction of more than 100 community primary schools, 26 lower secondary, and 23 middle secondary schools. Teacher training will be expanded with Asian Development Bank assistance. Principal donors will be Denmark, Switzerland, and the United Nations Children's Fund. International Development Association loans from the World Bank will supplement resources needed for infrastructure development.

### **Project Impact**

The activity intends to have the following outcomes:

- An increase in the national percentage of school-aged children enrolled in classes up to grade ten.
- An increase in the attendance of children enrolled in the participating schools.
- A reduction in the dropout rate for each grade up to grade ten.
- Closing of the national gender gap in school enrollment.

The activity intends to have the following outputs:

- An average of 27,400 boarding students at primary schools, lower secondary schools, and middle secondary schools receiving two meals per day during 295 days a year for five years.
- An average of 13,900 day students at selected remote primary and community schools receiving two meals per day during 230 days a year for five years.
- An average of 1,800 day students at lower secondary schools receiving one meal per day during 230 days a year for five years.
- At least 49 percent of the above students will be girls.

To date, the WFP Bhutan school feeding program has demonstrated the successful partnership between a committed government and a United Nations-assisted development project. Since 1998, enrollment levels have increased, and attendance rates now average over 90 percent. Parents are more involved in the schools and encourage greater attendance from their children.



# **Cambodia**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

In Takeo Province, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) provides children with one meal, a breakfast, per day. Access to basic education, retention, and achievement are increased for both girls and boys. The initiative in Cambodia is designed to relieve short-term hunger among school children, particularly those living in remote rural areas where they have to walk long distances to schools. Overall enrollment is up 8 percent in the schools where a feeding program has existed over the last three years. Enrollment increased 9.3 percent for girls and 7.3 percent for boys. In the schools in which the school feeding program is new, overall enrollment increased 5.7 percent, or 6.4 percent for girls and 5.1 percent for boys.

### **Country Overview**

Cambodia is emerging from 30 years of warfare and mass displacement. Much of the population of 12 million remains vulnerable to economic threats posed by unequal access to basic goods and services, education, employment, income opportunities and, in many areas, food. The low purchasing power and remoteness of the majority of the population, who live in rural areas, exacerbate food insecurity. The border areas, in particular, remain fragile as previous rebel strongholds are brought into the mainstream of Cambodia's political system and economy.

Annual per capita income is about \$268. More than 40 percent of the rural population lives below the poverty line. Cambodia still counts among the most heavily land-mined countries in the world.

Access to formal and non-formal education is limited, particularly in rural areas, with girls and women most affected. The literacy rate at 15 years of age and over is estimated at 68.7 percent, or 58 percent for women and 81.8 percent for men. Primary education is marked by high repetition and dropout rates, with over 40-percent repetition of grade one for both boys and girls. Less than 40 percent of girls complete primary education.

### **Commodity Management**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided 1,660 metric tons of rice and vegetable oil in support of the WFP Cambodia school feeding activity. The agreement between USDA and WFP was signed March 2001.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Rice	350	August 2001
	707	August 2001
	443	August 2001
Vegetable oil	130	July 2001
	30	July 2001

### **Project Overview**

In Takeo Province, WFP has joined the World Bank-supported Education Quality Improvement Project (EQIP) of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MOEYS) in a school feeding initiative supporting 64 primary schools in the province. By providing children with one meal per day (breakfast), girls' and boys' access to basic education is increased, together with retention and achievement. The initiative is designed to relieve short-term hunger among school children, particularly those living in remote rural areas where they have to walk long distances to schools. It also encourages female students to enroll and stay in school in grades four and five, when attendance typically falls and the dropout rate begins to increase sharply.

The costs of providing the meals, apart from WFP provision of rations, are borne by the community. The mid-term evaluation of the protracted relief and recovery operation and the subsequent WFP-UNESCO appraisal mission recommended that this initiative be continued in cluster schools where additional inputs from EQIP/MOEYS or other primary education, health, and community support programs are available. This would then bolster the government's community-based reconstruction of the basic education system. It is anticipated that these programs will guide future development of national "Education for All" strategies, as pledged by the government.

### **Project Impact**

Overall enrollment increased 8 percent in schools with an existing feeding program over the last three years, with enrollment up 9.3 percent for girls and 7.3 percent for boys. In the schools in which the school feeding program is in its first year, overall enrollment increased 5.7 percent, with a 6.4-percent increase for girls and a 5.1-percent increase for boys compared with three years ago. The main reason for non-enrollment and absenteeism for girls and boys is household economy commitments—the lack of family resources and the need for the children's labor at home or at income-producing tasks.

## Kyrgyzstan Mercy Corps

### Summary of Findings

The direct distribution component of this Mercy Corps' (MC) project targets about 60,000 children in 535 kindergartens, boarding schools, and orphanages throughout the country. Commodity distribution began in April 2002. Through the program's small grant component, 48 schools will benefit from infrastructure repair, 20 schools will receive food security grants, 10 schools will improve their water sanitation infrastructure, and 145,000 children will be provided with equipment and supplies. An important outcome of the project will be the strengthening of existing and the development of new community and other civil society organizations. The program will continue through September 2003.

#### *Thanking American Farmers*

"When I see *aksakals* (old men respected in the village) and grandmothers come to our meetings to discuss educational problems, I feel so proud of them and optimistic about our future. Actually, when we present the program and explain that American farmers donate the food, a lot of people are saying their great thanks to the American farmers." –MC Monitoring Report

### Country Overview

Known for its natural beauty, Kyrgyzstan (or the Kyrgyz Republic) is a small, landlocked country in Central Asia with a population of just under 5 million. It is bordered by China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The Tien Shen mountain range dominates the landscape, with almost 90 percent of the country covered by mountains. There are two distinct demographic, cultural, and economic centers in the country – the Chui Valley in the north and the Ferghana Valley in the south. It is a poor country with a predominantly agricultural economy.

Kyrgyzstan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The country was not prepared for independence, and the social, political, and economic transition has not been easy. The living standard for most people declined due to economic restructuring, which among many changes included a reduction in assistance to children, women, and pensioners. As the standard of living declined, so did the government's ability to pay for social programs. Foreign assistance has played a significant role in supporting economic restructuring.

Kyrgyzstan has made significant strides in moving to a market-driven economy. However, the country continues to face significant challenges involving economic transition, political reforms, and underdevelopment.<sup>54</sup>

In 1998, the Government of Kyrgyzstan amended its constitution to allow for private ownership of land. An estimated 90 percent of farms are now privately owned, and these farms have shown significant increases in productivity.<sup>55</sup> Privatization of state-owned businesses has also proceeded quickly, with 97 percent of businesses owned privately.<sup>56</sup> According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, giving it the highest poverty level of any former state of the Soviet Union.<sup>57</sup>

Primary school enrollment and attendance is reported to be 100 percent.<sup>58</sup> Literacy is high, with 97 percent of the population over the age of 15 able to read and write.<sup>59</sup> Primary and secondary education is funded locally, while the national government supports higher education. Since independence, finances have not been available to support basic education. Teachers are frequently not paid, and the infrastructure has fallen in disrepair. Communities understand that there will be limited assistance from government to support education and that they must take the lead if they want their children's educational environment to improve.

As UNICEF has found, "though literacy levels and primary school enrollment remain high, the educational system, once provided free of charge to all, is now highly decentralized and fragmented. User fees have been introduced, leading to lower enrollment and higher dropout rates among poorer children. In the mountainous and rural regions, a growing number of children cannot attend school because basic maintenance of school buildings has stopped. The highest decline in enrollment is at the kindergarten level. In 1990, around 30 percent of young children were enrolled in preschool. In 2000, that fell to 5 percent. The public preschool system collapsed with the breakup of the Soviet Union. The number of private kindergartens has grown, mainly in the urban areas, but access for rural children is almost nil. This situation demonstrates the critical importance of MC's efforts."<sup>60</sup>

Within this social and economic context, MC targeted a direct feeding program to institutions that provide education to young children, children orphanages, and boarding schools. A small grant program focused on educational infrastructure upgrades to the most disadvantaged geographic areas. On Aug. 3, 2001, MC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture signed an agreement that authorized MC's Global Food for Education (GFE) program in Kyrgyzstan. USDA allocated 7,790 metric tons of commodities to MC for the project.

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<sup>54</sup> The United Nations in Kyrgyzstan, Country Information Profile. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Kyrgyzstan Development Gateway, 2001.

<sup>56</sup> USAID, Kyrgyzstan Country Profile, 2000.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF, Kyrgyzstan, Country Profile.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF Priorities, <http://www.unicef.org/programme/highlights/ce/kyrgyzstan/situation.htm>

## **Commodity Management**

MC will directly distribute and monetize commodities. Direct distribution of 1,880 tons of rice, vegetable oil, and wheat flour to kindergarten schools, boarding schools, and orphanages started in April 2002. Proceeds from the sale of 5,910 tons of commodities is being used to implement the project's multiple components to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, and to enhance the learning environment.<sup>61</sup> MC used its own funds to cover expenses incurred while receiving, distributing, and preparing commodity sales in anticipation of sales proceeds. The following table shows the commodities, quantities, and intended uses.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Use</b>
Rice	540	Distribution
Vegetable oil	270	Distribution
Vegetable oil	530	Monetization
Wheat flour	1,070	Distribution
Wheat flour	5,380	Monetization

Under the terms of the agreement, all distribution commodities, the vegetable oil for monetization, and 50 percent of the wheat flour were to arrive in Kyrgyzstan by October 2001. The first shipment arrived in January 2002. The delay in commodity arrival seriously affected project implementation, as MC had planned to deliver commodities before the winter months when food is at its most expensive. Commodity distribution in late spring or summer poses a problem for boarding schools that close for the summer. Kindergartens and orphanages operate year-round. MC and beneficiary institutions are investigating how to safely store the commodities over the summer, such as processing the wheat flour into macaroni that then can be stored longer.

Schools receive enough commodities in bulk to provide each student a "ration basket" consisting of 9.3 kilograms of rice, 3.2 kilograms of vegetable oil, and 18.8 kilograms of wheat flour. The quantity of food in the ration basket is the same regardless of student age. Distribution quantities are based on the total amount of commodities divided by the total number of children, rather than on caloric content. MC monitors the use of the commodities but does not monitor, at this time, the caloric or nutritional value of the prepared meals. How long the commodities last depend on individual school use.

Kindergartens have been part of previous direct food distribution projects and are enthusiastically awaiting the commodities. The commodities were appropriate for Kyrgyzstan. However, it would be more effective if the vegetable oil for distribution were to be packaged the same as the vegetable oil for monetization; i.e., in six-by-four liter cases rather than 20-liter tins. MC is researching the appropriateness and need for other commodities, such as nonfat dry milk.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

## **Project Overview**

The MC/GFE effort has two components: direct distribution and a small grant program. The direct distribution component targets the most vulnerable populations in Kyrgyzstan, or approximately 60,000 children in the country's 535 kindergartens, boarding schools, and orphanages. The small grant program awards approximately 100 grants to improve educational institutions in selected regions. MC collaborated with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education to target the regions most in need of this type of support. The following table presents MC's goals and objectives for the program, implementation status, and general comments.

<b>Kyrgyz MC/GFE School Feeding Program</b>		
<b>Progress Criteria</b>	<b>Status of Achievement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Distribute commodities to 535 institutions—every kindergarten, boarding school, and orphanage in the country for a total of 60,000 children.	Commodity distribution (rice, vegetable oil, and flour) began in April 2002.	Beneficiary children include displaced children and children of nomads. MC will standardize caloric and nutritional value of meals.
Monetize 5,380 tons of wheat flour and 530 tons of vegetable oil.	In process.	Commodities were nutritionally and culturally appropriate for Kyrgyzstan.
Purchase local commodities at harvest and provide to the neediest kindergartens, boarding schools, and orphanages.	Not yet initiated.	Provide supplemental food that can be stored during winter months. First priority will be given to institutions in remote locations.
Provide infrastructure repair grants to benefit some 48 schools	Review process began in May 2002.	More children will be able to attend school longer.
Provide food security grants to benefit some 20 schools.	Review process began in May 2002.	Schools will develop viable business plans to utilize existing resources for income generation. Ten schools will produce food for their own consumption.
Provide for improved water sanitation infrastructure to benefit some 10 schools	Review process began in May 2002.	MC requires grantees to include a health/hygiene component and to develop linkages with UNICEF.
Provide for new equipment and supplies to benefit some 145, 000 children.	Review process began in May 2002.	Equipment will include laboratory equipment, desks, chalk, and books.

The Ministry of Education envisions a key role for kindergartens in providing valuable preschool education opportunities, but resources are not yet available to support these recommendations. As the economic situation in rural Kyrgyzstan worsens, the role of kindergartens in providing at least one healthy, nutritious meal per day for young children will increase in importance.

Boarding schools and orphanages also receive commodities through the MC/GFE project. Boarding schools receive financial support from the ministry but are also heavily supported by parents. Boarding schools provide education to a wide range of students. Several schools are magnets, offering specialization in one subject area such as math, science, or art, while others provide education to refugees, displaced persons, and children of nomads. Orphanages, supported by the government, provide limited educational opportunities and simply do not have the financial resources to provide nutritious meals to the students.

The small grants program requires community and school collaboration in all aspects of the project. The participants need to identify issues that limit educational opportunities for their children. Participants then develop a proposal to address the problems and implement the project jointly. Previously, the head of the school unilaterally made decisions impacting all aspects of education. Parent committees are active in some schools, and the goal of the ministry is to involve parents in all school education programs. MC's requirement that the school and community develop a partnership to access the small grant funds is a crucial first step to broaden community involvement in education planning specifically, and community problem-solving in general.

Over 300 community meetings had been conducted as of May 1, 2002, and that number is expected to double. Regardless of whether a school-community partnership decides to submit a proposal, the process of working together to solve common problems is a valuable development experience. According to the MC monitoring report, the communities want to make things happen, but do not know how to make them happen.

The grant committee composed of representatives from MC, other non-governmental organizations, and the Ministry of Education first met in mid-May to review proposals. Selection criteria have been established. As of June 25, 2002, more than 150 proposals had been received, and 18 projects had been approved. The committee will make additional awards in coming months.

Among the projects that received funding are the following:

- As a result of one infrastructure repair project, 713 children will have a warm and safe environment to study, the need for children to walk to and from school in the dark will be reduced, and additional classroom space will become available for children from neighboring villages. The existing village school is overcrowded and accommodates two and one-half shifts per day. Many students finish classes late in the afternoon and must travel home in the dark. The school bus is broken, and children from remote villages have to walk long distances. As a result of MC's

development intervention, a community group including village residents, teachers, members of the local women's group, and village elders submitted a proposal for consideration under the small grants program. The school-community partnership requested assistance to repair the school's roof, install a heating system, repair the kitchen, install glass windows, and repair the floors. Village residents will do most of the work.

- A safe and warm school setting for 600 students and 45 teachers will be created as a result of this project. The school has had no structural repairs since it was built in 1971. The roof leaks, floors are rotten, the drainage system does not work, and some rooms do not have heat. The school-community proposal requested assistance to repair the roof and floors, install a heating system in the library, add a gymnasium and workshop, repair the drainage pipe, and install new toilets.
- Attendance will increase for the 310 students because they will no longer have to study in damp, cold rooms. The school roof has leaked for two years. Classroom walls are covered with moss, and the floor has been ruined by excessive moisture. The community-school group has requested assistance to repair the roof and floors and to implement a general building rehab.
- Children and out-of-school youths in Boz-Beshik, a poor, remote village, will have computers. The school has an enrollment of approximately 280 students. The school's computers are outdated and in disrepair. The school has a well-equipped technology room, but students are only able to study computer theory. As a result of not learning actual computer skills, students have difficulty meeting university entrance requirements, do not consider their education relevant, and miss class, drop out, or transfer to other schools where they can get appropriate training. The community also wants to organize computer classes for the disabled village youth and the unemployed during the evening and summer vacation.

**Other donor support:** MC/GFE plans to work with UNICEF to implement water sanitation grants. As the project progresses, MC will identify linkages to other donor organizations.

**Sustainability:** Parents and other community residents will be the primary forces sustaining this project. MC's program is very effective in community capacity building. Development of school-community partnerships is a crucial first step to broader community involvement in education planning and community problem solving. This community development component also supports the Ministry of Education's goal to have parent committees become more involved in schools' overall education programs.

The community reconstructed a workshop and built a gymnasium for school children. School children, teachers, parents, and village leaders all participated. Each student brought about 20 brick stones to school that they found around the village. A lot of brick stones were left over, and the community plans to build more classrooms for the school.



**Monitoring and evaluation:** The sample school selection criteria for the direct distribution component were developed at a meeting attended by MC and USDA staff. Significant social, political, and economic differences exist between Kyrgyzstan's north and south. Likewise, there are significant differences between urban and rural communities in access and availability of basic resources, information, and technology. At this time, final numbers of small grants awarded and geographic distribution are unavailable.

### **Project Impact**

It is too early in the implementation cycle to report on project impact, although indicators so far have been positive.

In a village near Kara Kol, many children from 10 to 12 years old and up are hired to work in the fields and are absent from school. When MC staff asked why they were not in school, the children responded that they needed to earn money to buy clothes suitable for school.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

MC/GFE has created new opportunities and enhanced existing opportunities to strengthen societal organizations. The small grants program requires school officials and community members to be trained and participate in a community development process as a criteria on eligibility. Skills learned through this process can be used to tackle other community problems. Community development training will have a far-reaching impact. In spite of travel difficulties, people attended planning meetings.

### **Next Steps**

MC plans to modify the way it works with communities. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be prepared outlining the responsibilities of the MC "mobilizers" – the MC staffers who work with the communities – and the frequency of technical assistance visits. Some communities require so much assistance from the MC mobilizer to develop their proposals that they then believe that they are guaranteed grants based on MC's investment of time and resources in providing that assistance.

Community-to-community meetings should be coordinated. This will allow communities to provide support and assistance to each other.

## **GFE in Action**

Attending a community meeting to discuss school problems, an MC mobilizer saw community members ready and willing to take charge, combine meager resources, and work together to improve school conditions. Women offered to arrange meals for workers, men agreed to work without pay, and the Aiyl okmotu village government agreed to provide wood.

In Baltabai village, the school has two hectares of land, and the school community partnership decided to apply for an MC/GFE food security grant. Each child brought two to three kilograms of potatoes to school to plant. The school plans to sell half the potatoes to purchase school equipment. During a visit by an MC mobilizer, a 10-year-old student, obviously feeling very important, delivered some potatoes to the school director, saying, "If this is not enough, let me know and I will bring more."

Ordinary people appear more interested in improving education than in politics. In spring 2002, the Susamir Valley was host to a range of political rallies, speeches, and other activities. With all the efforts to draw crowds to political events, the MC mobilizer was not sure that many community members would show up for the school meeting. Also, a heavy snow was falling, and roads were blocked. Nevertheless, a huge throng made its way to the school not to attend a political meeting but rather to meet the mobilizer and learn about GFE. They discussed education issues and ways to solve their problems. Some community members offered sheep and wheat as their contributions to the school repair budget.

During a site visit to Osh Oblast, a GFE monitor visited a school that was an old shelter for sheep, completely open to the outside with no heating system. The community decided to build a new school itself, but it did not have any government funds. The community collected some money, laid a cement foundation, and made bricks. The walls went up, and the community has asked for help to finish it. Despite a hard life in a remote place, the people worked enthusiastically to provide the children with a new school.

When a monitor visited one of the kindergartens in the south, she observed children coming to kindergarten with packets of food. The director explained that the public kindergartens do not have enough money to feed the children. Parents cannot pay the kindergarten fees, so instead they provide their kids with food to take to school, such as potatoes or noodles.

During his site visit to a village in the south, an MC mobilizer spoke with an old man making bricks. The mobilizer asked the old man if he were building a house. The old man explained that the community is going to build a school, so he is helping them.

# Nepal

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

The long-term objective of this World Food Program (WFP) school feeding project is to increase access to basic education for families in food-deficit districts and to improve the health and nutritional status of school children. Under the project, about 250,000 school children in first through eighth grades 1–8 receive daily meals, and the mothers of about 42,000 girls in second through eighth grades receive vegetable oil. Enrollment rates for girls have increased at a greater rate per year than that of boys. This is most likely due in part to take-home rations and the fact that more girls than boys are currently out of the school system.

### Country Overview

Nepal, a low-income, food-deficit country, has an annual per capita gross national product (GNP) of slightly over \$200 (1998) and ranks 144th on the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Index (1999). Of its 22 million people, 42 percent live below the poverty line and more than one-third consume fewer than 2,250 kilocalories a day. The maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world, at 475 per 100,000 live births. The under-5 mortality rate is 118 per 1,000. Despite women's high labor input to the household economy, their access to assets and services and their involvement in decision-making is restricted by rigid socio-cultural practices.

Nepal's literacy rate is the 11th lowest in the world. There are pronounced regional and gender disparities in school enrollment rates. The net enrollment rate for primary schools is 79.4 percent for boys, but only 61.2 percent for girls. In the far western hills, these rates drop to 77.8 percent for boys and 49.3 percent for girls, and, in Achham district, to as low as 50 percent for boys and 30 percent for girls.

Dropout and repetition rates remain high, with 23 percent dropping out in grade one and 55 percent before the completion of the primary cycle. Only 10 percent of those enrolled in first grade complete primary school without repeating a grade.

The main reason for dropping out is poverty. Girls tend to drop out earlier than boys, primarily because they are required to do most of the household chores. The incidence of short-term hunger often deters children from attending class regularly or concentrating on learning. In the hill districts, about 40 percent of the children walk long distances to school, often on steep mountainous terrain, while those who live near the schools often return home for a meal during the mid-morning break and then fail to return to school.

## **Commodity Management**

The following commodities were provided for this project:

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Wheat-soy blend	50	August 2001
	150	September 2001
	1,786	January 2002
	464	January 2002
	1,320	January 2002
Vegetable oil	470	January 2002
	470	January 2002
	140	January 2002

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The long-term goal is to increase access to basic education for families in food-deficit districts with high educational needs, and to improve the health and nutritional status of school children. The project objectives are to:

- Improve attendance.
- Increase girls' enrollment and retention.
- Reducing afternoon absenteeism.
- Enhance the attention span and learning capacity of students by relieving short-term hunger.
- Reduce the intensity and prevalence of intestinal parasitic infections in school children by de-worming.
- Increase parental participation in the activity and heighten their awareness of gender issues.

**Implementation status:** The Primary School Nutritious Food Program (PSNFP), under the Secretary of the Ministry of Education (MOE), will remain the management unit responsible for implementing and monitoring Food for Education.

The de-worming program will continue to be implemented with the technical assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO) and through close operational coordination between MOE and the Ministry of Health.

The yearly number of participants is 250,000 school children in grades one through eight who receive a daily school meal, as well as mothers of about 42,000 girls in grades two through eight who receive vegetable oil.

With the exception of vegetable oil, WFP intends to procure all food requirements locally, as this has proved to be more cost-effective than importing in-kind contributions. Moreover, considering the complex logistics in the hill and mountain districts, only local procurement can ensure timely delivery and minimize losses resulting from limited storage capacities in remote districts.

A mid-day meal will be provided to relieve short-term hunger, provide micronutrients to improve the overall health of children, and enable children to attend school regularly. The proposed daily per capita ration is 110 grams of fortified food mix (composed of 85 grams of cereal blend, 15 grams of sugar, and 10 grams of vegetable ghee). This will provide approximately 463 kilocalories, about 15 grams of fat, and 17 grams of protein, plus micronutrients.

In selected districts and communities, a take-home ration consisting of two liters of vegetable oil per month will be provided to the mothers of girls, in order to encourage families to enroll their daughters in school and keep them there. As the vegetable oil is to be delivered directly to the girls' mothers, it will also boost interactions between parents and school staff, thereby serving as a vehicle for community participation in school planning in general and in the management of feeding activities in particular. Both the mid-day meal and the take-home ration will reduce the opportunity costs of basic education for very poor families.

The following outcome indicators have been identified:

- Increase in the proportion of girls to 43 percent of total enrollment by 2006.
- Increase attendance rates for girls and boys to at least 80 percent.
- Control worm infestation in girls and boys, and ensure that at least 80 percent of girls and boys receive de-worming tablets twice a year.
- Provide a school meal on school days to 250,000 children, including 152,300 boys and 97,700 girls (average numbers per annum).

**Other donor support:** The Asian Development Bank, the Danish Agency for Development Assistance, the European Community, the Finnish Development Corporation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Norwegian Development Corporation, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Bank are providing aid to this program.

# **Pakistan**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

The World Food Program (WFP) Pakistan focuses on girls' primary schools in selected areas, some with existing school feeding programs and some with new feeding programs. The long-term objective is to promote primary education for girls in food-insecure areas and to increase girls' literacy rates overall. The target is to be achieved by concentrating efforts in those areas that have shown very low enrollment and retention rates. Edible oil is used to enable the girls of poor families to attend these schools. Each month during the nine-month September-June school year, the girls receive one four-liter tin of oil each provided they attend school for a minimum of 20 days a month.

Approximately 75,000 of the children who receive assistance in 2001-02 do so with 2001 food contributions from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Global Food for Education (GFE) program. Girls' enrollment increased 43.7 percent in the schools with existing school feeding programs over the last three years. Because the targeted schools are for girls only, this increase cannot be compared with rates for boys. As enrollment has increased, so have student/teacher ratios and class size. Class size increased to 32 students per classroom from 15.

In the schools in which the school feeding program is new, enrollment has increased 17 percent compared with the level three years ago, and class size has increased to 23 students per classroom from 16.

### **Country Overview**

Pakistan is a low-income, food-deficit country with a per capita income of \$460 per year. The country imports about 15 percent of its basic staple, wheat. Pakistan faces enormous political, economic, and social challenges. The World Bank estimates that in 1998 some 30 million people or 23 percent of the population lived in "consumption poverty" (a measure of the minimum acceptable standard of private consumption). The poor in Pakistan are disproportionately rural and female. Some 52 percent of Pakistani women suffer from "poverty of opportunity" (an index combining health, education, and income), compared with 37 percent of Pakistani men.

Pakistani girls are brought up to marry young and remain at home. They represent only 18 percent of the children in rural schools. As a result, in a country where the overall literacy rate is just 37 percent, literacy among girls is half that of boys. Most women in rural areas cannot read or write.

Ninety percent of government primary schools lack water and sanitation facilities, and more than 50 percent have no shelter or lack boundary walls. Combined with the cultural constraints on girls' mobility, these conditions negatively affect girls' enrollment.

### **Commodity Management**

USDA provided 5,860 metric tons of vegetable oil in support of the WFP Pakistan activity titled "Assistance to Girls' Primary Education." The vegetable oil arrived in Karachi in late January 2002, approximately one month behind the originally scheduled arrival date.

### **Project Overview**

The provincial education departments are the main implementing partners of this activity. By encouraging girls and their parents to view school attendance as normal and acceptable, this activity contributes to social change by addressing the issue of female mobility in traditional and conservative communities. Mobility is a prerequisite for any intervention aimed at changing the socio-economic situation of women. Food aid is used as an enabler to attract and retain girls in primary education, the first step on the development path.

This program and the GFE-funded expansion contribute to the target set out in the Pakistani Government's Poverty Reduction Program (PRP), which the United Nations Development Group helped to develop. The PRP aims to accelerate enrollment, focusing on girls. WFP's Pakistan Country Office completed a baseline survey in December 2001 and began food distribution that same month. The contributions are expected to last 18 months.

The intended outcomes of this activity are to increase enrollment, attendance, and retention rates at selected girls' primary schools in targeted areas. In its 2001-2003 Country Program Plan, WFP plans to reach 44,000 girls currently enrolled in the 1,800 selected schools in targeted areas. These girls will receive a monthly take-home ration of four liters of edible oil over the three-year period if they remain in school. WFP also plans to reach another 100,000 girls who are expected to enroll in these schools and receive the same take-home ration over the three-year period. With the additional resources provided through the GFE program, WFP expects to reach another 84,000 girls.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has provided a checklist for "Minimum Requirements for Rural Primary Schools in Pakistan" in order to ensure that WFP is not attracting girls to sub-standard schools. The checklist covers items such as adequate buildings, qualified teachers, and the availability of teaching materials, latrines, and drinking water. WFP will work with federal and provincial authorities to ensure the availability of basic infrastructure as suggested by UNESCO. WFP uses a food-for-work program to provide drinking water, latrines, and boundary walls.

## **Project Impact**

The average ratio of student to teacher has increased from 14 students per teacher to 30 over the last four years. Today, in elementary schools across Pakistan, girls sit side-by-side, learning the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, something that would have been unimaginable just a few years ago.

## **GFE in Action**

Eleven-year-old Bibi Jwaaher told her classmates she wants to continue her studies beyond the fifth grade. Classmate Sajaada Bibi, also 11, said she plans to pursue a higher education in Islamic studies. In a region where it is rare to see a woman outside the mud walls of her home, mothers now come to school to pick up oil every two months and to discuss their girls' performance.

In a village outside Quetta in the rugged and dry Baluchistan region, a group of concerned parents used WFP's offer of oil (an indispensable and highly sought-after cooking item) to convince their village leader to find a building to house two tiny classrooms. When the school opened, the response was so overwhelming that the building was unable to contain all the students. Indeed, many classes must be held outside. Despite the lack of space, girls' enrollment has doubled at the school, as well as across Baluchistan. Attitudes are changing. Increasingly, mothers point out the advantages an education may provide to their daughters.



# Tajikistan

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

Food donations are highly valued in Tajikistan. Because of this, the use of food as an incentive for increased enrollment and attendance, and to help provide more adequate school resources, has been positively received in Tajikistan. Low enrollment figures recorded three years ago continue to increase, rising 30-35 percent in just the last two years. In existing school feeding programs, attendance levels average 78 percent overall, and 83 percent for girls alone. In schools newly introduced to the school feeding program, attendance levels for the same year average just over 73 percent.

### Country Overview

Tajikistan's 6.1 million people live in the poorest country in Central Asia, with an annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$330. According to the 1999 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report, the Human Development Index for Tajikistan is 0.665, ranking it 108<sup>th</sup> among 174 countries. Tajikistan is categorized as a low-income, food-deficit country.

Only 7 percent of Tajikistan's area is arable. The rest is covered either by mountains or deserts. Agriculture is traditionally the primary sector of the economy. Most of the cultivated land is irrigated. Cotton, the major cash crop, depends entirely on irrigation. The deteriorating irrigation infrastructure, obsolete machinery, and the lack of arable land have had severe consequences for agricultural output. The pressure to earn foreign currency, together with declining yields, has led the Government of Tajikistan to increase the amount of land cultivated for cotton at the expense of cereal production. Moreover, cereals have suffered a significant decline in per-hectare yield due to unfavorable weather, deteriorating irrigation facilities, brown rust, smut, and the lack of funds to procure necessary inputs.

Official unemployment is around 40 percent, and inflation has ranged from 630 percent in 1995 to 43.4 percent in 1998. An estimated 85 percent of the population is below the poverty line.

Social indicators are rapidly declining. The historically strong educational system is crumbling with the decay of school buildings and lack of teachers, textbooks, furniture, and heating. Many families are unable to provide their school-age children with clothing and shoes. This is leading to the social problem of street children, who are prone to falling prey to criminals, drugs, and child-labor abuse. The health status of the population

has declined with increased poverty, poor housing, the low quality of water supplies, poor nutrition, and a near-collapse of health services. It is the poor who suffer most from the inaccessibility of basic health services and medicines.

The rapid deterioration of the health care infrastructure and a changed diet, with less nutritious food, have resulted in a female anemia rate of 70 to 80 percent and a 60-percent malnourishment rate among expectant mothers. According to the World Bank, about 1 million people in Tajikistan are destitute and experience acute or chronic food insecurity.

Tajikistan used to boast a literacy rate of almost 100 percent. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the grueling civil war, the educational system is in disarray. Primary school attendance rates have fallen to about 65 percent. The WFP, therefore, intends to promote school attendance and improved child nutrition through the continuation of its school feeding program, in collaboration with international and national non-governmental organizations.

### **Commodity Management**

USDA provided wheat flour and vegetable oil for use in the Tajikistan school feeding program. The flour and oil are both fortified for increased nutritional value.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Wheat flour	380	November 2001
	3,290	January 2002
Vegetable oil	350	December 2001

### **Project Overview**

All surveys show a trend of worsening malnutrition, especially among children. Malnutrition is a problem across the country, but the most affected regions are Khatlon and the autonomous region of mountainous Badakhshan. In these areas, the WFP directly implements free food distribution.

Students receive 175 grams of wheat flour, 15 grams of vegetable oil, and 5 grams of iodized salt. The feeding program provides rations for 180 days. The program provides rations for 11,000 students, including 5,000 males and 6,000 females.

The main emphasis of this project, however, is rehabilitation and the creation of sustainable assets through food-for-work activities to target hungry poor people who are willing and able to move toward self-sufficiency. Most of the activities are related to rehabilitating infrastructure, the land-lease program, and the rehabilitation of schools.

Targeting is based on households that are the most food-insecure. The following factors affect this:

- Land availability of less than 1 hectare.
- Household without livestock.
- Household without an adult male.
- Household without savings.
- Female-headed household.
- Single pensioner only (urban area).
- Returnee household.
- Evidence of negative coping mechanisms, such as keeping children out of school.

### **Project Impact**

Greater impact can be measured in schools where the WFP was already conducting school feeding programs than in those school that are new to the program. However, the ability to review both new and existing schools allows for greater analysis and comparison values.

Low enrollment figures were recorded three years ago and now continue to increase, up 30-35 percent from levels just two years ago. In existing programs, attendance levels have averaged 78 percent for boys and girls combined, and 83 percent for girls alone. In schools newly introduced to the school feeding program, the attendance levels for the same year averaged just over 73 percent.

Financial hardship was cited as a greater impediment to sending children to school in the schools newly participating in the school feeding program (24 percent compared with 13 percent in schools with pre-existing programs). The high value of food to the families sending their children to school can be directly linked to this cost perception among surveyed families.

**Other donor support:** The WFP works with two international organizations. Mission Øst provides supplementary free food distribution and Food for Work projects in the Khatlon region, and Action Against Hunger supplies supplementary feeding for malnourished children, also in the Khatlon region.

## **Vietnam**

### **Land O'Lakes, Inc.**

#### **Summary of Findings**

During the pilot program which operated from January-May 2002, 65,000 beneficiaries in 301 school locations received daily rations of ultra-high-temperature (UHT) milk. Land O'Lakes (LOL) and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) launched a pilot program as they waited for Government of Vietnam approval of the larger school feeding program. With government approval, the school feeding program will be expanded to 315,000 beneficiaries per day in the 2003 school year. Fortified wheat biscuits will be provided with the UHT milk. A de-worming program was successfully implemented in all Global Food for Education (GFE) schools. The monetization process generated proceeds two percent over budget. The LOL GFE school feeding project will continue through May 2003.

#### **Country Overview**

Vietnam is the second most populous country in Southeast Asia, with a population of almost 79 million of which 40 percent are concentrated in the Mekong River and Red River Deltas. Agriculture, fishing, and forestry account for 70 percent of employment but only 25 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>62</sup>

Beginning in 1986, Vietnam launched a series of economic reforms. Key elements include decentralization of state economic management; autonomy to state-owned enterprises; replacement of administrative measures and controls by economic ones, particularly the use of market-oriented monetary policies to control inflation; acceptance of market-based exchange rates; and implementation of agricultural policies that allow for long term user rights and greater freedom in product marketing.<sup>63</sup>

Collective rice production was phased out in the late 1980's and Vietnam soon became a net exporter of rice. Rural families now have much greater choice on how to best manage agricultural land, and the result has been diversification toward higher value cash crops. In addition to being the world's number two rice exporter, Vietnam is now the world's third largest exporter of coffee.

