

برنامج  
الأغذية  
العالمي



Programme  
Alimentaire  
Mondial

World  
Food  
Programme

Programa  
Mundial  
de Alimentos

**Executive Board  
Annual Session**

**Rome, 6–10 June 2011**

## **EVALUATION REPORTS**

**Agenda item 7**

*For consideration*

# **E**

Distribution: GENERAL  
**WFP/EB.A/2011/7-D**  
21 April 2011  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

## **SUMMARY REPORT OF THE IMPACT EVALUATION OF SCHOOL FEEDING IN THE GAMBIA**



This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's Website (<http://www.wfp.org/eb>).

## NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

**This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration**

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Director, OE\*: Ms C. Heider tel.: 066513-2030

Senior Evaluation Officer, OE: Ms M. Read tel.: 066513-2539

Should you have any questions regarding matters of dispatch of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact Ms I. Carpitella, Administrative Assistant, Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

\* Office of Evaluation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation provides evidence of intended and unintended effects of the WFP school feeding programme in the Gambia. It applied a mixed-methods approach using complementary quantitative and qualitative methods.

Between 2001 and 2010, WFP supported three successive school feeding projects, reaching an average of 113,000 children per year – 50 percent girls – living in almost all the rural areas in the country. These children represent about 40 percent of all primary-school children in the country. The programme is aligned with the Government's Education Policy for 2004–2015.

The evaluation found that national gross enrolment rates stayed more or less constant between 2003 and 2009. Net enrolment improved overall, and gender parity was reached. Positive enrolment trends cannot be attributed solely to school feeding, because a large number of other improvements to the education sector took place between 1988 and 2004. The evaluation was not conclusive on the programme's effects on attendance rates, due to large discrepancies between reported and observed attendance, nor on its contribution to improved learning, given that a large number of other factors play a role in the overall poor test results of students.

The evaluation found clear evidence that the school meal contributed to students' minimum daily nutritional requirements when attending school. However, these positive results are undone by school-based practices that result in exclusion of some children from the programme.

The value transfer to households was influenced by resource shortfalls and pipeline breaks. Without breaks, the value transfer through school meals was close to the annual cost of education for the most vulnerable households – US\$76. The value of the transfer as a percentage of income was highest for the most vulnerable households, at 12 percent, compared with 7.3 percent for all groups.

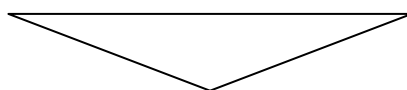
The Gambia remains at a very early stage in the move towards a nationally designed, managed and owned school feeding programme.

The effectiveness of the programme was limited most significantly by the quality of education, which requires improvement and is the main factor to ensure enrolment. The evaluation was not entirely conclusive regarding the role of poverty in households' decisions about sending children to school, although the percentage of out-of-school youth was highest among the poorest quintile. The extent to which food security and safety net objectives can be attained is affected by the fact that school holidays fall in the lean season, when food insecurity is highest.

Recent allocations of funding and resources provided the WFP country office with the capacity to update studies on food insecurity, which allowed more precise geographical targeting and further development of the capacity of a range of actors involved in the programme.

The evaluation recommends areas for improvement, including more precise targeting and taking the necessary steps towards the transition to a government-owned programme. Recommendations addressed to education and nutrition partners suggest analysing the causes of malnutrition among school-age children, and enhancing school quality through teacher testing and the dissemination of national assessment test results.

## DRAFT DECISION\*



The Board takes note of “Summary Report of the Impact Evaluation of School Feeding in the Gambia” (WFP/EB.A/2011/7-D) and the management response in WFP/EB.A/2011/7-D/Add.1 and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

---

\* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

## BACKGROUND

### Evaluation Features

1. WFP's Office of Evaluation (OE) commissioned this mixed-method impact evaluation of school feeding in the Gambia as part of a series of similar evaluations. The evaluation team consisted of specialists in education, evaluation, nutrition, food security and economic/social impact assessment, and those with experience of poverty reduction programmes in the Gambia.
2. This evaluation served both accountability and learning purposes, and was intended to evaluate the outcomes and impact achieved on: i) stated educational, gender and nutritional objectives; and ii) objectives specified in WFP's new social safety net policy objectives, which were not explicitly included in the programme design. It also aimed to identify the changes needed to contribute to the Gambia's development objectives and those of the WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2013) and the 2009 school feeding policy.
3. The evaluation study used a mixed-methods approach, comparing the treatment group with a non-treatment group. Data were gathered using questionnaires from school staff, students, cooks and households; interviews with a range of stakeholders, including the WFP country office, government staff and policy-makers, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); secondary materials and data; and qualitative interviews with groups of community members, using the participatory rural appraisal approach.
4. Of the 44 schools selected to participate in the evaluation, 21 were benefiting from school feeding and 23 were not. Of the 500 households selected for in-depth interviews regarding issues of wealth, assets, diet, reasons for sending or not sending children to school, etc., 335 were receiving school feeding and 189 were not. In the 18 communities selected – 12 receiving school feeding and 6 not – groups were formed of opinion leaders, members of food management committees, and women heads of households.
5. Instruments included protocols for interviews with households, teachers, head teachers, school cooks, and six students per school. Data on attendance – validated in each classroom at each school, and compared with teacher and head teacher records for that day – and on other elements of the school "climate" and the Essential Package were used to form an attendance and school climate checklist. A participatory rural appraisal approach was developed for use in both school-feeding and non-school-feeding communities.
6. Results of the surveys were analysed at the aggregate levels, split between school-feeding and non-school-feeding groups, and by applying a range of filters to the responses to identify patterns across indicators of poverty and food vulnerability.

