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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2009 Global Child Nutrition Forum

A Catalyst for Development:
Linking Sustainable School Feeding
& Local Farm Production

May 5-9, 2009
Stellenbosch, South Africa

*“Education and democracy may be the
most powerful combatants in the
war on hunger and poverty . . .
A nutritious balanced school lunch
for every child is the best investment
we can make in the health, education, and
global society of the future.”
— Senator George S. McGovern*

The Need is Daunting

At any given moment, over 350 million children in the world are hungry . . . and every single day, as many as 18,000 perish from malnutrition and hunger-related diseases.

Children living in poverty are often lucky to have even one meal per day, and in many cases, this meal is available only at school. However, throughout the developing world, 115 million children are unable to attend school.

School feeding programs are serving as lifelines to millions of disadvantaged children throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Effective school feeding programs:

- alleviate hunger;
- improve children's nutrition and ability to learn;
- increase enrollments by motivating parents to send their children to school; and
- promote community development and linkages between schools and local agricultural producers.

GCNF's Response

In recognition of the vast scope of childhood hunger worldwide, the national School Nutrition Association (SNA) founded the Global Child Nutrition Foundation in 2006. From its more than 60 years of experience in feeding millions of American school children, SNA recognized the substantial role that well-run school feeding programs can play in improving children's health, enhancing their performance in school, and helping children to thrive. GCNF is helping meet the daunting challenge of bringing nutrition, educational opportunity, and hope to children worldwide.

GCNF's mission is simple but clear: **To expand opportunities for the world's children to receive adequate nutrition for learning and achieving their potential.**

GCNF's Global Child Nutrition Forum Builds School Feeding Technical Capacity and Commitment

GCNF's flagship program is its Global Child Nutrition Forum, hosted since 1997 by the School Nutrition Association and since 2006 by the Global Child Nutrition Foundation. The Global Child Nutrition Forum provides a rare opportunity for international leaders to help them build capacity and commitment towards advancing school feeding programs and policies. Over its first decade, the Forum has brought together over 200 governmental and non-governmental leaders from countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East to assist them in their efforts to establish or expand sustainable school feeding programs in their countries.

Delegates to the Global Child Nutrition Forum receive technical assistance in program planning, development, and operations. They learn how others are successfully meeting challenges through presentations, case studies, and discussion with fellow delegates. Also, through use of a school feeding toolkit, they glean insights on building governmental commitment toward school feeding. Through participating in GCNF's Forum, delegates become members of a growing global alliance of child nutrition and school feeding advocates.

Delegates at the 2009 Global Child Nutrition Forum Stellenbosch, South Africa



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Global Perspectives on School Feeding

- Speakers: **Gene White**, Global Child Nutrition Foundation
Arlene Mitchell, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Nancy Waters, UN World Food Programme

The Big Idea

School feeding works. It decreases hunger, increases enrollment and attendance, and improves student performance. But because of the large and growing number of hungry children in the world—which has been exacerbated by recent food and economic crises—even more must be done to expand the benefits of school feeding to more countries and more children.

Quick Summary

- Due to the current economic crisis and the recent food crisis, school feeding has never been more important.
- School feeding works. The challenge is how to make it work even better and benefit more children.
- Despite school feeding's success, making it work even better and scaling it more broadly faces significant challenges.
- Home grown school feeding has all of the benefits of school feeding along with economic development benefits for the local economy.
- Successfully expanding school feeding requires partnership with and cooperation from all key stakeholders.

Context

Leaders from GCNF, the Gates Foundation, and the World Food Programme laid the foundation for this Forum by focusing on the context for school feeding, the successes to date, the challenges faced, and the road forward.

Key Points

- **At this time of crisis, school feeding has never been more important.**

The world faces significant challenges related to poverty, food, and school feeding. 2.5 billion people live on less than \$2 per day and there are 1 billion chronically hungry people in the world. Each day 60 million children go to school hungry; this is expected to rise to 100 million by 2015. The recent food and fuel crises pushed 130-155 million people into poverty, and the global financial crisis pushed another 53 million people into poverty. These crises have decreased the availability and increased the cost of food, which has affected malnutrition. And while the rates of malnutrition grow, so do the rates of obesity.

In this context, school feeding has never been more important. The charge of those at this Forum is simple: create nutritionally adequate meals for children at school. But moving forward and achieving this mission is extremely complex.

"There has never been a more important time to have a conference like this."

— Gene White

- **School feeding works. It is a successful social policy, but more can and must be done.**

Both Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Waters emphasized that school feeding works. School feeding is a successful social policy that has been broadly adopted across the world. It is an instrument to end hunger.

"There is no longer a question of school feeding, yes or no. School feeding is the instrument to respond to hungry children."

— Nancy Waters

School feeding has many benefits: it helps decrease hunger, increase enrollment and attendance, and improve student performance. It targets the world's most vulnerable children, provides important nutrients, and helps prevent health problems like anemia and diarrhea.

Yet as successful as school feeding has been, it must be done right, which is not always the case. School feeding programs must be both effective and cost effective, and even more can and must be done to make school feeding work better and benefit more children.

- **In evolving to home grown school feeding, many important gaps need to be addressed.**

To fulfill school feeding's full potential, some shifts in thinking need to take place and important gaps need to be addressed.

Today, most school feeding programs in developing countries have similar designs. Food is donated by the United States or purchased with funds from other big donors. This system has the advantage of these donors having developed the expertise and systems to move donated food to poor children, even in remote areas. But this design has one big limitation: it leaves out most of the local economy, especially local farmers and business people.

Other important gaps in current school feeding programs include:

- *Farmer productivity.*
- *Nutrition.*
- *Purchasing systems.*
- *Governance, transparency, and accountability.*
- *Private sector integration.*
- *Cost containment and financing.*
- *Cooperation and coordination among stakeholders.*
- *Reaching scale so that no child leaves school hungry.*
- *Lack of attendance at school.* This includes children who live in remote areas, are part of nomadic groups, have disabilities, or are exploited in some way.

Also, it is important for everyone in school feeding to keep in mind that the children are human beings; not statistics.

- **To improve their programs, countries should focus on home grown school feeding.**

Home grown school feeding consists of supplying schools with food that is grown by local farmers; processed, fortified, and stored by local businesses; and prepared by local paid kitchen staff. The benefit of home grown school feeding is that school meals become a local economic development program. Local farmers and businesses get a new customer that buys 180 days per year, in a predictable fashion. These purchases give these farmers and businesses confidence to invest in better seeds and machinery; this provides new capacity to access new markets. It provides more jobs, more tax revenues, and national pride. Many countries are now adopting this approach.

"Home grown school feeding is already one of the most successful social policies in the history of the world."

— Arlene Mitchell

- **Many key organizations are working together to address the gaps that exist and improve school feeding.**

To continue to expand school feeding and to address the gaps that exist, all stakeholders must work together in partnerships. The organizations represented by these speakers—GCNF, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the UN World Food Programme—are all playing a key role. The involvement of each of these organizations includes:

- *GCNF.* This Forum represents a key aspect of GCNF's support. Countries review their situation and develop specific objectives and plans. GCNF provides each country with a primary contact to serve as a resource for the next two years.

- *Gates Foundation.* The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was founded nine years ago based on the concept that all lives have equal value. The Gates Foundation set out to reduce the obstacles that prevent people from reaching their full potential. The Gates Foundation pursues goals in three areas: 1) educational programs, especially in US secondary schools; 2) global health programs, with a focus on diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS; and 3) global development programs, with a focus on reducing hunger and poverty.

With regard to global development programs, the Gates Foundation is trying several approaches, including emphasis on financial services, like saving accounts. The Foundation is advocating increased awareness of and investment in addressing poverty and hunger, and is exploring ways to make big improvements in sanitation, hygiene, and water. Also, work is underway to support farmers, particularly female farmers in Africa, as they represent the backbone of African farming.

The Gates Foundation is particularly interested in school feeding programs as school feeding touches on all three of the Foundation's major areas of focus—education, health, and global development.

- *UN WFP.* WFP programs currently assist 20 million children who go to school hungry. Also, WFP has worked with the World Bank on a soon-to-be-released book which endorses school feeding as an instrument and provides evidence about what works best.

The Link Between Nutrition, Learning, and Cognitive Development in School-Aged Children

■ Speaker: **Prof. Demetre Labadarios**, Knowledge Systems, Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa)

The Big Idea

Research shows that nutrition is an important factor in children's physical and cognitive development. Therefore, interventions that prevent or address malnutrition, especially those that start when children are young, are critical in children's development.

Quick Summary

- Malnutrition hurts children's development.
- Nutritional interventions can combat the effects of malnutrition, benefiting children's physical and cognitive development.
- To work best, nutritional interventions must be targeted to those who are most disadvantaged and must be well executed.
- Before interventions take place, a child's specific problem must be understood. This is because many children in Africa have "leaky gut" and inflammation.

Context

Professor Labadarios summarized the scientific evidence on nutrition and the role it plays in children's development. He highlighted limitations and even hazards related to school feeding.

Key Points

■ Childhood development is extremely complex.

There is not one issue that determines childhood development; it is multifactorial and there are multiple developmental risks. Research shows there is an overlap between sensory motor development, social and emotional development, and cognition and language. A collection of factors determine a child's school performance, economic performance, and overall pattern of development.

■ Malnutrition affects children's cognitive development.

The current science shows why the work of school feeding is so important. Malnourished children are slower in making choices and take longer to complete cognitive tasks. Their "selective attention" is worse than in children who are properly nourished. Also, malnutrition is linked with children's low IQ.

An important research finding is that the cognitive deficits in children who suffer from malnutrition don't happen immediately; they occur over time. Older children who have experienced malnutrition fare even worse in measures of IQ. This shows that the longer that interventions are delayed, the worse the outcome.

"The later you leave an intervention, the worse the outcome."

— Prof. Demetre Labadarios

■ Interventions can combat the effects of malnutrition.

Research shows that improvements in nutrition lead to improvements in health and cognitive development. Children who receive nutritional interventions have improvements in weight, height, school attendance (of 4 to 6 days per year, which is significant), math performance, and cognition. Nutritional interventions are associated with improvements in IQ.

A meta-analysis of the scientific literature concludes that school meals have a "small" benefit among disadvantaged children. Professor Labadarios does not see the impact as small. He sees it as significant.

■ For nutritional interventions to work, they must be targeted appropriately and be well executed.

Interventions should be targeted at those who have nutritional deficiencies. In particular, the most disadvantaged children should be targeted, as this is where interventions provide the greatest benefit. And, interventions must take place early.

For interventions to work, good nutrition needs to be provided in a careful, appropriate, sustainable way. Interventions should be provided through well-run schools. They should be administered by local people who know the language and culture, and the food provided must be liked or it won't be eaten. (Consideration must be given to the type of food. Most interventions consist of starchy foods, but foods of animal origin ameliorate malnutrition faster.)