These economic changes are occurring in the context of a "young" country where 70 percent of the population is 34 years of age or younger. More than half the population is under 25 and nearly one-fourth of the population is between the ages of 5 and 14. This age distribution places a special pressure on health and educational institutions to provide services to a large and still growing population.

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<sup>62</sup> CIA – The World Fact Book 2001.

<sup>63</sup> U.S. Department of State. Background Note: Vietnam, July, 2001.

Despite impressive economic achievements in recent years and a sharp reduction in poverty rates, Vietnam remains one of the poorest countries in the region with a per capita GDP of about \$380 per year. Vietnam ranks 51<sup>st</sup> out of 92 developing countries on the Human Poverty Index. More than 90 percent of the population lives on \$5 per day or less, and 45 percent of the people in rural communities live below the poverty line.<sup>64</sup> The incidence of poverty varies by region, with the highest poverty rate in the northern mountainous region. About 75 percent of the people live in rural areas that lack adequate sources of potable water.<sup>65</sup>

The Child Nutrition Center in Ho Chi Minh City estimates that children living in rural areas receive only 70 percent of their daily calorie requirements, and a significant percentage travel long distances to school on empty stomachs.<sup>66</sup> Schools participating in the pilot school feeding program in the Mekong River Delta region report that anywhere from 20-50 percent of students do not have a breakfast. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) GFE monitor reported even higher percentages of children who come to school without breakfast.

Although 51.5 percent of the children were underweight in 1985 and improvements have been made over the last 10-15 years, the malnutrition rate in Vietnam still remains very high, particularly in the rural and mountainous regions.<sup>67</sup> Reducing malnutrition continues to be a high priority for the Government of Vietnam.

The 1990's was a decade of progress for primary education in Vietnam. Improving access to primary education and the eradication of illiteracy were major government goals. By 2001, this effort resulted in a nationwide literacy rate of 90 percent and enrollment and attendance rates at more than 90 percent.<sup>68</sup>

Although reported enrollment of primary school aged children is 100 percent, there is significant room for improvement in secondary and high school enrollment. As shown on the chart on the following page, while 48 percent of all students are primary school students (100 percent of the eligible population), only 27 percent of all students are secondary school students, representing a significant drop-off in enrollment after primary school, even considering age distribution.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> World Food Program, Vietnam 25 Year Review, Dec. 2000

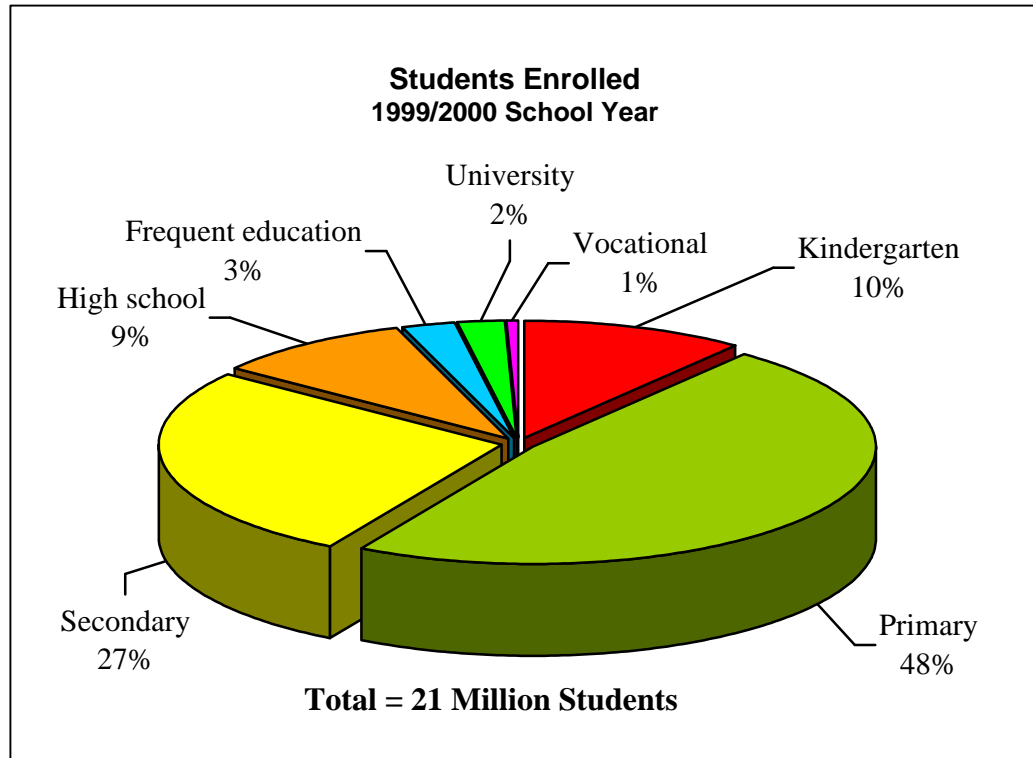
<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Dr. Nguyen Thi Kim Hung, Director, Child Nutrition Center, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Primary Education Department, Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Hanoi, April 2002.

<sup>69</sup> National Statistics Office, Tetra Pak.



Despite increasing enrollment and promotion rates during the 1990's, dropout and repetition rates remain a concern in Vietnamese primary education. Ministry of Education and Training data indicate that the repetition and dropout rates for the 1999-2000 school year were 2.8 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively, or 7.5 percent in total. Grades one and five are the most problematic grades for students.

### **Commodity Management**

The agreement between LOL and USDA was signed Aug. 3, 2001, to implement a GFE project in Vietnam using a donation of more than 43,000 metric tons of U.S. agricultural commodities. Later that month, the Vietnam School Feeding Program (VSFP) was announced.

The requested commodities were shipped in November 2001 and arrived in Ho Chi Minh City in late December 2001. The commodities were sold directly to Vietnamese agricultural processors and traders to provide the funds for the VSFP.

In the beginning, there was no storage, so the milk was stored in the teacher-room on the bookshelves. There were a lot of rats, so the teachers assigned one teacher each night to sleep in the room to scare away the rats. –USDA Monitoring Report

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Proceeds Generated</b>
Hard red wheat	19,952	\$2,699,266
Soft winter wheat	6,968	\$943,105
Soybean oil	15,000	\$2,782,480
Non-fat dried milk	1,303	\$2,606,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,222</b>	<b>\$9,031,100</b>

While the other three commodities were sold, the non-fat dried milk valued at \$2.6 million was used in the production and bartered with a large state-owned milk processing company in exchange for 16,087,963 units of finished 200-milliliter UHT milk to be distributed directly to the schools. A total of 3,479,172 units of milk were distributed and consumed through March 31, 2002, with an additional 3.5 million units estimated to be distributed through the end of the 2001/2002 school year. The balance of the barter contract will be supplied in September and October at the start of the 2002/03 school year.

At that time, the fortified biscuits made with U.S. wheat will also be distributed. Indications from the Ministry of Planning and Investment are that all processors supplying milk and biscuits to the program will receive a value added tax (VAT) rebate. The LOL-VINAMILK barter contract has a clause that states that in the event of any VAT rebate, all savings will be passed back to the school feeding program in the form of additional quantities of milk units, estimated to be another 1.65 million units more than the contract-stipulated total. Similar clauses will be included in any future milk and biscuit contracts.

### **Project Overview**

Most children in rural Vietnam travel long distances to get to school, and many arrive without having eaten breakfast. A healthy snack provided by the VSFP would give these children micronutrients and calories that would reduce their hunger and should lead to improved performance and a better quality educational experience. A positive educational experience would encourage more students to go on to secondary and high school, where enrollment rates are currently 60 percent and lower – significantly less than the government-reported 100-percent rates for enrollment at the primary school level. LOL decided to try to have some impact through the GFE project on the dropout and repetition rates seen in grades one and two.

In the LOL-USDA agreement, LOL proposed to carry out a large distribution program. This would include delivering milk and nutritious biscuits as a daily snack to 400,000 primary school children in several targeted regions of the country to be chosen by a committee of government and private sector representatives. However, the Government of Vietnam does not allow international donor projects of more than \$500,000 to be implemented without concurrence of all government ministries. This approval process can take a long time. Therefore, LOL and MOET agreed to carry out a small pilot project feeding 65,000 primary school students in the Mekong River Delta region.

The Delta area was chosen for the pilot because of the high dropout rate the region experienced during the October-December rainy season, when flooding was unusually heavy. The Delta region's proximity by automobile to Ho Chi Minh City (three to five hours) would allow both LOL and the processors to monitor logistics and manage other reporting issues carefully in the pilot phase.

Both LOL and the Government of Vietnam wanted to implement the VSFP pilot project as soon as possible in order to reach hungry children and also to reduce the time for the approval of the project expansion to the original GFE project size. Because the commodities, and the revenues from their sale, would not arrive until the end of December 2001, LOL decided to advance its own funds so that the project could begin in September. The staff immediately began the implementation planning and startup activities. In early January 2002, milk distribution began to 65,000 beneficiaries daily in 301 school locations in the Mekong River Delta region.

The VSFP daily nutritious snack consists of a 200-milliliter carton of fortified milk and a nutritious wheat biscuit. The two products combined provide the children with 300 calories and about 50 percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of needed vitamins and minerals. The 300 calories represent about 60 percent of the estimated calorie deficit facing children in rural Vietnam. The snack, combined with planned deworming twice a year, is expected to have significant impact on the nutritional status of children participating in the program.

An additional component of LOL's GFE project is to strengthen the production capacity of dairy and food producers in the private sector. Technical assistance through LOL and other technical specialists will be targeted at those producers with the goal of expanding their capacity and improving the quality of their products.

**Goals and objectives:** The goals of the VSFP are to increase enrollment and attendance by 20 percent and increase overall performance in primary schools. LOL staff also expect to improve dairy and food processing operations in the country.

**Implementation status:** To date, the most significant challenge for LOL has been the Government of Vietnam's requirement that all foreign non-governmental aid programs valued at more than \$500,000 undergo an extensive review and approval process that can take anywhere from three to eight months. While government officials conducted the review of the LOL GFE proposal, LOL and its lead partner, the Ministry of Education and Training, launched a pilot program so that milk could be distributed to students in the second half of the 2001/2002 school year. The pilot experience provided the VSFP an opportunity to gain product, distribution, and program implementation experience needed to expand the program to 315,000 beneficiaries in the central and northern regions of Vietnam. In July 2002, VSFP received official notification from the government that the program can be expanded for the 2002/2003 school year.



<b>Vietnam School Feeding Program</b>		
<b>Criteria for Measuring Progress:</b>	<b>Status of Achievement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
400,000 children to receive milk and biscuits daily.	Distribution of UHT milk in 200 ml packs began January 2002 for the pilot project, feeding approximately 65,000 students and staff at 301 school sites primarily in the Mekong Delta region. Fortified biscuit distribution will start in September at the beginning of the 2002/03 school year.	A five-month pilot was initiated while VSFP awaited government approval. Based on resources expended on the pilot, LOL submitted an extension request to feed 315,000 beneficiaries per day in the 2002/03 school year. About seven million servings of milk were distributed during the pilot.
20% increase in enrollment and attendance.	No significant changes in official enrollment and attendance rates have yet been documented. Reports suggest a 1-2% increase in enrollment and attendance.	Vietnamese primary school enrollment and attendance rates are high, but exactly how high is the question. Gathering accurate enrollment and attendance statistics is difficult as school officials feel pressured to report low dropout and high attendance rates to meet goals established in 5- and 10-year plans. It will be difficult for VSFP to measure impact in this area.
15% increase in number of girls attending school.	No significant changes in enrollment and attendance rates were documented in the first three months of feeding.	Official attendance rates are high for girls, but reports indicate attendance differences between boys and girls.
50% increase in basic nutritional knowledge among participating school children.	Education on nutrition and the environment will be added in the 2002/03 school year.	VSFP is working with MOET, Nutrition Institute, and Tetra Pak to ensure appropriate themes and integration.
Technical assistance to processors.	To be determined.	Developing the fortified biscuit product is one identified area for assistance. Other areas of possible assistance are product development and improving taste of product.

LOL has been very effective in coordinating its project with a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Examples include:

- MOET's Primary Education Department is LOL's lead partner in the VSFP. LOL works with a small management team in Hanoi, as well as with government representatives at the province and district levels. This partnership provided LOL direct access to primary schools and allowed for a quick startup of milk delivery to students.
- The Nutrition Institute (Ministry of Health) will continue to work with the VSFP to develop the nutrition education component of the program to be implemented at the start of the 2002/03 school year. District and local level offices assist in the de-worming program.
- Under a contract with LOL, the Vietnam Red Cross, which has a nationwide network and local connections, monitors school level participation on a random, spot-check basis. It ensures that schools follow program guidelines and alerts LOL if other problems or issues are identified during school visits. The Vietnam Red Cross was particularly valuable in alerting LOL to the carton disposal and environmental issues.
- Tetra Pak and its Ho Chi Minh City office provided startup support in the form of staff time and office space during October–December 2001. Tetra Pak is also offering packaging discounts to suppliers and has designated staff from its Singapore office to work with LOL to come up with solutions for dealing with empty cartons in a country with no rural garbage collection system.

**Other donor support:** During June-August 2002, LOL will be seeking to identify linkages with other groups working in the areas of nutrition education and education support programs. LOL has collaborated with a French company on development of a fortified biscuit.

As discussed previously, LOL has developed significant support from other agencies of the Vietnamese government and the private sector. The Ministry of Health has added a de-worming component to the VSFP. The National Nutrition Office has also been involved in technical assistance with nutrition education.

**Sustainability:** LOL worked with the Vietnamese Government to establish the organizational capacity within Vietnam to assume management responsibility for a school feeding program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and LOL are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities of the pilot project.

There are 301 schools participating in the VSFP pilot project. Ninety-six are centrally located main schools, and 205 are branch locations of those main schools. Enrollment in these schools ranges from the 1,300 students to only five students, with the main schools generally being much larger than the branch locations. The 96 main schools were

grouped based on geographic location and a median per school enrollment of 360 students. One school, ThoTraan, was pre-selected for analysis because its enrollment of 1,300 students was by far the largest.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment and attendance:** Overall numbers show no significant change in enrollment and attendance rates in the first three months of the VSFP, and no change is expected in the April-June reporting period. Pressure on schools and administrators to meet enrollment and attendance goals established in Hanoi make it difficult to accurately track improvements in enrollment and attendance. The following chart illustrates the high rate of attendance in the three pilot areas. The reason that children do not enroll in or attend school is usually the difficulty of travel. In many cases, it can take two to three hours by boat or walking to reach the school. Children are also absent or not enrolled because of the need for them to help on the farm or to watch younger siblings.

**Special emphasis on girls:** Primary school enrollment and attendance figures for boys and girls are comparable. The reasons children have to miss school are the same for boys and girls, but girls are kept home to help more often than boys. LOL is examining a number of non-food strategies to implement for the 2002/03 school year to promote school attendance by girls.

When harvest season comes, some of the pupils in poor families—especially in grades four and five—have to help their parents in the field. The girls are in the same situation as the boys, but they spend more days than boys in the field. –USDA Monitoring Report

**Other project achievements:** One of the objectives of the LOL-GFE project is to stimulate private sector processing and distribution of processed products to schools. LOL has observed that many high-quality milk and cookie products are never distributed beyond urban centers. Working with VSFP will help processors gain experience and access to more remote areas and markets. LOL plans to focus on this area in the coming months. Initial areas of concentration will be in product development and taste improvement.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Fortified biscuit products developed through VSFP could have a commercial future. Much of the population suffers from a serious micronutrient deficiency, and fortified biscuit products are not available on the market. The fortified biscuit product developed by VSFP can be purchased and delivered to remote rural communities for the same price as children pay for “junk” food items sold at local kiosks. LOL is encouraged to think that if the VSFP-developed fortified biscuit is priced competitively, it could have a commercial future.

## **Lessons Learned**

LOL originally planned to feed more children sooner. However, the pilot program worked well given the bureaucratic obstacles, distribution and infrastructure issues, product development and packaging cycles, and timing of commodity arrival. Over the course of the 5-month pilot, the VSFP staff learned the following lessons that will be incorporated into the larger program:

- Sweetened, fortified milk works best. Milk sold commercially in Vietnam is sweetened and/or flavored. For the first three months of the program, a commercially sold sweetened formula was used in the VSFP. After the third month, LOL asked VINAMILK to produce an unsweetened run (10,000 units) to test with the children. Although the tests were not scientific, the unsweetened milk was not popular. Popular taste preferences, coupled with the approximately 500-calorie daily gap for children living in rural communities, drove the decision to switch back to sweetened milk. The extra calories are not “empty” in rural Vietnam. The milk formula will also be adjusted to include additional vitamin A and D.
- Fortified biscuit/snack products do not exist in the commercial market. The LOL team has been working with four different biscuit manufacturers to develop a tasty, 150-calorie/30 gram wheat biscuit fortified with 50 percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamins and minerals. Because there are no fortified biscuit or snack products available in the market, processors must go through a cumbersome approval process with the Vietnam Food and Drug Administration.
- Educating parents about micronutrients and the benefits of fortified products will be a key part of sustainability. VSFP staff has learned from the pilot project that there is a need to include parents in the nutrition training process. Many parents do not fully appreciate the nutritional value of milk and often have concerns that too much milk will cause a child to be “obese.” The VSFP will include parents in future nutrition education efforts so that they are fully aware of the importance of the milk and fortified biscuits in improving the physical and mental health of their children.
- Change in packaging materials will increase the number of children that can be fed. The 2002/03 VSFP will use a combination of brick or box-shaped (30 percent) and fino or pouch (70 percent) packaging. LOL has decided to switch because of a 2-cent per serving savings. The capacity of the existing Tetra Fino lines currently operating in Vietnam is about 70 percent of target numbers. Tetra Pak has offered to further discount the Tetra Brik packaging (discount increased from 5 percent to 10 percent) for the remaining volume as a way to show support for the program.
- Empty carton and biscuit wrappers create a garbage problem. VSFP needs to find a better way to dispose of empty milk cartons because rural communities do not have a formal system of garbage collection. The empty cartons (and future biscuit wrappers) are more garbage than some communities have ever seen, especially at small branch school locations. The current practice is to burn the cartons in shallow holes very near the school. LOL will have to develop a better trash disposal system and ensure that appropriate education and training is conducted to ensure schools dispose of their garbage in the most logical, environmentally safe way.

- The most efficient approach to deliver products to the schools is for the suppliers to deliver to the branches and let the teachers teach. The pilot program fed 65,000 beneficiaries at 96 schools and 301 locations. Providing product directly to branch schools will have to be kept in mind for the expanded program. As new schools are added, it will require training more school staff.
- Identifying key people responsible for recordkeeping is essential. LOL understood the importance of accurate recordkeeping and did a thorough job in training school staff to assume responsibility for tracking inventory and consumption. However, the people trained did not do the recording and did not teach others how to do accurately. The need to complete forms accurately and on a regular basis has been a learning experience for school staff.
- “Three strikes and you’re out” needs to be the rule. Some schools do not take the program guidelines seriously and do not maintain accurate records or adequately store the milk. This lack of responsible cooperation cannot be accepted, especially as the program expands. The team is working to develop a warning system that will allow a school two chances to improve its reporting, storage, and/or garbage disposal systems. If the school does not improve or at least show a serious effort, then it will be removed from the program.

### **Best Practices**

- From the very start, the LOL-VSFP has responded to feedback and made efforts to modify activities as appropriate. A good example of this responsiveness was the LOL project director’s immediate response to the USDA’s regional coordinator’s suggestion to incorporate de-worming as part of the VSFP. A de-worming program was implemented in all 301 locations, and it seems to have resulted in weight gain for some of the children.
- On LOL’s initiative, it and its cooperating partners monitored possible problems associated with lactose intolerance in the student population. Despite concerns, there were no significant problems associated with lactose intolerance, although VSFP will continue to monitor as the program continues.
- By involving multiple processors to ensure competitive pricing and using more than one supplier, the program will stimulate private sector processing and distribution of processed products to schools in rural communities. Although the VSFP will use multiple processors, the processors are required to use VSFP-only designated packaging design. Packaging will indicate that it is a gift from U.S. farmers to the children of Vietnam and that the product is not for re-sale.

### **Next Steps**

LOL recently received clearance to operate the expanded program. Target regions for the 315,000 students to be fed next year have been identified: Dong Thap and Long An Provinces in the Mekong River Delta region; Bac Can Province in the northern mountainous region; Quang Tri Province in the north-central coastal region; and Quang

Nam and Binh Dinh Provinces in the central coastal region. The neediest districts of these provinces will be targeted to participate in the VSFP.

LOL needs to resolve the garbage issue. Tetra Pak is working with LOL to come up with a solution that makes the most sense given the conditions in Vietnam. One option is a burner that Tetra Pak is currently testing in Thailand. LOL continues to explore recycling options, but given the location of the schools (in three distinct regions) and the volume of containers, the feasibility of this option is uncertain.

LOL will develop the nutrition education component to VSFP. LOL will design three to five simple lessons to supplement health and nutrition lessons in the existing curriculum. Tetra Pak is also working with the program to develop some environment and education messages that can be included in the packaging design.

LOL is working to improve its database to track enrollment, attendance, and consumption. VSFP is working with the LOL-Bangladesh school feeding program to develop a more efficient/accurate data collection system. During the last two weeks of the 2001/02 school year which ended June 20, the new system was tested in Dong Thap. VSFP plans to work with the Bangladesh school feeding program to develop a regional database to share and track trends by region. LOL anticipates that Indonesia and the Philippines, sites of existing and possible USDA-supported school feeding programs, would be included in this regional database as well.

### **GFE in Action**

Teachers at Hung Dien B Primary School (Tan Hung, Long An) report that many pupils have experienced rapid weight gain after three months of consuming milk. For example, student Nguyen Ngoc Dang of class 5/1 gained five kilograms (11 pounds). He weighed 35 kilograms (77 pounds) before but now weighs 40 kilograms (88 pounds). Pupils Duong Thanh Nam (class 4/1) and Nguyen Cong Danh (Class 2/1) both gained four kilograms (around 9 pounds).

Primary school An Thoi Dong is a very quiet area, even though it's in the center of An Thoi Dong ward. At 8:50 a.m., the school drum sounds three times, and the school comes alive with the sound of students shouting for joy. Despite their noise, the children remain seated. Tran Van Lang, the man responsible for receiving and distributing milk at this school, explains, "This first set of drum beats is the signal that it is milk time." Then the drum beats 10 minutes, telling the teachers it is time to collect milk for their students. This is why the students wait patiently at their desks. After the milk is consumed, the drum beats again indicating that the children can go outside and play for their morning recess. Since the beginning of the milk program, the children at An Thoi Dong Primary School call the first morning drum beat the "milk drum beat" and it is their favorite drum beat of the day.

A teacher in a primary school in Dong Thap said: "I'm very grateful to the school milk program because, thanks to this program, I rarely have to encourage children to go to

school. The children become so milk-addicted that the attendance is normally 100 percent. During school time, they just look forward to milk time. Sometimes I forget about milk time and they remind me right away. They rush out with eager faces whenever I bring the milk to the classroom.” Another teacher reported, “There are 38 pupils in my class. Most of them love to drink milk. Lately, the only time they are absent from school is when they are sick. When they came back, they often comment that being sick meant that they missed having milk that day. School milk really helps us a lot in attracting pupils to schools.”

At Khanh Hung Primary School, the parents of a third grade pupil came to see the teachers and requested them not to give their son more milk, complaining that “my child is gaining weight too fast. Only last month, I bought him a new set of clothes, but today they do not fit anymore. We are afraid he will be obese.” The principal explained that gaining weight is a good sign, and their son will not become obese from drinking milk. However, the parents did not believe the school principal and took their son to a local clinic for examination. Only after the doctor concluded that the boy’s health and weight were fine did the parents calm down and listen to their son’s urgings that they allow him to keep drinking the milk.

The vice headmaster at the Binh Khanh Primary School welcomed an LOL representative with obvious pride and joy. “Look at the children,” he said. “After three months of drinking milk, they are all healthier and more energetic. I can see the change in their faces – looking brighter. Many of them gained weight.”





## **Benin**

### **Catholic Relief Services**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) school feeding program in the Republic of Benin began in April 2002 with the selection of parent-teacher associations (PTA's) as the focal point of implementing the program for 10,000 school children. Actual feeding started in June 2002. Data on the performance of the program is not yet available, but reports from CRS-Benin's Global Food for Education (GFE) monitors indicate wide acceptance of the program by the selected PTA's. CRS-Benin successfully monetized the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities and plans to use the proceeds of approximately \$548,562 to fund critical intervention programs in support of the school feeding. In addition, CRS-Benin has also targeted 3,500 female students for take-home rations as an incentive to increase school attendance by girls. The program is scheduled to continue through the 2003 school year.

#### **Country Overview**

Benin is a small country on the west coast of Africa, with an estimated population of 6.5 million. Its annual growth rate of 3.0 percent is one of the highest rates of population growth in Africa.<sup>70</sup> Sustained economic policy reforms and political stability have enabled Benin to achieve an average annual economic growth rate of 4.9 percent in the period 1991 to 2001.<sup>71</sup> Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth declined from 5.8 percent in 2000 to 5 percent in 2001 due to lower than expected agriculture output.<sup>72</sup>

Despite a decade of positive per capita income growth, poverty has not been reduced significantly.<sup>73</sup> Gross national product per capita in 2001 was only \$380. Further progress requires comprehensive measures to slow population growth, accelerate economic growth, and assure the availability of health and education services.<sup>74</sup> This will require further economic liberalization, dramatic improvements in the effectiveness of public service delivery systems, decentralization, and reduced corruption.<sup>75</sup> One-third of Benin's population lives below the poverty threshold and suffers from chronic food insecurity. This country has an extremely low human development index (HDI). The United Nations Development Program 2001 HDI ranks Benin 147 out of 162 countries.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> World Development Indicators database, April 2002.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> World Food Program 2001-Benin Country brief.

Benin's economy is dominated by subsistence agriculture, which accounts for approximately 70 percent of employment.<sup>77</sup> Due to inadequate technology, traditional farming methods, and dependence on rain-fed agriculture, Benin's domestic food supply is not capable of meeting demand. Benin has an illiteracy rate of about 48 percent among adult males and 76 percent among female adults.<sup>78</sup> Overall, about 63 percent of the primary school students are boys and 37 percent are girls.<sup>79</sup>

Enrollment figures for Atacora and the adjacent regions where CRS is implementing the GFE program are much lower.<sup>80</sup> Across this region, only about 30 percent of parents send all their children to school.<sup>81</sup> Parents with only one child tend to keep that child out of school to assist with household and farm activities. Even in households with more than one child, parents will typically keep the first child out of school and send younger children instead. The level of school attendance by children is highly correlated with the education level of the parents.<sup>82</sup>

The overall rate of student promotion is very low. On average, six out of 10 students are promoted to the next grade level (57 percent of girls compared to 64 percent of boys). The overall dropout rate for girls is 13 percent compared to 12 percent for boys.<sup>83</sup> The average attendance rate is about 80 percent for the region.<sup>84</sup>

Families of the students primarily engage in farming and fishing, with an average yearly income of about \$175.<sup>85</sup> During the long dry season, the household food security situation throughout the region becomes very tight even by Benin standards.<sup>86</sup>

### **Commodity Management**

CRS-Benin requested and received 3,350 metric tons of commodities from USDA to support its GFE program, including 2,760 tons of soybeans for monetization; 500 tons of rice for direct distribution; and 90 tons of soybean oil for direct distribution.

CRS planned to distribute 270 tons of rice and 40 tons of soybean oil as take-home rations for 3,500 girls in 60 schools. The take-home ration would serve as a reward for good attendance to girls who achieve at least an 85-percent attendance rate during a given quarter.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Government of Benin Statistics, 2001.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> CRS baseline Study of Benin's Education, 2001.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Government of Benin Statistical Report, 2000 and World Bank Country Report, 2000.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> CRS Report, June 2002.

The commodities arrived in Benin in two shipments in January and March of 2002. The soybeans were monetized in March 2002. CRS-Benin generated approximately \$548,561 from the monetization.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CRS defines food-assisted education as a set of interventions to support long-term educational objectives. The CRS-Benin program was designed to improve access to, quality of, and local participation in basic education for primary school-aged children. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- Increase enrollment and attendance rates of primary school-aged children.
- Improve the physical learning and sanitation environment for children in pre- and primary schools.
- Improve the quality of education provided to primary school-aged children.
- Increase active community involvement in the education of pre- and primary school aged children.

CRS-Benin is using commodities available under GFE in two ways. The direct distribution plan called for:

- Provision of a morning or mid-day meal to 10,000 children in pre- and primary schools over nine months.
- Take-home rations for 3,500 girls as a reward for high attendance rates. High attendance rate is defined as missing less than ten school days during a school term.
- Provision of training module materials to support the participation of teachers in training.
- Incentives to teachers and other school staff for attendance and for instituting teaching techniques in the classroom.
- Take-home rations to encourage enrollment and attendance by girls and other marginalized groups.
- Support for children's participation in summer school programs and/or short-term education programs for displaced or otherwise crisis-affected children.

In order to achieve the goal of community involvement in the education of primary school children, CRS designed a program that builds up the capacities of PTA's and other local community groups. Specific goals for the program are as follows:

- Providing initial intensive training as well as targeted follow-up training to PTA management committees established to implement the canteen distribution program.
- Promoting sustainable community involvement and commitment within the school environment by increasing PTA capacity. It is envisioned that when CRS phases out commodity distribution to the school canteens, the PTA's will take over management

and implementation of the program. As such, these objectives provide for intensive training, mentoring, and monitoring by CRS.

CRS monetized 2,760 tons of soybeans with the purpose of using the proceeds to fund a number of other critical interventions, including the following:

- Distribution of micronutrient supplements to improve student health.
- Provision of hygiene and nutrition education for parents and teachers.
- Improvements to school learning and sanitation infrastructure.
- Training of teachers and directors in improved teaching and school management techniques.
- Information and education campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of such issues as the importance of education for girls.
- Strengthening of PTA's to increase community involvement in education.

**Implementation status:** The focal point of the CRS program is the PTA. For this reason, CRS began implementation of the program in the Atacora region with the selection and training of 60 PTA's in April 2002. CRS selected the participating schools using a school selection and mapping tool developed by CRS-Benin. The following criteria were used in the school selection process:

- A rural location, where the school served students from villages located at least three kilometers from the school.
- A clean water source within the school surroundings and a willingness and ability to provide a cooking area and secure storeroom in the school.
- An absence of conflict between the PTA and the school director.
- A PTA that invests tangibly in the development of the school and community through cash and in-kind mobilization from the school and/or community.
- A PTA willing to make in-kind and nominal cash contributions to the canteens, and to sign a contract with CRS outlining the implementation plan.

CRS negotiated and signed contracts with each PTA. Each contract specifies the roles and responsibilities of the PTA's. The management committees within each PTA have full responsibility for operating and managing the school canteens, and for reporting on operations to CRS-Benin. The other PTA members and CRS-Benin monitor assist the canteen management committees on a regular basis.

Each PTA has a school canteen management committee, which is responsible for organizing the entire feeding program in their respective school. CRS began training the management committee members in May 2002. In addition to training the management committees, CRS also organized training for the directors of each school, which started in June 2002 in conjunction with the launch of the school feeding program in the schools. The total number of students enrolled in GFE-participating schools as of June 3, 2002, is 10,577, of which 3,098 or about 29 percent are girls.

**Other donor support:** CRS has established mechanisms at the country, regional, and headquarters levels to coordinate and collaborate with local and international organizations, host governments, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other donors in the implementation of GFE program. CRS' longstanding commitment to partnerships has played a key role in identifying potential partners for this initiative. CRS coordinates activities with World Education, International Foundation for Education and Self-Help, and Medical Care Development International in strengthening the education activities in Benin.

The collaboration is in the form of suggestions, such as the idea from the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help to extend equity actions beyond girls and boys to include ethnically marginal groups in the region. Other collaborative efforts include monthly meeting between CRS and other international organizations and donor communities to track funding educational programs. World Education provides CRS with a complementary PTA capacity building training program. Medical Care Development International provides health education training activities to PTA's as a complement to the CRS GFE program.<sup>88</sup>

CRS also collaborates with Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International. CARE is implementing a school promotion program for girls in Borgou region, adjacent to the region where CRS operates. CARE is in the process of developing International Education Center (IEC) material for this program, and CRS has indicated its willingness to incorporate the same material into the CRS GFE program.

**Sustainability:** CRS designed the GFE program in Benin to incorporate community involvement to help ensure sustainability and to work toward economically self-sufficient and stable communities. Through its many years of experience working with school communities, CRS has developed a sustainability strategy that is based on active local interest and participation in basic education. CRS experience has shown that education activities have the best chance of being successful and their impacts sustained if parents and other community members are actively involved through such mechanisms as PTA's and village education committees. CRS' strategy in its education activities, therefore, is to encourage formation of such organizations when they do not already exist and to strengthen them when they do.

CRS also works to facilitate linkages among the village education committees, local organizations, and regional government education offices so that eventually parent/community groups and federations can advocate successfully for the education needs of their communities. Such collaboration among private organizations and local officials in northern Benin bodes well for the sustainability of school lunch program in Benin.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** CRS-Benin has developed a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to measure the impact of the GFE program in Benin. CRS has hired

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<sup>88</sup> CRS Baseline study report, 2000. World Education (WE) and Medical Care Development International (MCIDI) activities funded by USAID.

four full-time GFE monitors based in Atacora region who will undertake regular monitoring and data collection. The monitoring and evaluation department assists in developing an effective reporting system for the canteen management committees, as well as for the CRS controllers. This information is entered into a management information system at CRS-Benin headquarters.

Because many impact indicators will be measured against the initial baseline study, it is feasible that some changes may be made after the start of the project to more appropriately reflect real needs and practicalities. The indicators are currently based on available statistics, staff observations, and lessons learned from other regions that have similar socio-economic indicators. The performance indicators are listed below:

- Tonnage of commodities distributed.
- Tonnage of commodities monetized.
- Number of meals (lunches) served per school.
- Number of take-home rations distributed.
- Number of teachers and administrators receiving teaching/management training.
- Number of parents groups formed and strengthened.
- Number of school improvements projects implemented.
- Percentage increase in enrollment over baseline, disaggregated by gender.
- Percentage increase in attendance rates over baseline, disaggregated by gender.

In 2002, USDA has also partnered with Allies in Health and Development (AIHD) to monitor the GFE program. Together, AIHD and USDA have developed factors from which a random sample of 20 schools has been selected to participate in the monitoring and evaluation program. The AIHD monitor will collect attendance data for the months June, July, and September 2002.

### **Project Impact**

School feeding under the GFE program in Benin began on June 3, 2002, after the selection of PTA's and the training of school canteen management committees and school directors. Data on program impact is not yet available.

**Enrollment:** The targeted region's schools have an enrollment ratio of 67 percent boys and 33 percent girls in the primary schools. Actual enrollment data from the selected schools is not yet available, and data is being collected.