### Context

7. The Gambia is one of the least developed countries in Africa, ranking 168<sup>th</sup> out of 182 in the United Nations Development Programme's human development index (2009). With annual growth of 2.6 percent and high levels of rural–urban migration, the population of 1.7 million people is young, growing and increasingly concentrated in urban areas. Forty percent is under 15 years of age and 20 percent is aged between 15 and 24 years. Although the percentage of population below the poverty line declined between 1989 and 1992, overall poverty has increased considerably since then, by 17 percent in urban and

22 percent in rural areas. The exception is Banjul, where poverty has declined by half. In 2003, an estimated 63 percent of the rural population was poor.<sup>1</sup>

8. The Gambia experiences periods of weather-related vulnerability every year, and is highly dependent on rice, the preferred staple, which has very low production levels. Grain production declined by 35 percent between 2005 and 2007, and there is high dependence on imported food. The 2008–2009 food and fuel price and financial crises resulted in increases in all cereal prices, which in 2010 remained 25 percent higher than their 2006 levels. Food security is constrained mainly by low purchasing power, particularly among rural households, and inadequate diversification of income-generating activities and assets.<sup>2</sup>
9. Over half of the Gambian population has had no education: only 13 percent has completed primary school; 20 percent upper basic school – grades 7 to 9; and 8 percent senior secondary school. Significant efforts by the Government and donors increased net student enrolments from 46 percent in 1991/92 to 94.9 percent in 2008/09, and gender parity was reached in 2004. An estimated 80,000 children were out of school in 2007, 45 percent of them girls.<sup>3</sup> The Government predicts that if recent enrolment trends remain unchanged, the primary completion rate in 2014 will be only 59 percent, far below the Millennium Development Goal target of 100 percent by 2015.
10. The 2005/06 multiple-indicator cluster survey data for the Gambia showed significant benefits for girls completing senior secondary school, which were far greater than the benefits of completing only primary school.
11. A multi-sectoral working group for the education sector brings together stakeholders, from government departments, NGOs, local authorities and local committees, civil society organizations and international agencies, to review data related to educational efficiency and quality, including of the school feeding programme (SFP).
12. Malnutrition in children under 5 years of age is caused by poor feeding practices, inadequate care and increasing exposure to infections, along with poor sanitation.<sup>4</sup> The main nutritional problems facing school-age children include stunting, underweight, anaemia, and iodine and vitamin A deficiencies, but only limited data are available; nutrition status is also affected by illnesses such as helminth infestations and diarrhoeal diseases.<sup>5</sup>

### School Feeding Interventions 2001–2010

13. The SFP is aligned with the Government's Education Policy 2004–2015. WFP's support began in 1970; from 2001 to 2010 there were three WFP-supported development projects with objectives of increasing levels of school enrolment, attendance and retention. Rural areas – in part of Region 2 and all of Regions 3 to 6 – are selected on the basis of having higher levels of poverty and food vulnerability and lower levels of school enrolment.

<sup>1</sup> Department of State and Economic Affairs. 2006. *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II (2007–2011)*. Banjul

<sup>2</sup> Republic of the Gambia. 2010. *Agriculture Sector Support Programme – A Proposal for the Global Agricultural and Food Security Programme*. Banjul.

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). 2010. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*. Paris

<sup>4</sup> National Nutrition Policy 2000–2004.

<sup>5</sup> WFP 2008. Summary Report on Deworming Activities Organized in Schools in the North Bank, Central and Upper River Region Benefiting From the School Feeding Programme in the Gambia. Banjul.

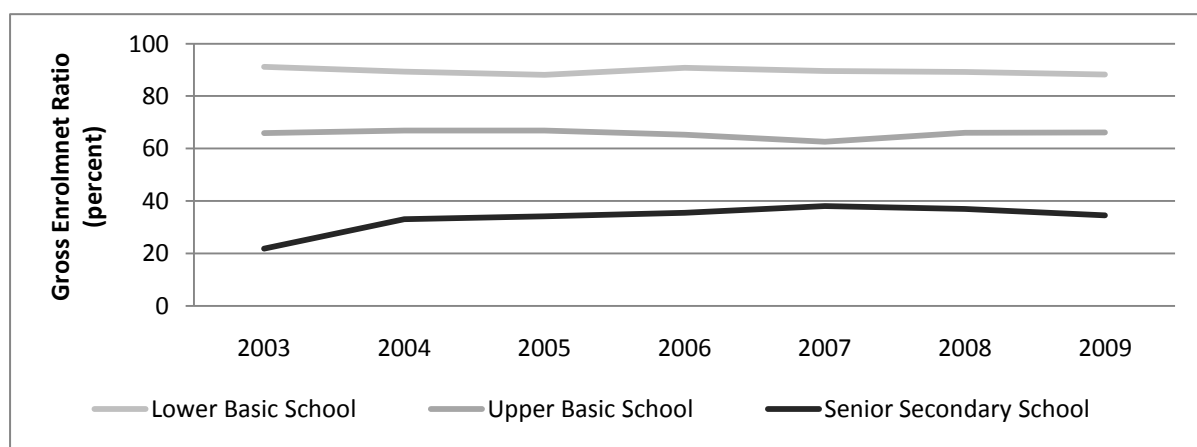
14. From 2001, WFP provided meals at lower basic schools (LBS, grades 1 to 6) and basic cycle schools (BCS, grades 1 to 9); in 2004 it added madrasahs and early childhood development centres (ECDCs) that met government standards. From 2001, the SFP aimed to reach 120,000 children per year, but the actual number averaged 113,000, of whom 50 percent were girls. These 113,000 children represented about 40 percent of all enrolments in grades 1 to 9. The average number of schools was 429 per year, of which 71 percent were LBS or BCS, 24 percent ECDCs and 5 percent madrasahs. The ration changed over time, from lunch and a mid-morning or afternoon snack in the first project, to only lunch in subsequent projects.