Other Important Points

■ **Leakage of the gut.** For many African children, the problem they are experiencing is a "leaky gut." Food causes inflammation because their body views food as a foreign substance. This condition is related to stunting, and stunting is related to obesity. This shows that nutritional interventions don't solve all problems. It is essential to understand a child's situation and the problem that needs to be solved. Those involved in nutritional interventions need to recognize that in some situations food can actually be dangerous. While nutrition is tremendously important, some words to keep in mind: "First, do no harm."

■ **De-worming.** This is a valuable adjunct to school feeding programs. Heavy worm infestations contribute to inflammation and exacerbate micronutrient deficiencies.

■ **Breastfeeding works.** The benefits of breastfeeding are beyond debate. Extensive research supports breastfeeding, including evidence that it is associated with a higher IQ for the child. The World Health Organization's policy is that mothers should breast-feed exclusively for six months. However, in Africa, fewer than 40% of women breastfeed and only 10-15% of women breast-feed exclusively for six months. The challenge is to ensure that the majority of women understand the benefits of breastfeeding.

School Feeding Working Paper

■ Speakers: **Nancy Walters**, UN World Food Programme
Carmen Burbano, UN World Food Programme

The Big Idea

The evidence shows that school feeding works. It has educational, nutritional, economic, and societal benefits. The challenge is scaling school feeding programs to reach more children and to reduce/eliminate hunger among children in school. Research from the UN World Food Programme, included in a new book on school feeding, shows that the keys to a sustainable school feeding program are a country's policy framework, its financial capacity, and its institutional capacity.

Quick Summary

- School feeding works. The challenge is scaling it and making it sustainable.
- The key drivers of making school feeding sustainable are a policy framework, financial capacity, and institutional capacity.
- WFP has a clear vision of ensuring that no child is hungry at school, with specific strategies to achieve this vision.
- A key element of the strategy is developing best practices and a knowledge base.
- WFP and World Bank have a book that provides guidance on designing and implementing school feeding programs.

Context

Nancy Walters provided an overview of the UN World Food Programme's policy and strategy. Carmen Burbano summarized the content and findings from a soon-to-be-released book on school feeding from WFP and the World Bank.

Key Points (Walters)

■ WFP is focused on ensuring no child is hungry at school.

Over 60 million children go to school hungry, which is expected to grow to more than 100 million by 2015. WFP is the largest international organizer of school feeding programs, yet these programs only reach 20 million children, leaving a large gap.

WFP's vision: *WFP will work with national governments and all partners and stakeholders to advocate for and ensure that no child is hungry at school.*

The benefits of school feeding programs are many. They include:

- *Income transfer.* School feeding is a scalable, effective social protection instrument, most effective as a safety net when it targets the poorest areas.
- *Education.* School feeding gets children into school, keeps them there, and enables them to learn.
- *Nutrition.* When school feeding rations are combined with deworming and micronutrient fortification, they offer important nutritional benefits.

- *Equitable access.* School feeding contributes to gender equality and provides access to school for children affected by HIV, IDP, and OVCs.
- *Local development.* School feeding is linked to local economic and agricultural development.

■ Opportunities exist that make it possible for WFP to achieve its vision, but challenges exist as well.

Opportunities exist to alleviate hunger among children. They include:

- *Most countries want school feeding.* National governments around the world see the benefits of school feeding and want school feeding programs in their countries.
- *Innovative partnerships have emerged focused on school feeding.* This includes partnerships among governments, NGOs, regional networks, private sector entities, and more.
- *The funding architecture is evolving.* School feeding programs are increasingly receiving multi-year funding, which enables them to engage in long-term planning. More funding is being provided in cash, which provides greater flexibility in how and where funds are spent. Also, governments are providing funding, often through funds from the World Bank, that are being channeled through government for school feeding.
- *There is advocacy for large-scale safety net programs.* Many organizations, including the US government and the World Bank, see school feeding as a way to reach and assist the hungry. Organizations are calling for WFP to set standards, establish national strategies, and guide international efforts on school feeding.
- *There is strong recognition of and support for school feeding.* Many organizations from different countries and sectors have publicly recognized the success of school feeding. This provides a solid basis for school feeding to move forward.

Still, while the opportunities for school feeding are great, formidable challenges remain. Among them:

- *Insufficient funding.* More funding is needed to scale school feeding worldwide.
- *Insufficient quality.* Some programs are not high quality. Improvements are needed in the planning and design.
- *Insufficient government ownership.* In some countries the government is not an owner of the school feeding program.
- *Insufficient coordination.* Today there remains significant fragmentation among school feeding programs.

The good news: the challenges are manageable.

■ WFP has developed a clear strategy for achieving its vision.

Actually, the strategy that WFP has developed is not a solo strategy for WFP; the strategy is about working together with partners to achieve the necessary scale in school feeding. This strategy has the following components:

- **Implementation support.** This entails providing support to organizations that are interested in pursuing school feeding. It includes support for program assessment and design; support for pilots; and support through workshops.
- **Strategic thought leadership.** This entails building a knowledge base with global best practices. It also involves identifying gaps in best practices and conducting research to address these gaps.
- **Global partnership, advocacy, and fundraising.** This entails building a global alliance to support school feeding, securing additional funding, and hosting a high-level conference.

“We want to learn and grab all knowledge possible [about school feeding] to build global best practices and a global knowledge base . . . we want to go to governments with options and with cost/benefit information.”
— Nancy Walters

Among the key changes in WFP’s policies are strategies that are: focusing on the outcomes of being a safety net; focusing on the essential part of the essential package; and providing support to preschools. Also, WFP is supporting sustainable, nationally owned school feeding programs that aim to source entirely from within a country’s borders.

■ **Already, several important school feeding best practices have been identified.**

Experience has shown that creating a sustainable school feeding program is a transitional process, as shown below.



THE TRANSITION OF SCHOOL FEEDING

	Programs rely mostly on external funding and implementation	→				Programs rely on national funding and implementation
Policy framework for school feeding	Limited	Increased	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Govt financial capacity	Limited	Moderate	Increased	Strong	Strong	Strong
Gov’t institutional capacity	Limited	Weak	Moderate	Increased	Strong	Strong

WFP’s role is to support the transition process

Initially school feeding programs rely on external funding and implementation, and then they must evolve to rely on national funding and implementation. During this transition, the policy framework for school feeding must go from limited to strong; the government’s financial capacity to support school feeding must grow; and the government’s institutional capacity must mature. It is WFP’s role to support this transition.

WFP’s involvement occurs through high-level meetings with donors and government officials, a workshop focused on developing a national school feeding strategy, a school feeding assessment, and a school feeding project design and implementation plan.

Key Points (Burbano)

Ms. Burbano summarized the conclusions from *Rethinking School Feeding*, a soon-to-be-released book on school feeding from WFP and the World Bank. This book began as a modest project to provide countries with guidance on how to scale school feeding programs in response to the global food crisis. In conducting research, it became apparent that there was no comprehensive summary of the evidence on the impact of school feeding. There was also no guidance on the design and implementation of school feeding programs. This book provides that guidance.

■ **Where the need for school feeding is greatest, the coverage provided by school feeding is least adequate.**

In writing this book, the authors analyzed school feeding programs across the world. They categorized countries as:

- **Category 1.** Countries where school feeding is available in most schools, always or sometimes. These tend to be high-income countries where school feeding is part of the government policy.
- **Category 2.** Countries where school feeding is available in some way, at some scale.
- **Category 3.** Countries where school feeding is available in the most food-insecure regions.
- **Category 4.** Countries where no school feeding is available. No countries have been found that lack any school feeding, but there are countries for which no data is available.

From this analysis, it was apparent that most countries have school feeding programs. This analysis also showed that where the need for school feeding is greatest the coverage is least adequate. However, even when the coverage is least adequate, there is usually a school feeding program in place, providing a foundation to scale up.

■ **The benefits of school feeding are beyond debate.**

A review of the evidence shows that school feeding works. It acts as a safety net, providing more effective results than many other types of safety nets. It is progressive, meaning that the majority of benefits go to the poorest households, and the targeting of this intervention is similar to conditional cash transfers.

School feeding produces educational benefits, including increased enrollment, attendance, cognition, and educational achievement. It also yields nutritional benefits, particularly related to de-worming and fortification.

“We are beyond the debate of whether school feeding makes sense or not: it does. The issue is how to improve sustainability and effectiveness.”
— Carmen Burbano

- **The costs of school feeding programs are at times criticized; there are opportunities for cost improvement.**

In many countries, the relative cost of school feeding is high compared with the GDP and the spending on education. However, this is usually because GDP and expenditures on education are so low. As GDP increases and educational spending increases, the relative expenditures on school feeding decrease.

"As countries develop, the cost of school feeding doesn't change much, but the cost of education increases as countries invest more."

— Carmen Burbano

However, even in poorly developed countries there is large variation among countries in the cost of school feeding. This indicates that opportunities exist to improve cost containment.

- **Making school feeding sustainable requires national policies and capabilities.**

As was shown above, making school feeding sustainable is a transition. The key components of this transition are:

— *Policy framework.* Countries that are able to sustain school feeding have explicit government policies that support education and school feeding. Lack of such policies is a barrier to program sustainability.

"Having school feeding embedded in a national policy framework is a precondition for sustainability."

— Carmen Burbano

— *Financial capacity.* In countries that sustain school feeding, the government is committed to providing the financial resources

to support it on an ongoing basis. Reaching this level of government commitment is typically a process. Often a transition occurs. Initially school feeding programs are funded by WFP or other external organizations, but over time the national government assumes more and more financial responsibility. This is critical for sustainability.

— *Institutional capacity.* In addition to funding, for school feeding programs to be sustainable a country must have the capacity and resources to implement school feeding on an ongoing basis.

The transition from externally funded to nationally owned programs can take up to 25 years.

- **The design and procurement practices of school feeding programs should be regularly assessed.**

There is not a recipe for an effective school feeding program. The "right" school feeding program depends on specific contextual factors such as costs, infrastructure, and resource availability.

What is important is that an in-depth analysis takes place to assess each school feeding program's design. Among the most important design considerations is whether the program should serve meals, snacks (such as fortified biscuits), or take-home rations. An assessment should look at the expected benefits, advantages and trade-offs, costs, and type of food.

Also, the procurement practices of school feeding programs should be assessed to determine the best sources for procurement. This might include international sources, national sources, procurement close to school, or community-based school feeding.

Global Initiative: Home Grown/School Feeding Programs

■ Speaker: **Arlene Mitchell**, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The Big Idea

Agriculture can transform countries. Home grown school feeding programs provide children with the benefits of nutritious food and provide communities with economic development benefits by providing a new market for farmers and food-related businesses. School feeding faces many challenges, such as financing, transparency, and lack of production capacity. But for every challenge there is good news in that progress is being made.

Quick Summary

- Agriculture is the key to reducing hunger and poverty. Societies can be transformed through agriculture.
- Historically agriculture has been neglected. Because of the potential impact of agricultural development, it is a priority of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- School feeding's health and educational benefits are known.
- Home grown school feeding is an approach to school feeding where all aspects of the programs occur locally. In addition to helping students, this helps the local economy.
- School feeding programs face numerous challenges. But progress is being made in addressing most of these challenges.