**Special emphasis on girls:** CRS plans to provide take-home rations to girls who attend school at least 85 percent of the days each month. CRS anticipates that about 3,500 girl students will receive monthly take-home rations beginning in September 2002.

**Other project achievements:** In its request for commodities, CRS chose commodities for monetization that would have an impact on the economy of Benin. Benin does not produce soybeans and the country has one oilseed processing plant, which processes

cottonseed. CRS convinced the processor, Fludor Oilseed, to process soybeans during the lull when cottonseed, the main raw material, is in short supply. As a result, the CRS GFE program saved the jobs of 150 people who would otherwise have been laid off temporarily from the plant for lack of raw materials.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

CRS did not anticipate:

- A strike by teachers and school administrators for higher pay. Teachers and school directors engaged in a month-long work stoppage for higher pay. As a result, CRS had to postpone training of selected PTA's and school directors, thereby delaying the implementation of the GFE program for one month.
- The increase in first-grade enrollment. Because of this increase, some first-grade classes in some of the selected schools have more than 100 students per class, and more teachers are needed.

### **Lessons Learned**

The following are lessons learned to date from GFE implementation in Benin:

- Daily attendance registers are not well kept in all the schools. The state of the registers now in use is not adequate to calculate attendance by gender.
- First-grade enrollment increases have resulted in larger class sizes and an even greater need for more teachers.
- About 65 percent of teachers lack basic teacher training.
- All the selected PTA's are interested in the program and enthusiastic about their selection.
- One of the strengths of the CRS program is the extensive training provided to PTA's before the program gets underway. As a result of this training, PTA members place a higher value on education for their children and are contributing to school improvements and payment of teachers' salaries. This is a welcome change in a part of the country where teachers' salaries are many months behind.
- Most schools participating in the GFE program lack such basic hygienic facilities as latrines and a water supply.
- Most schools lack enough teachers, resulting in cancelled classes that leave children at home. The region also suffers a shortage of female teachers who can serve as role models to the girls.
- Long absences from their posts are common for some schools directors.
- Each community member contributes complementary foods to the schools for the GFE program. Such contributions organized on a larger scale will lead to sustainability of the school lunch program in the region for the future.
- Pay strikes by school teachers and administrators during the academic year are more frequent than anticipated.

## **Best Practices**

One of CRS' best practices is the use of the social marketing tool to sensitize parents in the education of their children. CRS achieved this through extensive training for members of the PTA, organizing parents' day at each school, providing training seminars for teachers and organizing distribution days for take-home rations. For example, on the distribution days for the dry rations each trimester, CRS uses visual skits to deliver educational messages and to heighten awareness of the importance of education for girls.

CRS' focus on parent-teacher activities also helps to sustain the program long after donor organizations leave the scene. As indicated earlier, Benin is one of the few developing countries to design and implement a school lunch program from its own meager budget. The Ministry of Education plans to implement the program in the entire country by 2010.

## **Next Steps**

A sample of schools has been drawn up. The local monitor has been trained, and data collection has begun for the first 20 schools. A focus group questionnaire is to be developed, and the regional coordinator is expected to make a follow-up visit to schools.

CRS plans to extend the program for one additional month through the 2002 school year to make up for time lost due to the strike by teachers in early January. During this make-up month, CRS plans to continue the school feeding and the distribution of take-home rations. In addition, CRS plans to provide training for school directors and selected teachers, and to launch an awareness campaign for the PTA's during the summer months. The schools reopen in September 2002.

## **GFE in Action**

Madame Kouton is about 45 years old (she does not know her actual age) and the parent of four girls and two boys. The oldest girl is 16 and already married, awaiting her first child. Madame Kouton is a member of the PTA in Pikire in the Kerou district in Atacora region. She joined the PTA after she was made aware of the CRS GFE program in the region. She enrolled her remaining kids in school because she wants them to have an education. She and her husband produce yams, cassava and other food staples. Although her family income is only about \$100 a year, she contributes food from her farm to the CRS GFE program, as required. She indicated that she has learned a lot from just being part of the PTA. She says she is willing to do more to guarantee an education for her children. She welcomes the help from the GFE program in feeding her two boys and two girls enrolled in school, and she believes her sacrifice for her children will pay off in the future when they are all "educated."



# Cameroon

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

The World Food Program (WFP) assistance to Cameroon in the education sector began in 1992. The present expansion aims to increase school enrollment and attendance by girls and to re-target the project on the country's northern and eastern provinces. Schools where girls account for less than 40 percent of students and where at least 40 percent of students live more than 40 kilometers away are eligible for WFP assistance. Preference is given to areas where the overall enrollment rate is below 30 percent. The project's goal is to provide assistance to an estimated 49,000 pupils. Assistance includes a daily meal for all beneficiaries, both boys and girls, in the schools covered, and a quarterly dry ration to families who keep their daughters at school for the last two years of primary schooling (33 percent of beneficiaries). The effective targeting instituted in this program has led to an average 7-percent increase in the retention rate—the number of girls who stay in school.

### Country Overview

Cameroon, a low-income, food deficit country, is in the grip of a serious economic recession characterized by a substantial drop in gross domestic product (GDP), a fall in household incomes and the introduction of draconian budget cuts in the framework of a structural adjustment program. Consequences of these macro-economic phenomena include an increase in poverty and food insecurity, especially in the country's northern and eastern regions. Basic social services, and education in particular, have been hard-hit by tight financial restrictions and are no longer able to respond to demand. As a result, an alarmingly large number of children, many of them girls, are no longer sent to school.

Over the country as a whole, demographic pressure (2.9-percent population growth per year), high population density, under-utilization of inputs, inadequate extension, disorganized markets and post-harvest losses have led to a fall in food crop production and the amount of food available per capita. For the 1982-96 period, daily caloric intake fell from 2,300 calories to 1,981.

Faced with the difficulties of making ends meet and the direct and indirect costs of their children's education, many families have chosen to withdraw their children from school. Parents cannot afford to pay school fees and the official and unofficial contributions required to keep the schools running. In addition, they often need the labor of their children, especially girls, to work in the fields or in the home. Without a meal or snack during the school day, children who attend school have little energy and are unable to concentrate on their lessons.

Parents have come to consider schooling as a burden rather than an opportunity and often decide not to provide their children with an education. As a general rule, girls are the first victims. Many children who enter school also end up dropping out.

### **Commodity Management**

The selection of the food basket takes into account the beneficiaries' food preferences and includes cereals, vitamin A-enriched vegetable oil, leguminous vegetables, and iodized salt to remedy nutritional deficits common in the targeted regions.

The ration's nutritional value (714 kilocalories, 18 grams of protein, and 21 grams of fat) represents 30 to 35 percent of the energy intake recommended for school children (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization norms). The ration is completed by fresh condiments and vegetables (onions, vegetables, *niébé*, etc.) supplied by local communities through school management committees or parents' associations. The meal is served between 10 a.m. and noon.

Cameroon's Ministry of Education is responsible for project strategy and implementation. Its priority tasks are to set up the school canteens; train local communities, teachers, and canteen managers; and organize project monitoring and evaluation. It is the responsibility of the head teacher and the school management committee to take delivery of the commodities at the schools.

Deliveries of the dry rations intended for girls' families are made to the parents' committees. The committees re-distribute the food to the girls' mothers within a maximum of two weeks of receipt and keep an account of quantities received and distributed.

The 1,060 tons of U.S.-donated corn arrived in September 2001.

### **Project Overview**

WFP assistance to Cameroon in the education sector began in 1992. The present expansion aims to increase enrollment and attendance in schools among girls and to re-target the project on the country's northern and eastern provinces. Eligible for WFP assistance are schools where girls account for less than 40 percent of students and where at least 40 percent of students live more than 40 kilometers away. Preference is given to areas where the overall enrollment rate is below 30 percent.

The immediate objectives of the project are as follows:

- Increase the number of children going to primary schools in poor areas afflicted by food insecurity.
- Augment pupils' capacity to learn by providing them with a nutritionally balanced meal.
- Raise enrollment and attendance rates among girls ages 6 to 14 in the targeted provinces.

The Government of Cameroon, WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and other organizations undertake awareness-raising campaigns regularly to promote schooling among girls and to ensure that local groups are committed to basic education and joint management of school activities. UNICEF has a complementary program to promote girls' education in poverty-afflicted northern provinces.

### **Project Impact**

The project's expected outputs are to provide assistance to an average of 49,000 pupils, consisting of the following:

- A daily meal for all pupils, both boys and girls, in the schools covered (100 percent of beneficiaries).
- A quarterly dry ration to families keeping their daughters at school during the last two years of primary schooling (33 percent of beneficiaries).

The number of school girls receiving dry rations will increase from 15,000 in the project's first year to 16,000 in the second and 16,500 in the third and fourth years.

By targeting age groups between 6 and 14, WFP has focused on a population that traditionally stops attending school or drops out of school altogether. The girls targeted are remaining in school and thereby delaying marriage, pregnancy, and cyclical poverty.

Enrollment levels of girls targeted in the Cameroon school feeding program have increased over the last three years by 16 percent on average. Enrollment of girls increased nearly 50 percent in the beginning years of WFP school feeding. Since the school feeding program began, the Government of Cameroon has also started committing additional funds for education. Results so far include some signs of increases in the number of teachers and an improved curriculum.

# Chad

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

In accordance with the Government of Chad's educational policy, this project aims to promote the regular attendance of school children—especially girls—and to increase their learning capacity in the short and medium terms. The World Food Program's (WFP) assistance is targeted exclusively to the rural and semi-rural public or community schools in five prefectures of the Sahelian zone. The number of beneficiary children averages about 66,000 a year in 500 schools. Of the beneficiary children, around 22,000 are girls. In order to make this program more successful, more parental participation is needed, along with collaboration for better school infrastructure.

### Country Overview

Chad is a land-locked Sahelian country faced with periodic drought and classified as both a least-developed country and a low-income, food-deficit country. According to the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Report for 1999, Chad ranks 162 out of 174 countries, with a per capita gross national product (GNP) of \$230, an infant mortality rate of 194 per 1,000 (Demographic and Health Survey, 1996-97) and an aggregate household food security index of 64.5. Fifty-four percent of Chad's population lives below the poverty line.

Poverty and food insecurity limit access to education, and lack of education hinders development and contributed to malnutrition. Overall school enrollment in 1997/98 was estimated at 52 percent, with about 65 percent of boys enrolled and 39 percent of girls. Dropouts are common, and less than a third of children enrolled complete all of the primary educational cycle. Illiteracy among women exceeds 95 percent.

School enrollment in the Sahelian zone is less than 30 percent, much lower than the national average of 52 percent. Only 17 percent of girls are in school. The major obstacle to school attendance and learning in this region is chronic food insecurity. Even for children who attend school, hunger and malnutrition limit the capacity to learn. In addition, children are usually expected to contribute to agricultural production and household food and livestock production. The situation for girls is especially difficult because of the low social status of women, early marriage, and the heavy work burden of women, who are assisted by girls in all their household tasks. Moreover, school is not attractive because of the low quality of the educational system, overcrowded classrooms, and the long distances children must travel to reach school in this region of Chad.

## **Commodity Management**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Cornmeal	1,350	August 2001
	350	September 2001
Corn-soy blend	140	December 2001
	880	January 2002
Vegetable oil	150	January 2002

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** In accordance with the Government of Chad's educational policy, this project aims to promote the regular attendance of schoolchildren—especially girls—and to increase their learning capacity.

The activity pursues the following objectives:

- Promoting primary education and schooling for girls.
- Contributing to feeding children in food-insecure zones.
- Increasing the school enrollment of children in disadvantaged rural areas.
- Improving school attendance and reducing the rate of dropout, particularly for girls.
- Increasing the proportion of girls enrolled in the targeted region.

**Implementation status:** The preparation of fortified meals in the schools and the provision of a dry ration to the families of girls permits the children to attend school regularly and allows girls, in particular, to continue their education. This aid affords better access to food for children and populations suffering from food insecurity and represents an income transfer to parents who keep their girls in school.

This activity is under the technical authority of the Ministry of Basic Education through the National School Canteen Service (SNCS). A coordination unit composed of representatives of the above Ministry, the Ministry of Planning, and WFP is responsible for implementation and monitoring. The management committee of each school is in charge of receiving and supervising the use of commodities. The presence of women on these committees is favored. The dry rations for the families of girls are delivered by the management committee under the supervision of parents' associations.

WFP's assistance is targeted exclusively to the rural and semi-rural public or community schools in five prefectures of the Sahelian zone. The number of beneficiary children averages about 66,000 a year in 500 schools, including around 22,000 girls. These figures represent a continuous progression of the total enrollment in the schools and the proportion of girls in that total. WFP is providing hot lunches to 63,750 students in 500

primary schools. Increased U.S. donations have provided take-home rations for 61,250 students (35 percent girls) in 351 schools.

**Other donor support:** The Government of Chad, WFP, and other organizations, chiefly UNICEF, German Technical Assistance, and Catholic Aid and Development, conduct awareness-raising campaigns periodically to promote girls' education and to increase community involvement. Improvement in the educational structure is the main objective of a World Bank project. The European Union and France, along with WFP, are the principal donors of food aid.

### **Project Impact**

A number of factors have limited the success of the Chad project. Only 14 percent of the schools have latrine facilities, grade enrollments have declined over the past few years, and, finally, parental participation, which is crucial to the success of the program, has been poor. The declines in school enrollments may have been even greater without the food assistance in the schools.

However, Chad is beginning to see additional contributors to the educational sector, such as the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund. These organizations are targeting the educational infrastructure and parental participation. Additional reviews should be conducted in coming years to more adequately evaluate these impacts on the Chad school feeding program.

## **Congo (Brazzaville)**

### **International Partnership for Human Development**

#### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding for approximately 125,000 students began in February 2002. International Partnership for Human Development (IPHD) received 8,300 tons of commodities to support the Global Food for Education (GFE) program. About half of the commodities were successfully monetized and the proceeds of \$1.6 million were used to purchase local commodities and cooking utensils to supplement use of the donated commodities in feeding. Solid data on the performance of the program is not yet available, but IPHD's GFE monitors report a 125-percent increase in enrollment in the initial assessment of the first grade classes in the GFE program in the coastal region of the country. IPHD-Congo also plans to target 500 of the GFE schools for a malaria prevention program. The GFE project is scheduled to continue through the 2003 school year.

#### **Country Overview**

The Congo experienced political conflict and civil disturbances in the years preceding its independence from France in 1960. Likewise, Congo's history since independence has been violent, with three Presidential coups and one presidential assassination between 1958 and 1979.<sup>89</sup> After restoration of a fragile peace in October 1997, a new cycle of violence began in December 1998.<sup>90</sup> The transition to democracy and a market-based economic system has been undermined by frequent episodes of violence, insecurity, and sporadic fighting.

Congo's economy is based primarily on the petroleum sector, which is by far the country's major revenue earner, contributing 93 percent of the export earnings.<sup>91</sup> Oil production is expected to continue to rise significantly in the next few years, considering the fields currently under development and recent discoveries.<sup>92</sup> The country's abundant rain forests are another source of revenues. Forestry, which led Congolese exports before the discovery of oil, continues to generate 10 percent of export earnings.<sup>93</sup>

Families have only just started to rebuild their lives following three years of civil conflict. Most schools reopened in 2001, although government funds are lacking to begin a school lunch program. Approximately 512,000 children annually attend primary schools in the Republic of Congo, and most dropouts occur after one or two years of schooling. The

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<sup>89</sup> CIA Country Fact Book, 2002.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> State Department Country Background Notes, 2002.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that 34-40 percent of women are illiterate, compared to 17-18 percent of men.<sup>94</sup>

Malnutrition is high among primary school children. Absenteeism due to malaria is also high.<sup>95</sup> Most primary school children have a glass of water and fruit before leaving for school. In the evening, they eat their only meal of the day.

### **Commodity Management**

IPHD received 8,300 metric tons of commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Approximately half of the commodities, 4,300 tons, were monetized, with the other 4,000 tons used for direct distribution. Proceeds realized through monetization totaled \$1.6 million. IPHD used some of the proceeds to purchase flour, yeast, salt, and sugar to supplement preparation of local foods and donated commodities at the schools.

Allocations of USDA-donated commodities included: 1,800 tons of soybean oil (1,300 tons for monetization, and 500 for direct distribution); 4,500 tons of rice (3000 for monetization, 1,500 for distribution); and 2,000 tons of corn-soy milk (all for distribution).

### **Project Overview**

IPHD's GFE program began in February 2002 and has a 12-month time line. The 12 months include one month for project initiation, 10 months of school feeding, and one month to evaluate and close out the program. IPHD contracted with CARITAS/Brazzaville, a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to assist in program implementation. The overall goal of IPHD's GFE program is to increase enrollment, reduce the dropout rate, and increase attendance, especially for girls, while improving the health of students. The target feeding areas are the coastal region of Kouilou (Pointe Noire) and the provinces of Pool, Bouenza, Brazzaville, and Niari. The table on the next page presents the key criteria for measuring success of the program.

IPHD worked with the Ministry of Education to identify schools to participate in the GFE project. The school selection rationale is as follows:

- The coastal region (35,000 school children) has experienced little or no disruption from the civil conflict. Based on the logistics, these schools are more accessible than schools in many other areas of the country, and secure warehousing is available.

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<sup>94</sup> UNESCO Country Data Indicators, 2002.

<sup>95</sup> World Health Organization data.



<b>Criteria for Measuring Success</b>	<b>Comments</b>
125,000 kindergarten and primary school children receive daily school lunches over a 10-month period.	Includes 600 primary schools and kindergartens in five regions: Pointe Noire, Brazzaville, Nairi, Pool, and Dolisie. Each student receives four kilograms of food monthly (21 school days) for a 10-month period. The program in Brazzaville started in mid-May, but the program in Nairi region is on hold pending a cessation of civil unrest in that part of the country.
Dropout rate decreased compared to non-GFE schools.	Data to be collected at the end of the school feeding year.
Enrollment increased.	Enrollment for both girls and boy will be analyzed.
Community involvement increased. IPHD's strategy is to encourage formation of parent-teacher organizations or strengthen those that already exist.	IPHD will assess level of parental/community involvement through volunteer labor participation, donated food stuffs, etc.
Government commitment to school feeding program increased.	
Local foods purchased to complement meals prepared at the school.	Monetization proceeds enable 50,000 beneficiaries to eat one to two kilograms of locally produced foods monthly.
30 schools to be repaired.	
80 schools to receive cooking and eating utensils.	Schools in Pool and Dolisie lack cooking and eating utensils or have insufficient utensils to prepare school lunches. IPHD monitors identified these schools during their visits.
72 schools to receive educational supplies.	Schools targeted are those in areas most affected by the civil war, which destroyed many of their books, blackboards, and similar items. Families are too poor to help the school since many have just returned to rebuild their homes.
40 school kitchens to be constructed or repaired.	With usable kitchens in schools, lunches can be prepared and served where previously they could not.
105,000 children involved in a malaria prevention program.	Primary school children suffer one or more bouts of malaria during the school year, which causes considerable absenteeism and malnutrition.

- Brazzaville, the capital, and the surrounding province of Pool have 40,000 school children. This area was chosen for its good logistics and lower program costs. In addition, this area gives the program its highest visibility, which could possibly help facilitate an assumption of responsibility for the school lunch program by the government.
- Niari and Dolisie Regions (50,000 school children) were targeted for primary schools. Most of Congo's civil war occurred in these regions, resulting in burnt out schools and a halt to all schooling activities during the war.

**Malaria prevention program:** The Ministry of Education also requested that IPHD target 500 of the GFE schools to participate in a malaria prevention program. IPHD developed informational and educational materials and provided technical assistance in communication design for the prevention program. IPHD selected 10,000 children in 50 of the 600 schools where the incidence of malaria is highest to receive vitamin A and zinc tablets daily for the school year. Dehydration salts and malaria tablets for severely ill children were also provided. IPHD monitors and local teachers will select 3,000 children in Kouilou and Pool Provinces to receive mosquito nets at cost.

**Other donor support:** IPHD's longstanding commitment to partnerships has played a key role in identifying potential partners for these initiatives. IPHD has established mechanisms to collaborate with the Congolese Government, local authorities, and international donor organizations in the implementation of GFE program. This partnership involves weekly meetings to compare best practices in identical donor programs.

**Sustainability:** Through its many years of experience working with school communities, IPHD has developed a strategy for sustainability that is based on active local interest and participation in basic education. IPHD's experience has shown that education activities have the most chance of being successful and their impacts sustained if parents and other community members are actively involved through such mechanism as parent-teacher associations (PTA's).

IPHD also works to facilitate linkages between PTA's, local NGO's, and regional government education offices so that eventually parent-community groups and federations can advocate successfully for the education needs of their communities. Such collaboration among the NGO's and local officials in Congo bodes well for sustainability should the economy of Congo improve to allow funding for a national school lunch program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Program monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of both USDA and the implementing organization. USDA's local monitor will use methodology developed by USDA to collect data on the performance of the program in 20 sample schools. Data collection is in progress, hampered only by recent unrest in certain parts of the country.

IPHD hired 15 full-time monitors who visit each school twice a week to collect data. Data collection measures changes in attendance, enrollment, and the level of community participation. The monitors, who have received training in data collection, provide the program director with weekly and monthly reports that highlight successes, problem areas, and inventories. IPHD uses rental vehicles for their monitors, given the unreliability of local transportation in Congo.

## **Project Impact**

The GFE program has been hampered by sporadic violence in three of the target feeding regions, hampering data collection.

**Enrollment:** Enrollment and attendance data are not yet available, but IPHD's monitors report a 125-percent enrollment increase in the initial assessment of first grade classes in the GFE program in Pointe Noire region.

**Attendance:** The school program began in mid-April 2002, so attendance data are not available for an assessment. However, IPHD monitors report a dramatic rise (133 percent for boys and 106 percent for girls) in attendance and enrollment at one school, Ecole 418, in Pointe Noire region.

**Special emphasis on girls:** IPHD designed their program to give incentives to schools with higher than normal enrollment figures for girls.

## **Unanticipated Outcomes**

The IPHD bidding process includes private business and gave a boost to newly started private commercial enterprises. The bidding process introduced transparency and made it possible for these enterprises to ask for information on purchases of commodities under USDA's commercial marketing programs.

## **Lessons Learned**

- Water and sanitation facilities either do not exist or do not work properly at most schools. This has a direct impact on the health of the students and teachers.
- It took longer than expected to serve meals, one classroom at a time, thereby increasing the likelihood that some classes would not be served food.
- Government officials want to be involved with program planning and management. A steep learning curve results in many meetings with government officials.
- Many teachers are not certified to teach, and schools lack teaching materials. This serious lack of educational resources could negatively impact GFE's overall success in the Congo.
- Girls make up a little over half of the student population, a good indicator that school feeding programs focusing on female attendance work.

## **Next Steps**

IPHD plans to extend the program for one additional year to make up for time lost due to the recent civil unrest in parts of the implementing region.

### **GFE in Action**

The GFE program provides a strong incentive for children to attend school. At one of the schools in Pointe Noire region, an 8-year-old girl was observed carrying a baby behind her back during the school lunch. Sensing that the girl might not belong to the school, the regional coordinator asked her if she were a student and whose baby she was carrying. She explained that her mother told her to watch her little sister, but she still wanted to attend school because she knew that the school lunch would be served. So she came to school with her baby sister so that she could eat.

# Côte d'Ivoire

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

The World Food Program (WFP) has been providing hot lunches to more than 500,000 children in over 5,000 schools. The Côte d'Ivoire program now focuses on over 700 schools in the southern area through the creation of and partnerships with parent associations. WFP provides 45 percent of the food needs, requiring parents to build canteens and supply the additional food. Through WFP's empowerment strategy with parents, student enrollment levels have progressively increased by more than 23 percent.

### Country Overview

Côte d'Ivoire is classified as a low-income, food-deficit country. Despite reforms resulting in some progress by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, the country's educational system is tilted in favor of towns in the south, and in favor of boys. The project's objective is to provide support to government efforts aimed at increasing school attendance, reducing regional disparities, and narrowing the gap between the numbers of boys and girls attending school.

### Commodity Management

Commodity	Metric Tons	Arrival
Rice	700	June 2001

### Project Overview

The project serves 531,000 pupils in 5,175 schools. The project focuses on schools in the north and on the progressive phasedown of WFP assistance to turn full responsibility over to community-based organizations.

### Project Implementation

In order to make it easier for parents and village communities to take over responsibility for school feeding, the project features the following innovations:

- Creation in individual schools of management committees made up of parents, teachers, and local authorities.

- The food basket supplied by WFP including 45 percent local commodities to encourage local production and facilitate provisioning of canteens by parents.
- Reinforcement of the monitoring and evaluation system through the recruitment of United Nations Volunteers (UNV's) who will participate in mobilizing communities and in forming management committees, and be responsible for project monitoring.
- Two-year extension of WFP assistance in 715 southern schools in order to ensure a smooth transition towards the complete takeover of school feeding by local communities.

### **Sustainability**

In Côte d'Ivoire, school canteens receiving WFP food aid operate largely on support from parent-teacher associations (PTA's). For a school to qualify for WFP support, parents must organize an association and then build a kitchen and storeroom. The PTA then hires cooks and manages the canteen's food stocks. Moreover, all but the poorest families pay a daily contribution that covers part of the cost of the canteen's operation.

### **Project Impact**

Enrollment has increased by 23 percent on average over the last three years. High levels of community involvement and strong emphasis by the government have contributed significantly to the positive impact of the WFP Côte d'Ivoire school feeding program. Although more teachers are needed to keep up with the pace of higher student enrollment, the number of certified teachers has risen in the last two years. WFP is now working to enable community associations to take full implementation responsibility for school feeding programs. WFP's creative methods of program implementation have led to strong parental involvement and greater buy-in to the importance of education for their children.

### **GFE in Action**

WFP has hired Odette Loan as a director of school canteens. Her own past helps her relate to the children and their parents within the schools. When she was a young student, she recalls walking six kilometers to school with only a ball of rice for lunch. Once she and her siblings transferred to a boarding school, food was no longer available. Her siblings dropped out of school because they had no food. Odette Loan didn't quit, managing to find others who would help her find food to survive. She knows the struggle involved in not having anything to eat in school, and this knowledge ties her to these children and reinforces her commitment to the WFP school feeding program.

## **Eritrea**

### **Mercy Corps**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The school feeding component of the program started in March 2002 for about 35,000 students in 150 schools. Mercy Corps (MC) now projects that the project will reach up to 65,000 students in as many as 180 schools nationwide. This change in number of beneficiaries is due to conservative original projections. Reports from USDA and MC monitors indicate that student attendance, enrollment, and performance have increased since the biscuits were introduced. A total of 9,330 metric tons of soft white wheat and 8,100 tons of vegetable oil were monetized. Additionally, MC is providing small grants for parent-teacher associations (PTA's) and has placed a special emphasis on girls. MC is now preparing training materials for the girls' education component of the Global Food for Education (GFE) program. The MC GFE project in Eritrea is scheduled to continue through March 2003.

#### **Country Overview**

Eritrea is undergoing a critical transition. After a 30-year struggle to gain independence from Ethiopia, Eritrea was on its way toward development as a strong and independent nation. However, over the past few years, Eritrea has experienced a series of economic and political setbacks as a result of severe drought and renewed fighting with Ethiopia. The multi-year drought that affected the entire Horn of Africa affected over 400,000 Eritreans, more than 10 percent of the population.<sup>96</sup> During this time, a border war erupted between Ethiopia and Eritrea, causing widespread infrastructure and property damage in southern Eritrea. At its height, between one-third and one-half of the civilian population was displaced in Eritrea.<sup>97</sup> With assistance from the United Nations, the two countries are implementing a peace agreement signed in December 2000.

Eritrea consistently ranks 148 out of 162 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index in terms of quality of life issues such as access to health care, education, and economic opportunity. A significant number of students in rural areas attend school under a tree, without access to a classroom. The illiteracy rate is 32.7 percent for adult males and 55.5 percent for adult females.<sup>98</sup> The net primary school enrollment rate is 30.4 percent.<sup>99</sup>

If girls are able to attend school at all, many do not finish primary school because of early marriage or the need by their families for their help at home. The USDA local monitor

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<sup>96</sup> United Nations Development Program Report: Eritrea, A Country Study, 2001.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> World Bank, 2000, World Bank Country Brief, [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), June 2002.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

reported that girls are often viewed as members of the community who do not necessarily need access to education. The cultural expectation is that the men in their lives will provide for their needs. Also, according to the monitor, girls carry a much heavier burden in the home and are expected to take care of the children, cook meals, and gather firewood and water. When a family decides which children will go to school, more often than not, the boys in the family are selected, particularly if the parents are required to pay school fees. Meeting the educational needs of girls is an ongoing challenge.

As a result of an assessment conducted by MC examining development needs and food insecurity, the zones of Anseba, Garsh Barka, Maekel, and Northern Red Sea were identified as target areas for the school feeding program.

### **Commodity Management**

The donated commodities, 9,330 metric tons of soft white wheat and 8,100 tons of vegetable oil, were monetized. Because the buyer took possession of the commodities at the port, MC did not utilize inland transportation systems in the country.

### **Project Overview**

MC's GFE schools cover a diverse area. The program encompasses four of Eritrea's ethnic and language groups, both Muslim and Christian areas, an urban/semi-urban to rural spectrum, four of six administrative zones, and both war-affected and drought-affected zones. Chronic calorie deficiency exists in these areas, and children do not have regular access to enough food. Schools do not have the resources to provide lunches, and families often do not have the resources to send food with their children for lunch.

**Goals and objectives:** MC's original plan was to reach 35,000 students in 150 schools. Students will be provided with high-energy biscuits. MC now projects that the project will reach up to 65,000 students in as many as 180 schools nationwide. This change in number of beneficiaries is due to conservative original projections.

Due to the large number of target schools, wide geographic coverage, and difficult terrain, MC separated the implementation process into two phases, pilot and post-pilot. This allowed opportunities to test and correct logistical systems and procedures before launching into full project implementation. The pilot phase is now complete and the program has received positive reviews from the national and regional ministries of education and, most importantly, from the students, parents, and teachers. School feeding in these areas is seen as the immediate solution to a very specific community challenge.

MC's overall goal is to assist the Ministry of Education to improve the education environment through school feeding in selected government primary schools in four regions of Eritrea. Criteria for measuring success, implementation status, and comments are shown on the following table.



**Implementation status:**

<b>Criteria for Measuring Success</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
35,000 primary school children receive high-energy biscuits.	Started in March 2002.	95 schools located in four impoverished zones are initially targeted.
Improve enrollment.	Pending baseline data results.	Enrollment is improving based on reports from teachers and parents.
Improve attendance.	Pending baseline data results.	Attendance is improving based on reports from teachers and school administrators.
Improve performance.	Pending baseline data results.	Performance appears to be improving based on reports from teachers.
Increase NGO and PTA capacity building.	Training completed.	Increase capacity of Vision Eriteria, a local NGO, to enhance capacity of 95 PTA's.
Promote girls' education.	Ongoing.	In cooperation with Vision Eriteria, information campaigns will be funded to promote girls' education. PTA's will conduct information campaigns in their communities to promote girls' school attendance.
Provide small grants to PTA's to assist with local school improvements.	Ongoing.	

Prior to soliciting bids for high-energy biscuits, MC met with Eritrea's health officials to reach agreement on the minimum nutritional content of the biscuits. Eritrea had specific requirements, based on guidelines from the World Health Organization. All agreed that MC would solicit bids for biscuits with the following nutritional specifications: minimum of 600 kcal/student/day; 24 grams of protein/student/day; minimum ratio of 10 grams of protein per 100 grams of biscuit. The biscuits procured by MC meet these requirements and have been fortified with additional vitamins and minerals.

MC solicited competitive bids in a national newspaper and received six proposals. The three Eritrean factories that submitted bids did not meet the requirements. They could not obtain the ingredients on a regular basis, ensure delivery, or wrap the biscuit into a package that school children could easily consume. MC did select two Eritrean suppliers who obtained biscuits from manufacturers in Italy and India. MC continues to work with the Eritrean Government and local biscuit factories toward the possibility that Eritrean producers will be able to meet the necessary requirements in the future. In March 2002, MC delivered the first shipment of high-energy biscuits to schools, a milestone that received radio and newspaper coverage.

Staff and PTA members participated in a three-day workshop, which provided logistical training to ensure appropriate storage and distribution of the high-energy biscuits. PTA members were also introduced to the Eritrean Ministry of Education's PTA guidelines, thereby laying the foundation for MC's future capacity-building activities. In order to meet the needs of such a diverse population, MC has hired staff with a wide range of experience, each of whom is able to communicate in at least three languages. It is common for workshops to be held in several languages simultaneously to ensure full comprehension by community members. The common thread among the schools served is enthusiasm about the project and a belief that it is making a dramatic, immediate, and positive impact on the lives of the students.

**Other donor support:** The Ministry of Education hired and trained two field monitors to assist MC in the evaluation and monitoring efforts. MC is working to identify other donor support for the program.

**Sustainability:** The most promising step toward program sustainability is the strategy to increase the capacity of PTA's. The PTA's are the heart and soul of the program. MC says that only when the importance and longer term value of education is instilled in the minds of parents will any education intervention take root and become sustainable.

Many schools have demonstrated a tremendous level of volunteerism and cooperation to ensure the success of the program. Local government officials have given their offices as storage facilities for the biscuits. Villages provided financial and in-kind contributions to repair roads to participating schools, so biscuits can be delivered. Extraordinary efforts are being made to transport biscuits to schools in areas that are inaccessible by vehicle. One school organized students to meet the MC truck at the bottom of the mountain on which the school is situated. Students then carry the cartons of biscuits up the mountain on their backs, a steep two-hour climb.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** USDA and MC both have monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. USDA's monitor is conducting a baseline survey covering 20 schools in the four zones and conducting unannounced visits to an additional 30 targeted schools. Collectively, a matrix was developed of the 150 schools participating in the program. The factors from which the schools were selected were geography and the level of enrollment by girls. These two factors are critical in determining the impact of school feeding. A random sample of 20 schools was selected, with a minimum of two schools selected from each cell.

Vision Eritrea prepared a number of monitoring forms that MC field monitors will use during unannounced site visits with teachers. The monitor conducts head counts and cross-matches the number with the number of attendants registered in the teacher's daily book. Monitors also match the number of biscuits distributed since the last monitoring visit with attendance figures. The monitors observe the storage situation and overall cleanliness and note infestation problems. They work with the schools and PTA's to remedy any problems.

## **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** The school feeding component of the program started in March 2002 and enrollment data is being analyzed. However, preliminary reports from USDA and MC monitors indicate that student enrollment has increased since the biscuits were introduced. According to teachers and school administrators, students who dropped out earlier in the school year are trying to re-enroll in school.

Guben Hadish, head of pedagogy for Anseba zone, Ministry of Education, has been particularly enthusiastic about the biscuit distribution. In a meeting with MC on April 8, 2002, with MC, he said, "This biscuit is making dramatic change immediately. School dropouts decreased, and some are even returning from the first semester. No latecomers now. This biscuit encourages them, really. Even physical fitness is very good. Demand is beginning now. Parents are asking to register even their 6-year-old child. Our schools are motivated by this program. It must continue."

**Attendance:** Preliminary feedback from teachers and administrators indicate school attendance has increased since the biscuits were introduced. According to school officials, absenteeism and tardiness have virtually disappeared in many of the participating schools.