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF SCHOOL FEEDING

### Education and Learning

15. Poor data collection, management and use at the school level, and significant data losses by the Government preclude the drawing of any definitive conclusions about the impact of school feeding on enrolment, attendance and completion.
16. **Enrolment.** Enrolments increased over the ten-year period of this study, but the greatest increase was between 1988 and 2004, when the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and a range of donors and NGOs made significant efforts in this direction. After these efforts subsided, so did enrolments, which declined marginally from 2008 to 2009.
17. At the national level, the gross enrolment ratios (GERs)<sup>6</sup> stayed more or less constant between 2003 and 2009, but regions registered varying increases and decreases. Between 2003 and 2009, at the national level, the GERs declined marginally from 91 to 88 percent in LBS and from 84 to 81 percent in BCS, but increased substantially from 22 to 34.5 percent in secondary schools. Figure 1 shows GER trends by type of school and Figure 2 by region.<sup>7</sup> Of concern is that the Gambia's GER is lower than that of about 65 percent of other low-income African countries.

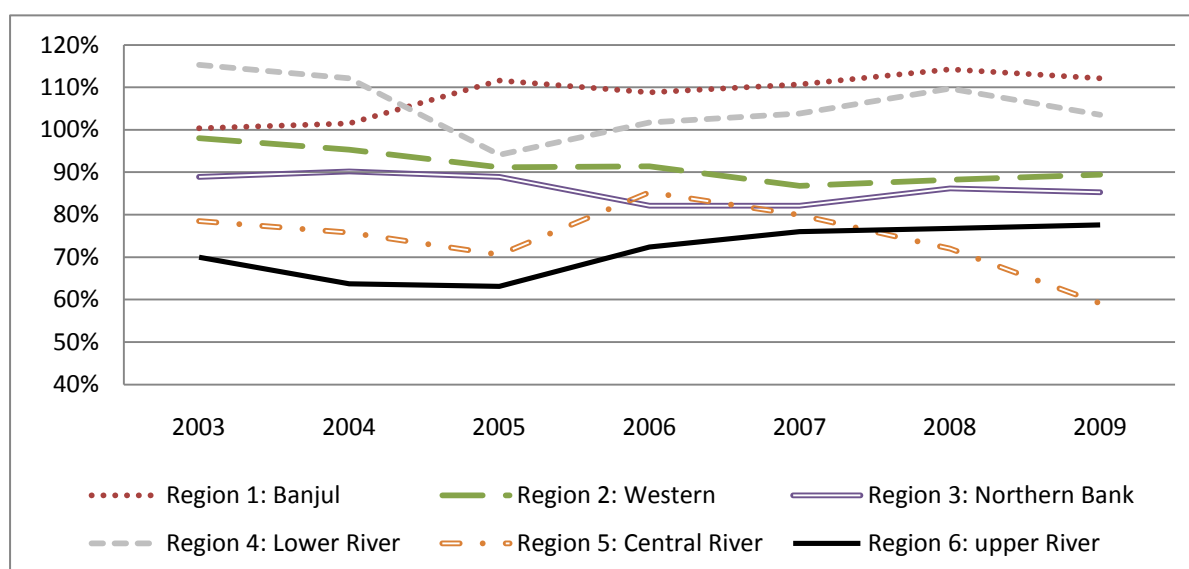
**Figure 1: Gross Enrolment Ratios for Basic and Secondary Education (2003–2009)**



<sup>6</sup> GER is the number of students enrolled in a particular level of schooling, regardless of age, as the percentage of the population of official school age for that level.

<sup>7</sup> The evaluation's household survey results on enrolment are presented only to provide triangulation with other sources of information; household survey findings showed that in one region, GERs in schools benefiting from school feeding were rising, in spite of an overall decline in that region's GERs.