Context

Arlene Mitchell explained why the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is focused on agriculture, discussed home grown school feeding, and outlined the challenges that school feeding programs must overcome.

Key Points

- **The Gates Foundation has prioritized agricultural development because of its transformative power.**

In choosing where to focus, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation asked, "What issues affect the most people? What issues have been neglected? Where can we make the greatest impact?" One area that fits with each question is agricultural development.

Agriculture is critical to reducing hunger and poverty. Most people living on \$1 per day rely on agriculture for their food and income. In sub-Saharan Africa, farming accounts for two-thirds of labor and one-third of GDP.

Importantly, agriculture has the potential to transform a society. Reducing hunger and poverty on a large scale starts with agriculture. Agriculture growth is 2-4 times more effective for the poor than non-agricultural growth.

"Almost no country has managed a rapid rise out of hunger and poverty without increasing its agricultural productivity."

— Arlene Mitchell

However, despite the importance of agriculture, it has been largely neglected over the past few decades, particularly in sub-Saharan countries.

Because of the importance and transformative power of agriculture, the Gates Foundation has made agricultural development a priority. The Foundation has developed the following agricultural vision: *Agricultural development is a powerful, sustainable answer to hunger and poverty. The goal of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is to provide hundreds of millions of small farmers with tools and opportunities to boost their yields, increase their incomes, and build better lives.*

With farming as the focus, the Gates Foundation is particularly focused on sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as these are the geographies where the need is the greatest. Also, the Gates Foundation has adopted an approach where the focus on results is relentless, which has often not been the case for development assistance. Among the key measures of success: increased household income among farmers; increased weight for children; and increased quality and quantity of people's diets.

In pursuing its agricultural goals, the Gates Foundation aims to build strong partnerships with other organizations that have similar goals. The organization's largest agricultural partner is the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), which has a seed program, a focus on soil science, and a focus on agricultural development at the country level.

- **The benefits of school feeding, particularly home grown school feeding, are well established. It must be expanded.**

School feeding is one of the most successful social programs in history. It reduces child hunger, improves enrollment and attendance, and leads to better school achievement. When school meals are fortified, they can prevent or mitigate health conditions. Also, school feeding programs can be targeted at specific groups, such as those in food-insecure regions.

Over the past 10 years, huge achievements have taken place in the area of school feeding. The World Food Programme almost doubled the number of children being served; support among developed governments has increased, as has support among poor governments. NGOs and the private sector have developed expertise, and the amount of research in this area has expanded.

Of particular importance is the development of the home grown approach to school feeding, which expands the benefits of school feeding programs. Home grown school feeding means:

- School food is sourced from a country's own farms.
- School food is processed, fortified, and stored by local businesses.
- School food is prepared and served by local kitchen staff.
- The school food program is owned by the national government and by local businesses, schools, parents, and communities.

— *The program provides economic benefit to the community.*

Home grown school feeding creates a positive virtuous cycle: farmers, knowing they will have steady demand, make investments; this increases productivity, which creates profits and jobs; taxes are generated for the government, which allows communities to do more school feeding; and all of this contributes to greater political and economic stability.

▪ **School feeding programs face many formidable challenges. But these challenges are all being addressed.**

Ms. Mitchell laid out eight challenges to school feeding. While each challenge is significant, there is good news regarding the progress being made in addressing each challenge.

1. **Challenge: Farmers' ability to produce the right food.** The specific challenge is producing the right quantity and quality of food in the right time frame to meet students' needs. Producing the right amount is tricky as farmers often lack the capacity and the seeds, tools, and knowledge to produce the appropriate quantities.

The good news: Progress is being made in identifying new crop varieties, new seeds are being disseminated, and organizations are investing to help build production capacity.

2. **Challenge: Nutrition.** The challenge is knowing what nutrition children need and ensuring they get the right amounts of calories and micronutrients (but not too much). We still don't know enough about nutrition and micronutrient needs, and we need to keep in mind the danger of obesity—it can be a danger for those who get enough food after having had too little.

The good news: Private sector research is very helpful and new methods of fortifying provide new opportunities.

3. **Challenge: Purchasing from small-scale farmers.** Lack of market information, literacy, and business skills, especially in rural areas, are barriers. Pricing can be tricky. Aggregation of food, storage of it, and especially transport can be difficult.

The good news: Cell phones are empowering even distant and poor farmers. For example, a female farmer in Senegal, when asked if she was getting a fair price for her peanut oil, replied that since she had a cell phone her buyer could no longer cheat her. Also, commodity exchanges and farmers' associations are being strengthened.

4. **Challenge: Integrating the private sector.** Creating an environment that is attractive to the private sector can be challenging. This includes policies and legal frameworks and requires creating an environment where the private sector is accepted and respected and where the private sector respects development workers. Integrating the private sector also means adjusting the quest for profits to the realities of developing countries.

The good news: New entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs are increasingly common and are tackling many critical issues.

5. **Challenge: Governance, transparency, & accountability.** Any time a significant amount of resources changes hands, as it does in school feeding, there is an opportunity for leakage. This leakage can come from insects, bad storage, or bad behavior. The problem has been exacerbated when too much ownership and management has resided with expatriates.

The good news: Several steps are being taken to improve governance, transparency, and accountability and to reduce leakage. This includes a shift in ownership to national governments and local communities. More local communities are creating watchdog groups that are demanding accountability, and new technologies provide better tracking.

6. **Challenge: Financing and administration.** Increasingly the question of cost is being raised, along with questions about cost containment. Also, stakeholders are asking how home grown school feeding programs can be financed. The big issue is how financing will take place during the transition period when school feeding programs go from being externally financed to financed by the national government. Administratively, one of the key questions is where in government school feeding programs reside.

The good news: There are many countries that are pioneers. They have made the transition and have paved the way. Much can be learned from their experiences.

7. **Challenge: Cooperation between interested parties.** While there is general interest among many organizations in forming a coalition for school feeding, there remains confusion and even competition between some organizations. There are different ideas about going forward and different ideas about who should be leading these collaborative efforts.

The good news: Organizations realize that they can't go it alone; success requires collaboration. The Gates Foundation is proposing a comprehensive coordinating mechanism run by the Partnership for Child Development (PCD). This organization has extensive experience building networks and coordinating activities, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Including agriculture into what they are already doing is a good fit.

On a local basis, what is envisioned are local school health committees that are chaired by the government and which involve education, health, and agriculture. These committees identify priorities, approaches, resources, and gaps. Gaps that can't be addressed locally are referred to PCD for assistance. PCD intervenes, providing the appropriate resources.

8. **Challenge: Addressing the need.** This is the greatest challenge of all. Tens of millions of children don't go to school because they are hungry, and others go to school but are too hungry to perform well.

The good news: The Millennium Development Goals have focused worldwide attention on this problem and as a result, home grown school feeding is gaining momentum.

"Getting the agriculture piece right will help us address these huge needs."

— Arlene Mitchell

Practical Applications: Case Study Panel

- Speakers: **Deaconess Deborah Mojirola Adepoju**, Special Advisor to the Governor (Nigeria)
Dr. Emmanuel Ohene Afoakwa, Executive Secretary, African Network for School Feeding Programmes (Ghana)
Alice Martin Daihirou, UN World Food Programme (Mali)

The Big Idea

School feeding programs aren't new. What is relatively new is the focus of many countries on building sustainable school feeding programs which link school feeding with local farm production. This linkage represents a transition where countries go from procuring the food for school feeding externally to procuring it internally. This transition takes government commitment and policies, financial support, and the capacity to execute a domestic school feeding program. The benefits go beyond the health and educational benefits of school feeding to include economic development.

Quick Summary

- In each case study, the health and educational benefits of school feeding were clear. Among them: healthier students and better school attendance.
- School feeding isn't new. Countries have experience with such programs. However, procurement and funding tend to be external, and these programs can be fragile.
- A more sustainable program is one where procurement is done locally. This not only delivers health and educational benefits, it provides jobs and other economic development benefits.
- A home grown school feeding program is a transition. It requires government support, appropriate policies, national capacity, an adequate agricultural system, financial capacity, community support, and private sector involvement.
- Home grown school feeding is not just a concept. Several countries, such as Ghana, are actively pursuing and having success with home grown school feeding.

Context

Representatives of the school feeding programs in Nigeria, Ghana, and Mali described the history, evolution, goals, and strategies for school feeding programs in their country.

Key Points (Nigeria)

Ms. Adepoju described the efforts underway in Nigeria to link sustainable school feeding and local farm production.

- **In Nigeria, school feeding is seen as critical to children's education and health.**

The vision for school feeding in Nigeria is to have well-nourished, healthy children who are happy and eager to complete basic education. The health goals for school feeding are to reduce hunger and malnutrition and improve the health status of children. The educational goals are to increase enrollment and attendance, improve learning capacity, and decrease gender disparities.

"School feeding is at the forefront of contemporary debate about healthy eating."

— Deaconess Deborah Mojirola Adepoju

- **Making school feeding sustainable requires involving communities and farmers in "home grown" school feeding.**

School feeding in Nigeria is not new. As early as the 1950s and 1960s, milk and other food items were provided to school. But these programs were not sustainable. They relied on external donors and were eventually discontinued due to funding challenges.

This has led those involved in school feeding in Nigeria to conclude that for school feeding to be effective it must be sustainable. For school feeding to be sustainable the food must be grown locally.

In 2005, Nigeria embarked on creating a sustainable school feeding program. This program includes funding from the national, state, and local governments. The emphasis is on locally grown and sourced food. The goals are not just health and education benefits for students; objectives include creating jobs, reducing poverty, and stimulating the local economy.

- **The key to sustainable school feeding is local farm production.**

Sustainable school feeding programs require local farmers who grow the foodstuffs used in schools. It is the local farmers who form the backbone of school feeding. Connecting local farmers with school feeding programs provides an important market for farmers. Local farm production can sustain school feeding because the food produced by local farmers is fresh, cheap, easy and quick to access. Ultimately, local agricultural production moves school feeding towards community ownership.

"Sustained school feeding and local farm production are inseparable."

— Deaconess Deborah Mojirola Adepoju

In Nigeria, farmers face several challenges. Production is below optimum levels for every crop. Farmers lack fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides, and they lack insurance against crop failure.

More support and guidance for farmers is required in areas such as: roads and irrigation infrastructure; providing information on soil fertility, seed supply, and water management; and encouraging farmers to form groups to enhance productivity and marketing. This support and investments in infrastructure will enhance food security, availability, accessibility, and utilization.

Key Points (Ghana)

Dr. Afoakwa reviewed the progress Ghana has made in creating a sustainable home grown school feeding program, which is a model for other countries.

■ Ghana has successfully piloted home grown school feeding and is now expanding it.

The key issues associated with school feeding are well documented: malnutrition in Africa is high and it affects students' health, attendance, academic performance, and economic opportunities. School feeding helps address these issues and addresses several Millennium Development Goals, specifically: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; and reducing child mortality.

"Malnourished children become adults with limited opportunities and capacities, undermining their human and economic development."