Several examples illustrate this effect of school meals in primary schools. For instance, the father of a 10-year-old boy participating in the program reported that his son told him, "Daddy, I like the biscuits at school. Do you want me to bring one home for you?" A mother reported to the monitor that her two daughters created a song about the tasty biscuits at school and have not been absent since the biscuits started arriving.

**Performance:** According to teachers and school administrators, the performance of students has improved as a result of the high-energy biscuits. Teachers have noticed improved concentration, attentive behavior, and an attitude of interest in learning. Students seem more enthusiastic about classroom assignments and activities. They are more talkative and excited about their work, particularly after the biscuits are served. When the teachers ask for a class volunteer, nearly every hand goes up.

One teacher reported that student eye contact has improved. Students now look at her when she speaks during class, and their attention span has improved. They are less distracted and are now able to sit still and listen attentively. According to some reports, students' work is written more clearly, with better organization.

**Special emphasis on girls:** MC is preparing training materials for the girls' education component of the GFE program. Beginning in August 2002, MC plans to facilitate bi-monthly meetings with other non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and the Ministry of Education to discuss solutions to low enrollment and attendance among girls. In addition, MC will conduct public information campaigns on the importance of girls' education and launch school registration drives that target girls.

Upon completion of the pilot program, the Ministry of Education and MC plan to work on plans for flexible schooling options to allow girls to attend school on a schedule that meets the needs of nomadic communities. They will also work together to create a general literacy program for girls who are forced to leave school. MC's long-term objective is to establish a female teacher recruitment action plan with the Ministry of Education to provide appropriate role models for girls in rural communities. Specifically, the girls' education campaign will be in the form of community-based plays, songs, and picture-based stories.

**Other project achievements:** Stronger links have been created between the local community and school directors by arranging community sessions where community and school needs are discussed and plans put in place to address those concerns.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

The capacity of a local NGO, Vision Eritrea, has increased as a result of the school feeding program. Ten Vision Eritrea members, including newly hired field monitors, received training on techniques and strategies to effectively implement the program through the PTA's. Vision Eritrea has hired additional staff and purchased equipment to assist with training and the girls' education campaign.

Jobs were created and the local economy has been stimulated. MC has entered into a number of local contracts with Eritrea transportation companies, an NGO, and storage companies to assist in the school feeding program. These contracts have created approximately 65 local jobs.

Relationships with the Ministry of Education have been strengthened. MC and its partners have urged the resumption of the Education Sectoral Coordination Committee, co-chaired by the Ministry of Education. The committee meets monthly and includes representation from Eritrea's Ministry of Education, NGO's, and United Nations agencies involved in education-related projects. Working groups on school feeding, PTA capacity building, girls' education promotion, and psycho-social projects have been created. In addition, the Ministry of Education created a position, School Feeding Officer, to coordinate with MC and its colleague agencies implementing school feeding activities.

### **Lessons Learned**

Parental time constraints and literacy issues need to be factored into project implementation plans. Biscuit distribution has created extra work for already-overburdened teachers. MC staff expected parents to assist teachers, through the PTA's, but farm and family responsibilities make it extremely difficult for them to commit time to schools each day. In addition, many parents are largely or completely illiterate, which makes it difficult for them to complete the forms needed by the project.

MC put the responsibility on the participating schools to design their own school-specific systems and procedures for the biscuit distribution and encouraged them to find creative ways to include parents. In the end, most schools put the burden on the teachers and school director. Future efforts must continue to find ways to ensure greater participation of parents in the PTA's. Such efforts need to be sensitive to the time constraints and seasonal nature of farming and animal husbandry.

Most participating schools do not have adequate water and sanitation facilities. The distribution of high-energy biscuits exacerbates the existing need for potable water, and MC has received many requests to provide potable water to schools. Further efforts will address this issue within the small grants component of the project. The World Food Program (WFP) currently operates a school feeding program in 133 schools in five zones of Eritrea. WFP distributes dry take-home rations in the form of wheat, peas, oil, and salt. In the future, WFP plans to switch to a combination of "wet feeding" methods. WFP anticipates that the main challenges in this regard will be firewood consumption and water provisions. As MC and WFP explore wet feeding methods, further attention will be needed to ensure that water and sanitation infrastructure are sufficient. While dry feeding currently meets an important need, wet feeding will provide increased options for food programs.

Developing local capacity is integral to success. MC believes that an important aspect of the project is to ensure that steps are taken to nationalize all operations as soon as possible. From the project's inception, MC has worked closely with Vision Eritrea. Vision Eritrea has recently taken on increased responsibility in program monitoring and training. MC will continue to work to increase local responsibility for oversight of the program.

Health problems need to be addressed. Mercy Corps expects to add a health and nutrition component to the program in order to ensure that proper hygiene is observed and to introduce health education into the classroom as it relates to school feeding. A de-worming component will be added to the school feeding program because parasites threaten to negate the benefits of food supplements.

### **Next Steps**

MC plans to enhance its school-tracking database to include all categories of information and to ensure that each site visit is systematically recorded. This process will be supported by individuals in the field who will closely monitor the progress of the program on a school-by-school basis.

MC will collect and analyze the data from the pilot schools and begin expanding the program to include all schools in the targeted areas.

MC will continue training the Small Management Committee (SMCI) at each school in the program on proposal writing and identification of school needs to prepare to request small grants.

MC will develop the capacity of Vision Eritrea to effectively work with SMCI's to monitor the distribution of the commodities

MC will develop educational materials that will be distributed in the local communities to promote girls education.

### **GFE in Action**

Twelve-year-old Osman Mohammed Idris of the Rehay School in Anseba zone knows adversity. Both his parents are dead and he is living with elderly grandparents who are in poor health. They can do little more for him than provide a roof over his head. Osman began hanging around the army camp in his village, but the soldiers did what they could to help him. In March 2002, MC began the GFE program in Osman's school. "The biscuits help me so much because I have no mother or father," says Osman. "They are both my breakfast and lunch. They give me energy to pay attention in class and learn. This is important to me because if I do well, I can go to junior secondary boarding school next year."

Amna Mohammed Ali, age 13, attends Kertset School in Anseba zone. "Amna is clever," her teacher reports. "She is the cleverest student in the class." Amna squirms shyly as her teacher praises her. She nervously reaches to adjust her head covering but returns her left arm to its usual hiding place beneath her scarf as soon as possible. She wants no one to notice that she is missing her left hand. When Amna was a little girl, she picked up a landmine in a field near her house. Her excitement about the prospect of finding a new toy was met with tragedy. She lost a hand but was lucky that her injuries were not worse. Today, Amna again is lucky. Her school in this remote village of Kertset participates in the MC GFE program, and Amna and the other students receive a packet of high-energy biscuits every day they come to school. "I have to walk two and one-half hours one way every day to come to school. Before the biscuits, I used to miss school sometimes. I had to leave my house before breakfast and did not get home in time for lunch. Many days, I just did not have the energy to walk in the heat through the mountains," says Amna. "Now, the biscuits give me power. I am not absent from school anymore."

Fiori Ocqbit, age 9, attends Kermad School in Anseba zone. "I like school. I want to continue my studies and become a teacher," she says. It is hard to believe that she used to be so hungry that she would fall asleep in class and not do her schoolwork. All of that has changed. "When I get biscuits, I get energy and I can follow my class work," she says. "Things at home have changed, too. Now that I'm getting biscuits at school, I am not so hungry anymore, so my two brothers and three sisters get the food that I used to eat. Everybody is getting more food. Next summer, when my 6-year-old brother is old enough to go to pre-school, I will tell him that he *MUST* come to school."

Ibrahim Humed is a PTA chairperson at Rehay School and a man who understands the value of public service. He served his country as a fighter during the war of liberation from Ethiopia. After the war ended, he returned to his life as a farmer, but his reputation earned him a volunteer position as a mediator on the local judiciary. In his opinion, though, perhaps his most important public service is that of PTA chairperson at Rehay school. "I grew up during colonial times and only got to finish grade three," he says. "I understand the value of education and I want my kids to have an opportunity that I did not have. It is the same with all of the parents here."

PTA chairperson Ibrahim Humed continues: "The program is having a big impact on so many levels for both the students and the community. For the students, the biscuits help them come to school. Some students come from a village called Dareko, a three-hour walk *one way* through heat and rocky mountains. There is drought there. Before they received biscuits from Mercy Corps, if they came to school, they would sleep through class because they were so tired from making their journey with no food or water, and they certainly would not come to school two days in a row. Now, they are happy. Their stomachs are full. They come to school every day on time. Before the biscuits, students were running to the clinic all the time for sickness. Sickness is the result of what? Lack of food. There is a change. No students are going to the clinic in Melebso now (the nearest clinic, which is a three-hour walk). *There is a change.*"

He also reports a change for his children. "Before they received biscuits from Mercy Corps," he says, "as soon as they got home from school, they would complain about being hungry and ask for food. Now they do not complain any more. The biscuits are making a big difference at home."

The biscuits are having an impact within the community as well. Now, at least four people from the community, including Ibrahim Humed, show up every day to help distribute high-energy biscuits to students and to make tea for the children to drink. A student runs from the classroom to ring the school's improvised bell – the casing from a tank shell left over from the war of independence. As the bell rings and students begin pouring into the schoolyard, Ibrahim does his final check on the tea ladies and the biscuits to ensure that today's distribution will go smoothly. "Thank you, Mercy Corps, for everything," he says.

# **Ethiopia**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

The World Food Program (WFP) project in Ethiopia targets food deficit areas where enrollment of girls averages approximately 45 percent. Enrollment levels for the last three years have steadily increased, particularly for girls. In schools where WFP has been conducting school feeding for the last few years, the enrollment increases averaged between 20 and 28 percent for the first two years of data collection, then leveling off to approximately 4 to 8 percent for the last year of school feeding. Infrastructure facilities, such as latrines and water access, are typically available in most WFP schools. Greater emphasis on increased retention at the higher grades could benefit this country's school feeding program.

### **Country Overview**

Ethiopia's economy is based on agriculture, which accounts for half of the gross domestic product (GDP), 90 percent of exports, and 80 percent of total employment. The agricultural sector suffers from frequent droughts and poor cultivation practices. As many as 4.6 million people need food assistance annually. The war with Eritrea forced the government to spend scarce resources on the military and to scale back ambitious development plans. Foreign investment has declined significantly. Government taxes imposed in late 1999 to raise money for the war depressed an already-weak economy. The war forced the government to improve roads and other parts of the previously neglected infrastructure, but only certain regions of the nation benefited. Recovery from the war is mostly contingent on natural factors.

Ethiopia is one of the educationally least developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1995, the adult illiteracy rate was 65.5 percent (54 percent for men, 74 percent for women). Moreover, due to high dropout and repetition rates, only about one-fifth of children enrolled in primary school complete grade six. These extremely low achievements in the education sector can be attributed to several factors. The protracted civil war, which ended only in 1991, destroyed educational infrastructure and severely disrupted educational services, particularly in the central highlands and in northern Ethiopia. Also, the direct and indirect costs associated with sending children to school are too high for many families. In addition, large parts of the country are inhabited by population groups, including nomadic groups, who are difficult to reach with education. Another factor is the insufficient attention and funding accorded to education by the previous government, resulting in a poor quality of education and extremely limited school facilities.



The overall primary enrollment rate for girls in 1994 and 1995 was 22 percent, compared with 36 percent for boys. However, in some rural areas, fewer than 5 percent of school-age girls attend school. Education for girls is limited by economic factors (direct cost of education for the family), the need for girls' labor at home, concerns about girls' safety at school, and many traditional beliefs and practices such as early marriage.

Household food insecurity is a national problem in Ethiopia, with an estimated 90 percent of rural households affected either by chronic or transitory food shortages. In the food insecure areas of Ethiopia, school children walk an average of three to four kilometers (or one hour) to reach the school on an empty stomach each morning, primarily due to food shortages at home. Additionally, the nutritional problems reduce the learning capacity of the school children, weaken their commitment to school, and hinder their active participation in educational activities. Physical and mental development is stunted, and morbidity rates increase as a result of the children's vulnerability to infectious diseases.

### **Commodity Management**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn-soy blend	3,000	August 2001
	990	September 2001
	4,000	November 2001
	2,310	December 2001
Vegetable oil	630	November 2001

### **Project Overview**

In December 1996, the Government of Ethiopia launched the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). This program is currently being implemented with full support of the donors, including the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

Recently, the government allocated an increasing share of the national budget to education and human resource development. The national budget focuses on the expansion of primary education, emphasizes quality improvements, and aims at achieving a more equitable distribution of opportunities in education while reducing gender and regional imbalances.

This project is an expansion of WFP's previous pilot activities in the education sector and involves assisting children who are attending primary schools and kindergarten in the rural areas of four regions where food insecurity is most prevalent and attendance rates are the lowest, particularly for girls. These regions are Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and Afar.

**Goals and objectives:** It is expected that food aid under this activity will:

- Act as an incentive to increase children's school attendance and encourage families to enroll and maintain their children in school.
- Act as a catalyst to stimulate community and parental efforts to participate in school-related activities.
- Provide a nutritional supplement and dietary support to prevent short-term hunger, increase children's attention, and help ensure more active participation of children in classroom activities.
- Contribute to meeting children's nutritional deficiencies and thus reduce incidence of diseases related to micronutrient deficiencies.

Within the framework of the government's ESDP, the activities are intended to meet the following immediate objectives at assisted primary schools and kindergartens:

- Contribute to covering an adequate proportion of daily micronutrient requirements, particularly of vitamin A, iron, and iodine.
- Improve students' capacity to concentrate and assimilate information by relieving their short-term hunger.
- Contribute to stabilizing attendance and reducing dropout rates.
- Contribute to increasing enrollment, particularly of girls.

**Implementation status:** WFP will provide two locally produced and blended commodities, Famix and high-energy biscuits. These products are easy and quick to prepare and are suitable in terms of demand for water and fuel. Additionally, and of great importance, the school children like the biscuits and Famix, a locally produced, high-energy supplementary food/drink provided to children under 5 years old. Local communities and especially parents groups are involved in the management of the project. They provide water, storage, and manpower for running the feeding operation at the schools.

The rations are distributed in the following manner:

- For half-day schools, an open packet of four biscuits is provided to each child upon arrival at school. The children can eat what they want right away. Using the cellophane packet, they can also safely save some of the biscuits to eat later in the day. The Famix is served at mid-morning to allow adequate time for its preparation.
- For full-day students, an open package of four biscuits is given to each child upon arrival. Famix drink is served during the mid-morning break. Porridge and an additional two biscuits are given at lunchtime.

To the extent possible, all commodities are purchased locally in Ethiopia. In order to increase resources for the project, WFP retains the option to import wheat to be exchanged for biscuits and Famix. If blended food or biscuits prove to be unavailable in sufficient quantities locally, they are imported. In all cases, the Ministry of Education is responsible for covering all relevant import duties and taxes.

All rural primary schools qualify for WFP assistance if they meet the following criteria:

- Accessibility for food transport and supervision. However, in order to not exclude remote rural schools, parents at such schools will be encouraged to take over food transport from the road head.
- Availability of a reliable and safe water source, along with adequate storage and kitchen facilities.
- Capacity to accommodate the influx of new students likely to result from the activity.
- Readiness of school staff and parents to form a School Feeding Committee to supervise the activity; this committee must have at least two female members.
- Readiness of parents/communities to support the project by providing fuel wood and water, ensuring food preparation (either by paying for cooks or by assuming the cooking through voluntary labor), constructing store room and kitchen facilities where needed, and ensuring food transport from the nearest road head if necessary.

### **Project Impact**

Over the five-year period, the activity's outputs are projected to be the following:

- An annual average of 125,000 primary students, of whom at least 45 percent are girls, at 221 primary schools will be fed a daily snack for 200 days a year. These figures include 500 kindergarten students at four kindergartens. Half-day students will receive a daily ration of 133 grams of biscuits (four biscuits) and 50 grams of Famix drink, whereas full-day students will receive a daily ration of 200 grams of biscuits (six biscuits), 50 grams of Famix drink, and 100 grams of Famix porridge for a total of 20 million rations a year.
- Training will be provided for 288 school teachers, head teachers, assistants, and zonal and regional staff involved in the implementation of this activity. Training will cover recordkeeping and reporting, as well as proper food handling and storage.
- Training will be provided in food preparation, hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition for 96 parents and kitchen helpers. At newly assisted schools, food preparation staff will be paid a daily ration of three kilograms of wheat for the first year. After that period, the community is expected to be responsible for food preparation, providing either cash or in-kind labor.

### **GFE in Action**

One of the teachers at the Mukadera Primary School in the Fitché area said that the food made a noticeable difference in student behavior. "Even the children's voices change and become stronger once they get the food in their bellies."

# **The Gambia**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

Approximately 60,000 primary school children in 260 rural public schools receive a morning beverage and a lunch 160 days a year. Several non-governmental organizations (NGO's) participate in training sessions for parent-teacher associations to ensure that members of the community, particularly women, are actively involved in the management of school canteens and are aware of educational problems. Enrollment levels have increased significantly—more than 100 percent in the first years of implementation.

### **Country Overview**

The Gambia is both a least developed country and a low-income, food-deficit country. It ranked 165<sup>th</sup> on the Human Development Index of 1998 and has one of the highest population growth rates in the sub-Saharan region (4.2 percent a year).

The national literacy rate is over 90 percent, but in areas such as the Upper River Division, the rate is only 52 percent for men and 22 percent for women. School enrollment rates in rural areas are only 49 percent, with striking disparities between girls and boys. Poor primary school achievement is also highlighted by low attendance and high dropout rates, especially for girls. Household poverty, cultural practices, and inadequate school facilities contribute to the poor education system.

### **Project Overview**

Following a 1-year temporary assistance effort, the project will target food-insecure rural areas with low elementary school attendance rates. World Food Program (WFP) food aid is used to help poor families send their children to school. Meanwhile, supporting activities are undertaken in coordination with the Government of The Gambia, parent-teacher associations, the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and NGO's. These activities include rehabilitation or expansion of schools, improvement in the school environment for girls, training of more female teachers, revisions in the curriculum, and support for community-based organizations.

### **Commodity Management**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn-soy blend	300	July 2001
	690	November 2001
Rice	600	July 2001
	90	November 2001
	1,710	December 2001
Vegetable oil	80	November 2001

### **Project Impact**

Approximately 60,000 primary schoolchildren in 260 rural public schools receive a morning beverage and lunch 160 days a year. Several NGO's are tasked with training sessions for parent-teacher associations to ensure that members of the community, particularly women, are involved in managing school canteens and in addressing local educational problems.

# Ghana

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

About 29,600 students per year will benefit from the World Food Program (WFP) take-home rations over the project period. Food aid will serve as an incentive to households to enroll their girls in primary and junior secondary education and to maintain the girls' regular attendance. Each girl pupil will receive monthly rations of eight kilograms of cereals and two liters of vegetable oil as long as she attends at least 85 percent of school days every month.

### Country Overview

Ghana is a low-income, food-deficit country. The population, estimated at 18.4 million, is growing at an annual rate of 2.5 percent, according to the October 2000 Ghana census. The United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) Human Development Report for 2000 ranked Ghana 129<sup>th</sup> out of the 174 countries assessed. The country's per capita gross national product (GNP) is \$390, which is below the average for sub-Saharan Africa and below the \$530-per-person average GNP for all low-income countries.

Basic education for children, which in Ghana includes primary education (grades one through six) and junior secondary education (grades seven through nine), continues to face problems of access and quality throughout the country. Between 1987 and 1997, enrollment rates at primary schools dropped from 75.5 percent to 72.5 percent. The gender gap in primary enrollment persists, although it improved slightly during the same period. In rural areas of the northern savannah, only 67 percent of eligible boys and 62 percent of girls are enrolled in primary school—rates that are substantially below the national average. Attendance rates are low. Primary school attendance rates are roughly 37 for boys and 35 percent for girls. Furthermore, the net enrollment ratio in junior secondary school is significantly lower for girls compared with boys, reflecting a number of poverty-related socioeconomic factors, including early pregnancies and the increased labor and economic value (i.e., bride-wealth) of adolescent girls. Women in the three northern savannah regions with high illiteracy rates (85 percent) not only have limited access to land, credit, and agricultural inputs, but also face more socio-cultural constraints than do women in other regions.

Food aid serves as an incentive to beneficiary households to enroll their girls in primary and junior secondary education and to maintain the girls' regular attendance. Each girl pupil will receive monthly rations of eight kilograms of cereals and two liters of vegetable oil as long as she attends at least 85 percent of school days every month. The Ghana Education Service (GES) under the Ministry of Education (MOE) will implement the activity.

## **Commodity Management**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Wheat	800	September 2001
Vegetable oil	270	July 2001

## **Project Overview**

The targeting of WFP activities is based on a chronic vulnerability assessment, last carried out in November 2000 and April 2001. The assessment includes factors such as food insecurity, proneness to disasters, poverty, health, girls' share of the school population, and HIV/AIDS prevalence. This has confirmed that the incidence of absolute poverty is highest in the upper west, upper east, and northern regions, and also that the burden of poverty falls disproportionately on food crop farmers, a large proportion of whom are women. Therefore, WFP assistance continues to be concentrated in the northern savannah regions.

**Goals and objectives:** The immediate objectives of the activity are:

- Increased enrollment of girls, increased school attendance, and reduced dropout rates among girls.
- Reduced disparity between boys' and girls' enrollment rates in school.

**Other donor support:** The Government of Ghana's contribution to this activity is estimated at more than \$1.2 million, including internal transportation, shipping, and handling.

## **Project Impact**

On average, 29,600 pupils per year will benefit from the take-home ration over the project period. Approximately two-thirds of the beneficiaries will be primary school girls, and one-third of beneficiaries will be girls at junior secondary schools. Intended benefits include an increase in enrollment and retention rates and the improved eligibility of girls for junior secondary schooling. This will give girls increased access to further education and vocational training, leading to enhanced income-earning ability.

Enrollment increases have averaged 10 percent during the last three years. The steady increases in enrollment levels for both girls and boys have drawn more commitment from the parents. Added emphasis on school infrastructure is needed in future programming. Additional donors could be helpful in providing kitchen and latrine facilities.

# **Guinea**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

Enrollment levels for the Guinea WFP program have increased every year for the past three years. This program has made significant in-roads for girls in the educational system and has triggered an enrollment increase into the higher grade levels. Additionally, the number of teachers has increased over the last year, reducing the student-to-teacher ratio.

### **Country Overview**

The ongoing civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone have had spillover effects in neighboring Guinea, which became host to some 300,000 refugees, mainly in its southeast region. The difficult situation faced by Guinea is compounded by widespread poverty among the population. According to the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Report for 2000, Guineans have an average life expectancy of 54 years and an illiteracy rate of 65 percent. The country's annual gross national product (GNP) is \$570 per person, and approximately 40 percent of its population lives in absolute poverty.

Of the children who do go to school, many drop out at the end of the third year when they are transferred to comprehensive-type schools, often far away from their home villages. Children often return home at midday to have lunch and prefer to stay home rather than walk all the way back to school in the afternoon. In all regions, and especially from the fourth year of elementary school, girls are more likely to drop out, stay away, or arrive late at school. This is because of their participation in household work or in economic activities, such as caring for household livestock.

### **Commodity Management**

The Global Food for Education (GFE) donation for this project consisted of 150 metric tons of corn-soy blend, which arrived in November 2001.

### **Project Overview**

Emergency school feeding is provided for food-insecure individuals in areas at high risk of malnutrition. These safety net programs also encourage communities to create sustainable assets and become more self-reliant. The ration level for emergency feeding is 628 kilocalories.



The goal of the school feeding program is to contribute to improving the nutritional status of groups identified as severely or moderately at risk through curative interventions such as therapeutic, supplementary, and maternal child health feeding, institutional feeding to vulnerable groups, and emergency school feeding for children in areas highly vulnerable to food insecurity.

The WFP program in Guinea is scheduled for the years 2002–2005 and aims to support national policies of poverty reduction, improvement of food security, and reduction of gender disparities. The program's objectives are:

- To reduce food insecurity.
- To promote the educational aspects of development.
- To give the poorest areas and communities an opportunity to achieve economic development.

In order to achieve those objectives, the program focuses on two sectors regarded as priorities: primary school enrollment and attendance in rural areas, and community rural development in the poorest areas, with special emphasis on education for women and girls.

Food aid is used as an instrument to fight hunger and poverty in the poorest rural areas of the country. It helps alleviate hunger in school children and rural populations, especially during the lean season, and works to improve their food security in a lasting manner by acting on the root causes of poverty. It helps poor, food-insecure households to invest in their children's—and especially their daughters'—education.

Immediate objectives are as follows:

- To ensure that pupils in the areas targeted by WFP eat regularly, and to contribute to the food security of the families of girls receiving dry rations.
- To increase enrollment in schools in those areas.
- To improve attendance rates and reduce dropout and afternoon absenteeism rates, especially for girls.
- To increase the ratio of girls attending classes at the target schools.

### **Project Impact**

School meals provide children with the calories that they often lack. The additional calorie intake increases their participation in school work. In the medium to long-term, school meals help primary school children to become more attentive, reduce their absenteeism, and improve their ability to retain what they are taught.

Food aid provides a dietary supplement to schoolchildren in the target communities and helps them remain in the school system through the elementary grades. The school meal

also saves children from returning home to eat lunch—often a distance of several kilometers on foot—and reduces absenteeism in the afternoon.

Through the provision of dry rations, parents will be encouraged to enroll their daughters at school and keep them there. Rations represent an income transfer to family budgets and improve the food security of households.

Lastly, WFP assistance has increased the involvement of parents and of village communities in running their schools through the creation of School Friends' and Parents' Associations, which train members to manage their school canteens.

# Kenya

## World Food Program

### Summary of Findings

Food provided in the school environment is extremely important to both teachers and students. Most parents do not send their children to school because of the cost of enrollment. However, even with cost as the major limiting factor in sending children to school, enrollment levels and numbers of teachers have been fairly stable for the last two years and are beginning to show an increase.

### Country Overview

Kenya is a low-income, food-deficit country with an Aggregate Household Food Security Index of 71.7, ranking it 51<sup>st</sup> out of 61 countries. It has a population of 29 million (1997) and a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$281. In 1997, 43 percent of Kenya's population was living in absolute poverty. The incidence of poverty is highest in the arid and semi-arid land areas. In 1997, the national average Human Development Index ranked Kenya 134<sup>th</sup> out of 175 countries.

Since independence, education in Kenya has developed rapidly, resulting in impressive growth of qualified human capital. School enrollment increased from 892,000 in 1963 to 5.6 million in 1996 for primary grades, and from 801,000 in 1989 to over 1 million in 1996 for pre-primary schooling. Policies aimed at strengthening primary education led to a gross enrollment rate of 95 percent in 1989. High poverty levels and increasing costs of education shouldered by parents resulted in a decline in enrollment at the primary level to 77.5 percent by 1996.

Regional disparities in enrollment and achievement exist at all levels of education, with particularly low rates in some arid districts. Although there is gender parity in pre-primary and primary schools at the national level, there are pockets in arid and semi-arid areas where girls are still highly under-represented. Economic, social, and cultural constraints affect girls' enrollment, attendance, and achievement.

Women work an average of 56 hours per week, compared with 42 hours for men. The situation is similar for young girls, who work around twice as many hours as young boys. Women's participation in decision-making about household expenditures and other areas is limited.

Almost 18 percent of Kenyan school children suffer from chronic stunting, with another 34 percent showing mild-to-moderate growth retardation, according to a study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Nutritional deprivation was found to be much more prevalent in arid and semi-arid land areas. It is not uncommon for only one meal to be prepared daily and for children to go to school without eating breakfast. Poor nutritional status increases the risk of frequent illness and the likelihood of poorer performance and grade repetition at school.

In arid and semi-arid areas, cultural values and limited income often lead to a strong bias toward educating boys at the expense of girls, who are valued more for their traditional roles fulfilled through marriage and child labor. Girls are disproportionately affected by lack of facilities and lack of security as they walk long distances from homesteads to schools. Alternative venues for primary education for girls, such as boarding or non-formal schools, are often inadequate or nonexistent.

Nairobi is estimated to have more than 50,000 street children, orphans, and child domestic workers. Children of teenage mothers, street mothers, and mothers suffering from HIV/AIDS are highly vulnerable. About half of Nairobi's school-age children do not attend school. Children from households headed by women are least likely to go to school as they are need for household work.

### **Commodity Management**

Under this World Food Program (WFP) feeding program, the daily food basket for pre-primary and primary school children consists of 150 grams of maize, 40 grams of beans, and 5 grams of vegetable oil. School children receive a maize meal porridge for a mid-morning snack and maize, beans, and oil for a midday meal—a dietary contribution equivalent to 700 kilocalories and 23 grams of protein per student per day.

Maize and beans are used as an in-kind grant to communities to undertake a number of labor-intensive activities at the school level. Emphasis is placed on building the capacity of school committee leaders and community groups to identify, plan, implement, and monitor their own school-based projects. This also gives support to the efforts of the Government of Kenya and of other agencies in strengthening school services. The school feeding program and the Ministry of Education are expanding their partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGO's), through which the WFP food assistance is channeled to the targeted schools. Food may be used to assist in the development of school-based micro-enterprises aimed at increasing food production; for example, through a one-time grant to barter for a school-based livestock herd.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	54,000	June 2001
	2,400	January 2002
Vegetable oil	2,700	September 2001
Corn-soy milk	11,800	September 2001

## **Project Overview**

Many of the schools supported through the school feeding program have considerable problems of access to clean water, adequate fuel wood supplies, and fruits and vegetables to supplement the basic school feeding program commodities. In addition, classroom space is inadequate in many schools, especially for pre-primary students.

The long-term objective is to promote universal education of socio-economically disadvantaged and nutritionally vulnerable children, especially girls, in pre-primary and primary schools in targeted arid and semi-arid land areas.

Active participation by girls and women in basic activities is reinforced through a series of community-based training activities. WFP and partners actively identify and promote positive female role models, facilitate additional resources targeted to women's and girls' education, and use local and international media exposure to highlight issues relating to hunger and poverty.

The types of projects that are supported include activities to:

- Reduce the labor and food energy demand on women and children by bringing domestic water and fuel wood supplies closer to the school.
- Rehabilitate or build more classrooms or other facilities, such as houses for women teachers.
- Encourage enterprises that produce food or income for school feeding.

The location and outreach of the NGO partners determine the geographical coverage within a targeted division.

**Goals and objectives:** The objectives of the program are to:

- Increase enrollment, prevent dropouts, and stabilize attendance at selected pre-primary, primary, and non-formal schools.
- Improve school facilities and assist school committees and communities in the identification and development of enterprises to sustain school feeding programs.
- Assist the Government of Kenya, donors, NGO's, and communities in disaster preparedness activities for populations affected by high levels of food insecurity.
- Decrease malnutrition levels of children and women in selected arid and semi-arid land areas.

The immediate objectives are to:

- Increase enrollment, prevent dropouts, and stabilize attendance at assisted pre-primary and primary schools.
- Improve the attention span and ultimately the learning capacity of students by relieving short-term hunger.

- Provide a significant contribution to the nutrient intakes of pre-primary and primary school children through the continuation of the school feeding program in targeted districts of arid and semi-arid land areas.
- Improve school facilities (water supply, classrooms, housing for women teachers, school-based agro-forestry).
- Assist school committees and communities in the identification and development of enterprises to sustain school feeding programs for the future.

**Other donor support:** The Government of Kenya continues to increase budget allocations for school feeding to complement community efforts. The contribution is about \$2.2 million per year, and its implementation capacity is adequate.

The contribution from NGO partners is estimated at \$1.3 million. Sisters of Mercy contributes about \$1.7 million per year, and the Catholic Diocese contributes \$100,231 per year.

**Implementation status:** The school feeding component remains as in the current plan of operations, with implementation being the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

Under the program:

- 270,000 pre-primary and primary school children per year, 50 percent of whom are girls, are receiving a food ration, cooked and supplied daily.
- Pupils' family members, especially women and girls, in 200 schools receive uncooked family rations.
- 15,000 pre-primary and primary school children in urban slum schools are receiving a food ration, cooked and supplied daily.

WFP has been supporting the Sisters of Mercy and the Catholic Diocese in serving Nairobi's urban slums. Under this project, 15,000 pre-primary and primary school children in formal and non-formal schools are receiving a mid-morning snack and hot lunch. Sisters of Mercy and the Catholic Diocese target the absolute poor and proactively promote the education and training of girls. Currently, girls represent 52 percent of enrolled children. The Ministry of Education handles overall food management and transfers food commodities to each NGO in Nairobi. Each NGO assumes responsibility for planning, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on the use of the food assistance.

**Sustainability:** Strategies for sustaining the school feeding program include:

- School-based livestock production to provide milk and meat, and for sale to earn income.
- Poultry keeping.
- Gardens and agro-forestry.
- Community fund-raising activities for establishing revolving funds managed by parent-teacher associations and school committees.

## **Project Impact**

An annual average of 270,000 pre-primary (195 days per year) and primary (273 days per year) day and boarding students are fed. Food grants are provided to an average of 200 schools per year to undertake the improvement of facilities and school feeding sustainability enterprises.

## **Lessons Learned:**

The following are major lessons learned regarding WFP's operations in Kenya:

- The Ministry of Education has been a very reliable partner in reaching the most disadvantaged populations because of its network of schools throughout the country.
- Food-for-work projects have relatively high overhead costs for the quantity of food delivered, so they are more cost-effective when integrated with other projects such as school feeding.
- Women's groups are a good entry point for community-based activities.
- Greater partnership is required with other development partners, especially at the school and community levels.
- Integrated approaches are required to overcome constraints to increase girls' enrollment and achievement at primary schools.

## **GFE in Action**

In the Masai town of Kajiado, a teacher told visiting WFP officials that in 1995 there were only 98 enrolled students (64 boys and 34 girls) at the school. But with the introduction of school feeding, the number grew to 231 students in 1999—78 girls and 100 boys in the primary school, and 21 girls and 32 boys in the pre-primary school.

In one of the poorest regions of Kenya, the Turkana region, the Minister of Education attested in March 2001 that attendance increased by 130 percent for girls and 60 percent for boys within one year after the introduction of the school feeding program.

# **Madagascar**

## **Adventist Development and Relief Agency**

### **Summary of Findings**

The school feeding program began in Madagascar in March 2002 in one of the two targeted regions. The donated corn-soy blend and nonfat dry milk would have enabled the Global Food for Education (GFE) school feeding project to distribute an estimated nine million meals for 50,000 schoolchildren in 178 public primary schools over the 10 school months (September–June). As of February 2002, 49 metric tons of NFDM powder and 98 tons of corn-soy blend had been distributed to these schools. The program was halted in Antsirabe region and never got started in Antanyfotsy region because of political and economic instability in Madagascar. However, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Madagascar is scheduled to resume the GFE program in both regions as soon as the political and economic situation allows. The program will continue through the 2003 school year.

### **Country Overview**

Madagascar, an island nation of predominantly mixed Asian and African origin, has a population of about 15.5 million people. The gross domestic product (GDP) is about \$3.8 billion, with agriculture accounting for 29 percent of GDP. Annual capita income is about \$269, making Madagascar one of the poorest countries in the world. In fiscal year 2000, Madagascar's exports were valued at \$1.06 billion, mainly made up of apparel, shrimp, vanilla, coffee, sugar, cloves, graphite, essential oils, industrial stones, and gemstones. Imports were \$1.5 billion, including consumer goods, foodstuffs, crude oil, machinery and vehicles, iron and steel, electronics, computers, and accessories.