**Figure 2: Gross Enrolment Ratios, by Region (2003–2009)**



18. Net enrolment improved overall during the evaluation period, including girls' enrolment, which reached parity with boys' in 2004. Positive enrolment trends cannot be attributed solely to school feeding, given that a large number of other initiatives took place during the early part of the decade.
19. **Attendance/out-of-school.** The evaluation found large discrepancies between reported and observed attendance, and considered school-based data too unreliable for drawing conclusions. A household-level survey in 2006 found an average attendance rate of 68 percent,<sup>8</sup> while data from the evaluation's household survey found a substantially higher rate of attendance in schools not receiving school feeding, at 83 percent, than in those with school feeding, at 75 percent, although these figures include out-of-school children.<sup>9</sup>
20. **Completion rates and continuation to higher levels.** The Gambia's average primary completion rate in 2009 – 7.6 years – compares well with those in other low-income African countries in the same year, which averaged 6.9 years. Almost 63 percent of students entering grade 1 completed grade 6. The average promotion rate was 87.3 percent for grades 1 to 12. However, the survival rate from grades 1 to 9 was 41.4 percent, and that from grades 1 to 12 was 21.2 percent.
21. **Learning.** School feeding's contribution to improved learning could not be demonstrated, given the overall poor test results of students in the Gambian education system; teachers, head teachers and the evaluation team attributed these low results to factors other than school feeding.

<sup>8</sup>The Gambia Bureau of Statistics. 2007. The Gambia Multiple-Indicator Cluster Survey 2005/2006 Report. Banjul. The report also noted that of the 32 percent of children not attending school, 29 percent had never attended. A similar breakdown is not available from the evaluation household survey data.

<sup>9</sup> The larger portion of Region 2 schools in the non-school feeding survey group may have influenced this finding, as Region 2, although rural, is relatively close to a major urban area.



## Nutrition

22. There is clear evidence that the school meal contributed to students' minimum daily nutritional requirements when they were in school and able to contribute. However, there is also substantial evidence that certain school-based practices negatively influenced participation in the school meal for some children. There were indications that students were more attentive and energetic because of the meal. The planned ration for the school lunch accounted for 30 percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of kilocalories, 31 percent of protein and fat, 17 percent of iron, 15 percent of iodine, and 21 percent of vitamin A, and was in accordance with the recommended daily intakes for a midday meal. However, substantially less funding was available than planned, so only 78 percent of the average daily ration was provided between 2001 and 2010; in January 2010, the ration was halved, with likely effects on children's food consumption (Table 1).

	Energy	Protein	Fat	Iron	Iodine	Vitamin A
	kcal	G	g	mg	µg	µg Re
Planned daily ration	551	14	11	3	181	104
Daily requirements (6–12-year-olds)	1 850	46	35	18 7–9 years	120	500 7–9 years
Planned ration as % of RDA	30	31	31	17	151	21
Reduced ration as % of RDA (50% for 2010)	15	16	16	8	75	10
Reduced ration as % of RDA (78% from 2001 to 2010)	23	24	25	14	94	16

23. A dietary diversity measure found similar levels of diversity between students benefiting from school feeding and those not benefiting. All students had a high average score of 6 out of a possible 12 food groups. However, the most vulnerable households' average score of 4.4 was significantly lower than the least vulnerable households' 7.5 (Table 2). Morbidity rates among children experiencing swelling in the neck – a proxy indicator for iodine deficiency/goitre – in the last 12 months of the survey were low in both groups, at less than 1 percent. Two percent of school feeding students and 3 percent of non-school-feeding students were finding it difficult to see at night – a measure of night blindness and a proxy indicator for vitamin A deficiency. Greater numbers of students enrolled in schools with meals received deworming medication than did those in schools without meals, at 69 versus 52 percent.

Vulnerability group	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Least vulnerable	7.5	5	10
Somewhat vulnerable	6.3	3	9
Most vulnerable	4.4	1	6

Source: Evaluation team, household survey 2010

## Value Transfer and Safety Net

24. WFP's school feeding policy recognizes the school meal as a value transfer to households. In the Gambia, the value of the transfer to households varied by the level of household vulnerability, and was also influenced by resource shortfalls and pipeline breaks. The value transfer through school meals came close to the cost of education for the most vulnerable households.
25. Using The Boston Consulting Group's (BCG's) methodology for assessing costs for 2008, the costs of the school meal were approximately 3.4 dalasi (GMD) (US\$0.15) per student per meal, and GMD1,628 (US\$73) per household per year.<sup>10</sup> Based on what it would cost a household to purchase the ingredients for an equivalent meal on the local market, the value transfer would be slightly higher at more than GMD1,710 per year, representing an average of 8.5 percent of food consumption (Table 3). Value transfers varied according to the household's level of vulnerability, from 12 percent for the most vulnerable households, to 3 percent for the least vulnerable, and 7.3 percent for all groups (Table 4).<sup>11</sup> Pipeline breaks reduced the value transfer to 9.6 percent for the most vulnerable and 2.4 percent for the least vulnerable households.

**TABLE 3: SCHOOL MEALS' COST OR VALUE TRANSFER TO HOUSEHOLDS, UNDER DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES**

Cost/value transfer 2008		Cost (BCG)	Value transfer (local prices)
Cost/value per meal (dalasis)		3.40	3.57
Cost/value transfer per beneficiary per year (dalasis)	Planned	677	711
	Actual <sup>a</sup>	541	568
Cost/value transfer per household per year <sup>b</sup> (dalasis)	Planned	1 628	1 710
	Actual <sup>a</sup>	1 301	1 366
% of household food consumption represented by transfer <sup>c</sup>	Planned	8.1%	8.5%
	Actual <sup>a</sup>	6.5%	6.8%

<sup>a</sup> In 2008 funding shortfalls and pipeline breaks reduced the number of school feeding days to 159 from the planned 199. Calculations here are based on 159 days.

<sup>b</sup> Based on an average of 2.4 children per household attending primary school (Evaluation team, 2010).