— Dr. Emmanuel Ohene Afoakwa

There is a history for school feeding in Africa, and for home grown school feeding. Several task forces, reports, and organizations have cited the benefits of school feeding. But school feeding programs were not enough. School feeding had to be linked with agricultural development and had to be based on locally/domestically produced food.

With that as the background, in 2005 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to enhance cooperation on home grown school feeding. Ten pilot countries, including Ghana, were designated. This timing coincided with other school feeding efforts in Ghana. In 2004, Ghana began assessing its school feeding program and in 2005 attended the GCNF conference. Following this conference, the Minister of Agriculture was briefed on the nutritional, educational, social, and economic benefits of school feeding—and was interested in piloting home grown school feeding.

In 2007, Ghana's school feeding program reached about 200,000 children. The program fed about 500,000 children in 2008, will reach 800,000 children in 2009, and is expected to feed more than 1 million children in 2009.

"The success we have experienced in Ghana is a model for Africa."

— Dr. Emmanuel Ohene Afoakwa

■ Ghana's experience shows that home grown school feeding is a transition process with multiple key factors.

Dr. Afoakwa described home grown school feeding as a "transition ladder." The transition involves going from a school feeding program where all procurement is external to a home grown school feeding program. There are several critical elements in this transition. They include:

- *Government commitment.* Transitioning from a system with external procurement to a home grown system requires significant and long-term government support. Such a transition can't occur without government support.

- *Program leadership.* Having a strong leader of a country's school feeding program is essential.
- *National capacity.* A country must have the infrastructure, the knowledge, the tools, and the markets to be able to implement home grown school feeding.
- *A home grown agricultural system.* Related to national capacity is developing an agricultural system that can produce the necessary types and quantities of products. Creating such an agricultural system requires investing in fertilizers and other aspects of soil health; developing good water management for increased crop yield and food safety; and having seed delivery systems. Ideally, the agricultural system will be able to continuously increase its productivity, especially in food-insecure regions.
- *Financial capacity.* This will always be the greatest challenge. In Ghana, the transition to a home grown program is being supported financially by several different types of taxes, including a tax on cell phone calls.
- *Community participation.* For home grown school feeding to work, the community must be engaged and supportive. Meals are prepared by community members.
- *Private sector involvement.* Home grown school feeding requires the involvement of the private sector. The private sector can be involved in providing processing, storage, transportation, and equipment, and in making markets work.

Also important is working with development partners, such as the GCNF, the World Food Programme, the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, USDA, USAID, and more.

Ghana expects amazing results. These include increased height and weight of school children; good health; increased school enrollment, attendance, and retention; increased income for farmers; increased employment; and increased sustainable food production. The country also expects school feeding to help it achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

However, Ghana must also overcome several challenges which include sustaining the political will of the government, stimulating and winning the confidence of development partners, training food handlers, and inter-sectoral coordination.

"Ghana has faced lots of challenges [in transitioning to home grown school feeding] but we are passionate, focused, committed, and can't be stopped."

— Dr. Emmanuel Ohene Afoakwa

Key Points (Mali)

Ms. Daihirou described Mali's progress in taking steps to create a sustainable school feeding program.

■ The opportunities to improve school feeding in Mali are significant.

Mali is a large country. The population of 13.5 million is dispersed, with many people living in remote, food-insecure areas. About 20% of school-age children are not in school. While

the country is familiar with school feeding, previous school feeding programs have been put aside due to cost. Today, only about 1,000 out of 9,000 schools have school feeding and only about 8.5% of students are reached through these programs. The result: there are many children in need.

And the needs extend beyond lack of school feeding. There are gender disparities, health issues, and economic issues. The hope is that an integrated school feeding program can improve children's health (through de-worming and improved hygiene and nutrition), improve enrollment and retention, and improve economic development.

- **The national government is leading the transition to sustainable school feeding, but long term, responsibility must reside with local communities.**

After representatives attended the 2007 GCNF conference, Mali decided to articulate a policy on school feeding. The new Minister of Education saw the benefits but pushed for creating a sustainable program.

"He said, 'Tell me how you will sustain it.' The government is willing to start it, but the government can't commit to sustain it long term."

— Alice Martin Daihirou, quoting Mali's Minister of Education

Stakeholders from across the country convened and individuals from other countries were invited to share their school feeding experiences. The conclusion: it was necessary for the government to develop and put in place a school feeding policy. That policy has been developed and the government is now going through the process of putting a strategy in place.

The strategy calls for helping local villages and communities eventually own their school feeding programs. It also calls for making school feeding sustainable and prioritizing certain schools, such as those in the most vulnerable and food-insecure geographies. It envisions that the government will provide initial funding for three years and that long-term responsibility for school feeding and funding will be assumed by local communities.

A sustainable program requires developing local agricultural capabilities (because the costs of transportation across Mali are high and prohibitive), developing necessary infrastructure, and developing local private sector involvement (including processing, transportation, and markets).

GCNF Country Funding Study

■ Speakers: **Donna Wittrock**, GCNF Ambassador

The Big Idea

Research studies are important in creating guidelines for effective school feeding programs. The study described in this session provides information about the most common policies and funding mechanisms. Investments in research will help provide the types of information necessary to help those overseeing school feeding programs make good decisions as they start and expand their school feeding programs.

Quick Summary

- A survey of delegates provides important information about the most common funding mechanisms and policy frameworks to support school feeding.
- Another survey is about to be initiated that will take an in-depth look at funding and policies in four countries.

Context

Donna Wittrock reviewed a study being conducted on school feeding policy and funding mechanisms.

Key Points

Ms. Wittrock described a study being conducted on policy and funding mechanisms to advance school feeding globally.

- **Among the objectives of this study: to serve as a guide for countries around sustainable school feeding programs.**

The specific goals of this study are to:

1. Obtain information on national policy and funding mechanisms that support sustainable school feeding programs.
2. Share this information as a guide for officials in countries to establish or expand sustainable school feeding programs linked to small farm production.

This study has two phases:

1. A survey of the 2009 Forum delegates. Among attending delegates, 80% responded, representing 11 countries (Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia).
2. An in-depth study of four targeted countries which will go into greater detail on policies and funding.

- **Research on funding shows that national funding is generally available.**

The first phase of research asked delegates about the sources of funding for school feeding programs, which department disperses the funds, and the entities that administer school feeding.

Sources of funding

- 67% report that national funding is available. This may not represent all of the funding provided or adequate funding, but it does show that national funding is a key funding source.
- Other sources of funding include WFP (90%), NGOs (50%), local funding sources (30%), and provincial funding (10%). These numbers add to more than 100% as there may be multiple sources.

Disbursement of funding

- Funds are most frequently dispersed by the Ministry of Education (50%), followed by Finance/Treasury (25%), Finance/Education (25%), and local government (1%).

Administration of funding

- Funding for school feeding programs is administered by many different types of entities. Most common is national government (70%), along with WFP (59%), NGO/PVOs (59%), local communities (47%), and provincial/state government (35%). It is common for countries to have multiple entities responsible for administering programs.

- **No countries that were surveyed have universal school feeding programs; all target their programs in some way.**

Research questions dealing with policies asked about what policies are in place related to school feeding, the targeting of school feeding programs, and the challenges faced in sustaining school feeding.

Policies related to school feeding

Countries have developed several major national policies related to school feeding. These include policies that:

- Are tied to domestic food production (this is the most common type of policy in place)
- Deal with community-driven home grown school feeding
- Are part of poverty reduction
- Target feeding the poorest areas
- Reduce hunger in the country
- Focus on the children's rights to receive food and education

Targeting of school feeding

School feeding is being targeted to:

- The poorest schools in selected sections of the country (57%)
- All schools in selected sections of the country (21%)
- The poorest schools throughout the entire country (21%)
- All schools in the entire country (0%)

Biggest challenges to sustaining school feeding

Different delegates cited many challenges as the biggest ones that they face. They include:

- Lack of sufficient funding. This is the greatest challenge. Some respondents say that enough funds have been allocated, but these funds haven't been launched or endorsed. Others say that there is not enough funding for all of the schools and

children, and still others are worried about funding when WFP funding is phased out. Also, delegates commented about funding concerns related to the global economic crisis.

- The need for more technical assistance.
- Insufficient infrastructure, such as warehousing and transportation.
- Lack of capacity to produce food for all schools, especially those in the poorest areas.
- Poor networks and communication.
- Continued community support.

▪ **This study is now moving to Phase II.**

This phase will study the funding and policies of four countries in much greater detail. Criteria for selecting these countries have been established, such as geographic diversity and accessible data. The questions to be asked and the sources of data to be used are being determined. Interviews will be conducted and data analyzed. The deadline for this phase is November 2009.

GCNF China Study

■ Speakers: **Stan Garnett** and **Gene White**, Consultant Volunteers, GCNF

The Big Idea

Following the devastating earthquake in China, school feeding is playing a critical role in the immediate recovery and the long-term development of China's educational system and economy.

Quick Summary

- This case study comes from an on-site needs assessment of the situation in Sichuan Province, China.
- This assessment showed that the situation in Sichuan is very difficult and school feeding is serving as a safety net.
- There is great optimism that school feeding can be a catalyst for economic recovery and renewal.
- Among the steps for school feeding to move forward, there needs to be an inventory of all resources and information; there must be networks and partnerships; and there need to be new models for school feeding.

Context

Gene White and Stan Garnett described their needs assessment study, conducted in April of 2009. This assessment was in regard to the recovery and development process in Sichuan Province, China following the devastating earthquake that hit this area in 2008.

This study followed a request by the Education Bureau of Deyang for technical assistance. The needs assessment focused on developing a sustainable school feeding program in the aftermath of the devastating May 13, 2008 earthquake in Sichuan. This 8.0 earthquake killed and injured 80,000, left 4,000 orphans, and destroyed thousands of schools, possibly as many as 14,000.

The purpose of the assessment was to determine the needs and options for developing a model school feeding program in targeted schools in Deyang, and to identify the role of school feeding in an area of the country recovering from shock. The needs assessment consisted of visiting several schools in Sichuan and Deyang, and meeting with principals, teachers, and foodservice staff.

Key Points

■ The situation in Sichuan Province is very difficult.

The amount of destruction and the impact on schools is significant. In several locations, "tent schools" have been erected. (These were originally tents but are now one-story pre-fab shelters.) The schools visited have a considerable number of boarders; many are orphans whose parents were killed in the earthquake.

Throughout China, there is no national school feeding program. Each province, and in many ways each school, operates as a separate entity. There is little sharing of information. And the school feeding programs that do exist tend to be inefficient. At

many schools, due to minimal storage capacity, food must be purchased daily from local markets.

■ School feeding is seen as a safety net both immediately and in the long term.

For the thousands of children now living at schools, the school feeding program is a necessary safety net. In the longer term, school feeding can be a safety net in providing students with healthy food. To provide this safety net, those involved in education and school feeding desire food and nutrition standards for meals are served in schools. Currently, foods are not enriched or fortified. Nutritional standards could help lead to healthier food.