In December 2000, the boards of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank concurred that the country is eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. On March 1, 2001, the IMF board granted the country \$103 million for 2001-03 under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). Resources freed up under HIPC were to be directed toward improving health, education, rural roads, water, and direct support to communities. In addition, on March 7, 2001, the Paris Club approved a debt cancellation of \$161 million. On Feb. 28, 2001, the African Development Bank (ADB) approved under the HIPC a debt cancellation of \$71.46 million and granted in June 2001 an additional credit of \$20 million to fight AIDS and poverty<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> World Bank Report, Madagascar, 2002, and CIA Country Fact Book, 2002.



Partly as a result of these credits but also as a result of previous reforms, average GDP growth exceeded the population growth rate. Madagascar's appeal to investors' stemmed from its competitive, trainable work force. However, the country then plunged into civil unrest as a result of disputed elections held in December 2001.

Chronic malnutrition is as high as 51 percent in Madagascar among children less than 5 years old. As many as 52 percent of rural children show signs of stunted growth by the age of 24 months. Severe malnutrition affects about 5 percent of rural children under 5 and about 3 percent of urban children.

The province of Antananarivo, in which the two selected school districts are located, has some of the highest levels of malnutrition. The ratio of caloric intake from proteins is less than 10 percent for this region and is as low as 8.5 percent in rural areas. The recommended ratio is 10-12 percent. The majority of the caloric intake (about 60 percent) is from rice, with another 25 percent from roots and tubers such as sweet potatoes and manioc. The population of this region also suffers from an acute shortage of iodine, despite efforts to promote iodized salt through commercial channels.

The two districts are located in the central high plateau of Madagascar, which is bisected from north to south by the main roadway from the capital city of Antananarivo to the second largest non-port city of Fianarantsoa. This access to transportation, along with the pleasant highland tropical climate, made this region one of the most densely populated rural agrarian areas of Madagascar. The poor quality of the iron-rich red soils, along with nutritive depletion, results in comparatively low crop productivity relative to many other parts of the region. Rice production is the primary agricultural activity. The total rice production in the province of Antananarivo provides less than half of the consumption demand for the area.

The selected districts had these characteristics:

- Centrally located in Madagascar and accessible, making them ideal for a high-profile pilot program.
- High density of rural population, with chronic cyclic food shortages.
- Low protein intake in the diet.
- Low school enrollment rates of children ages 5-8 (40-50 percent).
- High dropout rates for children ages 12-14, especially among girls (up to 50 percent).
- Local district administrators keen on promoting development and working with ADRA.
- ADRA's access to a distribution site located directly between the two districts.
- Within the strategic operating zone of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other ADRA partners.

Given high poverty rates in these two districts, even by Madagascar standards, ADRA chose to implement the GFE program in these two districts.

## **Commodity Management**

ADRA/Madagascar requested and received 4,900 tons of various commodities—corn, corn-soy blend, and non-fat dry milk.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Packaging</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>
Corn	50 kg bag	3, 400
Corn-soy blend	25 kg bag	900
Non-fat dry milk	25 kg	600
<b>Total</b>		<b>4, 900</b>

Of the donated commodities, ADRA had planned to monetize 3,550 tons, including 3,400 tons of corn and 150 tons of non-fat dry milk, and directly distribute the remaining 1,350 tons. As of March 2002, 1,350 tons consisting 900 tons of corn-soy blend and 450 tons of non-fat dry milk had been shipped to Madagascar.

The first shipment of 450 tons of corn-soy blend arrived in the port of Tamatave on Dec. 30, 2001, and was transported to Antsirabe warehouses for distribution in the school feeding program. ADRA received 150 tons of nonfat dry milk powder on Jan. 9, 2001, which has also been transported to Antsirabe for distribution in the school feeding project. ADRA received another 450 tons of corn-soy blend, which has been sitting at the port since Feb. 4, 2002. This product is also destined for distribution in the Antsirabe school feeding program. Another shipment of 300 tons (18 containers) of non-fat dry milk arrived in the port of Tamatave around March 10, 2002. This shipment is partly for monetization (9 containers) and partly for distribution (9 containers).

Due to the civil strife, the commodities remain in warehouses. Organizations such as the Peace Corps, USAID, and all non-essential U.S. Embassy personnel have been evacuated from the country.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** ADRA's primary goal is to provide a meal of corn-soy blend porridge prepared with iodized salt every school day during two school years for up to 90,000 primary school students in two rural school districts of Antsirabe II and Antanyfotsy.

These districts are located in the central highlands of Madagascar within the province of Antananarivo. The program is geared to school children in both public and private schools within the district. It calls for students to receive a ration of 125 grams of cooked corn-soy blend per day. A pilot group of about 9,000 students are to receive a similar ration of instant breakfast cereal, a locally processed product of precooked, flaked, corn-soy blend with vitamins, minerals, and sugar added. The cost of this value-added product

is to be partially paid through exchange for corn-soy blend, which will be transformed into the same instant breakfast cereal with different packaging for commercial sale near where the product is being tested in the schools. This is intended to enhance the chances of sustainability of the program by getting consumers used to the taste and value of the vitamin-enriched product.

As a secondary objective, ADRA planned to monetize the corn to collaborate with the local government husbandry services and commercial veterinary services to stimulate commercial chicken and egg production in Madagascar and particularly in the target region of the school feeding project. Specific goals for the program are as follows:

- 5-percent increase in enrollment rates.
- 10-percent increase in retention of students through their final year.
- Improved physical growth rates of beneficiary children.
- Improved passing rates on school exit exams.
- Increased parent association participation in school improvement activities.
- 50-percent increase in commercial chicken/egg production in target region.
- Increased consumption of protein from chicken/egg source in regional diets.

**Implementation status:** As of March 2002, ADRA/Madagascar's GFE program operated in 178 public primary schools in the Antsirabe region. The imported corn-soy blend and non-fat dry milk powder would have enabled the GFE school feeding project to distribute an estimated nine million meals for 50,000 school children in these 178 public primary schools over the next 10 school months. As of February 2002, 49 tons of non-fat dry milk powder and 98 tons of corn-soy blend flour had been distributed to these schools. The program was halted in Antsirabe region and never got started in the Antanyfotsy region.

**Sustainability:** The ADRA agreement makes sustainability a major goal for the GFE program in Madagascar.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** ADRA has developed a monitoring and evaluation system under the agreement, the objectives which are to:

- Collect basic data regarding the distribution and the number of beneficiaries.
- Collect pre- and post- intervention statistics on enrollments, retention rates, student health and growth records, and exit exam pass rates.

ADRA also planned to conduct a final evaluation survey through a random cluster sample of households in the target area to assess project impacts. ADRA also set up a monitoring system with full-time monitoring staff to visit each implementing school to collect the necessary data for evaluation. In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture plans to set up infrastructure in Madagascar to hire a local monitor to collect data on a sample of 20 schools participating in the GFE program. Because of the political and economic instability in Madagascar, these plans have been postponed.

## **Project Impact**

Until political and economic instability returns, implementation of the GFE program in Madagascar will be severely hampered, making it impossible for ADRA to accomplish its objectives.

## **Unanticipated Outcomes**

Clearly, ADRA did not anticipate the political and economic instability that has engulfed Madagascar since GFE program began, resulting in the following unanticipated outcomes:

- There were larger than usual (approximately \$3,000 per day) demurrage charges for commodities at the port.
- ADRA was unable to pay the \$38,000 for customs clearance and transport of these goods to ADRA warehouses in Antsirabe. This account for services provided has been outstanding since the beginning of January 2002. ADRA also needed another \$30,000 to pay for the clearance and transport of the second and third shipments to Antsirabe for distribution in the project.
- The instability and financial crisis affected ADRA/Madagascar's ability to successfully negotiate planned monetization sales.
- In addition, ADRA had to begin paying the extended port storage fees at Tamatave for the 23 containers that have been sitting there since the beginning of February.
- The inability of ADRA to realize the projected operational budget from monetization estimated at \$221,000 put the entire GFE project in jeopardy.

## **Next Steps**

USDA will monitor the political and economic situation in Madagascar and formulate a plan of action for monitoring and evaluation of the GFE program. In the interim, ADRA/Madagascar will keep USDA abreast of the situation in the implementing schools. As soon as the instability subsides, USDA plans to set up the monitoring infrastructure, hire a local monitor, select sample schools, and collect relevant data for the evaluation of the GFE program.

# **Mozambique World Food Program**

## **Summary of Findings**

By covering part of the costs of schooling through school feeding, this project will enable poor households to enroll and keep their children in school, including in boarding facilities. Providing two meals per day in day schools will reduce students' short-term hunger and improve the concentration of children who have walked long distances from home to school. This is expected to lead to improved performance and reduced repetition and dropout rates.

Take-home rations will cover part of the costs sustained by families in sending their children to school. Take-home rations for girls can reduce the significant gender gap in education by providing an effective incentive in overcoming the obstacles to letting girls attend school. A similar logic applies to orphans. They are usually cared for by foster families who do not have the means to support their schooling and who depend on the labor of the orphan children to cover the additional costs of supporting them.

## **Country Overview**

Despite growth rates of around 10 percent over the past four years, Mozambique remains among the poorest countries in the world. Its per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was \$240 in 1999. Moreover, economic progress is not evenly distributed: About 68 percent of the people live in absolute poverty, and 64 percent live in food-insecure households. Total population is 17.2 million, and population density is only about 20 persons per square kilometer. With 80 percent of the population living in rural areas and the economy based predominantly on agriculture, Mozambique is particularly vulnerable to recurring natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and pests.

In schools, the net enrollment rate drops from 53.8 percent for the first level of primary education (grades one through five) to only 2 percent for the second level of primary education (grades six and seven). There are not enough primary and secondary schools within walking distance of all rural communities. Therefore, strategically located boarding institutions for primary, secondary, technical, and professional education are a necessity. Most rural and peri-urban families have an income far below the average GDP of \$240 per year and are, therefore, not able to pay the \$32 per year it would cost (using local prices) to feed each student.

Children in rural and peri-urban areas must walk long distances to reach one of Mozambique's 626 second-level primary schools. As a result of socio-economic conditions and dietary habits (only one meal per day, usually at night), most children are hungry when they arrive at school and have difficulty concentrating and learning. This

contributes to high dropout rates (about 20 percent between grades five and six) and high repetition rates (25 percent).

The main deterrent to sending girls to school is the socio-economic situation of their families. Faced with limited financial resources, parents send their sons rather than their daughters to school. From the age of 10, girls often have to stay at home in order to carry out domestic and agricultural tasks. Cultural and religious habits also play an important role in girls' low participation in primary education.

The number of orphans under age 15 is currently about 504,000. By 2006, their numbers are expected to more than double to 1.1 million, with the increase mainly reflecting the deaths of parents suffering from HIV/AIDS. Current estimates of HIV infection rates are almost 25 percent in the rural areas of the central region for people ages 15-45, and around 15 percent for the same age group in other regions. Studies indicate that children in households where one or more adults are infected by AIDS or are deceased are less likely than other children to perform well in school and more likely to be absent from classes or to drop out of school entirely.

### **Commodity Management**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Rice	2,000	September 2001
	5,000	January 2002
Corn-soy milk	200	September 2001
	1,000	January 2002
Vegetable oil	100	September 2001
	200	December 2001
	300	January 2002

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** This activity pursues the following objectives:

- To increase access for children from poor households to day schools and improve their learning achievements (grades one through seven).
- To increase the percentage of girls at schools for the second level of education.
- To secure access to the second level of education for orphans.
- To secure access to boarding institutions for all levels of education for children from poor households.

This activity will contribute toward fulfillment of the right to education and improved learning capacity through increased enrollment and attendance at school, particularly for girls and orphans.

**Implementation status:** The targeting of WFP activities is based on a chronic vulnerability assessment, which includes factors such as food insecurity, proneness to disasters, poverty, health, the percentage of girls in the school population, and HIV/AIDS prevalence. The groups targeted for WFP assistance include:

- Students and parents' associations at rural and peri-urban schools at the second level of primary education (grades six and seven), as well as those at primary schools.
- Education systems (grades one through seven) where long walking distances and short-term hunger reduce children's concentration and their capacity to learn.
- Girls and their families in schools participating in the school feeding activity in provinces where girls' share of the school population is under 30 percent.
- Orphans (defined as children up to age 15 who have lost one or both parents) and their families in the schools participating in the school feeding activity in the provinces, where HIV/AIDS prevalence among adults ages 15–49 exceeds 20 percent.
- Students and staff of boarding schools.

Boarding school directors are responsible for implementing the activity at their schools. A parent-teacher association establishes the necessary infrastructure and ensures access to safe drinking water, sufficient manpower, and fuel for food preparation. The association also organizes food preparation and the distribution of meals.

At the beginning of each semester, (twice per year), mothers of enrolled girls present themselves at the school with their daughters to receive the family take-home ration. Based on the Ministry of Education's criteria for sitting exams, a minimum attendance rate is the criterion for receiving take-home rations. Care providers and the orphans in their care present themselves at the school twice a year in order to receive the take-home ration.

WFP provides the necessary non-food items, such as kitchen utensils, to enable each day school to start its canteen activities. Training is provided for the parents' association in overall management, gender issues and girls' education, food storage, cooking, and sanitation. Training is also a part of project implementation for all relevant partners.

**Other donor support:** The education sector receives substantial support from a large number of bilateral and multilateral organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, the Danish International Development Agency, and the Swedish International Development Agency. Several of these programs complement WFP's activities in such areas as the rehabilitation of boarding school infrastructure and provision of teaching materials. WFP is actively participating in the donor coordination group for the education sector.

The Government of Mozambique's contribution over 5 years is estimated at \$4.95 million.

## **Project Impact**

The beneficiaries of this activity are:

- Children at schools selected for day school feeding. Their selection is based on criteria that include poverty or chronic food insecurity and an average walk to school of more than 5 kilometers. Each year, 30,000 pupils enrolled in primary schools (grades one through seven) in rural and peri-urban areas will receive two nutritious meals on each school day.
- 6,400 girls enrolled at the selected day schools in the provinces where the percentage of girls in the school population is below 30 percent. These girls receive two take-home rations per school year.
- 1,600 orphans enrolled at these schools in the provinces where HIV/AIDS prevalence among those ages 15-45 is above 20 percent. These orphans receive two take-home rations during each school year.
- Boarding school students whose families are considered so poor that the cost of food would exclude the students from access to continued education. In addition to 40,000 pupils in boarding schools, 1,800 teachers and 1,700 staff receive three daily meals throughout each school year.

Effective beneficiary targeting under this program, as well as strong donors (including local organizations), lead to greater impacts in schools under this program. Enrollment increases measured in newly participating WFP schools are greater than increases in those schools participating over the last few years (an average of 16 percent compared to 8.5 percent). However, average attendance levels in existing schools are higher than in new schools (89 percent as compared to 86 percent). This trend would indicate that the value placed on education increases as more children and their parents are brought into the school environment through school feeding programs.



## **Senegal Counterpart International, Inc.**

### **Summary of Findings**

The Counterpart International, Inc., (CPI) Global Food for Education (GFE) program in Senegal, originally scheduled to start at the end of fiscal year 2001, did not begin until late in April 2002 as a result of a disagreement between CPI/Senegal and the Government of Senegal on monetization of commodities in Senegal. CPI plans to monetize 6,960 tons of rice and use the proceeds to fund an information campaign on the importance of education and nutrition. CPI also plans to distribute 590 tons of various commodities directly to 53,925 school children in grades one through five in the Podor district in St. Louis Prefecture. The disagreement delaying the project was resolved in April 2002. The commodities for distribution and monetization have been "called forward." The GFE feeding program will start in September 2002 and continue through July 2003.

### **Country Overview**

Senegal, situated in West Africa with a population of about 9.8 million, is among the countries that pioneered democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>101</sup> The country gained independence in 1960 and for a long time was highly visible in the international arena. It has maintained a relatively stable political and social environment but, for the past several years, has been confronted by a rebellion in the southern part of the country.<sup>102</sup>

Senegal has a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$4.4 billion and annual per capita income of \$490, with a population growth rate of about 2.7 percent a year. A total of 47 percent of the population is under the age of 15. The adult literacy rate is 38 percent, with primary school enrollment at 56 percent of the primary-school-age children.<sup>103</sup> Seventy percent of the rural population works in the agricultural sector, and rural areas contain 80 percent of the country's poverty. In addition, Senegal faces structural food deficits because production covers only 50 percent of consumption requirements. Progress on the economic front has not yet been sufficient to make a dent in poverty. In February 2001, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a third annual arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF).<sup>104</sup>

Although the Government of Senegal has repeatedly expressed a strong public and private commitment to education since independence, the quality of schooling and percentage of female students remain low, while the student-teacher ratio is high. The result has been a high rate of adult illiteracy and few graduates from rural areas.

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<sup>101</sup> CIA World Fact Book, 2002.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> World Data Indicators, 2002 and World Bank report #15523-SE, 1996.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Just four years ago, only 31 percent of students passed grade six and only 53 percent passed grade nine examinations. Not enough children have access to schooling and educational quality is low for those who do. In 1980, public expenditure on pre-primary and primary education was 42.8 percent of the total expenditure on education. That figure increased to 50.1 percent in 1985, but had fallen to only 34.2 percent by 1996.<sup>105</sup> In 1997, the public expenditure on total education was only 3.7 percent of the gross national product.<sup>106</sup>

According to the World Bank in 1999, more than one million children attended primary school, while only 174,114 attended secondary school. In 1980, 568,000 children of primary school age were not enrolled in school. This number increased to 583,000 in 1997. At the same time, children of secondary school age who were not enrolled in school increased from 685,000 to 1,092,000.<sup>107</sup>

These low rates of education extend beyond the urban areas, affecting all levels of education in the rural communities. While Dakar has a primary education enrollment rate of 91.5 percent, other regions average only 55.4 percent.<sup>108</sup> According to the Demographic Health Survey in 1992/93, only 21 percent of rural females attended primary grades, while 78 percent of their urban counterpart attended. The primary school completion rate for the same demographic group was 2 percent in rural areas and 23.9 percent in urban areas. Rural males had a 28.8-percent primary school enrollment rate and a 7.1 percent completion rate, while rates for urban males were 92.3 percent and 42.5 percent, respectively.<sup>109</sup>

The percentage of girls enrolling in grade one who reached grade five increased from 82 percent in 1980 to 85 percent in 1996, while boys remained the same at 89 percent. The percentage of eligible girls who were not enrolled in primary school increased from 55 percent to 57 percent from 1980 to 1997.<sup>110</sup> The percentage of girls in total primary school enrollment increased from 39 percent in 1970 to 45 percent in 1997.<sup>111</sup>

Issues contributing to the education problems faced by Senegal's population include: an inadequate number of schools; the prevalence of schools offering only five grades (35.6 percent of children are enrolled in these schools)<sup>112</sup>; high pupil-teacher ratios, which have reached 56:1 in primary schools<sup>113</sup>; and continuing gender inequalities resulting in girls still accounting for only about 45 percent of students in primary schools.

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<sup>105</sup> USAID: Global Education Database, 2000.

<sup>106</sup> World Bank: World Development Global Education Database, 2000.

<sup>107</sup> Op cit., World Development Indicators, 2000.

<sup>108</sup> World Bank: Senegal-Quality Education for All, 1999.

<sup>109</sup> Op cit., Global Education Database, 2000.

<sup>110</sup> Op cit., World Development Indicators, 2000.

<sup>111</sup> Op cit., Global Education Database, 2000.

<sup>112</sup> Op cit., Senegal-Quality Education for All, 1999.

<sup>113</sup> Op cit., World Development Indicators, 2000.

These factors have resulted in high levels of illiteracy, so that only 10 percent of the poor rural population can read and write.<sup>114</sup> While the current situation appears dire, the Government of Senegal has pledged to improve the educational system by increasing the capacity of primary schools, constructing new classrooms, and redeploying teaching staff. Through these initiatives, supported by the World Food Program (WFP), the number of primary school students should increase from 950,000 in 1997 to 1.6 million in 2003, with a gross schooling rate of 80 percent of eligible children (82.5 percent for boys and 79.3 percent for girls).

Within this framework, CPI proposed the Fouta-Toro Project for Education and Food Security in Senegal (EFFS).<sup>115</sup> In St. Louis Prefecture, high rates of malnutrition have been recorded as a result of inadequate food in homes; lack of important micronutrients; poor food utilization; poor maternal, infant, and child care; nominal health services; poor sanitation and hygiene; and inadequate household incomes.<sup>116</sup>

**Commodity Management**

CPI signed the GFE agreement on Aug. 20, 2001, and requested the following commodities for the GFE project:

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Shipment Date</b>
Long-grain rice	6,960	July 2002
Non-fat dry milk	50	July 2002
Soy-fortified bulgur wheat	430	July 2002
Vitamin A fortified vegetable oil	110	July 2002
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,550</b>	

CPI plans to monetize 6,960 metric tons of rice and use the proceeds to fund an information campaign on the importance of education and nutrition. CPI also plans to distribute 590 tons of various commodities directly to 53,925 school children between grades one and five in the Podor district in St. Louis Prefecture.

**Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CPI targeted Podor district in the St. Louis Prefecture to implement the GFE program. All school children at the cooperating institutions and

<sup>114</sup> Op cit., Senegal-Quality Education for All, 1999.

<sup>115</sup> USDA-CPI Agreement, Number GFE-685-2001/681-00, August 2001.

<sup>116</sup> World Bank Report, quoted in CPI Agreement #GFE 685-/2001-681-00.

families in the selected communities were to be eligible for appropriate program components. Estimated beneficiary numbers for the Podor District are:<sup>117</sup>

- 8,925 school children.
- 45,000 other children.
- 13,500 women.
- 13,500 men.

The CPI GFE program in Senegal, originally scheduled to start at the end of fiscal year 2001, did not become activated until late in April 2002 because of a disagreement between CPI/Senegal and the Government of Senegal on monetization of commodities in Senegal.<sup>118</sup> This disagreement was resolved in April 2002, and the feeding program should start with the beginning of the next school year in September 2002.<sup>119</sup>

CPI plans to work predominantly with educational institutions, formally and informally organized community groups including women's associations, and local NGO partners, specifically, the *Programme Intégré de Podor* (PIP) and the *Union de Jeunes Agriculteurs de Koyli-Wirnde* (UJAK). Measurable results will be achieved through the implementation of school feeding, nutritional and sustainable agricultural technical assistance and community training, and an information campaign on the importance of education and nutrition.

**Sustainability:** CPI hopes to connect with a number of local partners to implement the project in a participatory and sustainable manner. It will complement work performed by the Government of Senegal, other non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and international organizations in the areas of education and food security. CPI also plans to work closely with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Agriculture throughout this project.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** The project will begin with a baseline survey, which will provide information for the project and help establish more accurate annual and project targets. Knowledge, attitudes, and practices with regard to household food security and education data (using an adapted household food economy model) will be collected. All aspects of the baseline, mid-term, and final surveys, and monitoring and evaluation will be participatory with the partner NGO's, government ministry staff, and communities.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

# **Tanzania**

## **World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

The World Food Program (WFP) Tanzania project is being implemented under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. At the district level, the district education officer represents the education ministry. The day-to-day operations of the activity, however, are delegated to the local communities and school committees.

Assistance is targeted in three chronically food-insecure regions on the mainland: Dodoma, Singida, and Arusha. An estimated 75,000 children annually in primary day and boarding schools are directly benefiting from WFP assistance.

Monitoring data from the ongoing school feeding pilot project has shown that, in schools where cooked meals are being provided, school attendance rates (traditionally falling below 40 percent in the targeted areas in the lean season) have been consistently maintained at 60 percent. Enrollment, teacher levels, and classroom sizes have all improved over the last three years of school feeding program operations.

### **Country Overview**

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita gross national product (GNP) estimated at \$240 in 1999. The United Nations Development Program's 2000 Human Development Index ranked Tanzania 156<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries. It is classified as a least developed country and as a low-income, food-deficit country. More than 40 percent of its 31 million people live in chronically food-deficit regions, where irregular rainfall patterns cause repeated food shortages.

Primary school enrollment rates in Tanzania are currently estimated at 50 percent, a sharp decline from the 80 percent that was achieved in the 1980's. Of those enrolled, 52 percent are boys and 48 percent are girls. Rural areas, however, have marked gender imbalances in enrollment rates. In these areas, most of the primary schools are boarding schools, and boys account for 62 percent of total enrollment, while girls make up the remaining 38 percent. Among the reasons for this imbalance are the limited number of girls' dormitories, the fact that facilities are not used to their full capacity, and the lack of government funds to feed all boarders. Within this context, parents have little motivation to send their daughters to school, and they are also often too poor to pay the fees that contribute to the cost of running these schools.

Monitoring of the pilot project has confirmed that seasonal dropout rates are higher among boys than girls, because boys are deemed more suitable for undertaking casual labor and hunting and farming/pastoral activities during times of economic stress. In the

higher grades of primary schools, many boys drop out permanently, leaving more girls than boys attending in these grades. However, even where educational statistics show little gender discrepancies, many girls still suffer from negative practices, including sexual harassment, early pregnancy, early marriage, and circumcision.

**Commodity Management**

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	1,250	September 2001
Corn-soy blend	800	September 2001

**Project Overview**

This activity aims to:

- Contribute to increasing enrollment, improve attendance, and reduce the dropout rate at assisted primary day schools for both boys and girls.
- Improve the concentration span and learning capacity of students at assisted primary day schools by alleviating their short-term hunger.
- Allow primary boarding schools to function at full capacity by increasing the enrollment of girls.
- Inform teachers and students regarding HIV/AIDS.

The intended outputs include:

- Provision of an early-morning snack and cooked midday meal, 180 days per year over a 5-year period, to an annual average of 67,500 students at selected primary and pre-primary day schools.
- Provision of two meals per day (breakfast and lunch or dinner, while the Government of Tanzania provides a third meal), 230 days per year over a 5-year period, to an annual average of 7,500 students at selected primary boarding schools;
- Improvement of school infrastructure for operating a feeding program (storage, water supply, separate latrines, cooking facilities, and cooking and eating utensils).
- Training of 200 head teachers as trainers in HIV/AIDS and integration of the subject in the school curriculum.

The total Government of Tanzania contribution over 5 years is estimated at \$263,000.

## **Project Impact**

The following results are expected from WFP assistance:

- Improved enrollment rates for girls in targeted rural areas.
- Improved attendance and reduction of dropout rates for both boys and girls at assisted schools.

Food aid will serve as an incentive for enrollment, attendance, and retention at primary day schools, as well as a dietary support at primary day and boarding schools.

While targeting of girls has been the main focus of this school feeding initiative, the greatest impact over the last year has been measured in the enrollment of boys (over a 45-percent increase). However, the take-home rations have a greater impact on the girls' attendance levels (averaging 75 percent of those eligible).

## **Uganda**

### **Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance, in Collaboration with Catholic Relief Services**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The goal of the Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA) program is to improve access to primary education for 20,000 Universal Primary Education students in 20-30 schools in the disadvantaged districts of Gulu and Kitgum. ACDI/VOCA is responsible for the monetization component of the program, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) will focus on implementation of the program objectives. Under the project, 6,560 tons of commodities are scheduled to be shipped, of which 4,850 tons will be monetized. CRS plans to work toward parent-teacher association capacity building through curriculum-based lesson plans and provide seeds, tools, and technical assistance for the development of school gardens. The program is scheduled to continue through March 2003.

#### **Country Overview**

The East African country of Uganda is finally experiencing a degree of political, social, and economic stability after decades of turmoil, which completely devastated the country. Due to its political leadership, Uganda is making gains in many areas, but many problems remain. While much of the country is peaceful, long-term conflicts in neighboring countries have allowed insurgencies in border areas to continue. Poverty is a major concern in Uganda, with 35 percent of the population in abject poverty.<sup>120</sup> Twenty-six percent of children under age 5 are malnourished. Male illiteracy is estimated at 29 percent and female illiteracy at 48 percent.<sup>121</sup> Extreme seasonal food shortages occur, and even during the better times, children are fortunate to receive one basic meal each day.<sup>122</sup>

In Uganda, girls are more likely than boys to be tasked with significant household responsibilities.<sup>123</sup> By the end of primary school, there are only two girls remaining in school for every three boys.<sup>124</sup> Early pregnancy is an additional reason for girls to drop out of school. By age 17, 43 percent of young Ugandan women give birth.<sup>125</sup> Girls are more likely than boys to be pressured to drop out of school by parents to aid in economic activities or to free parents from chores so they can engage in economic activities. This situation often results in low-paying, sporadic employment.

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<sup>120</sup> World Bank, 2000 World Bank Country Brief. [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) June 2002.

<sup>121</sup> World Bank, Summary Gender Profile.

<sup>122</sup> District Officer Report, Nakasongola, District, April 2002.

<sup>123</sup> Save the Children, Country Report, June 2002.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ministry of Health, April 2002.



If a child is receiving food at school, the opportunity cost of education for all children will lessen the uneven pressure on girls to drop out.<sup>126</sup> ACDI/VOCA, in conjunction with CRS, plans to address girls' lower rates of enrollment and attendance through working with parent-teacher associations (PTA's) and district education offices to provide information to parents.

In the Gulu District and Kitgum, the program targeted areas where it is very common for school children to go the entire day without food and have only one meal in the evening. Based on this data, ACDI/VOCA and CRS submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide a daily meal to primary-school-age children in Uganda's Gulu District. The proposal commodities were scheduled for shipment in August 2002.

### **Commodity Management**

<b>Fiscal 2001 Commodities</b>	<b>Preferred Packaging</b>	<b>Monetization (Metric Tons)</b>	<b>Distribution (Metric Tons)</b>	<b>Total (Metric Tons)</b>
HRW wheat	50-kg bag	4,850	0	4,850
Vegetable oil	4-liter cans	0	110	110
Corn-soy blend	25-kg bag	0	1,200	1,200
Rice	50-kg bag	0	400	400
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,850</b>	<b>1,710</b>	<b>6,560</b>

ACDI/VOCA intends to monetize 4,850 tons of hard red winter wheat. ACDI/VOCA will distribute all food commodities from its primary warehouse in Kampala. ACDI/VOCA will transport commodities to in Gulu, where they will be stored before being forwarded under CRS management to schools or collected by PTA groups. ACDI/VOCA will also manage the monetization process and sale.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The goal of the ACDI/VOCA program is to improve access to primary education for 20,000 Universal Primary Education students in 20-30 schools in the disadvantaged districts of Gulu and Kitgum. Specifically, ACDI/VOCA will focus on:

- PTA capacity building through training on curriculum-based lesson plans, methodological techniques, classroom management, educational needs of female students, and the government's teacher supervision system.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

- Feeder road linkage to schools by linking ACIDI/VOCA's current P.L. 480-supported community feeder rehabilitation program in Gulu with the school feeding program through shared information sessions and coordination efforts with local staff.
- Establishment and maintenance of school gardens to provide schools with a local, sustainable source of food and income. CRS will provide seeds, tools, and technical assistance to develop school gardens.

**Implementation status:** ACIDI/VOCA, in cooperation with CRS, will implement a 1-year food-assisted education program that includes PTA development, take-home food rations to primary students, teaching support to educators and administrators, and the promotion of school gardens. ACIDI/VOCA is responsible for the monetization component of the program, and CRS will implement the program objectives.

The overall strategy is to bolster the ability of rural families to send their children to school, help school districts provide quality education, and assist communities in becoming more involved in the school environment. All activities will be carried out in partnership with the district education system and communities, and in consultation with international and national education organizations in Gulu and Kitgum. An emphasis will be placed on district- and community-level engagement in the program to promote the eventual graduation of program schools from external assistance to sustainable self-reliance.

CRS will monitor the impact of the take-home ration activity on educational quality. Also, along with government officials, CRS will address potential negative effects in terms of increases in the pupil-to-teacher ratio.

CRS-Uganda has selected two disadvantaged districts in northern Uganda to target through this program. This region of Uganda has experienced uncertainty for the last 15 years, with political unrest, drought, and societal instability combining to displace populations and jeopardize livelihoods. As a result of the Universal Primary Education policy and recent displacement patterns, primary schools in Gulu and Kitgum have an average enrollment of 768 students, according to the Ministry of Education.<sup>127</sup> Both districts exhibit the following indicators of poor educational quality relative to national averages:

- Low girls' enrollment rates.
- High percentage of untrained teachers.
- High student-to-teacher ratios.
- High dropout rates.

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<sup>127</sup> In 1997, Uganda launched a policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) to help reconstruct a national education system devastated by 20 years of political and social unrest. The UPE policy seeks to make primary school accessible for the majority of Ugandan children by removing the burden of school fees from parents and guardians.

A total of 20-30 public and private schools will be selected to participate in this program. Schools within the selected districts will be evaluated and chosen based on the following criteria:

- School is designated a Universal Primary Education school by the Ministry of Education.
- School is located in a rural area.
- School is accessible by delivery truck.
- School already has or is willing to establish a functional PTA.
- School authorities express a need for the above interventions.
- School community has a desire to participate in the program.
- School does not have functional school feeding or school food program.
- District education officer is willing to cooperate with CRS to conduct teacher training.

One CRS project officer and two assistant project officers will manage the overall distribution and secondary activities under the supervision of CRS' senior staff, and will ensure program quality in commodity management, pedagogical support, community capacity-building, and inter-agency collaboration. Five animator/end-use checkers will be responsible for training and supporting the PTA and school feeding management committees, following up with teaching and administrative staff training through this program, and monitoring the use of food commodities.

PTA's and the school food committees will manage school community-level activities. CRS-Uganda will apply lessons from CRS' global experience implementing food-assisted education and community capacity-building programs to ensure proper management and community ownership of the take-home ration activity. To ensure accountability, PTA members will fill at least two-thirds of food committee positions. Clear responsibilities among the committee members, as well as lines of communication between the committee and CRS, will be developed in advance of the distribution component. Committee members and school authorities will be trained together in the principles of commodity management and in CRS' reporting requirements, so that an internal monitoring system is established. Throughout the school year, the animators/end-use checkers will carry out refresher training sessions in these subjects and develop new themes to strengthen the management and implementation skills of the PTA and food committees.

**Other donor support:** CRS will work with both governmental and NGO's in the implementation of this program. In particular, the agency group will work with government and private primary schools, community-based organizations, district education offices, the national Ministry of Education and Sports, and education-focused international NGO's operating in the program area. Given similar strategies for educational support and the collaborative agreements in other sectors, CRS-Uganda will coordinate closely with the World Food Program throughout this program to identify common goals, implementation methods, and impacts. Collaboration between all of the sectors will ensure that the school feeding program activities and training curriculum

correspond to national goals and standards, meet the needs of communities and households, and support other intervention in the education sector.

The overall strategy of this program is to strengthen community and district government capacities to support primary education through the combined provision of teacher-administrator training, PTA development, local food/income sources for school, and food-assisted support to vulnerable households. The program will also buttress the Ministry of Education's efforts to provide pre-service training to its untrained teachers in rural areas. It is expected that as these capacities grow, the need for external food and material support will diminish, and the communities and local education system will be better able to sustain the success of UPE at their own level.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both CRS-Uganda and USDA will monitor and evaluate the program. CRS-Uganda's monitoring and evaluation team will conduct a baseline survey to obtain pre-intervention and control data on the program's performance indicators for all program schools. Other collaborating organizations, like the Ministry of Education and program school authorities, will be invited to participate in the survey and add questions that are relevant to their own related programs. USDA efforts include hiring a local monitor who will conduct a baseline survey in the target area and conduct focus groups on attendance, enrollment, and performance.