<sup>c</sup> Based on household food consumption data from The Gambia Integrated Household Survey, 2003–2004 and selecting rural areas with lowest standard error for consumption of food and non-alcoholic beverages, updated to 2008 prices.

<sup>10</sup> The average exchange rate in 2008 was US\$1 = GMD22.4.

<sup>11</sup> The mean household income calculated from the household survey data was GMD23,317 per annum.

<b>TABLE 4: COST OR VALUE TRANSFER AS PERCENTAGE OF INCOME,<sup>12</sup> BY VULNERABILITY GROUP</b>		
<b>Vulnerability group</b>	<b>Local prices, no shortfalls/breaks</b>	<b>Local prices 2008, with shortfalls/breaks</b>
Least vulnerable	3.1%	2.4%
Somewhat vulnerable	9.7%	7.7%
Most vulnerable	12.0%	9.6%
All groups	7.3%	5.9%
Annual value transfer (dalasis)	1 710	1 366

Source: Evaluation team

## Food Security

26. Many households suffer severe food shortages for several months of the year. In the long run, addressing food shortages through school feeding to alleviate household hunger has limitations, because school feeding does not operate during the most severe hunger season, when students are on school break and food is most scarce.

## Capacity Development and Sustainability

27. The Gambia remains at a very early stage in the transition towards government responsibility for the design, support and management of an SFP. Using WFP's recently designed quality standards for school feeding,<sup>13</sup> the overall assessment is that only "limited status" has been achieved and significant inputs are likely to be required over the medium term to prepare the country for this transition, particularly given the Gambia's severe fiscal constraints. However, the WFP country office leadership has made significant efforts to strengthen the Government's ownership of and capacities for school feeding.

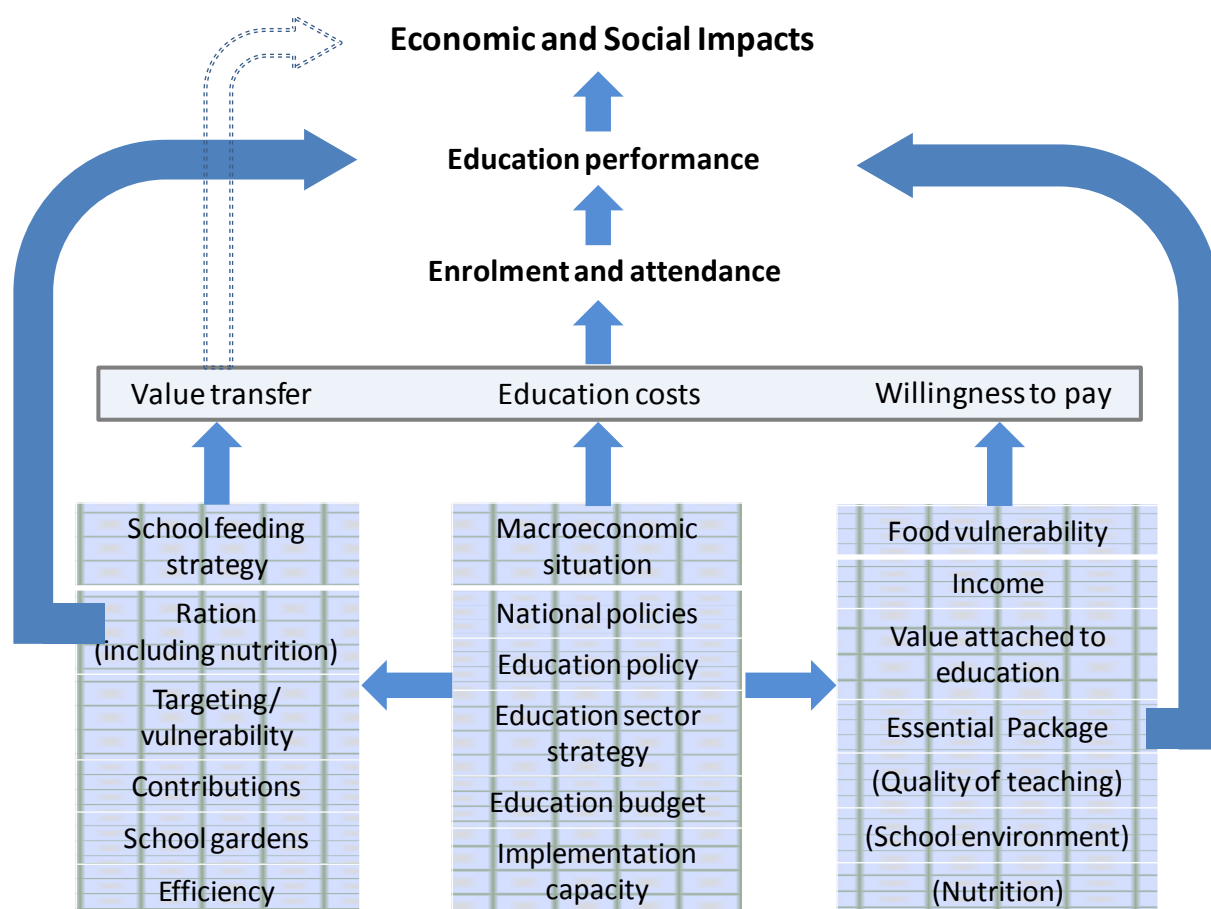
## HOW DOES SCHOOL FEEDING CREATE IMPACT?