■ There is optimism about the potential for school feeding to be a catalyst in recovery and renewal.

Even amid the current crisis, many individuals in China are optimistic. While the crisis has brought great difficulties, the recovery provides the potential for a fresh start. Those connected with education and school feeding see the potential for new facilities and equipment, for creating more efficient operations, and for training their staff members on modern food preparation practices. Amazingly, many individuals see school feeding as a catalyst for an improved educational system.

"If we can get school feeding to where we want it, it will open new doors for education."

— Gene White, quoting an individual she met in China

■ For school feeding to move forward in Sichuan and throughout China, several important steps are necessary.

The needs assessment identified several actions that are required. These include:

- *Creating an inventory of the resources and information that exist.* The first step is to inventory what already exists in China. A great deal of information and technical assistance already exists, but these resources have not been identified.
- *Creating networks and partnerships for information sharing.* After the resources and information have been identified, ways to share this information need to be created. For example, principals and foodservice staff members in Sichuan want nutritional standards. It turns out, a think tank in Beijing has developed nutritional standards for Chinese school feeding programs, but these standards have not been shared. Networks for sharing information are needed.
- *Developing models for school feeding programs.* Local stakeholders need to work together to develop models for school feeding programs. While in China, Ms. White and Mr. Garnett worked on a draft of a model.
- *Exploring potential funding sources.* Ultimately, funding is critical. While more can be done with current funding, to provide more food, facilities, and training, more funding is required. Thus, a key next step is finding funding sources for school feeding programs.

Brazil—Successes and Examples of Purchasing from Local Farmers: Progress and Challenges

■ Speaker: **Daniel Balaban**, President, National Fund for Education Development

The Big Idea

Brazil's universal school feeding program is well developed and provides a model for other countries to consider. This program is grounded in policy, most notably the country's constitution. It is financed by the central government but administered locally by School Feeding Councils in each municipality. New laws will extend Brazil's school feeding program and will link it to family farmers.

Quick Summary

- Brazil has a legally mandated universal school feeding program. All 49 million students in all 165,000 schools participate.
- The program is grounded in policy and law, with clear guiding principles and guidelines.
- The majority of funding for Brazil's school feeding program comes from the central government. It is distributed to states and municipalities to purchase food.
- Each municipality has a School Feeding Council that oversees all aspects of the local school feeding program.
- New laws require that at least 30% of school feeding funds be used to purchase from family farmers, linking school feeding with economic development.

Context

Daniel Balaban described the evolution and administration of Brazil's universal school feeding program. He also explained recent changes in the laws to promote family farms as part of the school feeding program.

Key Points

■ In Brazil universal school feeding is legally mandated.

Brazil's population of 189 million includes 49 million students in 5,563 municipalities who attend 165,000 public schools.

In 1955 school feeding was a regional humanitarian campaign based on international donations. Beginning in 1974, school feeding for the poorest municipalities was funded by Brazil's central government. In 1994, the country began universal school feeding for all students in all public schools. This program is a direct resource transfer. Resources are transferred from the central government to states and municipalities. The amount of the transfer is based on the number of students.

In 1955, Brazil's school feeding program reached 85,000 students in 340 schools in 137 municipalities. In 2009, the universal school feeding program will reach all 49 million students in all 165,000 schools in all 5,563 municipalities.

Brazil's school feeding program is grounded in the country's policy framework. The key national policies are:

- *Brazil's Federal Constitution*. The country's Constitution, which was created in 1988, established school feeding as a right.

"School feeding was established as a right in the country's Constitution."

— Daniel Balaban

- *Guidelines and Basis of Education Law*. These educational guidelines, created in 1996, reiterate that school feeding is a right for all students.
- *Nutrition and Food Security Law*. This 2006 law focused on the nutritional aspects of school feeding.
- *FNDE Resolutions*. These resolutions clarified how funds are distributed and to be used.
- *New legislation*. Newly passed laws (discussed below) further expand Brazil's school feeding program and make family agriculture a key component of school feeding.

In addition to these policies, Brazil's universal school feeding program is grounded in the following principles:

- *Universality*. The belief that school feeding is a human right.
- *Equality*. All students should be treated equally.
- *Decentralization*. The notion that federal funds should be transferred to states and municipalities for implementation.
- *Continuity*. The idea that the school feeding should be continuous throughout the school year.
- *Social control*. The concept that school feeding should be controlled locally by School Feeding Councils.

The key guidelines of Brazil's school feeding program are:

- Use appropriate and healthy food.
- Include education about food and nutrition in the curriculum.
- Respect regional customs and culture in the foods that are prepared and served in school.
- Support sustainable development. This includes training and purchasing from local farmers.

■ Funds to support school feeding flow from the central government to states and municipalities.

Brazil's 2009 school feeding budget is \$1.1 billion, just for food. School feeding is funded nationally, but funds are transferred to state and municipalities. The distribution of funds is closely reviewed.

Using criteria that include price, quality, and regional preferences, the states and municipalities then purchase the food. States and municipalities receive additional funds to train and pay staff and to purchase equipment. Also, most states and

municipalities provide additional funds for school feeding. The funds provided by the central government represent \$0.13 per student per day and the additional funds provided by states and municipalities average \$.06 per student per day.

- **Local school feeding councils oversee all aspects of the school feeding program.**

Each state, federal district, and municipality must have a School Feeding Council (termed a "CAE"). Each CAE must have 7 members: 2 are parents; 2 are teachers, students, or others related to the education system; 2 come from civil society, and 1 comes from the executive branch.

These councils approve the accounts, monitor schools' health and sanitary conditions, monitor the development of menus, and notify authorities regarding any problems.

- **Recent laws expand Brazil's school feeding program.**

Brazil's new school feeding law has several developments. Among these developments is an expansion of service to secondary education (high schools) and adult and youth education. Also, food and nutrition education is now included in the school curriculum.

But perhaps the most important new development is support for family agriculture, with support for the purchase of foods that are produced locally, preferably by family farmers. In fact, the law mandates that at least 30% of the funds for school feeding (which are estimated at about \$600 million) are to be used to purchase food from family agriculture. It is anticipated that these laws will generate employment and income, will be a stimulus to local and regional development, and will help foster rural entrepreneurship.

Implementing these new aspects of the school feeding laws comes with the following challenges:

- *Lack of organization of small farms.* There are many difficulties getting small farms organized. But efforts are underway to form cooperatives and farmer associations. These mechanisms can help farmers sell their crops.
- *Community participation.* CAE members have served 2-year terms. As soon as they get trained their term is done. For this reason, CAE terms have been lengthened to 4 years.
- *Inadequate infrastructure.* Poor municipalities lack the funds to supplement the funding that comes from the central government.
- *The need for training.* Continuous training on school feeding is needed for public administrators and school staff members.

Other Important Points

- **More fruits and vegetables.** In 2004, 28% of students ate fruits and 57% ate vegetables. In 2008 the number of students eating fruits had grown to 57% and the number of students eating vegetables was up to 80%.
- **Attaining the MDGs.** Brazil has made tremendous progress in achieving its Millennium Development Goals. From 1990 to 2007 the number of people living on less than \$1 per day decreased from 8.8% to 4.0%. From 2001 to 2007 the percent of children under the age of 1 who are undernourished declined from 7% to 1.6% and the percent of 1- to 2-year-old children who are undernourished fell from 14.6% to 3.5%. From 1990 to 2006, child mortality was reduced from 4.7% to 2.2%.

JAM Update: Helping Africa Help Itself

■ Speaker: **Isak Pretorius**, Joint Aid Management USA (JAM)

The Big Idea

School feeding programs are critical in achieving nutritional and educational goals, but schools can play an even broader role in their communities. They can be a focal point for education for children, adults, and even teachers. Also, the school feeding program can serve as a market that helps develop the entire community. But this concept of viewing the school as the focal point for community assistance must be sold, which requires making a business case to all key stakeholders.

Context

Isak Pretorius described JAM's model for community assistance and the many benefits it offers.

Key Points

- **JAM's model is not a school feeding program. It is a complete community assistance model.**

The model that JAM has developed over a number of years is broader than just a school feeding program. It is a community assistance model that uses the school as a focal point, a platform. The goals are to leverage the school to maximize the impact on education and on the entire community.

"The concept is to use schools as a central access point in the community. It is a platform."
— Isak Pretorius

Among the many aspects of JAM's model are:

- **Nutritional and educational goals.** While JAM's model isn't limited to school feeding, it is anchored in it. Through school feeding activities, communities can ensure that children who don't receive adequate nutrition at home will receive it at school. This will draw children to school, increasing enrollment and improving academic performance. The nutrition that is provided must be accompanied by a focus on clear educational goals and outcomes. The hope is that by providing children with nutritional assistance, the children will not require such assistance, which is the ultimate goal.

But just focusing on nutrition and education is not enough. If other important issues are not dealt with, then just one problem is being solved. JAM's model thinks about schools more broadly than just providing food and education.

- **Water and sanitation.** Few schools have access to safe, clean water. The absence of clean water is a huge gap; it causes schools to look for foods that don't require water. Making clean water a part of a school's activities is an important component.
- **Nutrition education through school gardens.** School gardens can serve as a physical classroom and a mechanism to train students about nutrition and farming. However, the purpose of school gardens should be purely educational and school gardens should not be viewed as a way to feed the school. There is not enough capacity for school gardens to be the

source of food for school feeding, and this runs the risk of crossing a line and becoming a child labor issue.

- **HIV/AIDS activities.** Because schools are seen as trusted, credible sources for education, they can serve as an educational resource for the entire community. In this capacity, schools can provide educational programs on critical subjects such as HIV/AIDS.
- **Teacher training.** Training teachers strengthens the school, improves the education that students receive, and benefits the entire community. Today, both the quantity and quality of teachers is often lacking. It is not enough to just increase school enrollment; the quality of the education that is provided must improve as well. Teacher training is a key way to do this. Importantly, students transfer information that they learn at school to their parents, benefitting the community.

"We need to strengthen the capacity of teachers . . . education has a trickle-down effect."
— Isak Pretorius

- **Infrastructure.** Part of JAM's model includes bringing in investments for infrastructure. This includes food processing facilities and transportation. Investing in infrastructure makes sense because the school feeding program creates a market for locally grown food. This market and these infrastructure investments provide a foundation for additional development.

- **This model must be sold to host governments.**

While the JAM model works, it doesn't mean that funding will be provided. For programs to be funded they must make economic and political sense. JAM's approach includes creating a "business case" that conveys the broad benefits, and then selling this business case to all key stakeholders, including the host government, the private sector, civil society, and others. An example is creating a groundswell by engaging all PTA members who in turn can engage their families and communities.

An important aspect of this business case is showing that there is a plan to develop the capacity to make this model sustainable. A key aspect of capacity is human capital. School feeding can provide a platform to develop human capital.

"School feeding is a kick starter to develop national human capital."
— Isak Pretorius

Other Important Point

- **Election focus.** In the recent US presidential election, the candidates in the world's most developed country mentioned education and food security during the campaign. However, these subjects are hardly ever mentioned in African elections. Child nutrition is simply not talked about.