Food committees will submit regular commodity status reports, distribution records, and stock inventories to the PTA and CRS-Uganda. PTA's will also provide regular reports on their meetings and activities. Finally, progress reports on the training workshops and school gardens are to be provided by the appropriate district and/or community-level implementers.

At the CRS-Uganda level, animators/end-use checkers will visit each school twice per quarter to review and strengthen on-site commodity management, verify attendance levels, and meet with PTA's and food committee members to review the status of activities and discuss any problems that might arise. CRS project officers and the program manager will visit each school at least once per academic year to evaluate the program's progress toward its broader objectives. The district education officers in each targeted area will be invited on these visits to provide effective decentralized supervision and management.

In collaboration with CRS-Uganda, ACDI/VOC will submit semi-annual reports, which will include data on performance indicators, to USDA. ACDI/VOCA-Uganda will verify with spot checks that all recipients are using proceeds and commodities consistent with the plan of operation. The following indicators will be used to measure achievements of the program.

Process indicators:

- Number of schools receiving food commodities for distribution.
- Number of students receiving monthly take-home rations.
- Total tonnage delivered to schools, per year.
- Number of teachers and administrators trained.
- Number of PTA members trained.

Outcome indicators:

- Percent increase in average student attendance rates over baseline, by gender.
- Number of PTA's conducting at least one school fundraiser or special event per year.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability is a key component of the school feeding program. ACDI/VOCA intends to work with local communities to develop small gardens that will serve as sources of food if the school feeding program does not continue to be funded through USDA. Additionally, community leaders have been encouraged to ask families to allow school children to bring a vegetable/fruit item to school as often as possible, thus enhancing the diet and strengthening the community involvement in the education of their children. The pilot aims to reinvigorate community contributions and involvement in the schools, and particularly in the provision of food in the schools. The project is supplying commodities and technical assistance, infrastructure, labor, and materials. The communities themselves provide the actual feeding. This promotes a sense of ownership and long-term sustainability.

## **UGANDA**

### **Save the Children**

#### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding for about 5,000 students was scheduled to begin in July 2002. Beneficiaries represent the entire school population of the two poorest sub-counties in the Nakasongola district. A total of 640 metric tons of commodities arrived in April 2002. Twenty school management committees have been established out of 25 schools. The committees will assume an active role in preparing the meals at the school sites and monitoring the effectiveness of the program. The Ugandan Ministry of Education has increased its awareness and commitment to the school feeding program by attending a series of training courses conducted by Save the Children on effective monitoring and evaluation. This Global Food for Education (GFE) program is scheduled to continue through March 2003.

#### **Commodity Management**

All commodities will be directly distributed to schools to provide a lunch for children. Monetization is not a component of this project. The types and quantities of commodities are shown in the following table.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>
Corn-soy blend	160
Rice	150
Cornmeal	150
Soybean oil	60
Non-fat dry milk	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>

Although duty-free clearance had been arranged prior to shipment, there was a miscommunication between the Government of Uganda and Save the Children, and the commodities were delayed when they arrived. After discussions with the government to confirm the duty-free status of the donated commodities targeted for direct distribution, the government released the commodities on May 31, 2002, with the exception of the vegetable oil, which was released on June 27, 2002. Demurrage charges were waived through negotiation with the government.

Save the Children will distribute the commodities from the main Kampala warehouse to the warehouse in Nakasongola on an as-needed monthly basis. From there, the dry foods will be distributed to each school. Stock control systems are in place, and the schools are completing the upgrade or construction of food storage areas. A school storekeeper selected by the school management committee will receive the commodities. Upon receipt, the storekeeper will enter the number of items in the ledger books and complete the forms provided by Save the Children, USA. The storekeeper will issue daily rations to the cooks, who will then prepare the food and distribute it to the children. The number of meals provided each day will be checked against the daily school attendance register.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The goals of Save the Children's GFE program are to provide one meal a day to primary school children in the impoverished Nakasongola District for one full academic year, to maintain attendance at schools, and to enhance educational opportunities, especially for girls. The feeding pilot project is designed to increase enrollment, retention, and academic achievement, as well as to reinvigorate community involvement in primary schools. Save the Children has identified three specific objectives:

- Provide a daily meal to 5,000 students for one full academic year.
- Develop school management committees that will be responsible for drawing up schedules and menus for preparing and serving food on-site.
- Develop small gardens at various school sites.

**Implementation status:** Commodity distribution was scheduled to begin in July 2002 to 25 schools. Beneficiaries represent the entire school-going population of the two poorest

sub-counties in the Nakasongola District. The Nakasongola District is approximately 150 miles outside of Kampala, the capital city. The area is rural, with families involved mainly in fishing and farming. There are 8,959 children enrolled—4,571 girls and 4,388 boys, many of whom suffer from malnutrition.<sup>128</sup> However, since enrollment levels determine government funding, the figures are often inflated.

Save the Children encourages strong community involvement, support, and contribution to schools. Community involvement includes the establishment of school management committees in each school. Save the Children has worked with these committees in both its community-based schools and the formal primary schools in these two sub-counties. In the GFE project, the school management committee is responsible for menu development and time allocation to prepare and serve food at the school site. Save the Children project staff have trained the committees in food storage, preparation, and nutrition, and will deliver the dry foods and monitor the program on a weekly basis.

Meetings have been held in each school with the head teachers and committees, as well as with parents, who are very excited about the project. The schools have established food committees and have identified a cook, storekeeper, and a guard. The schools submitted to Save the Children a list of materials they would need to ensure that the food could be properly stored. For the formal schools, this primarily meant renovation of existing stores, which they were able to do themselves. For the community-based schools, many requested iron sheets and doors to attach to the huts they built. Save the Children has also provided water storage containers to each school.

Meetings have been held at various levels within the district to explain the project and ensure support. The district education officer, the community development officer, chief administrative officer, and other members of the district council have been active partners in implementing the school feeding program.

**Other donor support:** Save the Children will work with community-based organizations, district education offices, the national Ministry of Education and Sports, and education-focused international non-governmental organizations (NGO's) operating in the program area. Given similar strategies for educational support and the collaborative agreements in other sectors, Save the Children will consult closely with the World Food Program to identify common goals, implementation methods, and impacts. Collaboration between all sectors will ensure that the school feeding program activities and training curriculum correspond to national goals and standards, meet the needs of communities and households, and support other intervention in the education sector.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability is a key component of Save the Children's GFE program. The project supplies commodities, training, and basic equipment. Manual labor, materials, and volunteers work to implement the feeding program. This involvement promotes a sense of ownership and long-term sustainability.

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<sup>128</sup> Ministry of Education, Kampala Uganda, April 2002.

Save the Children has started working with local communities to develop small gardens that will serve as sources of food for the schools. Additionally, community leaders have been encouraged to ask families to allow students to bring a vegetable or fruit item to school as often as possible to enhance the diet and strengthen community involvement in the education of their children.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Save the Children. USDA's local monitor and Save the Children staff developed a matrix consisting of all the schools participating in the program. They divided the 27 schools according to two criteria: type of school, either formal or non-formal; and type of community, fishing, farming, or both. A random sample of 20 schools was selected.

Save the Children is conducting a baseline survey and intends to collect data throughout the pilot year. Training is underway for field monitors and food committees on data collection and report completion. Five female community field monitors have been identified and trained to work with the food committees, the children, parents, and teachers on a regular basis. These volunteers will report to the Save the Children monitor and will receive occasional incentives, such as a bicycle and/or tee shirts.

### **Project Impact**

Food distribution was scheduled to begin in July 2002, and baseline data is being collected. Reports indicate that parents are re-enrolling their children in schools where they believe food distribution will take place. Twenty school management committees have been established out of the 25 schools. The committees will take an active role in preparing the meals at the school sites and monitoring the effectiveness of the program. The Ministry of Education has attended a series of training courses conducted by Save the Children on effective monitoring and evaluation.

### **Lessons Learned**

Clearing commodities is not easy in Uganda, presenting a widespread problem impacting all NGO's that import commodities. The government frequently changes requirements without informing the NGO's.

NGOs should ensure that all commodities are shipped in 20-foot containers. Forty-foot containers (used for the vegetable oil) at the port in Nakawa must be transported overland to Kampala. The international freight forwarding company responsible for shipping and clearing the commodities does not bond the Nakawa port area.



## **Next Steps**

- Develop schedules and timelines for program implementation.
- Clear the remaining vegetable oil from the in-land port.
- Transport commodities to Nakasongola District to begin food distribution.
- Continue working with the school management committees to ensure proper preparation of school meals.
- Identify areas at school sites for the small gardens and organize community members.
- Continue training local staff on monitoring and evaluation techniques.
- Meet regularly to determine best practices and go over the lessons learned.

## **GFE in Action**

In Nakasongola, the children were all very excited about the program and expressed a great deal of appreciation. When asked if they would like a meal at school, all of the children said yes. Many children in the government schools go without a meal or water all day long. During soccer games, which take place in the hot sun, the children do not have water. One little girl said, "I'm dizzy and I do not want to play with the other children because I'm hungry." A number of the children were eating plants that grew near their school because there was no other source of food.

The chief administrative officer of Nakasongola District pledged his full support to the school feeding project. "Combining school work with the distance children have to walk on a hungry stomach will greatly affect the learning process, performance, and attendance. This project is long overdue," he said.

A community leader said, "Girls who normally stay at home to cook meals for other siblings who are in school will now be able to get an education, too."

A mother offered this comment on the program: "Because of poor nutrition, our children are sick frequently. We hope that this program will help keep the children healthy and lead to better performance in school."

## **Uganda World Food Program**

### **Summary of Findings**

The project is expected to increase and maintain school attendance for 60,150 beneficiaries. Enrollment rates of both boys and girls have increased by close to 10 percent over the last year. U.S.-contributed commodities, with the exception of corn, are blended together to prepare a morning porridge for the school children. Two meals are

provided to all students attending both day and boarding schools. Additionally, an evening meal is provided to boarders.

In order to promote girl's attendance, a take-home ration of 300 grams of cereal is given to all girls attending day, pre-primary, and primary schools. Also, parents, primarily mothers, who attend adult literacy classes at the schools receive a take-home ration of 300 grams of corn.

The targeted area, Karamoja, is a drought-stricken and chronically food-deficit region in northeastern Uganda. Even in good years, the grain deficit alone average 14,000 tons. Between 100,000 and 180,000, people in Karimojong face severe food shortages annually during the preharvest lean season (May to August), with small children, the elderly, women, and the disabled being the most vulnerable.

Within Uganda, Karamoja has the worst social indicators of any region in the country with literacy, enrollment, combined education and gender-related indices being three to four times below national averages. Only 6.8 percent of the local population age 15 and above have completed primary school. Literacy is 18 percent for men and 6 percent for women. The majority of primary schools offer only the first 3 years of schooling. Young boys are traditionally required to herd cattle, while young girls do domestic chores and agricultural work.

### **Commodity Management**

USDA contributed the following commodities and quantities for direct feeding purposes:

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Corn	3,800	July 2001
	600	September 2001
Corn-soy blend	1,320	September 2001
Corn-soy milk	1,220	September 2001
Vegetable oil	340	July 2001

### **Project Overview**

Food aid serves two main functions: 1) as an incentive for encouraging children and parents to attend formal schools, alternative education programs, vocational training, and adult literacy classes; and 2) nutritional and dietary support for school children and women and men in food-deficit locations.

The morning porridge is cooked and provided to the pupils at 10:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. Cooks are hired and paid by the schools, either through Universal Primary

Education (UPE) program allocated funds and/or through parents' contributions. The World Food Program (WFP) does not make any provisions for payments for the cooks. The take-home rations are distributed every Friday upon completing the week's attendance.

**Goals and objectives:**

- Increase enrollment and consistent attendance of children, especially girls, in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools.
- Improve children's capacity to concentrate and assimilate information by relieving short-term hunger.
- Promote participation of women in the adult literacy programs.
- Encourage adoption of alternative basic education programs for Karimojong children and parents who are unable to attend formal schools.
- Promote girls' education through take-home rations for girls attending day, pre-primary, and primary schools.
- Support the introduction of school farms and gardens.

This program is supporting the following activities:

- 900 pre-primary pupils (400 girls and 500 boys) are receiving food assistance.
- 49,000 primary pupils (20,400 girls and 28,600 boys), consisting of 8,600 boarders and 40,400 day students, are receiving food assistance.
- 3,500 secondary boarding schools students (1,295 girls and 2,205 boys) are receiving food assistance.
- 3,250 parents (2,000 women and 1,250 men) of nomadic children or previously inaccessible under the formal education system are being given food as an incentive to send their children to learning centers.
- 3,500 women are benefiting from food aid by attending an adult literacy program.
- 10 schools are received WFP support on annual basis to nurture school gardens and farms.

Each institution receiving food assistance will be required to establish a tree nursery. Similarly, each student and adult benefiting from this program will be responsible for planting and maintaining one tree per year.

**Project Impact**

Expected measurable outcomes include:

- Continuous attendance (reduction of dropout rate) of some 49,000 primary and 900 pre-primary pupils, including 20,400 female day scholars in primary school for 190 days.
- Alleviation of short-term hunger for these children, with assumed improvements in attention span and cognitive performance.

- Attendance of 3,500 adult women in literacy classes for 190 days.
- Enrollment and sustained attendance of 3,250 nomadic or previously inaccessible children for 260 days.
- Sustained attendance of 3,500 secondary boarding students.
- School gardens established by 60 schools, and the planting and maintenance of 150 trees annually.

**Sustainability:** To promote sustainability, community sensitization campaigns have been undertaken to mobilize parents to freely contribute cereals during times of surplus. In addition, school gardens/nurseries are being established. The program includes a reduction in take-home entitlements of schools in areas where enrollment and retention targets have been attained, while maintaining assistance to those in need.

**Other donor support:** The Ministry of Education and Sports contributes 25 percent of internal transportation, shipping, and handling, as counterpart funding to be paid to WFP. This accounts for \$30 per metric ton of donated commodity. For the U.S. contribution of 7,280 metric tons, this equates to \$218,400.

The Universal Primary Education program was launched to ensure that the disadvantaged have free access to primary education. Under this program, funds are provided to targeted schools to cover the cost of school registration, uniforms, books, teachers, equipment, cooks, and other required school resources that cannot be paid by the parents. Traditionally, Ugandan parents are required to pay for the basic costs of educating their children.

## **Albania**

### **Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere**

#### **Summary of Findings**

Meal delivery began in mid-November 2001 to three pilot schools and expanded to 64 schools by mid-March 2002. As of April of 2002, 16,023 students were eating a school meal every school day. The Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) reported surges in attendance as regular non-attendees began coming to class, with increases of up to 17 percent. CARE also reported an increase in the number of girls relative to boys who are coming to classes. Attendance for girls increased 5.6 percent, compared with a 5.3-percent increase for boys. There were also marked declines in absenteeism across all the schools. The program is scheduled through February 2003, with an extension to run until June 2003.

#### **Country Overview**

The poorest low-income country in Europe, Albania is making the difficult transition to a more open-market economy.<sup>129</sup> It is ranked 85<sup>th</sup> of 162 countries according to United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index.<sup>130</sup> In the spring and summer of 1999, with an apparently stable economy and government, 465,000 Kosovar refugees sought shelter in Albania during the war in Kosovo. Hosting this large refugee community continues to place a considerable burden on Albania's already weak infrastructure and social institutions.<sup>131</sup>

Forty-six percent of the Albanian population lives on an income below the poverty line.<sup>132</sup> According to the Albanian Poverty Reduction Strategy, poverty is found primarily in rural areas. Within that context, the poorest prefectures are Kukes, Lac, Gramsh, Bulqize, Diber, Librazhd, and Puke. Indeed, four out of five poor people live in rural areas. Of those who are poor, more than one-third have only an elementary education, and the poverty expectancy for uneducated heads of household is 37 percent in rural areas.<sup>133</sup>

Regarding gender parity in education, the Government of Albania reports that there are no tangible differences between boys and girls, but there are significant differences in dropout rates between urban and rural areas. While 87 percent of urban children who enroll in first grade will finish primary school, that figure is only 77 percent in rural

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<sup>129</sup> Internal draft "Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) July 2002-December 2003" document, WFP/Albania.

<sup>130</sup> "Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy." Government of Albania. November 2001.

<sup>131</sup> USAID Country Profile. [www.usaid.gov/regions/europe](http://www.usaid.gov/regions/europe).

<sup>132</sup> Op cit. Government of Albania.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

areas. The primary causes of school dropout are different for different levels: For preschool, it is the closure of the public institutions; for compulsory school, economic reasons (35 percent) and the low quality of education (20 percent) predominate. Twelve percent of the population over 15 years of age is illiterate.<sup>134</sup>

Thirty-two percent of children in Albania suffer moderate to severe stunting due to inadequate nutrition, and another 11 percent suffer chronically from moderate to severe wasting.<sup>135</sup> Only 45 percent of the population has access to potable water in their homes.<sup>136</sup> Less than half of households use iodized salt, which has led to marked levels of iodine deficiency.<sup>137</sup>

The experience of the World Food Program (WFP) has shown that providing food in school both decreases hunger and increases school attendance.<sup>138</sup> Research confirms that education is one of the most effective investments to improving economies and enabling people to improve their lives. For example, a United Nations' study showed that in countries with an adult literacy rate of about 40 percent, GNP per capita averaged \$210; in those countries with at least an 80-percent literacy rate, GNP per capita was \$1,000 and above. Other studies show that girls who go to school marry later and have an average of 50 percent fewer children. Research also indicates that women's education contributes to the reduction of child malnutrition.<sup>139</sup> Indeed, in Albania, children of mothers with less than a secondary school education are more likely to be underweight and underdeveloped than children of mothers with secondary school or higher educational levels.<sup>140</sup>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Global Food for Education (GFE) program is designed to mitigate certain economic reasons for low attendance, relieve hunger-based hindrances to classroom learning, and improve the educational environment for students and teachers. CARE decided to focus GFE interventions in the poorest prefecture in the country. The project was to feed 15,434 children in 45 selected schools in Kukes and repair 30 schools damaged during 10 years of social unrest in the area.

### **Commodity Management**

The requested commodity was 18,500 metric tons of wheat. The wheat was to be monetized, with the proceeds from the sales used to implement the project's multiple components designed not only to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, but also to enhance the learning environment.<sup>141</sup> CARE received the wheat in two shipments in November and December 2001. Both shipments were for monetization, which

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> World Food Program School Feeding Survey results. [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

<sup>136</sup> Op cit. Government of Albania.

<sup>137</sup> Op cit. WFP/Albania.

<sup>138</sup> Op cit. WFP School Feeding Survey Results.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Op cit. Government of Albania.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

proceeded after a delay of several months. The delay caused the project's startup to occur well into the school year. However, losses, damages, and taxes were transferred contractually to the buyers so that CARE did not sustain any losses.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CARE established multiple goals and objectives for the GFE project. In order to meet the overall goals of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance (especially for girls), CARE proposed the following objectives:

- Purchase food at local markets and implement a direct school feeding program for 15,434 children in 45 selected schools in northern Albania.
- Repair and rehabilitate 30 schools in the region, which have substantial enrollment levels.
- Promote greater involvement of communities and parent-teacher associations (PTA's) in educational and extra-curricular activities that improve the quality of education and benefit the school children.

**Implementation status:** Meal delivery began in mid-November 2001 in some schools after a delay from the intended start scheduled for September 2001. The delay was due to late arrival and monetization of the commodities. The meal program will continue through the summer months. The 12-month project was scheduled to end in February 2003, but it has been extended until June 2003 in order to complete the school year. During the project startup in September and October, prior to the completion of monetization, CARE identified target schools using the following criteria: Access to the school by road for food delivery and monitoring of activity; number of students enrolled; and approval from the District Board of Education Directors.

Based on these criteria, three schools were selected as a pilot to begin the feeding in November 2001. The project was then expanded to 45 schools by the end of December, 51 by the end of January 2002, 55 by the end of February, and then to 64 schools by mid-March 2002. Forty-two of the schools are in Kukes, 20 are in Has, and two are in Tropoje. As of April 30, 2002, 16,023 students had received a mid-morning meal during recess every school day. The feeding is focused on kindergarten and grades one through eight. A few older students who study in the same building receive meals as well. More than 1,000 teachers also receive the mid-morning meal.

The feeding is handled by local commercial food vendors, who were selected through a competitive bid process. However, in two isolated rural communities in which no acceptable local vendor was found, the parents were mobilized and receive direct payment to prepare meals at home that the children bring every day.<sup>142</sup>

CARE based the school menus on the results of a school questionnaire among 574 students. With additional input from parents, local vendors, and teachers, the menu

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<sup>142</sup> CARE GFE Project Status Report May 15, 2002. Tirana, Albania.

selected was bread (100 grams), cheese (30 grams), meatball (50 grams) or salami (25 grams), one hard-boiled egg, one seasonal fruit, and a small juice for the kindergarten students. Most children eat the entire meal at school; however, for those who walk up to seven kilometers each way, many often save part of the meal for the walk home.<sup>143</sup>

CARE provides small grants to PTA's to finance school and educational improvements. This encourages PTA initiatives to organize school-based community activities, which provide a venue for informal contact between parents and teachers. Examples of funded projects include regional excursions for children from isolated villages, organization of intramural sports programs, cleaning of school surroundings, and environmental awareness and protection programs. CARE has also used these occasions to distribute mine awareness posters produced by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Albanian Mine Awareness Foundation.

CARE will begin its infrastructure repair work in May 2002 and continue through the school holiday months of June-August. GFE funds will be utilized to improve 30 schools that serve 12,000 students. CARE will provide desks for 1,010 students in 20 schools in Puke District and repair 21 schools in Has, Kukes, and Tropoje Districts. Local construction companies competed in a limited tender, and the bids were opened in the Tirana office of CARE in late April. More than 60 local firms competed.

During the first four months of actual GFE school feeding, 16,023 students received daily school lunches in 43 schools in Kukes, 19 schools in Has, and two schools in Tropoje Districts. Furthermore, during the most severe winter in northern Albania since the 1970's, GFE food suppliers continued to provide meals to students in almost all rural schools in the area. "While the Albanian government and Red Cross airlifted emergency food supplies to stranded villagers by helicopter, the CARE USDA GFE school feeding activities supported household food security by providing one meal every day for participating pupils in these areas."<sup>144</sup>

**Other donor support:** CARE distributes mine awareness posters produced by UNICEF, UNDP, and the Albanian Mine Awareness Foundation. Teachers, school officials, and parents contribute labor and logistical support at the school sites.

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue and will continue to be analyzed. In its focus on improving education in Albania, the government proposes to increase attendance through eighth grade using a variety of strategies including providing scholarships, textbooks, and food.<sup>145</sup> The PTA's facilitated by CARE represent sustainable infrastructure enhancements that will help resolve local school needs into the future. Other aspects of this program are sustainable beyond GFE. These include parent and teacher training, community empowerment, infrastructure developments, and community support for education.

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Executive Report, GFE General Activity Report, October 2001-March 2002. CARE/Kukes.

<sup>145</sup> Op cit. Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy.



**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and CARE will be carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities during the project. CARE has been carrying out extensive monitoring of its GFE project, developing a database to track attendance when official records proved less than satisfactory. It sends monitors to villages to examine the implementation of GFE. Even during the harshest winter months, with few exceptions, CARE reported that its monitors were able to visit schools and observe the GFE project. USDA has hired a local monitor to carry out the survey of 20 sample schools and the local monitoring for USDA.

CARE and the USDA monitor will coordinate their monitoring and evaluation efforts to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. As a group, the personnel will discuss factors that could impact a GFE project's success and reach consensus on the factors to use in the development of a sample matrix. The factors identified would contribute significantly to success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by Catholic Relief Services.

A matrix will be developed of all CARE schools. Schools will then be chosen from each cell on a random basis to arrive at the 20 sample schools. CARE has gathered baseline data on enrollment and attendance in all of its GFE kindergartens. The USDA monitor will use a questionnaire to obtain preliminary baseline data before initiating focus groups of parents for qualitative data collection.

### **Project Impact**

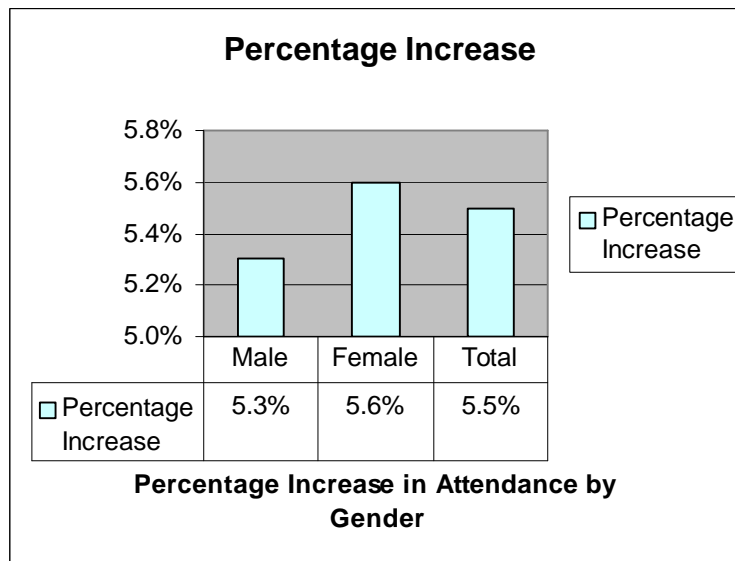
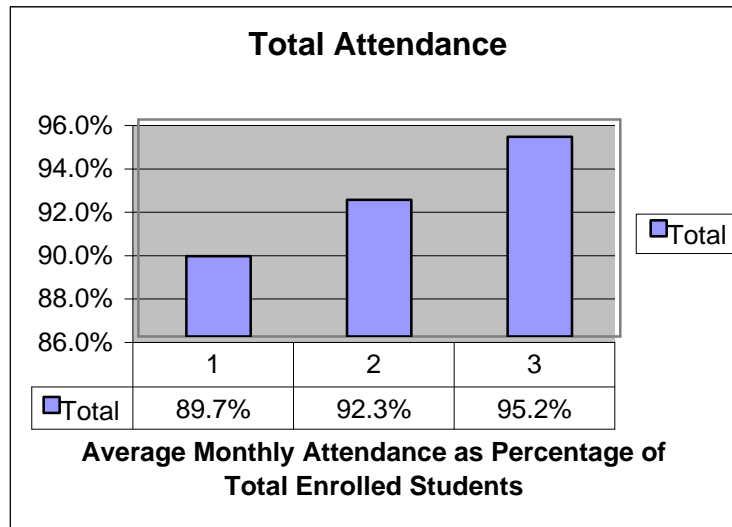
**Enrollment:** CARE decided to develop its own statistical database to track enrollment and attendance figures. Official enrollment statistics were not useful for the purposes of GFE monitoring because once a student is enrolled, the child is maintained on the official records of the original school even if the child later drops out or transfers to another school. There is not yet anything statistically significant to report.<sup>146</sup>

**Attendance:** In the first four months of feeding, CARE has seen four kinds of increases attributable to the GFE project. The first was an attendance surge, which came after the introduction of the daily lunches in the schools when a number of regular non-attendees began coming to class. For example, attendance increased by 12.8 percent in the border school of Orgjost, and a striking 17 percent in the predominately Slavic-speaking rural village of Brekije. The second kind of increase was identified after CARE had constructed its database of sample schools and reflected a broader pattern of steadily increasing attendance. This was particularly noticeable in rural villages like Mamez, which registered a 17.3-percent overall increase. A third kind of increase attributable to GFE is the impressive increase in younger pupils in kindergartens served by GFE. The average attendance increase was 10.1 percent, more than twice the increase typical for the other primary school grades.

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<sup>146</sup> CARE/Albania Memorandum to GFE Regional Coordinator, June 2002.

Lastly, GFE registered an increase in the number of girls relative to boys who are coming to classes during GFE feeding. Prior to GFE, there was a noticeable (1.5 percent) difference in the number of boys who went to school compared with the number of girls. After feeding began, the number of girls attending school increased by 5.6 percent, compared with a 5.3-percent increase for boys.<sup>147</sup> The charts below are from CARE Albania's Statistical Annex to the June 2002 Executive Summary report.



**Performance:** Evaluating the impact of GFE on student performance would be premature after only four months of school feeding.

<sup>147</sup> CARE/Albania General Activity Report Executive Summary, February 15 through June 15, 2002.

**Special emphasis on girls:** Prior to the GFE project, there was a notable difference in attendance between girls and boys, with girls having a higher absentee rate. During the initial four months of the feeding program, attendance increases were higher for girls relative to boys, although girls continue to miss more school than boys overall.

**Other achievements:** GFE has helped foster a positive image for the United States in Albania. During a field visit to GFE schools, the U.S. ambassador used the occasion to discuss other initiatives, including bringing back the Peace Corps. He felt that GFE was a good example of how Albania was making the kind of progress that allowed development projects to have an impact.<sup>148</sup>

CARE Kukes developed a database and began tracking enrollment and attendance data on sample schools that it collected through CARE monitors. CARE reported a surge in attendance in the first 6 months after the school feeding program was introduced. That spike was followed by general declines in absences over the next months of feeding in all 64 schools. In the Kukes district, for example, Borje school averaged an 8.6-percent absentee rate for November, 1.5 percent for January, and 0.8 percent in February.<sup>149</sup> In Tropoje District, student absenteeism at one school dropped from 11.5 percent in December to 5.5 percent in January, 5 percent in February, and 4.7 percent in March.<sup>150</sup>

CARE has begun its work on school infrastructure repair and improvement. In Puke, CARE delivered 258 student desks to the Board of Education in May, and another delivery was scheduled for June. CARE also awarded 15 contracts to rehabilitate 22 schools in Has, Tropoje, and Kukes. While there were minor difficulties with the construction of some of the sanitation facilities and some issues as to how the schools should be connected to the Kukes public water systems, all problems were resolved and three rehabilitation projects were completed by June 2002.<sup>151</sup>

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

- There has been such a response to the GFE program that, in many schools, attendance is outpacing the infrastructure's capacity to respond. This is particularly true in the case of the kindergartens, where attendance in individual classrooms has almost doubled, causing a shortage of desks, books, and materials for the students.<sup>152</sup>

#### ***Building Civil Society***

An unexpected outcome of the GFE focus on education is the tool it gives CARE to work with PTA's on issues of general citizen interest and responsibility like trash management and litter pickup at the schools. –Care/Albania GFE Field Director

<sup>148</sup> Op cit. CARE Executive Summary

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

- In an area of high unemployment, the purchase of locally produced food from local vendors has generated paid employment in food processing and additional income for local farmers and bakers.
- Because of the need for financial services to pay the local vendors and contractors, the one bank in the area has developed new financial services, benefiting other banking customers as well.

### **Lessons Learned**

Any program that seeks to increase enrollment and attendance must ensure that the needs for additional classroom space, desks, staff, and educational materials are addressed. Increases in attendance will require additional infrastructure to support the increased enrollment and attendance. In the first year of GFE CARE project in Albania, the increased number of children attending school has led to an increase in the demand for kindergarten education beyond the capacity of the district schools to meet. Because there are not enough teachers and classroom space, some schools can accommodate only about 50 percent of the children wishing to attend kindergarten.<sup>153</sup>

Another lesson learned is that the GFE food distribution system produces plastic bags that litter the hillsides of Albania.<sup>154</sup> CARE intends to introduce trash management, hygiene, and litter pickup through the PTA's as part of its civic education and work in building civil society.

### **Best Practices**

- CARE helped strengthen PTA's at 60 of its 64 schools. The PTA's are instrumental in implementing the GFE program, promoting educational enhancement of the school facilities and providing feedback to CARE and USDA on ways to improve program impact.
- The small grants awarded to the PTA's by CARE to improve the educational environment and strengthen parental involvement with the schools are central to the GFE goal of improving educational performance.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Op cit. CARE/Albania Memorandum. June 2002.

## **Albania**

### **Catholic Relief Services**

#### **Summary of Findings**

The first distribution of commodities to schools began in April 2002 to supplement existing feeding programs. In the first month, the program reached 32 schools with a combined enrollment of 3,915 children. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) also awarded small grants to parent councils to repair and expand school facilities and purchase education materials. Because feeding began in April 2002, there are few documented impacts for the project, although preliminary information indicates an increase in attendance. The program is scheduled to operate until September 2003.

The Global Food for Education Program (GFE) mitigates certain economic reasons for low attendance and relieves hunger-based hindrances to classroom learning. CRS decided to build on its previously successful project with parent-school partnerships and to focus GFE interventions on kindergartens in five regions where CRS was already working, including the poorest region in the country.

#### **Commodity Management**

The agreement between CRS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) was signed on July 27, 2001. CRS requested 740 metric tons of the following commodities: wheat flour, 260 tons; non-fat dry milk, 340 tons; rice, 90 tons; and vegetable oil, 50 tons.

CRS received a total of 707.19 tons of commodities. The loss occurred between the U.S. port and receipt in Albania. CRS assumes that the majority of the loss occurred during overland shipping from Greece, but it cannot verify that because there was no shipping agency representation at the Albanian border, nor were there any personnel to make visual inspections at the various ports along the way from the United States. There were significant delays in the customs clearance process in Durres, Albania, and it took more than three and one-half months to clear all of the commodities.<sup>155</sup> This delay resulted in a late start for the GFE program in Albania, meaning that CRS will have to feed during parts of two school years. However, USDA has granted an extension and sufficient commodities to complete the feeding in the additional months of April-September 2003.

The first distribution of commodities to schools began in April 2002 to supplement existing feeding programs. In the first month, the program reached 32 schools with a combined enrollment of 3,915 children in the regions of Kukes, Lezhe, Tirana, Durres, Fier, and Elbasan.

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<sup>155</sup> Commodity Logistics Information Report, October 2001-March 2002. CRS/Albania.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** CRS and its implementing partners established multiple goals and objectives for their GFE project. They proposed to carry out the following objectives to meet the overall goals of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls:

- Distribute commodities to 40 kindergartens to augment the menu for the direct feeding of 4,000 students.
- Develop and/or strengthen parent-school partnerships to promote parental involvement in early childhood education.
- Repair/improve educational infrastructure including kitchens, playgrounds, and other projects through provision of small grants to kindergarten parent councils for school enhancement projects.
- Improve nutritional quality of kindergarten meals.

**Implementation status:** Meal delivery was delayed from September 2001 until April 2002 due to difficulties with customs and late arrival of the commodities. The meal program will continue through the entire 2002/2003 school year. During the wait for the commodities to arrive, CRS identified target kindergartens using the following criteria:

- Geographic or social connections with primary schools that were part of the existing CRS program.
- Need for food/education parent-school partnership programming.
- Inclusion on a list of needy kindergartens obtained from local education directories in each region.
- Existing kitchens.
- Access to nutritionists.
- Public rather than private status.

Based on these criteria, 33 kindergartens were chosen. CRS worked with the parents in the schools to set up parent councils, and 23 schools were chosen to participate in the parent-school partnership program. CRS held training sessions with the parents and teachers on such topics as how to plan and carry out an effective meeting and how to prepare a project proposal. Future training will include fund raising. Training has been provided in early childhood development for parents and teachers, and future topics include school maintenance and parental involvement in education and parenting skills.