28. Children's access to school and households' decisions regarding whether or not to send their children to school may be influenced by a wide range of factors, including an SFP, as illustrated in Figure 3. Some factors are contextual, while others are related to SFP implementation.

<sup>12</sup> Average annual incomes were calculated from the evaluation household survey data: least vulnerable, D 56,000; somewhat vulnerable, D 17,695; and most vulnerable, D 14,233.

<sup>13</sup> The eight school feeding quality standards are: i) sustainability; ii) sound alignment with the national policy framework; iii) stable funding and budgeting; iv) needs-based, cost-effective quality programme design; v) strong institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and accountability; iv) a strategy for local production and sourcing; vii) strong partnerships and intersector coordination; and viii) strong community participation and ownership.

**Figure 3: School Feeding Impact Framework**

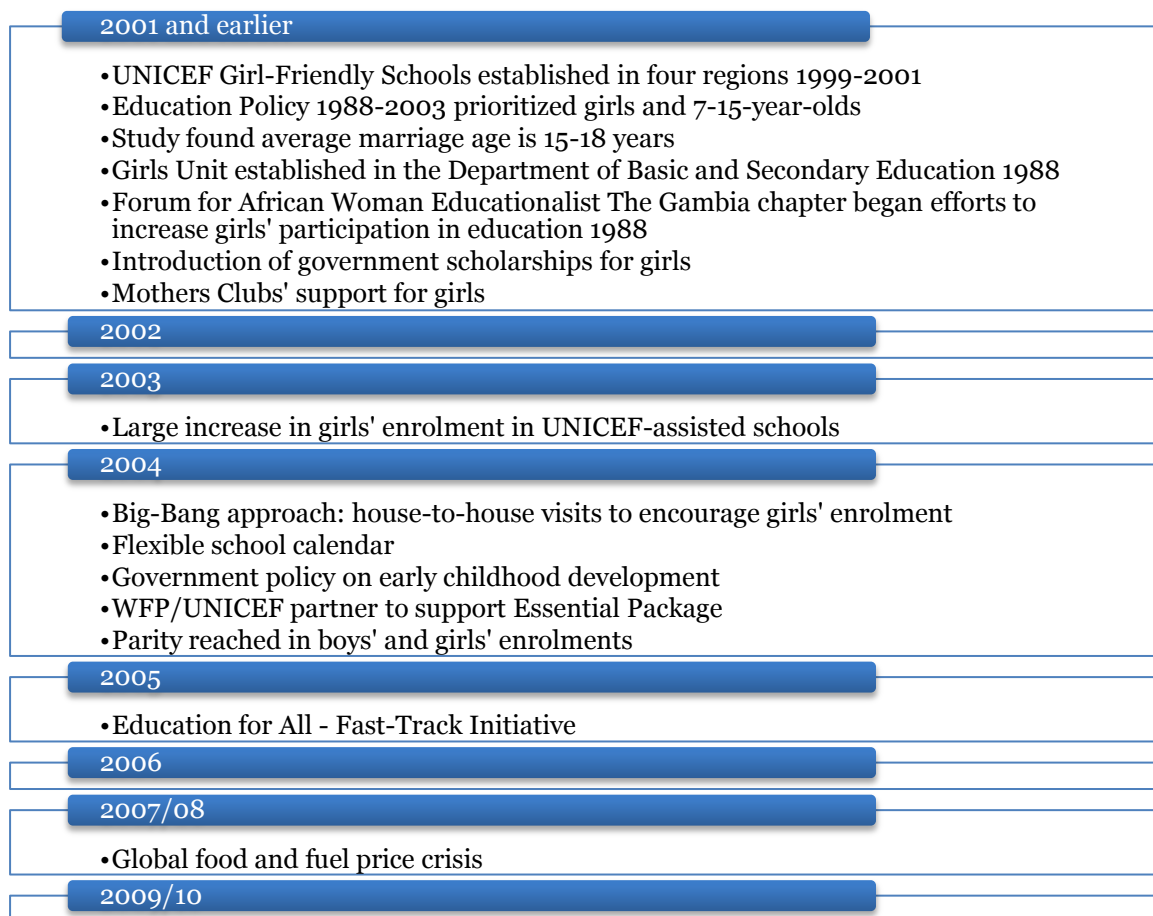


Source: Evaluation team.

### Contextual Factors Outside WFP's Control

29. The effectiveness of school feeding – its ability to generate intended outcomes – and its impact were limited by a number of external factors beyond the control of WFP's SFP. Most significant among these was the quality of education, which is seen as the main draw for children to attend school, but requires significant improvement. The evaluation findings were not conclusive regarding the role of poverty in households' decisions about sending their children to school, although the percentage of out-of-school youth was highest among the poorest quintile. The extent to which food security, and therefore safety net, objectives can be attained is affected by the fact that school holidays fall in the lean season, when food insecurity is highest, meaning that children do not benefit from the school meal during the time when they and their families are most food-insecure.

30. **Education outcomes and impacts.** Owing to the poor quality of education data, it was not possible to determine whether, or to what extent, school feeding contributed to increases in educational enrolment, attendance, completion and learning. A number of other government and donor efforts (Figure 4) to increase enrolment, especially of girls, were highly effective, but the numbers of children enrolled in LBS ceased to increase when these efforts waned, suggesting a limited impact of school feeding, as it was offered throughout.