Private Partnerships to Advance School Feeding

■ Speaker: **James Hershey**, World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH)

The Big Idea

Soy can provide a solution to protein deficiency. It can be used in a variety of ways—from nutritional supplements to tofu. Multiple examples exist of programs where private organizations have worked with NGOs and local governments to successfully incorporate soy into school feeding programs. These examples show the benefits of public/private partnerships and the importance of sustained government commitment.

Quick Summary

- People in many countries have significant protein deficiencies.
- Soy provides an effective and a cost-effective way to address protein deficiency. Soy can replace or enhance meat, can be used in baked goods, and can even be used in beverages. It is flexible, tastes good, and is less expensive than other proteins.
- Several demonstration projects have taken place where private companies partner with NGOs and local governments to provide soy products as part of school feeding programs.
- These programs are often successful but are not sustainable. Private support is often short term and government support can wane if the government changes.
- The World Soy Foundation provides humanitarian aid and home grown soy solutions. This includes equipment that enables creation of small local businesses to supply soy milk and other soy products to schools.

Context

In describing the work of the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) and the World Soy Foundation, Mr. Hershey described the benefits of soy and shared several case studies of how private partnerships are supporting school feeding.

Key Points

- **Soy can play an important role in addressing the protein deficiencies that exist around the world.**

In many countries the demand for protein exceeds the supply. This lack of supply results in individuals, families, and countries suffering a protein deficit. The protein deficit contributes to the high rate of stunting that is seen in many countries. This problem is expected to worsen as world demand increases, particularly in developing nations, driven by population and economic growth.

"Few countries produce enough protein to meet their needs."

— James Hershey

However, soy protein has tremendous benefits, and the United States, Brazil, and Argentina have a surplus of it. The benefits of soy include: it is the best vegetable protein, in the same general category as milk and egg. It is highly functional and fits with other

local foods. And because soy is a vegetable, it is economical and less expensive than animal protein. Soy provides an opportunity to fill protein gaps around the world.

Acting based on enlightened self interest, the American Soybean Association established the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH). WISHH's mission is to create sustainable solutions for the protein demands of people in developing countries through the introduction and use of US soy products.

- **There are many ways that soy can be used in school feeding programs.**

Soy has been used in US school lunch programs for economic and nutrition reasons. Menus have been modified to include meat/soy combinations. This enables schools to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in a cost-effective way. Soy offers flexibility, soy is accepted by students, and soy-enhanced meat products improve the nutritional profile of school meals.

In addition to enhancing or replacing meat, there are other ways that soy can be used as well. After soybeans have been processed, soy can be added to porridges along with baked goods such as buns and biscuits. Also, soy can be used in beverages, such as soy milk or fortified fruit juices.

- **WISHH has engaged in several school feeding programs in conjunction with private partners.**

The types of demonstration projects WISHH has been involved in include food technology projects, nutrition education, product sample delivery, and acceptability studies. Private partners are involved in providing funding and on-the-ground NGOs are involved in implementation. Examples of school feeding projects include:

Senegal

Solea donated 12 metric tons of textured soy, which looks like ground beef. It has a long shelf life and cooks quickly. This provided 480,000 servings of 25 grams each, which fed 2,000 children. Both the children and the cooks who prepared the food liked the product very much. Counterpart International became involved and helped turn the small pilot into a more substantial program. They incorporated local agriculture and microfinance as part of the program.

Cote d'Ivoire

ADM buys large amounts of cocoa from Cote d'Ivoire and wanted to find a way to give back to the children of the country. They decided to give 82 metric tons of texturized soy protein chunks to this country where including protein in the school feeding program was a significant challenge.

The product that was served was approved by WFP. 176 schools were trained and 79,000 children were served. More than 90% of students liked the taste and more than 80% of the cooks felt that the soy product had advantages over other vegetable proteins.

Also, those in charge of logistics were very satisfied with the packaging and shelf life of the soy products.

Honduras

Honduras already had an extensive school feeding program with funding from local governments, WFP, and Taiwan. But to supplement the existing school feeding program, Cargill and USAID/GDA funded pilots where soy flour was included as part of biscuits. 100,000 biscuits were made by small and mid-sized bakers, which provided an economic benefit in addition to the program's nutritional benefits.

"A sustainable solution must have a commercial element . . . a long-term solution has to involve local commerce and businesses."

— James Hershey

This pilot was a success, but elections in Honduras resulted in a change in the government. The new government did not want to continue this program.

Nigeria

The pilot in Nigeria involved multiple parties, including the federal and state government, Tetra Pak, and Solea. In the program's first phase, 200,000 children got NUTRI SIP, an easily stored, shelf stable, fortified product with protein and energy. In the second phase, an alliance was formed including USAID. In this phase, local production was emphasized and 400,000 children were served at more than 1,000 schools. As in Honduras, this program was a success but due to a change in government the program was not continued.

These experiences have resulted in several important lessons being learned. Among them:

- As corporate social responsibility grows, corporate partners are often willing to make investments in strategic sectors. These investments/donations can provide short-term "seed money" but they are unlikely to continue long term.
- Government support can disappear if/when the government changes.
- Private support can provide great leverage for public resources.
- The best model is public/private partnerships.

■ The World Soy Foundation focuses on humanitarian aid and home grown soy solutions.

The World Soy Foundation is a charitable organization where US soy farmers engage in humanitarian aid. The focus of this organization is to nourish people with soy protein, to educate on nutrition and food technology, and to conduct research to build out the body of knowledge on soy. In implementing programs the World Soy Foundation works with several partners. The school feeding program in Ghana provides an example of this organization's work.

Ghana

In Phase I, soy milk producer Silk WhiteWave was the sponsor of a soy-focused school feeding program and ADRA Ghana was the implementing partner. School food committees were formed, kitchens were constructed, cooks were selected and trained, nutrition education took place, and food was bought and stored.

As a result of this program, school enrollment increased by 22% and there was high community interest, support, and participation in the school and school feeding. There was also high acceptability of soy and no complaints.

In Phase II, which had the same sponsor and implementing partner, a soybean processing machine called a Vitagoat was installed. This machine created soymilk, producing 750 servings of 250 milliliters in six hours. It also can produce yogurt, tofu, soy chips, and other soy-based food items. This machine enables creation of local micro-enterprises to sell soy milk and other soy products to schools. This provides the capacity to create a market, which can be sustained long term.

Networks and their Role in Promoting School Milk Programmes Internationally—the Experience of FAO: 1996-Present

■ Speaker: **Dr. Michael Griffin**, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The Big Idea

Forming networks is an important way to share information about what works, to communicate quickly and broadly, and to build support. Regional networks are valuable because they help people who are grappling with similar issues, but international networks also have value because they provide a broader perspective.

Quick Summary

- Based on his experience helping to create and sustain school milk programs around the world, Dr. Griffin has suggestions for the key elements for making school feeding sustainable.
- Networks play a critical role in advancing and sustaining school feeding programs. They are a way to build support and share information.
- Value can be derived through networks by sharing success stories and best practices using methods such as email lists and conferences.

Context

Dr. Griffin shared his thoughts on the benefits of networks and offered lessons from his experience building and promoting school milk programs around the world.

Key Points

■ A number of factors contribute to the success and sustainability of school feeding.

Based on his extensive global experience in working to establish and promote school feeding, Dr. Griffin identified several areas that are important in making school feeding sustainable.

- *Having conviction that what you are doing is good.* Most people involved in school feeding have this conviction. The challenge is to convince others that school feeding is one of the most important activities in which a country can engage.
- *Establishing a clear long-term vision.* Successful school feeding programs don't come about overnight. Organizations looking for short-term profit or returns are likely to be disappointed. The vision for school feeding must be a long-term one, taking maybe a generation.
- *Providing feeding in an appropriate way.*
- *Making programs financially sustainable.* Often school feeding starts with external funding, but when the funding goes away—which it eventually does—the program is done. Ideas were shared of ways to create a sustainable revenue stream for school feeding, such as taxes on cell phone calls in Ghana or taxes on property in Uruguay.

— *Linking school feeding with national agricultural development.* This linkage addresses the above point and provides a way to make school feeding financially sustainable.

— *Enshrining school feeding in legislation.* If a country enshrines school feeding in legislation, as Brazil has done, it is a strong commitment and is harder for a government not to support it.

■ Networks are about voluntary relationships.

Words that come to mind and describe what a network is include: linkage, support, and relationships. Networks are not formal or mandated; they are usually informal and voluntary. Networks are based on mutual interest, they often have no hierarchy, and they can be sustained even when some people leave.

However, the weakness of a network can be the lack of an institutional base. The informality of a network can mean that there is no one in charge. This lack of leadership can threaten a network's continuity.

■ Forming and deriving value from a network can entail taking several practical steps.

Forming email lists and producing regular reports and newsletters are ways of sharing information across a network. Through email lists, ideas and practices can be shared and questions can be asked and answered.

Conferences are another important networking activity. They provide a forum for ideas, case studies, and success stories to be shared. Delegates can listen to speakers and determine which ideas are most relevant and valuable for them. Dr. Griffin has been involved in planning and participating in dozens of conferences on school feeding and school milk programs around the world. He sees great value in having different ideas shared. He sees the information sharing that takes place within a region and from one country to another as invaluable.

"When you see examples of successful programs you can find solutions for your country."

— Dr. Michael Griffin

Other Important Points

- **Support of First Spouse.** It is always helpful to have a patron (or patroness) for national school feeding. In many countries the spouse of the president or national leader serves in this role.
- **Milk days.** Dr. Griffin has been instrumental in creating "school milk days" in dozens of countries around the world. These events and activities surrounding them increase awareness around the importance of school milk and feeding programs.
- **Starting China's program.** China's school feeding program was largely hatched at conferences dealing with school milk and school feeding.

Tier I Country Reports: Successes, Challenges, and Hopes for Future

The Big Idea

Countries throughout Africa are focused on school feeding. There are good data and positive experiences that demonstrate the benefits of school feeding. In most countries, the challenge now is scaling school feeding to reach more children and making school feeding a sustainable undertaking that benefits the community.

Quick Summary

- All countries have some form of school feeding.
- The problems that countries are working to address are largely the same: high rates of malnutrition, low rates of school enrollment, high drop-out rates, and gender disparities.
- School feeding programs have been proven to work. School feeding addresses malnutrition and improves school enrollment and retention; it can improve gender disparity and improve academic performance.
- Where school feeding is working, there is strong political will. Government leaders support school feeding, they make laws that support it, and they allocate funds for it.
- In most countries, universal school feeding is the long-term vision, but the short-term reality is that school feeding programs are targeted at areas where the need is greatest.
- Where school feeding is working, there are successful operational practices for getting the funds to the school level, and for procuring, distributing, storing, and preparing the food.
- Most countries are seeking to create sustainable, home grown school feeding programs where the schools purchase food from small local farmers. This leverages school feeding to benefit an entire community. The keys to success are getting the community to own the program and having enough farmers to support it.
- The most common challenges are lack of political support, lack of funding, lack of community awareness and support, and lack of coordination between government entities, NGOs, and the private sector.
- Across all presenters, there was a general sense of optimism about the future of school feeding in their country.