CRS has also developed a small grant program for mini-projects. The mini-projects are solicited and then managed by the parent councils. Some mini-projects have already been carried out, including the purchase of playground equipment, new school materials, child-sized furniture for classrooms, kitchen supplies, small school reconstruction/renovation projects, and the setup of kindergarten libraries.

Baseline data gathered by CRS indicates that it will be servicing 3,915 children enrolled in the 32 GFE kindergartens. This number of child beneficiaries is expected to increase to

4,000 or more in September 2002 with the beginning of the new school year and the opening of the 33<sup>rd</sup> kindergarten now under reconstruction.

During the first month of GFE meal distribution, two issues arose that will need immediate attention from CRS. First, school meals are not free in Albania, so children whose parents cannot afford to pay for lunch do not benefit from the government program or from the GFE project. This means that GFE may not reach those children who need it most and for whom the incentive of a school meal would likely contribute to increased enrollment and attendance.

The other issue concerns differing taste preferences. The non-fat dry milk and vegetable oil do not appeal to Albanian palates. Sufficient fresh milk is available, and the cooking/baking practices are not suited to the use of non-fat dry milk. Potable water is not always available, which poses an additional problem when reconstituting non-fat dry milk. To resolve this issue, CRS is planning to barter the non-fat dry milk to dairies in exchange for cheese and other fresh dairy products. The dairies will combine the non-fat dry milk with fat to make frozen desserts for commercial sale.

The vegetable oil has a natural aroma and taste that are unpleasant to local preferences. The cooking properties are also different from local oils that are traditionally used, such as olive and sunflower oils. Although this led to some complaints in the beginning, recent reports show that children are getting used to the odor and taste of the oil, and this problem has been overcome in most cases.

**Other donor support:** The Albanian Red Cross donated blankets, kitchen sets, and soap. Teachers, school officials, and parents contribute labor and logistical support at the school sites.

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue to be analyzed as the project becomes fully implemented. In its focus on improving education in Albania, the Government of Albania proposes to increase attendance through eighth grade using a variety of strategies including scholarships, textbooks, and "free food."<sup>156</sup> The efforts of parent councils facilitated by CRS represent sustainable infrastructure enhancements that will help resolve local school needs into the future. There are other aspects of this program that are sustainable beyond GFE. These include the parent and teacher training, community empowerment, infrastructure developments, and community support for education. Making the school meal accessible to the poorest children who cannot afford to pay for it should be addressed by any future school feeding program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and CRS will be carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities during the project. USDA has hired a local monitor to survey 20 sample schools and perform local monitoring. CRS and the USDA monitor will coordinate their monitoring and evaluation efforts to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. As a group, the personnel will discuss factors that could affect a

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<sup>156</sup> Op cit. Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

GFE project's success and reach consensus on the factors used to develop a sample matrix. These identified factors would contribute significantly to the success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by CRS.

A matrix will be developed for all CRS schools. Twenty schools will be chosen at random from each cell. CRS has gathered baseline data on enrollment and attendance in all of its GFE kindergartens. The USDA monitor will use a questionnaire to obtain preliminary baseline data before initiating focus groups of parents for qualitative data collection.

### **Project Impact**

Because the feeding began in April 2002, there are few documented impacts for the project. However, preliminary information indicates an increase in attendance. The parent councils at many schools have completed needs assessments and launched successful activities to improve kindergarten facilities such as playgrounds, kitchen facilities, and specific enhancements to the learning environment. Parent-teacher bonds are being strengthened as reflected in greater parental involvement.<sup>157</sup>

The reaction to the vegetable oil and the non-fat dry milk was unanticipated and will be dealt with by CRS Albania to minimize any adverse impact on the project.

### **Lessons Learned**

Perhaps the neediest children targeted by the program are being missed. The CRS GFE program is intended to enhance the nutritional quality of the menu by the purchase of additional food items, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. As a result, meal portions are bigger and more nutritionally balanced, and more meals and snacks are now provided throughout the day than was possible before GFE. However, the CRS GFE program may not reach some of the neediest children. The Government of Albania does not have a free-meal program, and some families cannot afford to participate. There may also be other reasons that children do not participate in the program, and more research is needed as to the causes of nonparticipation.<sup>158</sup>

Teachers benefit from the food, too. Teachers are the keystones in the education process. The teachers often have economic and nutritional stresses similar to those of the students. Furthermore, the GFE program adds to the teachers' workloads. Opening the meal program to the teachers would enhance educational effectiveness, as well as extend good will in appreciation for the new tasks that GFE imposes on them, such as recordkeeping and reporting.

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<sup>157</sup> "GFE Achievements in Albania: Notes from the Field," CRS/Albania.

<sup>158</sup> CRS/Albania notes that not all of the neediest are excluded and the reasons are complex as to why some children do not participate in the school lunch program.



People from different geographical areas often have different tastes. The non-fat dry milk and the vegetable oil are not popular with the Albanian palate. Although the rejection problems seem to be decreasing with time, CRS will continue to monitor the situation to determine if further adjustments have to be made to accommodate these differences.

As attendance increases in response to the GFE program, infrastructure can be stretched beyond its limits. Any program that seeks to increase enrollment and attendance must ensure that the needs for additional classroom space, desks, staff, and educational materials are addressed as well.

### **Best Practices**

CRS helped strengthen parent councils in 23 schools. The parent councils are instrumental in implementing the GFE program, promoting educational enhancement of the kindergarten facilities, and providing feedback to USDA on ways to improve the impact of the program.

The small grants awarded to the parent councils by CRS to repair and expand school facilities and purchase education materials are central to the GFE goal of improving educational performance.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps for CRS should include working with the Albanian Government to discover ways to extend the school meal program to those unable to participate because of economic barriers. USDA's next step will be to complete the data collection process to make a final assessment of the GFE project's impact on attendance and enrollment.

### **GFE in Action**

In the kindergarten of Rreshen in the region of Lezhe, people were very excited about the donated food from CRS. The Mayor of Rreshen was the first to knock on CRS' door to express interest in participating in the GFE program for Rreshen's only kindergarten. A meeting of representatives from CRS, the municipality of Rreshen, the community, and kindergarten teachers and administrators was organized to discuss and exchange ideas about how to manage the food for the benefit of the children. Everyone thanked CRS for giving the children of Rreshen the opportunity to enjoy a more nutritious diet. When the food arrived in the kindergarten, everyone was pleased and grateful. The cook is always busy preparing new and improved meals. Parents have the opportunity to discuss the next day's meal with the teachers and the cook when they come to pick up their children.

When the CRS staff began to work with kindergartens, they realized that teachers and parents had very little information about parental involvement in education. At the same

time, teachers and parents were requesting training in early childhood development. CRS then decided to offer this training. After the parents and teachers participated in the training, things started to change in the kindergartens. Teachers approached their work with more energy and new ideas, and parents said they felt more important in the life of the kindergarten. Parents and teachers felt more united in a common cause of improving their children's school experience. In the Kavaje kindergarten (prefecture of Tirana), parents contributed toward building a playground for their youngsters. In kindergarten No.1 in Librazhd (in the region of Elbasan), parents contributed their time to assist the teacher during the school day. After the training was held, parents and teachers immediately started to make changes in the classroom environment, and teachers began using new teaching practices, based on child-centered methodology.

## **Albania**

### **Mercy USA for Aid and Development**

#### **Summary of Findings**

Mercy USA for Aid and Development (MUSA) has not begun direct feeding because the commodities have not arrived. Feeding is anticipated to begin in September 2002. MUSA has begun preparation, including assessment and enrollment of participating schools, contracting, hiring staff, and developing the feeding mechanisms and logistics for the food delivery. The Global Food for Education Program (GFE) monitor will begin to collect baseline data, including other donor support information, once the school selection has been finalized and the sample schools chosen. The program is scheduled to begin in September 2002 and end in March 2003.

MUSA decided to focus its GFE in the northern and central regions of the country because that is the area of greatest poverty and unemployment, including some of the poorest prefectures in the country, such as Kukes, Diber, Lezhe, and Elbasan.

#### **Commodity Management**

The requested commodities were: wheat flour, 5,000 metric tons; rice, 850 tons; and corn oil, 150 tons.

MUSA originally requested 6,000 tons to be delivered in January and February 2002. As of May 14, 2002, MUSA had not received commodities or funds, although the commodities were expected to begin arriving in mid-May. However, with school ending in mid-June, actual feeding will not begin until the start of the new school year in September 2002, continuing until June 2003. When the feeding begins, a portion of the commodities will be bartered for local foods, such as cheese, to enhance the nutrition. MUSA expects that its feeding program will reach a combined enrollment of 30,000

children in five regions (Lezha, Shkodra, Tirana, Elbasan, and Berat) in the 12 targeted districts of Kukes, Lezhe, Kurbin, Rreshen, Puke, Malesia Madhe, Vau Dejes, Tirana, Berat, Gramsh, Librazhd, and Elbasan.

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** To meet the overall goals for the GFE project of increasing enrollment, attendance, and performance, especially for girls, MUSA proposed to feed 30,000 students in the 12 districts and meet the following targets:

- Increase attendance from 41.1 percent to 60 percent.
- Reduce the dropout rate for girls from 4 percent to 2 percent.
- Increase the academic passing rate from 93.5 percent to 96.0 percent.

**Implementation status:** MUSA has not begun direct feeding because the commodities have not arrived. It has begun preparation, including assessment and enrollment of participating schools, contracting, hiring staff, making arrangements for bartering, and developing the feeding mechanisms and logistics for the food delivery.<sup>159</sup>

**Other donor support:** The GFE monitor will begin to collect baseline data, which will include other donor support information, once the school selection has been finalized and the sample schools chosen.

**Sustainability:** This is a serious issue to be analyzed as the project becomes fully implemented. In its focus on improving education, the Government of Albania proposes to increase attendance through eighth grade using a variety of strategies including scholarships, textbooks, and food.<sup>160</sup>

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and MUSA will be carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities during the project. USDA has hired a local monitor to collect baseline data on the sample schools and conduct the local monitoring for USDA. MUSA staff and the USDA monitor will coordinate their monitoring and evaluation efforts to avoid redundancies while ensuring independence of action. As a group, the personnel will discuss the factors that could impact a GFE project's success and reach consensus on the factors used to develop a sample matrix. These identified factors would contribute significantly to success or failure of any educational effort. They would also impact the administration and supervision of the project by MUSA.

A matrix will be developed for all MUSA schools. Twenty sample schools will be chosen at random from each cell of the matrix. The USDA monitor will use a questionnaire to obtain preliminary baseline data before initiating focus groups of parents for qualitative data collection.

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<sup>159</sup> MUSA Project Status Report May 2002.

<sup>160</sup> Op cit. Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps for MUSA include finalizing the targeted schools, working with the USDA monitor to develop the school sample and coordinate monitoring/evaluation, and carrying out all of the tasks associated with the project's implementation. Feeding begins September 2002.

## **Bosnia and Herzegovina Catholic Relief Services**

### **Summary of Findings**

Five million meals have been served to 34,000 students in 106 schools from October 2001 through June 2002. Preliminary information from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) indicates an increase in attendance of approximately 10 percent, and an increase of about 45 percent in the number of students who attend at least a portion of the school day. The parent-school councils launched successful activities to improve school facilities through the small grants program. Economic benefits were spawned by 16 Global Food for Education Program (GFE) contracts with local bakeries that provided the meals. These contracts allowed the bakeries to hire additional employees and in some cases expand the range of products they provided to local communities. With the project extension, the feeding program and other activities will continue from September 2002 through June 2003.

### **Country Overview**

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country in southeast Europe with approximately three million inhabitants. Formerly part of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, the country experienced four brutal years of war between 1992-95 that caused severe destruction of the infrastructure, economy, and human lives. Although the war ended in November 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord, the country is still crippled economically, politically, and socially. Huge numbers of people displaced by the war are returning to their devastated communities without necessary resources and with a general lack of social services. Unemployment was approximately 40 percent in 1999.<sup>161</sup>

Within this context, education is one of the areas of most promise in terms of solving problems, but it is also the area where the political and social struggles are most evident. Schools must not only cope with war-related tensions and economic stagnation, but they struggle to survive within an education system based both on a centralized social past and a decentralized post-war bureaucracy that can no longer adequately meet their needs. There is currently no effective Ministry of Education at the country level, while parallel ethnic structures in some regions (e.g., Bosniak and Croat) are making the situation even more complicated. The net result is that quality education and the future human capital of the country is compromised.

The following is a sketch of the current education system. The country is divided into two entities: the Federation, where the majority of the population is Muslim and Croat; and the Republika Srpska (RS), whose population consists mostly of Serbs. The region called Herzegovina is contiguous to Croatia and traditionally has been settled by an

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<sup>161</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bk.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bk.html)

ethnic Croat majority. The Federation and the RS have separate Ministries of Education that rarely communicate. The RS maintains a highly centralized system inherited from Yugoslavia. The Federation is broken into 10 cantons, and most of the decisionmaking pertaining to educational issues resides at this level. Two cantons of the Federation have parallel structures, Bosniak and Croat, that implement two separate ethnically based school policies and curricula.

Eight years of primary education are mandatory. Parents are held legally accountable for sending their children to school. Children are usually enrolled in the primary school closest to their homes. In rural areas, a walk of six miles over mountainous terrain may sometimes be necessary. Secondary education is optional, but almost 90 percent of teenagers complete this level. The secondary school course of study lasts three to four years, depending on the area of specialization. The teachers rarely receive their salaries, and in general are not satisfied with their working conditions because they lack books and equipment.<sup>162</sup> Given the socialist past of Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is no historic active involvement of the wider community in school activities and, ironically, the legacy of the recent war destroyed many schools and community relationships at the moment when their involvement is critical to developing the country.

Within this environment, CRS developed a proposal and signed a GFE agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The CRS program is designed to mitigate economic reasons for low attendance and relieve hunger-based hindrances to classroom learning, as well as to promote parent/community involvement in education. CRS began in October 2001 after identifying 106 schools out of 222 for which a thorough assessment was conducted.

### **Commodity Management**

CRS received 24,630 metric tons of hard red winter wheat. A total of 22,000 tons was monetized, and the remainder was provided to local bakeries to prepare bread for school sandwiches and nutritional pastries. The proceeds from monetization were used to purchase ingredients, such as meat and cheese, from local sources for the sandwiches and pastries. The caloric value of each meal is 450 calories. Additionally, each meal provides 12 grams of protein, 70 grams of carbohydrates, and 15 grams of fat (27 percent of caloric intake).

### **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The primary goals are to increase rates of attendance and rates of enrollment, but there are a number of additional objectives.

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<sup>162</sup> CRS/Bosnia-Herzegovina GFE Preliminary Monitoring Report, March 2002.

- Strengthen community infrastructure for addressing school improvements through the formation of parent-school councils.
- Facilitate school repairs, improvements in the learning environment, and upgrades of teaching equipment and materials.
- Increase the number of lunches served to vulnerable school children, particularly children of returned refugee families. Provide meals to a minimum of 30,000 students in at least 100 primary schools.
- Provide highly nutritional lunches in school for returned refugee students and other vulnerable students.
- Develop and strengthen school lunch parent-teacher contact groups, which monitor distribution of school lunches.
- Provide small school lunch grants to participant schools to improve the ability of parent-teacher contact groups to provide meals and improve the general learning environment.
- Provide school improvement grants to parent-school councils to improve the learning environment in accordance with needs identified by parent-school councils.
- Develop parent-school councils in schools, targeting schools with a high population of returned refugees.
- Strengthen parent-school councils by providing training in topics such as the role of the family in raising children, conflict resolution, conducting needs assessments and prioritization of needs, designing project proposals, and fund raising.

**Implementation status:** Meal service began in October 2001 and has continued through the school year ending June 2002. An average of more than 34,000 students were provided meals in 106 schools. More than 5 million meals were provided during the 2001-2002 school year.

Small grants for the improvement of school facilities were provided to both parent-school councils (\$12,000 limit) and the contact groups (\$2,000) through a competitive proposal process. Projects included library improvement, purchase of teaching equipment, improvement of school and recreation facilities, and landscaping to improve the educational environment. Parents and teachers regularly made in-kind contributions of labor and materials amounting to a minimum of 25 percent of the value of each small project.

In order to provide students with a high quality, nutritious lunch, CRS contacted the Office of School Nutrition at the Institute for Public Health for information on types of student lunches. Based on the findings and CRS resources, 15 different menus were created to meet both nutritional requirements and the expectations of students. CRS provided these suggested menus to potential bakeries during the tender organized for school lunch production. The ability of a bakery to cost-efficiently produce the range of menu items was one of the criteria used in the selection of the contractors. After more than six months of distribution experience, CRS reduced the menus from 15 to between five and 10, allowing the bakeries and the schools to choose the appropriate menus for the students in the program.

Regardless of the area or producer, the most frequent meals produced each week include sandwiches with cheese or salami, or chocolate or doughnuts.

The program targets more than 34,122 of the most vulnerable students using the following criteria:

- Students without one or both parents.
- Students with both parents unemployed.
- Students with special needs.
- Student returnees from refugee families.
- Students who travel more than four kilometers from home to school.

To facilitate proper implementation and foster community ownership, this project has also supported the establishment of a grassroots mechanism to ensure distribution oversight, provide regular updates of beneficiary lists, and ensure targeting of the most needy. Two mechanisms were used at the community level: contact groups and parent-school councils. Contact groups consisting of parents and teachers were formed in each of the participating 106 schools. Each group has a minimum of two teachers and two parents who, in addition to the previously mentioned activities, also work on identifying and addressing school needs with limited funds. In addition, 16 parent-school councils were formed from the more developed groups of parents and teachers who, after assessment, were determined to have the skills to contribute to the longer term, broader interests of the school. Training in small project design and management was provided for the 16 new parent-school councils.

**Other donor support:** Teachers, school officials, and parents contribute labor and logistical support at the school sites.

**Sustainability:** Parent-school councils and contact groups facilitated by CRS represent sustainable infrastructure enhancements that will be positioned to help resolve local school needs in the future.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both USDA and CRS are monitoring and evaluating this project. CRS has developed a number of monitoring and evaluation tools to collect data, including attendance forms, contact group quality forms, monitors' reports (field staff report monthly), distribution control forms, individual beneficiary reports, and waybill forms to track the transport and delivery of flour to bakeries.

USDA identified a local monitor working through a non-governmental organization who is collecting baseline data on 20 schools using a standard USDA GFE questionnaire. Additionally, stakeholders at the 20 sample schools plus an additional 30 schools are being visited to collect information on implementation and impact based on feedback from teachers, parents, students, and community members.

The following table summarizes the results of the GFE program in Bosnia-Herzegovina as of March 31, 2002.



No.	Indicator	Target (as described in original proposal)	Achievement
1	Increased number of girls and boys attending school.	5% to 10% increase above the level before the school lunch program began.	Average increase of 45% for girls and 43% for boys for sample of seven schools (6.6% of total).
2	Increased number of lunches served to vulnerable school children, particularly children of returned refugee families.	30,000 students in 100 primary schools.	As of October 2001, meal service for 34,122 students in 106 primary schools. Detailed breakdown of beneficiaries per category per month.
3	Highly nutritious lunches in school for returned refugee and other vulnerable students.	Of recommended daily requirements, lunches that provide 20% of protein, 65% of carbohydrates, and 27% of fat to 30,000 vulnerable students.	Average nutritional value provided in distributed sandwich: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protein: 15 grams (25% of daily protein requirement for children ages 7-14).</li> <li>• Carbohydrates: 85 gram (23% of daily requirement).</li> <li>• Fat: 15 grams (24% of daily requirement).</li> </ul> These achievements represent 25% of daily requirements.
4	School lunch parent-teacher contact groups, which distribute school lunches.	100 parent-teacher contact groups above the baseline (contact groups will include in total at least 200 teachers and 200 parents).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 106 parent-teacher contact groups created; 215 parents and 257 school workers or teachers involved.</li> <li>• Four training sessions conducted for all contact groups, providing members basic knowledge and skills for identifying and addressing school needs.</li> </ul>
5	Small school lunch grants to participant schools to improve the ability of parent-teacher contact groups to provide meals.	Approximately 50 school lunch grants.	132 small grants approved. Contact groups have identified many grant activities that are not directly linked to the provision of school lunches but significantly improve the school environment.
6	Parent-school councils in schools, targeting schools with a high population of returned refugees.	16 parent-school councils above the baseline.	16 parent-school councils created.
7	Parent-school councils trained in such areas as the role of family in raising children, conflict resolution, needs assessments/prioritization, project proposal design, and fund raising.	16 parent-school councils trained above baseline.	91% of training sessions conducted (56% of training sessions attended jointly by at least two different parent-school councils).
8	School improvements grants to parent-school councils to improve the learning environment in accordance with council-identified needs.	At least 16 school improvement grants above baseline.	30 school improvement grants approved and an additional 40 in preparatory phase; 45% of funding for 30 approved projects spent on infrastructure improvements.

## **Project Impact**

- Preliminary information indicates about a 10-percent increase in classes attended, with an increase of around 45 percent in number of students who attend at least a part of the school day.
- The parent-school councils and contact groups launched successful efforts to improve school facilities, such as playgrounds, kitchen facilities, libraries, and classrooms.
- Community organizational infrastructure was strengthened through the assistance provided by the GFE project for parent-school councils and contact groups.
- Productive community relationships between teachers and parents were reinforced through the small grants program.

## **Unanticipated Outcomes**

- The project contracted 16 local bakeries to provide the meals. The economic activity spawned by the GFE contracts allowed the bakeries to hire additional employees and, in some cases, to expand the range of products they provide to local communities.
- The economic effect of the program reached beyond student families and bakeries to include: providers of printed paper and nylon wrappers for the 5 million sandwiches; processors of meat and cheese purchased for sandwich fillings; and local producers of the meat and cheese that was supplied to the processing facilities.
- The number of students attending extracurricular activities increased an average of 7 percent for girls and 9 percent for boys, compared with comparable periods before the GFE program began. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, such activities have traditionally played an important role in schools and represent an important part of the informal education process. Many students who did not previously receive a school lunch would often leave school earlier because they were too hungry to remain and participate in activities following regular classes.

## **Lessons Learned**

School enrollment and attendance are functions of many variables that are often interrelated in complex ways. Food alone may not yield the desired result. For food to be an effective tool, the project must be designed to address interrelated factors that will be critically important to the success of the program. This includes:

- Investing time and expertise in making the program decisionmaking process truly participatory by including the community stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- Allocating sufficient resources to strengthening and empowering the local community's organizational infrastructure.
- Making necessary repairs to physical infrastructure.

### **Best Practices**

- Perform a detailed and rigorous situation assessment to ensure that the sociological factors that impact the intended goal of increasing attendance and enrollment are sufficiently understood prior to designing the implementation plan.
- Help develop and strengthen parent-school councils and parent-teacher contact groups. In the CRS project, these associations were instrumental in implementing the GFE program, promoting educational enhancement of the school facilities and providing feedback to USDA on ways to improve the impact of the program and reach the most vulnerable students.
- Provide small grants, as CRS did, to the parent-school councils and contact groups to repair school facilities, improve or expand facilities, and purchase education materials.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps include collecting final data and completing impact analysis, and preparing to start the next school year.

### **GFE in Action**

- Teachers and school nurses report a reduction in stomach aches and signs of fatigue among pupils as a result of the meal enhancements made possible through GFE.
- In addition to the school feeding for 34,122 vulnerable students who participate in the USDA GFE program, the 16 local bakeries that make the sandwiches also benefit. On average, the bakeries have reported an 18-percent increase in their overall production and a 25-percent increase in people employed as a result of participation in the GFE program.
- Another benefit to bakeries is access to wheat flour from the United States. Hard red winter grain is partial compensation for participation in the program. The ability to obtain high-quality flour is not common in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For economic reasons, bakers buy mostly lower quality flour from Hungary, Croatia, or Yugoslavia. CRS has received many positive reports about the quality of American flour, despite the fact that it is milled locally. This may pave the way for potential markets in the future.

# Georgia

## Counterpart International

### Summary of Findings

This project will begin in fall 2002. Counterpart International (Counterpart) will provide around 35,000 daily meals to students attending 140 schools in the Kakheti and Samagrello regions of Georgia. The second major component of the program is school rehabilitation and educational materials support. In addition students and teachers will receive training in nutrition and health education. The program will continue through May 2003.

### Country Overview

Georgia is located in southwestern Asia, bordering the Black Sea, Turkey, and Russia. Georgia gained independence in 1991 upon the breakup of the Soviet Union. Sixty percent of its five million people live in urban areas, and by 2015 almost 70 percent of the population is expected to live in urban areas.<sup>163</sup> The economy has traditionally centered on tourism around the Black Sea, which explains the 45-percent employment in the services sector.<sup>164</sup> Thirty percent of the Georgian economy is agriculture, but crops often spoil in the field because farmers cannot get their produce to market or must pay costs that drive market prices above those for imported goods.<sup>165</sup>

Georgia is one of the poorest countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>166</sup> Sixty percent of the population falls below the poverty line.<sup>167</sup> Poorly planned transition strategies, governmental and institutional corruption, an energy crisis, a deteriorating infrastructure, the inability to collect taxes, and public loss of confidence in reform measures have contributed to the current economic situation. A drought in 2002 caused declines in the agricultural sector and was further aggravated by the ongoing economic problems and unresolved ethnic conflicts. The energy crisis not only reduced access to heat but also reduced the economic growth potential for areas outside of the capital, Tbilisi.

Government spending for health, education, and welfare programs has dropped significantly, possibly suffering the most dramatic decline of the transition economies.<sup>168</sup> As the economy further deteriorates, the government is not able to invest resources into the development of its people or social safety nets. Overall, it is able to provide few

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<sup>163</sup> U.S. Department of State, Country Profile: Georgia, 1998.

<sup>164</sup> CIA, The World Fact Book, Georgia.

<sup>165</sup> U.S. Department of State, Country Profile: Georgia, 1998.

<sup>166</sup> Joint Press Release of the World Bank, Asia Development bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the international Monetary Fund, April 2002.

<sup>167</sup> Op. cit. The World Fact Book.

<sup>168</sup> USAID Regional Overview: Georgia, 2001.

services, and its reach outside Tbilisi is very limited. The reduction of assistance to the elderly, mothers, and children has a significant impact on the everyday lives of the country's most vulnerable. Internally displaced persons, who number close to 250,000, further strain on government's ability to provide adequate assistance.<sup>169</sup>

Education in Georgia consists of four levels: kindergarten, compulsory general education (grades one through nine), upper secondary (grades ten and eleven), and higher education. According to the World Bank, problems in the education sector include very low teachers salaries, deteriorated infrastructure, suspended welfare support to students, and increased cost to parents for education.<sup>170</sup> The enrollment rates in public sector institutions, historically very high (about 100 percent for compulsory general education and 75 percent for upper secondary schools), have dropped by 23 percent on average, partially offset by an increase in private school attendance.<sup>171</sup>

A recently conducted study reported that "the drought of 2000 did not severely impact the acute nutritional status of children; that is, the prevalence of wasting was low. Rather the drought added to the already dire situation that impacts the nutritional status of mothers, the household economic situation, and overall household food security. The long-term impact of the drought, coupled with chronic economic poverty, will lead to the decline of the health status of children in Georgia. And as their health status declines so will their ability to learn and be healthy participants in Georgia's future development."<sup>172</sup>

It is within this social, economic, and political context that Counterpart targeted 140 schools in the Kakheti and Samagrello regions of Georgia, where the problems of malnutrition and poverty are among the most severe in the country. The program is designed to mitigate economic reasons for low attendance and relieve hunger-based hindrances to classroom learning. The Global Food for Education (GFE) program is consistent with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Georgia program to reduce human suffering. The agreement between Counterpart and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) was signed April 25, 2002. To support Counterpart's GFE project, scheduled to begin in the fall of 2002, 26,600 metric tons of commodities will be shipped to Georgia.

### **Commodity Management**

Counterpart will monetize and directly distribute 26,600 tons of commodities. The hard red winter wheat will be monetized and the proceeds used to implement the project's multiple components designed not only to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, but also to enhance the learning environment. The following table shows donated commodities by program use, quantity, and arrival.

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<sup>169</sup> Op.cit. U.S. Department of State.

<sup>170</sup> World Bank. Georgia: Recent Economic Developments and Selected Issues, 2001.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Nutritional Status of Children Less Than Five Years of Age in Six Drought-Affected Regions of Georgia: 2002-2001, page 9. The National Centers for Disease Control, Tbilisi and Save the Children/U.S. February 2002.

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Program Use</b>	<b>Metric Tons</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Bulgur, soy fortified	Distribution	1,000	July/August 2002
Non-fat dry milk	Distribution	100	July/August 2002
Vegetable oil, vitamin A-fortified	Distribution	500	July/August 2002
Wheat, hard red winter #2 or better)	Monetization	25,000	May/June 2002 September/October 2002
<b>Total</b>		<b>26,600</b>	

### **Project Overview**

The program will begin in fall 2002. Counterpart will provide approximately 35,000 daily meals (one meal per child) to students attending 140 schools in the Kakheti and Samagrello regions of Georgia. The planned daily meal will be a hot porridge made from bulgur wheat, non-fat dry milk, and vegetable oil. Locally purchased foods such as cheese, eggs, and fruits and vegetables will complement the meals. Targeted schools will include boarding schools which house orphans and children who no longer have any means of support. A hot, nutritious meal will benefit the health of children and will encourage the students to stay in school.

Support for school rehabilitation and educational materials is another component of the Counterpart GFE program. Of total proceeds from monetization sales, 31 percent will be used to support school infrastructure repairs and the purchase of school supplies. Counterpart will subcontract crews to repair school infrastructure, such as leaking roofs or broken windows. Counterpart will also make improvements to the school cafeteria/kitchen and basic sanitation infrastructure, such as installation of hot water taps and provision of sanitary water wells and natural gas bottles for cooking.

Counterpart will purchase and distribute locally produced supplies, such as pens, paper, and notebooks to targeted schools. Schools will first be assessed to determine need, and supplies will be distributed during the first few weeks of each semester.

Counterpart will use 5 percent of sales proceeds to implement a health education program. Staff and students in the targeted feeding programs will receive training on nutrition and healthy behaviors. Activities may include the distribution of educational posters and brochures, lessons for the school curriculum, role-playing exercises, contests, and theatre. Targeting the female population, Counterpart will work to increase local knowledge and promote behaviors directly related to food security and health. Each participant will receive about four hours of instruction per month on such topics as basic nutrition, sanitation, and healthy practices. Key themes will include how to identify nutritious foods, how to cook foods to retain vitamins, and how to ensure that the diet supplies needed protein in ways consistent with local tastes and customs.

This project is scheduled to start in fall 2002.

## **Georgia International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc.**

### **Summary of Findings**

Meals were delivered daily to 14,000 school children from October 2001-June 2002. Enrollment and attendance data for the year is currently being analyzed. Teachers and parents noticed students' increased sense of confidence, greater class participation, and better attitudes toward learning. The educational component was delayed until the second semester because of a shortfall in commodity sales. Sales were hampered by the availability of smuggled wheat in the market. An extension is planned, and the program will continue until April 2003.

### **Commodity Management**

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc., (IOCC) received shipment of and subsequently monetized 10,800 metric tons of hard red winter wheat. Proceeds were used to implement the project's multiple components designed not only to increase enrollment, attendance, and performance, but also to enhance the learning environment.

IOCC-imported wheat grains are among the types used and preferred locally. Clients were pleased with the quality and usually milled the grain for sale as flour. In spite of the positive response to the U.S. wheat, the program was hindered by slow sales. Buyers reported that markets were oversupplied with wheat flour that had been smuggled into the country, making legitimate sales uncompetitive. As a result, the school supplies distribution component was cancelled, and implementation of the educational component was delayed until the second semester.

Approximately 59 percent of the monetization proceeds went to cover the cost of contracts with local bakeries and food companies to prepare and deliver school lunches. Meals consisted of cheese bread, bean pie, and sweet buns. All foods were wrapped in plastic bags with printed messages related to IOCC's health, environmental, and civic education program.

### **Project Overview**

The IOCC GFE school feeding program, which began in October 2001, just completed its first academic year. It has two components: food distribution to 14,000 vulnerable school children, and educational resource support to schools. Target schools were identified in the vulnerable regions of Tbilisi, southern Georgia, and western Georgia. IOCC also gave priority consideration to the often-improvised schools established for children of internally displaced persons, one of the most vulnerable groups in Georgia.

IOCC has worked closely with the Georgian Ministry of Education in all aspects of project design and implementation. The ministry suggested interventions to IOCC to support the educational needs of students and teachers and provided data that identified the most vulnerable schools in each of the targeted regions. The table below shows the number of GFE target schools and beneficiaries by region.

<b>Number of Schools and Beneficiaries by Region</b> IOCC/GFE Program March 2002		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>
Tbilisi	16	6,607
Western Georgia	28	4,033
Southern Georgia	11	4,018
Total Schools/Beneficiaries	55	14,658

**Direct feeding:** Meal distribution proceeded smoothly. Menus consist of the following locally produced items: khachapuri imeruli (cheese bread); khachapuri penovani (a cheese pastry); lobiani (bean pie); qada (similar to imeruli, it has a sweet filling instead of cheese); and buns. Milk is served twice a week, and juice three times a week. The meals were designed by local dieticians and each meal, valued at approximately \$0.43, provides 35 percent of the daily calories, 50 percent of the daily protein, and 35 percent of the daily calcium needs of children. Milk and juice are packaged in Georgia by two local factories, using Tetra Pak materials printed in Turkey.

**Educational support component:** The educational component of the program began at the start of the second semester in January 2002. *The Adventures of Tiko and Niko*, a 64-page illustrated sticker book printed by IOCC in both Georgian- and Russian-language editions, was developed in cooperation with the Center for Civic and Environmental Education, a Georgian non-governmental organization (NGO). The organization, which came highly recommended by the Ministry of Education, has experience working with donor organizations in the fields of health, environmental, and civic education.

Children learn about health, the environment, and civic education by matching the printed sticker, which they receive with their daily meal, to the illustrations in the book. This exercise becomes a teaching topic for the class. Prior to the distribution of the workbooks, teachers were given guidance regarding their role in implementation.

As this activity progressed, teachers in a number of schools in southern Georgia became concerned about their participation in this exercise. A few teachers at first refused to participate, claiming there was not enough class time to introduce new material. Other teachers were concerned about the distribution of the educational materials to first- and second-grade students, claiming students ages 6 and 7 do not yet fully understand Russian, nor is Georgian the commonly used language in the region. However, with the support of the local branches of the Ministry of Education, all these concerns were addressed.



Tests were administered in October and November 2001 to approximately 5 percent of the total number of children in GFE schools in Tbilisi and in southern and western Georgia. The test assessed their existing knowledge regarding health, environmental, and civic education issues prior to the implementation of the educational component. The tests were retaken at the end of the academic year. This will provide a basis for analysis, although one semester is a very short period to evaluate.

Posters featuring the booklet characters and illustrations related to health, environmental, and civic education topics were printed in both Russian and Georgian and distributed to all participating schools. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), IOCC, and Georgian Ministry of Education logos appeared on the poster.

**Other donor support:** Teachers, school officials, and parents will contribute labor and logistical support at the school sites.

**Sustainability:** IOCC has worked closely with the Ministry of Education in the implementation of this program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of both IOCC and USDA. USDA hired a local monitor to administer a questionnaire designed for statistical analysis of the project impact, as well as to interview stakeholders at 20 sample schools. However, the local monitor was not officially hired until June 2002 and has not been able to gather data yet. Data collection and general project review will begin when schools open in the fall.