**Figure 4: Factors Influencing School Enrolments**

31. Low levels of learning were due to a range of factors, including parents with limited or no education, and teachers with limited education and inadequate teaching skills. Numerous changes being made suggest that significant improvements in the education sector will occur in the near future.
32. **Nutrition outcomes and impact.** While the school meal contributed to the daily nutritional requirements of children at school, a lack of nutrition and health-related data for school-age children undermined the ability to assess accurately the nutritional adequacy of the school meal. There was also substantial evidence that many school staff were benefiting from school meals without contributing financially, while children who were unable to contribute financially or in-kind were either denied the meal or stigmatized in a variety of ways, both affecting the consumption of school meals by students.<sup>14</sup>
33. **Value transfer.** Factors that affected the value transfer of the school meal includes its nutritional value and whether it was reduced by pipeline breaks, school breaks, absenteeism, non-targeted beneficiaries consumption of school meals, cash or in-kind payments required from students, students not being allowed to eat, and/or food losses. The value of the transfer was also influenced by the degree of vulnerability of the household: the value was higher for the most vulnerable.

<sup>14</sup> The SFP's design did not plan for school staff to benefit from these meals, regardless of whether they contribute.

## Implementation Factors within WFP's Control

34. Recent changes in government standards for madrasahs and ECDCs are facilitating increased enrolments in basic education, as anticipated in the country office project plans. Unfortunately, the lack of resources for meeting project needs resulted in a dilution of the per-student ration. Re-targeting exercises were delayed by a lack of country office staff. However, recent changes in WFP funding structures resulted in increased funding and resource allocations, which provided the country office with sufficient capacity to update studies on food insecurity. This resulted in more precise geographical targeting; capacity development for actors in the school feeding process; and the use of a more sophisticated monitoring system. The country office has used its leadership of the multi-sector working group for the education sector to advocate for increasing the number of actors contributing to the Essential Package.
35. The SFP is the only social safety net operating in the Gambia, and the only mechanism offering a feasible platform for systematically reaching the entire country. Although the country office is making significant strides towards hand-over of SPF management and implementation to the Government, a nationally designed, managed and owned programme remains a long way off.

## Interactions Among Factors

36. **Household-level factors: willingness/ability to pay.** In addition to the direct financial costs and benefits, households deciding whether or not to enrol their children in school take into account factors such as the value they place on education, their income, religious considerations, their food vulnerability, the quality of teaching in school, and the school facilities.<sup>15</sup> A higher percentage of the most vulnerable households in the sample did not send their children to school. These households are likely to have a lower willingness/ability to pay, and the value transfer is less of an incentive for school enrolment in the face of the additional education costs that must be incurred.
37. For households that have decided to enrol their children and have incurred the education costs, the extent of the value transfer will be critical in determining whether the benefits outweigh the costs. Funding shortfalls and pipeline breaks can be extremely influential in this, particularly, for example, as in 2010, when half rations were applied and the gross value transfer was closer to GMD855 than GMD1,710.

---

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

38. At the national level, the GERs stayed more or less constant between 2003 and 2009, but regions showed variations. Net enrolment improved overall, including for girls, who reached parity with boys. Positive enrolment trends cannot be attributed solely to school feeding, as many other initiatives took place, especially from 1988 to 2004. School feeding's contribution to improved learning could not be demonstrated, given the overall poor test results of students in the Gambian education system.

---

<sup>15</sup> The Poverty and Social Impact Analysis Report 2009. Reasons cited by households with out-of-school children included religious considerations, by 48 percent, and because the child was needed to work/school was too expensive, by 26 percent.

39. There is clear evidence that the school meal contributes to students' minimum daily nutritional requirements when they are in school and able to consume it. However, substantial evidence indicated that certain in-school practices – students' financial or in-kind contributions and staff's consumption of school meals – negatively influenced participation in the school meal for some children.
40. The value transfer to households varied by level of household vulnerability and was also influenced by resource shortfalls and pipeline breaks. The value transfer through school meals was close to the cost of education, and was highest for the most vulnerable households.
41. Assessment of the SFP's sustainability – its continuation rather than the sustainability of its results – identified many areas where sustainability standards were met to only a limited extent, despite the country office's efforts to hand over programme management and implementation to the Government. These observations, together with the Government's need to prioritize scarce financial resources and invest in a variety of sectors, affect the likelihood of the Government assuming greater responsibility for funding the SFP in the near future.

## Recommendations

⇒ *For the Government, WFP Country Office and Schools/Communities*

42. **Recommendation 1:** Develop, disseminate and implement a policy on children's contributions and the appropriateness and consequences of school staff eating the school meal.
43. **Recommendation 2:** Develop a formal school feeding policy and strategy leading to eventual hand-over of the SFP to the Government, with specific dates, tasks and objectives.
44. **Recommendation 3:** Provide technical assistance and fund other appropriate activities to develop the Government's capacity to manage and implement the SFP.
45. **Recommendation 4:** Explore ways of transferring more authority to certain education units within the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.
46. **Recommendation 5:** Identify strategies for more precise targeting of the most vulnerable and most food-insecure. In addition to tighter geographic targeting based on food-insecurity indicators, consider other targeting options.
47. **Recommendation 6:** Advocate with the National Nutrition Agency, UNICEF and other agencies addressing the underlying causes of malnutrition, to collect data on school-age children's anthropometric status, including vitamin A deficiency and anaemia prevalence; continue implementing strategies to address vitamin A and other micronutrient deficiencies for school-age children; and review the ration composition for school feeding.
48. **Recommendation 7:** The WFP country office should cooperate with and support the Early Childhood Development Unit in the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in conducting a baseline study of ECDCs.