Context

Delegates from eleven countries presented a brief overview of the school feeding program in their country. They described how these programs are structured and implemented, shared progress and accomplishments, and outlined the challenges they face.

Angola

- **Since its inception in 1999, Angola's school feeding program has continued to evolve.**

Angola's school feeding program began in 1999 with the help of the Education Minister and WFP. The country's school feeding

program, which provides daily rations of milk and bread, is operated through a collaboration between the government and WFP. Initially only 30,000 students were fed through the program. By 2006, the program had expanded and food was provided to 385,000 students.

Despite the success of the school feeding program, many challenges exist. These include ongoing funding, coping with a poorly developed infrastructure, and dealing with inadequate food storage facilities.

- **School feeding remains a part of Angola's long-term goals.**

Angola has set a goal for 2015 of keeping all children in school. School feeding plays a key role in achieving this goal because it helps attract and retain students. Angola's hope is to expand its current school feeding program. Program expansion will reach more children and will help prevent the problem of children moving from one school to a neighboring one simply to receive school meals.

Benin

- **In the past five years, Benin has improved the targeting of its school feeding program.**

Benin's first school feeding program began in 1976. The program in place now is a five-year program that started in 2004. It ends in 2009 and will be renewed for five more years. It is part of Benin's overall government policy focused on poverty reduction.

There are two school feeding programs; one is funded by the government, with a budget of \$3 million, and the other funded and managed by WFP, with a budget of \$16 million over five years. (Currently the cost to provide one meal per child per day is \$0.17.)

The programs have been targeted based on an assessment mapping that was conducted in 2005. This assessment process mapped and determined areas with the highest risk of food insecurity and the lowest school enrollment rates. Together these programs serve 20% of the country's public primary schools. This represents more than 1,000 schools and about 173,000 children.

An on-site meal program has been designed with very specific rations for each meal. In addition, a program targeted at 8,000 girls provides take-home rations for these girls' families.

Success has been seen in school enrollment, particularly among girls, as well as improved coordination between all of those involved in school feeding. Benin has also improved its distribution and logistics capacity.

- **Local procurement is a key aspect of Benin's school feeding program.**

Benin wants its school feeding program to be effective and cost effective. Also of great importance is that procurement be done locally, even if the items purchased are slightly more expensive when purchased locally. In recent years, about 70% of all

procurement has been done from suppliers within Benin and about 30% of purchases have been from international suppliers. In some years, the portion of local purchases has been as high as 85-90%, but in times of food crisis, as prices rise, some items have to be purchased internationally.

As part of increasing the amount of local procurement, Benin is pursuing capacity-building strategies. While the majority of all procurement is from local suppliers, many of these suppliers are larger entities versus owners of small family farms.

Benin is also engaging local communities through the formation of local school feeding communities that include parents, teachers, and children. These committees deal with issues such as food storage, preparation, and raising funds for complementary foods.

- **Sustaining school feeding in Benin faces several challenges.**

Among the challenges are: making school feeding a priority for all of the key actors; dealing with issues related to quality control and food storage; and coordinating all aspects of school feeding with all of the critical players, including the government, WFP, donors, suppliers, and communities.

An opportunity is to develop local procurement and storage capabilities to incorporate Benin's abundant supply of fish as part of school feeding.

Burundi

- **The context in Burundi is extremely difficult.**

Prior to the conflict that took place in Burundi in 1993 the country was relatively food secure. But the conflict displaced 1.4 million people and resulted in significant food insecurity. More than 40% of the population suffers from chronic malnutrition and anemia is prevalent among 31% of mothers and 56% of children. More than 90% of the population depends on subsistence farming and there is competition for arable land. The good news: Burundi is a moving from a state of emergency to a state of recovery.

- **The government of Burundi is committed to school feeding.**

In 2005, primary education was declared free and mandatory for all by the President of Burundi. There is a strong national strategy for school feeding as an education/social protection intervention and the government of Burundi has pledged \$6 million to the country's school feeding program.

A mapping process identified those regions with the highest levels of food insecurity—the north and northeastern provinces. Currently, school feeding targets these areas with the aim of providing a safety net for chronically food-insecure children. The program covers 20% of school children.

Burundi's school feeding program is jointly implemented with the involvement of both WFP and the government of Burundi. WFP has valuable experience implementing school feeding programs, which is lacking in Burundi.

The long-term goal is that all children of school age will go to school and will benefit from school feeding. The hope is also that

the school will serve as a starting point for a community's social and economic development and that local school committees will take ownership of the school feeding program. Already, even with meager resources, parents associations are making valuable contributions to school feeding programs.

- **Achieving this long-term vision requires overcoming several major obstacles.**

The key challenges include lack of funding to support school feeding at the level that is desired and increasing the economic capacity of communities so that the communities are equipped to take over the school feeding programs. Also, lack of access to clean water and good sanitation are issues, as is poor agricultural development.

Egypt

- **Lack of food has significant consequences in Egypt.**

Food insecurity, which is common in many areas of Egypt—especially rural areas—has significant health consequences. It is related to stunting, anemia, infectious diseases, and heart problems.

- **Egypt's school nutrition program is targeted at the country's poorest areas.**

The country's school nutrition program, established in 1991, is operated in partnership with WFP. The program is targeted at those areas with the highest levels of poverty and malnutrition. Currently 5.5 million out of 15 million students benefit from school feeding. This includes students in kindergarten, primary school, middle school, high school, and special education school. Nutritional guidelines exist which specify the appropriate number of calories, grams of food, and fortifications.

- **There are many positive elements of Egypt's school feeding program.**

The school food program in Egypt represents collaboration between the ministries of education, health, and trade. Also, the school food program sources exclusively from Egyptian suppliers.

- **Many barriers exist in sustaining and expanding Egypt's school feeding program.**

In Egypt there is low awareness of nutrition and the importance of school feeding. More funding is required, and better cooperation and communication between stakeholders is essential, including between government ministries.

Kenya

- **Kenya has a significant school feeding program which has been shown to work.**

School feeding in Kenya was introduced in 1980. In 2007, 1.7 million children participated in Kenya's regular and expanded school feeding programs, and in 2008, 1.2 million children participated. In 2009, almost 1.1 million children are being fed through a WFP-assisted program and 306,000 more children are receiving meals as part of a WFP drought response program.

The government of Kenya is committed to school feeding and has policies in place to support it. For 2008/09, the government of Kenya has committed \$2.6 million for logistics for the WFP-assisted program. The government also provides ad hoc in-kind food contributions to WFP-assisted programs.

The challenges that have been experienced include maintaining adequate resources, addressing cultural disparities, continuing to purchase locally amid the drought and food crisis, continuing to deliver the essential package, and achieving sanitation.

Recent research shows that Kenya's school feeding programs continue to be necessary and they are effective. Baseline research from 2008 showed that 48% of children had not eaten before coming to school. This research also showed that Kenya's school feeding program keeps food-deprived children in school. Teachers said that food at school positively affects pupils' attentiveness and their cognitive and learning capabilities. Also, provision of school meals appears to have a positive impact on hygiene as children wash their hands more.

- **A home grown school feeding pilot is taking place in Kenya.**

This pilot provides feeding to 550,000 children and is supported by \$6 million in funding from Kenya's government. The funds are transferred from the government of Kenya to schools' bank accounts. School management committees follow purchasing guidelines to purchase food at local markets. Monitoring is carried out by the government and WFP and compliance with policies is required for continued funding. One of the key challenges is a delay in the disbursement of funds through the government's system.

Implementing this pilot has required training, which has just taken place, along with donor and private sector support. The hope is that this program will make school feeding more sustainable by creating markets for small local farms.

Assessments and monitoring of this pilot will take place to review the results and determine the lessons that have been learned.

- **Kenya is also implementing a school-based de-worming program.**

From 2004 to 2008 a pilot was conducted where 2.5 million children were de-wormed. Following this pilot, plans have proceeded for a 2009/10 national school-based de-worming program to reach 3 million of the country's most at-risk children. Several partners, including De-worm the World, which has contributed \$4 million, have provided assistance.

Malawi

- **Malawi's school feeding program is implemented through collaborative efforts.**

Malawi's current school feeding program targets 881 schools (17% of all schools) and 953,000 learners (30% of all children in the country). Several different entities are involved. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology works with WFP in providing school feeding at 679 schools with 642,000 children. Mary's Meals implements school feeding at 192 schools with

306,000 students. Other organizations are also involved in supporting programs at a smaller number of schools.

- **There is strong political will for expanding school feeding in Malawi.**

School feeding is one of the main activities in Malawi's School, Health, Nutrition, and HIV/AIDS strategy. There is strong political will and support for school feeding. This is seen by the inclusion of school feeding in numerous national policies, strategies, and documents.

In fact, the level of political will is so great that in December 2007 there was a cabinet directive mandating the implementation of a universal school feeding program. While mandated, universal school feeding has not yet been implemented and isn't like to be in the near future. However, plans are being developed to significantly expand Malawi's school feeding program. WFP has assisted the government in designing an expanded program. A consultant has helped assess the cost of the program and has given guidance on the food basket.

The expanded program will target an additional 2,220 vulnerable schools with 1.4 million more students. This will bring the total number of participating schools to 3,100 (61% of all schools) and will reach 2.3 million students (72% of all students). Expanding school feeding to these levels would be seen as a tremendous achievement.

A finalized program document has been submitted to Malawi's national government for inclusion in the 2009/10 budget.

- **While expanding school feeding faces many challenge, there is optimism that these challenges can be overcome.**

Important challenges include lack of funding, lack of capacity, inconsistent engagement between implementing partners, a poor road network which hampers deliveries, and misappropriation and mismanagement of food at the school level. But the passion and political will that exists provides optimism and WFP continues to advocate for support.

The way forward requires focusing on the specifics of implementation, building capacity for expanded school feeding, and piloting an expanded program.

Nigeria

- **Nigeria has passed legislation establishing a free lunch at school for all children.**

Nigeria's home grown school feeding and health program (HGSFHP) was launched by the county's president in 2005. It is a home grown, community driven, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach. The program focuses on increasing student enrollment, improving nutritional status, and creating a ready market for local farmers and agricultural industries.

A law was established in Nigeria to provide a free lunch to children at school. A pilot phase was implemented in 2006 and 2007. The program was monitored and a survey of 270 schools in 15 states was conducted to determine the results. The results of this survey will guide future policy decisions.

- **Home grown school feeding in Nigeria is not progressing as quickly as desired.**

Even though home grown school feeding is the law in Nigeria, implementing HGSFHP is “hanging” at Nigeria’s federal level, though some states are implementing it. Among the many challenges and obstacles: the former Minister of Education misled the government with regard to HGSFHP; there has been poor coordination and collaboration between various parts of the government; there has been a lack of best practices for school-based agriculture and nutrient education; and there is a lack of qualified teachers and teaching materials. Needed are guidelines for implementation and capacity building.

There is some cause for optimism as the new Minister of Education has experience implementing HGSFHP and is a supporter of it. A framework is being considered to mobilize local governments in support of HGSFHP, and Nigeria hopes to launch a WFP office in the country.

Rwanda

- **In a difficult environment, Rwanda’s school feeding program is performing well.**

Rwanda suffers from chronic food insecurity and structural poverty. There is low enrollment in school and frequent absences from school. For the students who do attend school, because they are hungry the learning abilities are low and the academic performance is poor.

With this as the context, in 2002 WFP launched Rwanda’s first school feeding project. The goal of this project was to support the government’s goal of ensuring universal primary education by 2015.

The current school feeding program is called “Food Assistance for Education.” It is a 5-year program running from 2008 to 2012. The objectives of this program are to improve school attendance, increase enrollment and retention of vulnerable children, and increase the country’s capacity to manage school feeding programs.

The current school feeding program is offered in 46% of the country, which includes the most food-insecure and drought-prone areas. Currently WFP assists 300 schools (out of 1280) and around 300,000 children in primary school.

Among the key activities of this program are: providing nutritious daily cooked meals; equipping schools with kitchens and food storage; making health services and health education available at schools; and providing agricultural tools to assist schools in growing school gardens.

The program’s success is attributable to several implementing partners, including WFP, the Ministry of Education, UN agencies, World Vision, and Plan International. The other key partnership is with local Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). The PTAs participate in the food management committee. They provide input and assistance on proper food preparation, handling, and storage.

- **Rwanda’s school feeding program has produced outstanding results.**

The results for WFP-assisted schools include: attendance has increased from 68.5% in 2003 to 96% in 2008. The drop-out rate has declined from 21% in 2003 to 2% in 2008. Also, 94% of teachers say that the school feeding program has increased children’s ability to concentrate and learn.

- **Rwanda’s long-term vision is to make its school feeding program sustainable.**

The government of Rwanda wants to ensure that schools and communities can sustain the successful school feeding program that has been created. This has led to creation of a community-based school feeding program which aims to improve the quality of life of a community’s population through local development. The local development is based on a sustainable process of school feeding activities.

This won’t be easy as most communities lack financial and human resources, have limited capacity, and have weak community involvement.

Sierra Leone

- **Education is a government priority in Sierra Leone, and WFP and several NGOs are helping provide school feeding.**

Sierra Leone has been through a horrific civil war which has left behind immeasurable devastation. During the civil war, WFP provided assistance to schools situated in areas surrounding refugee camps and settlements for internally displaced people.

In the aftermath of this war, the government instituted free primary education for the country’s 1.3 million school children and the president has stated that education is one of his priorities. However, free education has not been enough to bring children to school. Currently only about 60% of children attend school (about 800,000 out of 1.3 million).

WFP currently supports about 1,300 schools. In 2008, WFP-assisted school feeding programs benefitted 273,000 students and 341,000 children are expected to benefit in 2009. Other NGOs such as Catholic Relief Service and World Vision also have programs that provide school feeding to some students.

- **Sierra Leone desires to expand school feeding, but faces several challenges in doing so.**

One challenge is that assessments to determine the number of children in school have taken place at the beginning of the school year, which is a time of poor attendance and doesn’t accurately reflect the actual number of children in school. Another challenge is the lack of joint planning between WFP and the other organizations providing school feeding-related services, especially UNICEF for water and sanitation. Many communities are so poor that they are unable to contribute to and take ownership for these programs. And, in some instances, feeding of non-beneficiaries (such as teachers and children who are not enrolled in school) uses up the food that is allocated for the children in school.

Several next steps are planned. Among them: shifting the assessment period to better reflect the actual enrollment;

engaging the district councils and other stakeholders to improve roads so schools in remote areas can be reached; training school management committees; and linking local food procurement with local farmers.

Long term, Sierra Leone plans to conduct a vulnerability analysis to improve the targeting of resources. They plan to have closer collaboration among various stakeholder groups, and desire to expand the food incentive scheme for girls to reduce gender disparities.

South Africa

- **South Africa has made tremendous progress in the 15 years its school feeding program has existed.**

South Africa's school feeding program was initiated in 1994. It was originally part of the Department of Health but in 2002 became part of the Department of Education. The goals are to promote sustainable food production and strengthen nutrition education. And, while alleviating poverty and improving health are important, as part of the Department of Education, the school feeding program has to improve educational outcomes.

The school feeding program is grounded in national legislation. This is beneficial in that even when the government changes, the laws supporting school feeding remain.

Funding for South Africa's school feeding program comes from the national government, with funds then allocated to provinces through conditional grants. This means that the national government can attach specific conditions to the funds and can monitor that funds are only spent on the conditions that are designated. For 2009/10, the budget of school feeding is 2 billion rand, which is significant, but not enough. This will feed 6.8 million students in 19,400 public schools.

- **Various partners play a key role in South Africa's school feeding program.**

The success of South Africa's school feeding program is based on partnerships with NGOs, the private sector, and community

groups. The private sector supplies items such as kitchens and utensils. Community groups serve as the best possible watchdogs regarding appropriate use of funds and nutritional standards.

- **The goal in South Africa is to take the school feeding program to the next level.**

South Africa's goal is to build on the success of its school feeding program. Ways to do this include extending school feeding programs to secondary schools, improving the quality of food, improving the efficiency of school feeding programs, and improving the training provided to food handlers.

Tanzania

- **Tanzania's school feeding program is successful but small.**

Currently Tanzania's school feeding program covers 240,000 children in 340 schools. In these schools, the school feeding program has improved the access to food. It has improved the quality of learning, improved enrollment from 59% to 97%, increased attendance to more than 90%, and helped decrease the drop-out rate from 6% to 3%.

However, while successful, Tanzania's school feeding program is reaching a small portion of schools and children. Of Tanzania's 15,700 schools, this program exists in just 340 schools.

Among the challenges that must be overcome are low community awareness about the importance of school feeding, logistics and transport issues, and storage problems.

The government intends to introduce a policy on school feeding. It is also necessary for school feeding leaders to engage communities about the importance of feeding children healthy meals so that communities will take ownership for school feeding. And, funding is an enormous issue.

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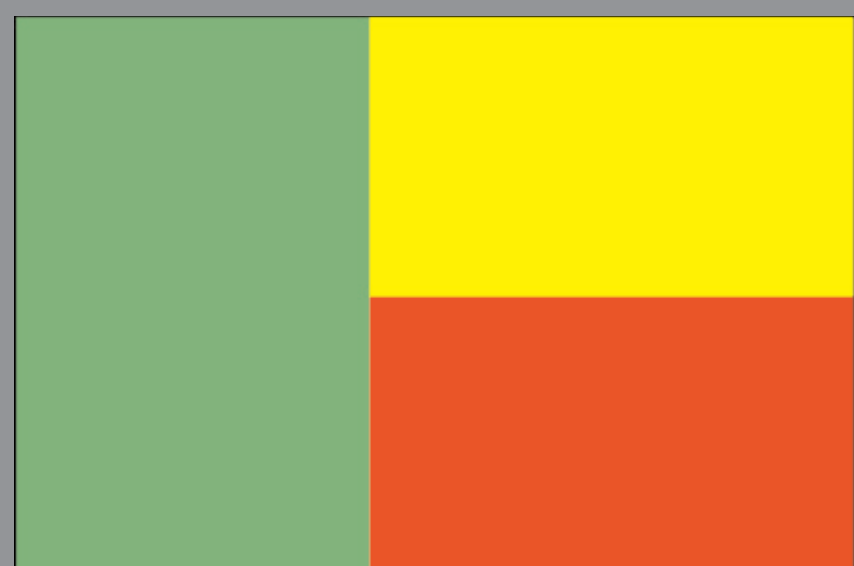
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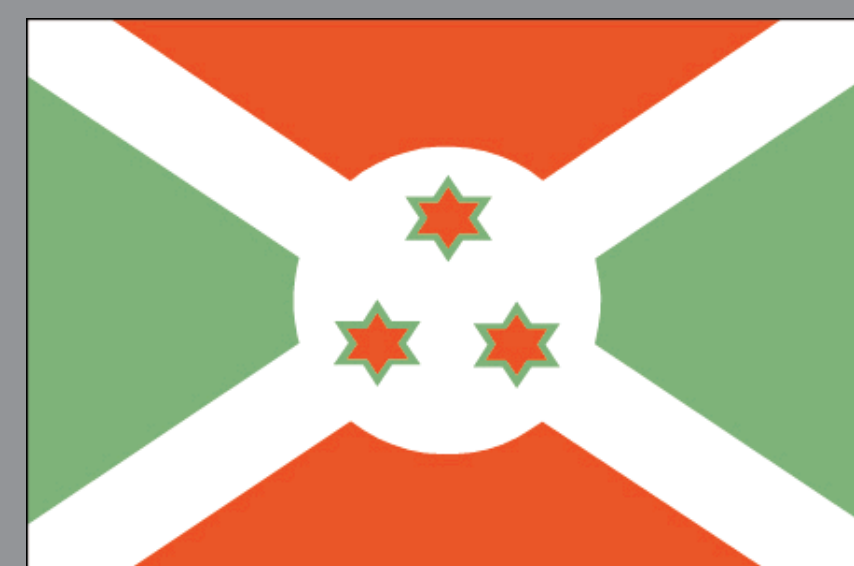
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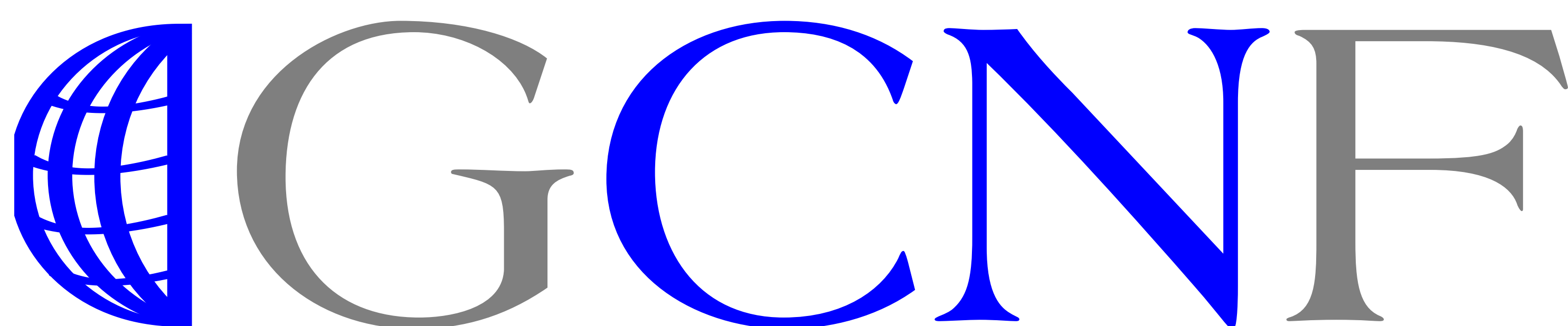
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