To select the 20 sample schools, a matrix was developed that grouped schools according to geography, urban/rural location, and size of school. These criteria offered the best opportunity to examine potential differences in project implementation and impact.

IOCC monitors visit each school to ensure that forms are properly completed, children are receiving meals, and quality is maintained. Participating bakeries are monitored at least weekly. At the bakeries, monitors check for discrepancies in the records, inspect the facility for general cleanliness, conduct a physical count of stock on hand, and check the quality of the products.

### **Project Impact**

Teachers, school directors, and parents stress the importance of the program for both parents and children. Through focus group sessions and interviews, various participants mentioned that many families, because of high unemployment, cannot afford to provide healthy meals for their children. People in rural areas especially have limited knowledge of the importance of nutrition to a healthy life, and even if they wanted to apply this knowledge, they cannot act on it because of limited financial resources.

**Enrollment:** IOCC is conducting an analysis of enrollment increases.

**Attendance:** IOCC is conducting an analysis of attendance. Participants report that student attendance has improved. Parents send their children to school, even on days when they otherwise would not have, because they know that the meal the child receives at school may be more nutritious than the one available at home. The majority of teachers understand the importance of the school feeding program because it provides children with a portion of the necessary daily required nutrients, and they see the link between the food and its effects on the children's concentration, energy, and self-esteem. Children are more eager to come to school, and they welcome the opportunity to eat together with their peers without paying any attention to their social status.

**Performance:** It is difficult to assess whether or not the performance rate of children was affected because of the short period of operation. However, many teachers, school officials, and parents pointed to various indicators of improved performance, including the following:

- Increased sense of confidence.
- Increased class participation.
- Increased understanding of health, environmental, and civic education issues.
- Increased concentration.
- Better attitudes toward learning.

**Special emphasis on girls:** IOCC is conducting an analysis of the impact of the feeding program on girls' attendance.

### **Lessons Learned**

The following lessons are provisional, pending complete analysis.

The lead time necessary to get commodities delivered to a country and monetized is longer than anticipated in most cases. In addition, changes in local market conditions between the time when the project is designed and the time of actual commodity delivery can affect monetization sales.

Nutrition and household economic issues that can be mitigated by school meals are not the only factors that must be addressed if the goal is to increase attendance and enrollment and improve classroom performance.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps include completing data collection for impact analysis and other reporting requirements. Also, IOCC will consider recommendations from participants to provide meals to the teachers involved in the program and, if possible, to include the fifth and sixth grade classes in the feeding program.

## **GFE in Action**

Tamuna Tiginashvili is a third grade student from Vashlijvari IDP School in Tbilisi. She lives with her mother, grandparents, and an uncle. Her mother and grandparents are unemployed, and her uncle is a minibus driver. Her father left the family and is supposedly living in Russia. Tamuna says that the school feeding program has helped her to learn better. Of all the meals served, she likes khachapuri penovani (flaky, layered cheese pie) and juice the best. She also enjoys the booklet and says she has learned many things that she did not know before. Her family is also very satisfied and happy with the program. Tamuna says she hopes to someday become a television talk show host.

Diana Nakopia is a second grade student, also from Vashlijvari IDP School in Tbilisi. She lives with her mother, father, and brother. Neither of her parents is currently employed. She says she loves to come to school and, of all of the meals served, she really likes the bun with milk. She says that the booklet provided in the educational component of the program helps her to get along better with other children. Both she and her parents are very happy and hope that the program will be extended into the next academic year. Diana would like to someday become a dancer.

Many parents report that they are unable to properly feed their children at home. In some cases, there is no breakfast, or breakfast is limited to bread and tea. For others, coming up with lunch money for their children every day is quite a challenge. Even for those who have less difficulty providing for their families, the fact that someone is doing something for the children on such a scale is greatly appreciated.

## **Moldova**

### **International Partnership for Human Development**

#### **Summary of Findings**

In five months, 23 million hot meals were provided to 266,000 students. The program has generated an estimated \$771,196 in local in-kind contributions. School enrollment was already at a high level in Moldova, and the data collected does not indicate an increase. However, students report that they enjoy school more since the meals began, and enrollment at the kindergarten level has increased since the start of the program. Teachers report that the attention and energy levels of the children have improved. The pasta factory contracted under the Global Food for Education Program (GFE) has added 67 full-time employees as a result of the business the GFE program has brought to the company. The program is scheduled to continue through December 2003.

#### **Country Overview**

One of Europe's poorest nations, Moldova ranks 98<sup>th</sup> on the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Index.<sup>173</sup> Formerly ruled by Romania, Moldova became part of the Soviet Union at the close of World War II, and has been independent since 1991. Russian forces have remained on Moldovan territory east of the Nistru River, supporting the Slavic majority population—mostly Ukrainians and Russians who have proclaimed a “Transnistria” republic. This region is the country's most heavily industrialized region. Economic conditions and poverty are now much worse in this enclave than in the rest of the country. With this area in dispute, it is difficult for Moldova to realize its potential as a market-oriented economy. Moldova became the first former Soviet state to elect a Communist as its president in 2001.

With a favorable climate and good farmland, 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) comes from agriculture, including fruits, vegetables, wine, and tobacco. Moldova's best-known product comes from its extensive and well-developed vineyards, which are concentrated in the central and southern regions. In addition to world class wine, Moldova produces liqueurs and champagne and is known for its sunflower seeds, plums, peaches, apples, and other fruits.

Moldova must import all of its supplies of oil, coal, and natural gas, largely from Russia. Energy shortages contributed to sharp production declines after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Any breakdown in trade has a serious effect, exacerbated at times by drought and civil conflict. After the Russian ruble devaluation of 1998, Moldova's economy underwent a prolonged recession from which it is only now beginning to emerge. There was an 8.6-percent drop in GDP. In 1999, GDP fell by 4.4 percent, the

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<sup>173</sup> [www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/cty\\_f\\_MDA.html](http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/cty_f_MDA.html).

fifth drop in the past seven years. Exports were down, and energy supplies continued to be erratic. GDP declined slightly in 2000, with a serious drought hurting agriculture. Census data from 1999 reported that 75 percent of the Moldovan population lives below the poverty line.<sup>174</sup>

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) statistics indicate that 10 percent of children in Moldova suffer from moderate to severe stunting caused by malnutrition.<sup>175</sup> The literacy rate is 96 percent.<sup>176</sup> Prior to 1991, all Moldovan schools provided children with a daily glass of milk, and many offered a midday meal. Since independence, the milk and school lunch programs have disappeared because of lack of funding. The lack of a school lunch is felt mostly in rural schools where poverty is most severe.

The school buildings and physical infrastructure for education are in severe disrepair. Heating systems are inadequate, and roofs and windows need repair. As a result, the absentee rate in winter months is high. Water and septic systems at schools are often inadequate. Teaching equipment is worn and inadequate, and parents must often buy the books. In addition to being the leading cause for hunger among the students, poverty exacerbates the educational problems. Education is highly valued in Moldova, and attendance is generally good except in winter months when the physical adversities are especially challenging.

Moldova has 790,000 students at all levels of education, of which 335,000 are enrolled in primary education. Another 135,000-150,000 children are in preschools and kindergartens.<sup>177</sup>

The International Partnership for Human Development (IPHD) designed a GFE project to mitigate hunger-based hindrances to classroom learning. The agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and IPHD was signed in July 2001.

### **Commodity Management**

Under the GFE program, IPHD received a total of 28,400 metric tons of commodities. This included 16,400 tons of wheat (bread flour), 6,000 tons of rice (1,500 tons of long grain rice and 4,500 tons of medium grain), 2,250 tons of corn-soy blend, 1,500 tons of vegetable oil, and 2,250 tons of corn-soy milk.

The wheat flour was made into pasta at a local manufacturing facility, with services paid in-kind with flour. The long grain rice was monetized. The vegetable oil, medium grain rice, corn-soy blend, and corn-soy milk were distributed directly for meal preparation.

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<sup>174</sup> [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/md.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/md.html).

<sup>175</sup> [www.unicef.org/statis/Country\\_1Page124.html](http://www.unicef.org/statis/Country_1Page124.html).

<sup>176</sup> [www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5357.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5357.htm).

<sup>177</sup> IPHD Logistics Report May 2002.

## **Project Overview**

**Goals and objectives:** The goals of the IPHD GFE project are to increase attendance and enrollment, and improve classroom performance. The specific objectives are to provide meals to 300,000 preschool and school-age students in 1,250 schools, targeting the poorest sector of the population; and to upgrade kitchen utensils.

**Implementation status:** The project began in January 2002, a delay from its intended start date of September 2001. Nevertheless, the project has met 89 percent of its goal to feed 300,000 children in 1,250 institutions. IPHD has provided a total of 23 million hot meals to 266,000 students in 2,400 schools and pre-schools/kindergartens. The meal program will continue during the summer months at a reduced target of 10,000 kindergarten pupils, and the full program will be renewed at the start of the school year in September. The current program will end in December 2002.

Because it is the largest, most extensive program of this kind in Moldova, the GFE program plays a unique role in setting a pattern for community collaboration. In a country of very limited resources, food security is a concern for a large segment of the population. The activities associated with the process of feeding the youngest citizens of the nation have generated cooperation and inspired local initiatives.

Local governments enthusiastically support the GFE program, making changes in staff and budgets to facilitate the rapid startup of the school meal program. Many schools have reopened kitchens closed since independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991. Civic leadership has been energized to respond with in-kind contributions. Regional councils, schools, and individuals have sent letters of appreciation. Children are coming to school anticipating USDA-sponsored food.

**Other donor support:** In four months, the program has generated an estimated \$771,196 in in-kind contributions in local funds.<sup>178</sup> This large local contribution is a measure of the acceptance of the program at the local and district levels.

**Sustainability:** Economic conditions most likely will not permit the national and local governments to underwrite the program in the future. However, there is an upsurge in local participation.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Both IPHD and USDA are carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. IPHD routinely monitors the process, beginning with the unloading of commodities at warehouses. Monitoring forms were developed for field use: (1) for the initial needs assessment visits, which began in October 2001 before the foods arrived; (2) for checking food use; and (3) for schools to provide IPHD with a concise and consistent ongoing record of the program. In the five months since November 2001, IPHD's seven monitors have made more than 3,300 visits to schools. They also held regional forums with educators, monitored the delivery at the warehouses, addressed localized concerns, held press conferences, and met with local governments to sign

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<sup>178</sup> IPHD Monitoring and Evaluation Report June 2002.

agreements. These agreements are written and signed with every school director or mayor responsible for schools participating in the GFE program.

Within Moldova, a monitor from a local private voluntary organization, ADSISTO, collects evaluation data for USDA. Using the standard GFE questionnaire, baseline data has been gathered on 20 sample schools. These schools were selected randomly from a matrix of factors selected after discussions with IPHD.

### **Project Impact**

In five months, 23 million hot meals were provided to 266,000 students.

**Enrollment:** Moldova already had a high enrollment for education, and USDA data did not show an increase in enrollment. However, monitors did report the following:

- In the primary grades, attendance and enrollment are traditionally high and the effect of feeding on these variables is not so visible. However, a final assessment will be based on a close analysis of records and data at project end.
- Students report that they like school better since meals are provided.
- Enrollment at the kindergarten level has visibly increased since the start of the meal program.
- Many parents with children at kindergarten age prefer to keep them at home. GFE provided the opportunity to improve feeding while reducing fees for parents. As a result, more parents are enrolling their children.
- The program is well received and recognized by the parents as having significant benefit for them. This is evidenced by the fact that summer-run kindergartens are opening and requesting inclusion in the program.

**Attendance:** Data is being collected, but observations so far include the following:

- Teachers report fewer complaints about stomach aches among students since the start of the meal program.
- A good feeding program makes schools more pleasant, attractive, and enjoyable for children, which contributes to keeping children in schools;
- In primary schools (children ages 7-11), enrollment and attendance are traditionally high, and the feeding effect is not so visible. The parents' attitude is that children should go to school, especially at that age. Later, when teens are able to earn an income, they are absent from school while involved in household and farming commitments.

**Performance:** Teachers report that the attention and energy levels of students have improved since the introduction of the meal program.

Teachers and school officials report that since the start of the meal program, participation in after-school activities has increased in theater, dance, and other extra-curricular activities.

**Special emphasis on girls:** There is no disparity between girls and boys in school attendance. Education is a high priority for children of both genders. A definitive analysis of project impact will be completed at the project's conclusion.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

- The pasta factory in Moldova, contracted under the GFE program to turn 6,300 tons of flour into 3,000 tons of pasta, has added 67 full-time employees as a result of the business the GFE program has brought to the company. This is a significant, positive economic impact for the program.
- Infrastructure improvements organized as a result of GFE include the rebuilding of school lunchroom facilities, the expansion and upgrading of regional and local food storage capacity, and the development of local commodity infrastructure to supplement the GFE subsidies.
- In some cases, an increase in student enrollment, especially in kindergartens, has exceeded teacher capacity and other educational resources of the schools.
- The positive impact on the school atmosphere and student performance has prompted several local communities to seek ways to continue providing meals after the IPHD GFE program closes.

### **Lessons Learned**

- The poorest in Moldova cannot and do not attend school. They do not have suitable clothes. The GFE program is missing children with the greatest need.
- Schools that were too poor to finance the extensive repairs needed to put their kitchens into service were not able to participate in the program. In a few cases, there have been creative solutions, such as the case where arrangements were made by the community to use the canteen next to the school.
- In the poorer schools where resources are not available to purchase non-GFE food items to supplement the menu, meals of rice and pasta are considered monotonous and nutritionally incomplete.
- In rural areas, families tend to own land where they produce vegetables and livestock products to provide food for the table or income. In urban areas, unemployed parents do not have this option.
- The program works better when school officials and community members, especially parents, are given a voice and role in planning and decision making.
- Cooks are not familiar with corn-soy meal, and this commodity has not fit well in traditional recipes. However, IPHD has developed and distributed an 18-page recipe book and provided numerous demonstrations on how to prepare the recipes.
- In some cases, municipalities were unable to obtain the necessary sanitation certificate for the school kitchen because they do not have piped potable water. Allocation of GFE resources for such improvements would make the meal program more accessible.



## **Next Steps**

Next steps include:

- Continue warehousing the commodities pending the start of school in September.
- Arrange for summer feeding activities.
- Establish/confirm agreements with participating schools for feeding continuation at the beginning of the new school year in September.

## **GFE in Action**

Teachers and other school officials appreciate the GFE resources. Teachers and school nurses report a reduction in complaints of stomach aches and signs of tiredness among students as a result of the meal enhancements made possible through GFE.

By providing food, the GFE program is helping poor families and poor villages. One example can be found in Talmaza, a village of 7,000 in the south of Moldova and a GFE implementation site. Talmaza formerly had five kindergartens, but only three survive because of economic hardships. Even these kindergartens do not function year-round because local authorities cannot afford to heat the buildings in winter. Carolina lives in Talmaza and is kindergarten age. Her mother used to work as a cook and her father as a tractor driver. However, when the collective farm was split among fellow villagers, Carolina's parents were left without land or permanent jobs. They now work for other landowners at the equivalent of less than \$1.50 each per day. This means insufficient food, inadequate clothing (especially in winter months), and economic obstacles to attending kindergarten. The GFE program provides food and helps mitigate the economic hardships within Talmaza and other villages like it.



## **Lebanon International Orthodox Christian Charities**

### **Summary of Findings**

School feeding for approximately 22,000 students began in October 2001. International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) received 27,000 metric tons of wheat to support the GFE program, including 20,000 tons of hard red winter wheat and 7,000 tons of northern spring wheat. IOCC sold the commodities and used the funds to provide meals to 22,000 of Lebanon's poorest children. Additionally, an education program focusing on civics, nutrition, and the environment was initiated. Baseline survey data from the 20 sample schools show minimal increases in attendance and enrollment. However, information gathered from focus groups with school directors indicate that enrollment, attendance, and attentiveness increased after the school feeding program started.

Teachers and parents also report that school feeding has had a positive influence on the children's attitude, behavior, and concentration. Introduction of a new curriculum made it more difficult to assess the impact of the program on children's performance compared with last year. The program is expected to start feeding again in November 2002 and will continue through the entire school year.

### **Country Overview**

As a result of 25 years of civil war and other strife, Lebanon suffers from economic instability and lacks significant resources to implement major development initiatives. The civil war severely damaged the Lebanese economy, leaving a public debt of 160 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>179</sup>

In Lebanon, major income disparities exist, and unemployment and poverty are widespread.<sup>180</sup> Levels of development vary among provinces. In one province, for instance, the poverty level is 60 percent; in another, only 14 percent.<sup>181</sup> The poverty disparity is reflected in school enrollment levels. School enrollment in one well developed province is 96 percent for primary school-age children, while only 55 percent in a less developed province.<sup>182</sup>

According to the Ministry of Education, the overall enrollment rate by gender at the primary level is 98.4 percent for girls and 98.3 percent for boys. However, greater disparities between genders exist in more impoverished areas, particularly in the south,

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<sup>179</sup> Human Development Report 2001, Beirut, 2001.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

which is heavily populated by Muslims. In addition, as children get older, girls drop out at a faster rate than boys.<sup>183</sup> This is primarily due to early marriages and the distance to schools.

There is no comprehensive index of malnutrition levels in the country, although some qualitative research has shown evidence of malnutrition in areas outside of Beirut. The overall prevalence of moderate and severe stunting is 12.2 percent<sup>184</sup>, whereas the prevalence of moderate and severe wasting is 2.9 percent.<sup>185</sup>

### **Commodity Management**

IOCC received 27,000 metric tons of wheat to support the GFE, including 20,000 tons of hard red winter wheat and 7,000 tons of northern spring wheat. All of the wheat was monetized, and the process was a complete success.

IOCC sold the commodities for a higher price than estimated. As a result, an additional \$237,000 was made available to the project. IOCC advertised the commodities in three popular newspapers, and representatives were invited to attend the bid-opening session. The highest bid was accepted, and the entire shipment was sold prior to the commodities arriving in country. The purchaser agreed to pay the total value of the commodities upon presentation of shipping documents to the bank that opened the letter of credit. This procedure eliminated the need to have USDA appoint a surveying company to confirm the receipt of the commodities. It also saved IOCC from waiting until the commodities arrived in country to get the 60-percent balance of the proceeds in installments over four months, as previously planned. The total of \$3,547,250 was received.

### **Project Overview**

The goals of IOCC's GFE program are to provide a nutritious school lunch for 22,000 of Lebanon's most vulnerable school children and to distribute educational materials to increase the children's awareness of health, civic, and environmental issues.

The following table shows major criteria for measuring program success, implementation status of the project, and comments on project activities.

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<sup>184</sup> Partners for Development-Civil Group. A Situation Analysis of the Nutrition and Health Status of Elementary Students in Public Schools in Lebanon. Report submitted to International Orthodox Christian Charities, Beirut 2001. Stunting is defined as a low height for age and is indicative of long-term malnutrition.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. Wasting is defined as a low weight for age or weight for height and is indicative of short-term malnutrition.

<b>Criteria for Measuring Success</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Monetize 27,000 metric tons of wheat.	Completed.	Proceeds exceeded projections by \$237,000.
Provide daily school meal to 22,000 children.	Began Oct. 1, 2002; finished June 8, 2002.	Feeding completed for one full academic year.
Provide workbooks to 22,000 children.	Completed.	Workbooks and lessons increased knowledge of health, civic education, and environmental issues.
Provide school stationery to 22,000 children.	Completed.	Agenda, pencils, erasers, calendars, rulers, and specially designed educational illustrations were distributed.
Conduct teacher workshops to introduce material.	Completed.	Teachers are primarily responsible for introducing the education component.
Conduct baseline survey at beginning of the program.	Completed.	Data is presented in tables to follow.
Conduct post-test at the conclusion of the first year.	Completed.	Data is being analyzed.

Meals distributed by IOCC to children followed a 10-day menu cycle. Meals averaged 430 calories, with a calcium content of 372.5 mg and an iron content of 4.95 mg. Juices distributed were fortified with vitamins C and A, and iron. Discussions with parents, teachers, and administrators revealed positive reactions on the effect of the program on the nutritional status of children. The following is an example of GFE meal menus.

<b>Sample Menus</b>				
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday/Saturday</b>
French bread, Halloumi cheese, unsweetened orange juice	White muffin, whole milk	French bread, yellow cheese, unsweetened pineapple juice	Chocolate cookie, whole milk	Arabic bread with thyme, oil, unsweetened orange juice

**Sustainability:** Efforts toward sustainability need to be addressed. Currently the sustainability of the program depends on continued USDA support. The program needs to be more fully integrated into the educational system. IOCC intends to identify resources to sustain the program.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of both USDA and IOCC. USDA's local monitor is a nutritionist based at the University of Balamand. The monitor regularly consulted with the Department of Statistics and the Ministry of Education, as well as with USDA during the development and analysis of the matrix and the data. The local monitor is responsible for collecting quantitative and qualitative data on 20 sample schools.

IOCC and USDA's local monitor developed a matrix from which to select the 20 sample schools. The schools were selected based on geographical location and gender. Schools were selected at random, with a minimum of two schools selected from each cell except for the two cells where only one school was represented.

### **Project Impact**

**Enrollment:** Baseline survey data from the 20 sample school show minimal enrollment increases. However, information gathered from focus groups with school directors indicate that enrollment increased after the school feeding program started.

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. A school director in Borj el Brajneh reported that a mother "begged" him to transfer her child to the school, in spite of the lack of vacancies in the school.

**Attendance:** Factors that impact school attendance in Lebanon include:

- Cold weather.
- Participation in family agricultural work.
- Family commitment to sending children to school (this is particularly an issue in the northern part of the country).
- Educational progress, such as whether or not the student passed to a higher level during the indicated year, stayed in the same level, or left the school.
- Additional days taken off from school after holidays. For example, if Thursday is a holiday, many students are absent on Friday, too.
- Availability of proper clothing, books, or transportation.

Focus group participants noticed an increase in the attendance rate compared to last year. They believed that the meal presented an incentive to students to come to school, as food was not always available at home, especially for breakfast. In some rural areas, the possibility of having a daily snack made parents send their children to school instead of taking them to help in agricultural work. Teachers reported that in some cases, students who were not feeling well would come to school, attend the first classes, and take their meal and go home. Even students who are known by their teachers to be unmotivated have demonstrated better school attendance, something teachers attribute to the provision of food at school.

Average Attendance for Girls										
	Nov.		Dec.		Jan.		Feb.		Average	
	00-'01	01-02	00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02
<b>Beirut</b>										
Pre-school	96.3	94.3	94.8	90.4	90	91	87.2	92.2	92.1	92
Grades 1 to 4	97.4	97.9	97.8	95.3	94.9	94.9	94.2	96.2	96.1	96.1
Grades 5 to 6	99.1	98.3	98.6	97.2	97.5	96.3	96.2	97.8	97.9	97.4
<b>North</b>										
Pre-school	95.9	94.5	91.1	87.2	90.9	89.8	89	88	91.7	89.9
Grades 1 to 4	98.1	97.3	97.5	94.8	96.5	95.8	97.1	96.1	97.3	96
Grades 5 to 6	98.7	98.9	98.8	96.5	97.7	98.2	97.9	97.9	98.3	97.9
<b>South</b>										
Pre-school	98.4	97.9	97.2	96.7	97.5	96.6	96.2	96.4	97.3	96.9
Grades 1 to 4	98.8	98.9	98.4	96.8	97.9	98.1	97.9	98.2	98.3	98
Grades 5 to 6	98.6	98.9	98.6	97	98.4	97.3	97.8	98.6	98.4	98
<b>Average Girls</b>	97.9	97.4	97.0	94.7	95.7	95.3	94.8	95.7	96.4	95.8

Average Attendance for Boys										
	Nov.		Dec.		Jan.		Feb.		Average	
	00-'01	01-02	00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02	00-01	01-02
<b>Beirut</b>										
Pre-school	94.5	94.7	90.9	87.6	90.8	90.1	84.8	90.8	90.3	90.8
Grades 1 to 4	96.8	97.2	96.5	93.3	94.7	94.4	93.6	95.15	95.4	95
Grades 5 to 6	97.6	98.1	98.2	97.2	96.5	95.9	95.5	96.4	97	96.9
<b>North</b>										
Pre-school	96.1	92.6	92.9	87.6	91.1	91.4	89.7	90.1	92.5	90.4
Grades 1 to 4	98	97.2	97.9	94.7	95.4	96.2	94.7	95.7	96.5	96
Grades 5 to 6	98.9	98.9	96.1	95.2	96.7	97.6	96.6	97.4	97.1	97.3
<b>South</b>										
Pre-school	97.3	98	95.5	96.9	95.6	95.5	95.6	94.2	96	96.2
Grades 1 to 4	98.3	98.5	98	98.2	97.8	98	97.9	98.4	98	98.3
Grades 5 to 6	98	98.9	97.6	98.3	97.1	98	97.3	97.3	97.5	98.1
<b>Average Boys</b>	97.3	97.1	96.0	94.3	95.1	95.2	94.0	95.1	95.6	95.4

Several examples illustrate the effect of school meals in primary schools. For instance, Mrs. Salma, mother of an 8-year-old boy participating in the program, reported that she heard her son talking to his cousin and inviting him to join his school because, as he said, “In our school we have tasty food everyday.” Another mother reported that her child told her he wants to go to school because of the food.

**Performance:** Teacher observations indicate that the school feeding program helped children to:

- *Increase motivation.* Students who were previously reluctant to participate in class activities are now leading class activities. In the past, teachers noticed that certain students would not raise their hands in class to answer questions. Now, most hands in the class are raised, particularly in the class following the distribution of the meals.
- *Concentrate better.* Teachers report that students now appear more focused. Students are asking questions that indicate a grasp of the classroom material. Teachers report that after the children have their meals, lessons can cover more difficult material, and the children grasp the material more quickly. According to one teacher, the children “are brighter and I can see a gleam in some of their eyes.”
- *Achieve higher grades, possibly due to less absenteeism.* Teachers report that the children are performing better on exams, are attending school more regularly and appear more cheerful now that there are meals in school.
- *Be more energetic.* Teachers report that after meals are served, there is a burst of energy in the classrooms. Activities are now much more “owned by the students,” and the kids are more energetic.

School directors and teachers highlighted the impact that the food has on the final three sessions of the school day. After the break, students used to feel tired, unable to concentrate and, most importantly, hungry. This year, with the implementation of the program, these three hours became very productive hours as students still have the potential and strength to work.

In addition to the meal provided by IOCC, the educational component of the program played a significant role in improving student performance. An educational booklet introduced *Noor and Noora* increased students awareness in civics, the environment and health. Many parents reported seeing the effect of this educational component at home. A mother of a 6-year-old girl said that her daughter pasted a note “Do not waste water” above the tap in the kitchen and a second note “always turn the light off before leaving the room” over light switches. Another mother said that her 7-year-old daughter taught her about the importance of brushing teeth.

**Other project achievements:** Prior to the GFE program, many children did not drink milk or, if they did, it was hot milk with sugar. Through the visits of Captain Milk, sponsored by Tetra Pak to promote milk consumption, almost all children now drink milk. Parents reported a beneficial effect of the feeding program on the general condition of their children. A mother shared that her child was underweight and unable to accept food in



the morning. During the past three months she noticed a significant increase in weight. A father reported that his thin daughter is now encouraged to eat with her friends, which is improving her nutritional status. Other administrators and teachers reported that “students are healthier,” especially kindergarten children. Teachers added that children acquired good eating habits that will have long-term effects on their nutritional status.

Most school administrators indicated that GFE promoted equality among students, which further attracts children to school. The director in Tarik El Jadidah, School for Girls, indicated that the program reduced the feeling of inferiority felt by students when their classmates brought cheese sandwiches each day, while they could not afford a meal. Parents also indicated that their children consider school as a second home and their teachers almost as mothers and fathers. According to some teachers, GFE fosters a sense of belonging among students.

Other project achievements include:

- Local non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) were developed, in particular Al-Kafaat, a local Lebanese NGO that works toward incorporating handicapped children into society. IOCC was instrumental in increasing the local capacity of Al-Kafaat.
- School development was strengthened by exploring small grants to improve school construction. IOCC would like to further explore the possibility of providing small grants to schools to assist with classroom improvement, educational resources and other infrastructure enhancement initiatives.
- A relationship was strengthened with the University of Balamand to further develop creative educational approaches to increase the performance of children. The development will focus on creative educational materials that will serve to educate the children about proper nutrition and diet. IOCC and the university are now exploring interactive exercises to incorporate into the next school year to increase performance.
- Stronger links were created between the local community and school directors by arranging community sessions where community and school needs were discussed and plans put in place to address those concerns.

### **Unanticipated Outcomes**

- IOCC is working closely with Tetra Pak’s Captain Milk milk-promotion program to increase the awareness of the importance of calcium on bone development and the benefits of drinking milk.
- The Lebanese Ministry of Education worked closely with IOCC to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. On many occasions, representatives from the ministry accompanied IOCC to school sites. The ministry was instrumental in providing training in nutrition issues.

- Christian and Muslim children strengthened their relationships through the GFE program by participating collectively in cross-religious educational sessions and city-wide fairs. Now the bonds between Muslim and Christian students are stronger, as evidenced by them playing together in the schoolyard and eating their meals together at the same table.
- The program promoted the feeling of equality, which increased students' self-confidence and esteem. Teachers reported that children feel equal now that all of them receive the same meal. Before, those children who could not afford meals at school felt inferior.

### **Lessons Learned**

*Involve community members early.* Including community members can assist in the sustainability and the success of the program. In addition, the community itself benefits from the program. Community involvement in implementing school feeding programs can increase communication among parents and teachers, directors, and others; provide parents a chance to become more aware of what goes on at school; help increase the value of education and the school for parents and the community; and encourage parents to register their children in school and ensure attendance.

*Educate children quickly about the importance of drinking milk.* At the beginning of the program, IOCC monitors faced many complaints over the acceptance of milk by children. Children are not used to drinking cold, unsweetened milk. After the visit from “Captain Milk,” who explained the importance of drinking milk, the acceptance of milk increased significantly. In the future, the program would like to strengthen its relationship with the “Captain Milk” initiative and use some of these techniques and strategies for impacting attendance, enrollment and performance.

*Plan appropriately and have a contingency plan if school is closed unexpectedly.* At the beginning of the program, more educational materials were reproduced than required. IOCC ensured that distribution was tailored to the correct pattern. On rare occasions during unexpected strikes, some schools were closed and meals that were prepared were not distributed. To overcome this problem, IOCC arranged alternative feeding locations with nearby institutions when meals had already been prepared. Also, occasionally, a school would unexpectedly open, and meals were not prepared. To address this contingency, IOCC asked school directors to provide notification of the opening or closing of the school well in advance.

*Ensure proper oversight of the meals and develop a standard checklist for quality assurance.* A few schools reported minor problems with some of the meals. Occasionally a meal or two was not wrapped completely, and there was difficulty in opening juice or milk cartons, and errors were made in printing expiration dates. IOCC immediately contacted the catering NGO's and the situation was corrected and not repeated. It is recommended that a nutritionist monitor the progress of meal preparation weekly. In the future, a checklist will be completed prior to the meals being transferred to schools.

## **Best Practices**

Targeting is essential to success. Best practices include the following:

- Prior to implementation, survey the prevalence of malnutrition in selected areas.
- Integrate appropriate micronutrient supplementation in meals according to results of surveys.
- Survey communities in disadvantaged areas about their acceptance of school feeding and extent they benefit from it.
- Integrate community members, parents and students in the implementation of the program.
- Mobilize community and concerned governmental and non-governmental bodies to endorse the program for future sustainability.
- Increase the variety of meals and engage a nutritionist to monitor the nutritional component of the program.

## **Next Steps**

- The results of the post-test administered by the University of Balamand are being entered into the database, and comparisons between the pre-and post-tests will soon be available.
- The questionnaires administered by IOCC to assess the feeding component of the program are currently being processed and analyzed. Results are expected this summer.
- IOCC is preparing the school-feeding program for the following year. The number of schools chosen to participate will depend on the budget allocated to Lebanon. The same schools that were participating in the program during 2001-2002 will also participate during 2002-2003.
- The University of Balamand is currently brainstorming ideas with other nutritionists, educators and the local monitor to suggest to IOCC the educational component for the following year. IOCC will discuss the educational program in June and plan for its implementation.
- During July, IOCC is arranging training for the monitors on effective monitoring, evaluation and communication.
- In September, IOCC members will resume preparation of school feeding for the 2002-03 school year.
- Feeding is scheduled to start at the beginning of November 2002. It is preferable to start feeding after all students have been registered and settled. Since many students continue registering during October, the feeding program will begin in the following month.

## **GFE in Action**

Nawal Darwich is a fifth grade student from Elementary Haret Hreik 2 public school in Beirut's suburb. She lives with her parents and four siblings in a two-room apartment. Her father works as a driver, and her mother is a housewife. Nawal says that IOCC has taught her healthy eating habits. She now drinks milk with no sugar and enjoys the meals that are provided. The *Noor and Noora* booklet (educational component of the program that raises awareness on health, environmental and civic education topics) taught her how to behave properly and fairly with people and how to be hygienic, something she was not aware of before. Her parents appreciated and encouraged the implementation of such a program and hope it will be extended for future years. Nawal said that she hopes one day to become a doctor to cure all sick children.

Hussein Mahmoud Saghir is a fourth grade student from Al-Laylaki public school in Beirut's suburb. He lives with his mother and father and six siblings in a three-room apartment. His father is a daily worker without a permanent, stable job, and his mother works at home and takes care of her children. Hussein said that the school feeding and education program helped him concentrate more in the classroom, especially in the last three hours of the day after the break. He likes all the meals distributed and find them delicious. He also likes milk and juice. As for the booklet, he says that it raised his awareness about the environment. He said "My parents liked this new idea and told me to ask the school director if the program is going to be implemented next year in order to register my siblings in my school." He wants to become a teacher.

Ali Lakis is a fourth grade student from Elementary Bourj Hammoud 1 public school. He lives with his father and four siblings. His mother died when he was two years old. His father is a daily worker. According to him, the school feeding and education program is very important, especially in providing breakfast – something that he did not have before. His favorite is the cheese sandwiches. The two characters *Noor and Noora* taught him to eat healthy foods. He dreams of becoming a famous writer.

## **Yemen**

### **Adventist Development and Relief Agency**

#### **Project Overview**

The objective of this program is to improve school enrollment and retention and to reach a minimum 85-percent monthly attendance rate for 30,000 school-age girls in primary grades one through nine. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) will accomplish this goal through the distribution of 4,500 metric tons of wheat flour and 500 tons of refined soybean oil as take-home rations to 30,000 female students who attend public schools in poor regions in the Taiz governorate of Yemen.

The food being provided to the girls and their families will enhance their chances of starting and continuing school, even beyond the traditionally early age that girls assume adult roles through marriage or full workloads. The value of food aid in the form of take-home rations is twofold: (1) it contributes to the household income; and (2) it gives status to the girl who can enhance the family's well-being in a very substantive way.

The take-home rations will consist of one 50-kilogram bag of wheat flour and one four-liter jug of soybean oil. Beneficiaries will receive three allotments of rations distributed every three months during the school year. The agreement was signed Aug. 6, 2002. Implementation of ADRA's one-year program will begin in January 2003.