⇒ *For the West African Examinations Council – the Gambia and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education*<sup>16</sup>

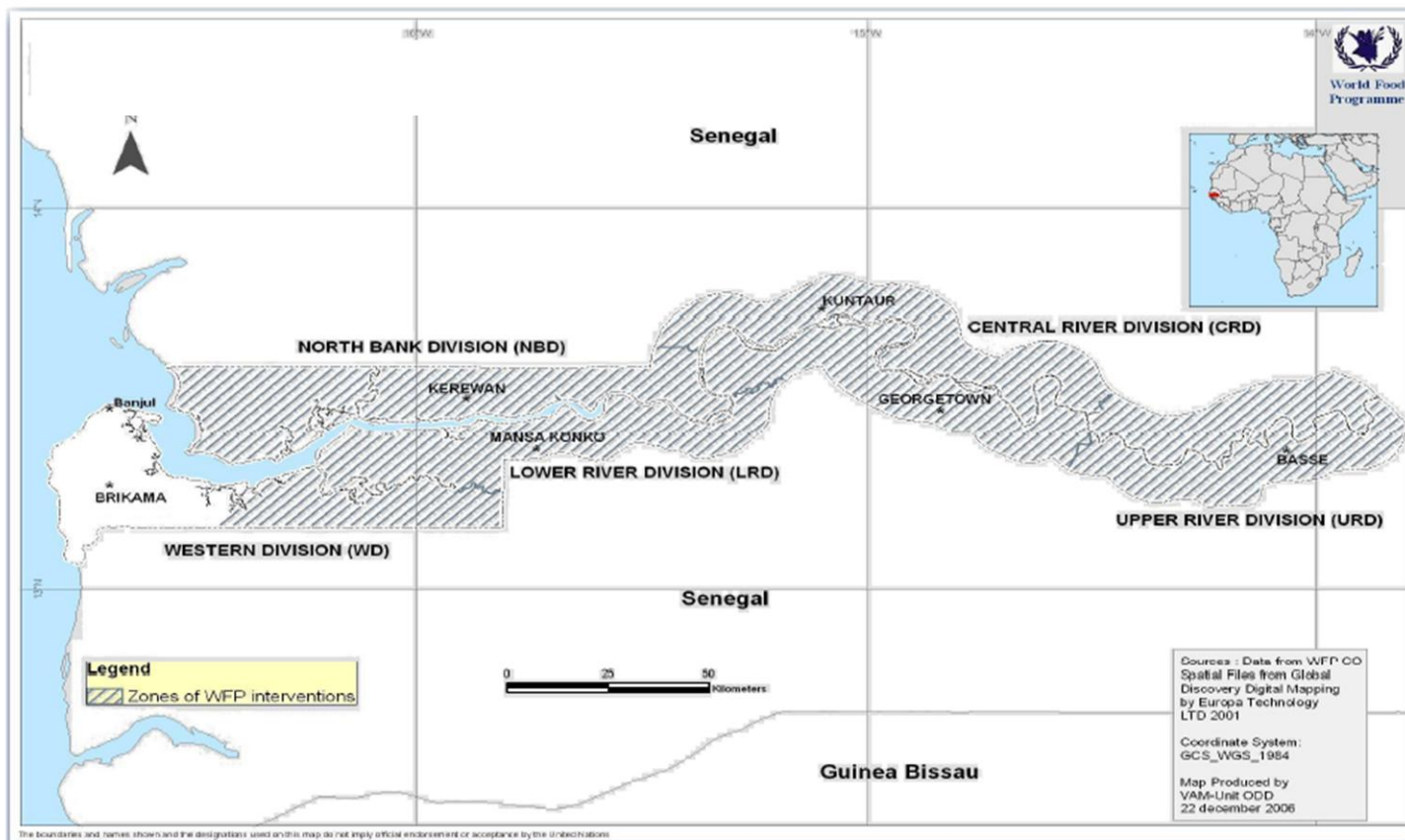
49. **Recommendation 8:** Report national assessment test results at the school rather than at the student level, and report school-level results to communities.
50. **Recommendation 9:** Test teachers on knowledge appropriate for grade-level content and on the teaching skills needed to teach primary grade subjects.

---

<sup>16</sup> These recommendations are not within WFP's area of responsibility, nor are they directly related to school feeding. However, they are likely to contribute to improvements in educational quality and accountability.



## THE GAMBIA: ZONES OF WFP INTERVENTIONS



Region 1: Banjul; Region 2: Western; Region 3: Northern Bank; Region 4: Lower River; Region 5: Central River; Region 6: Upper River

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries.

ANNEX

---

## ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

BCS	basic cycle school(s)
BCG	The Boston Consulting Group
ECDC	early-childhood development centres
GER	gross enrolment ratio
LBS	lower basic school(s)
NGO	non-governmental organization
OE	Office of Evaluation
RDA	recommended daily allowance
SFP	school feeding programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund