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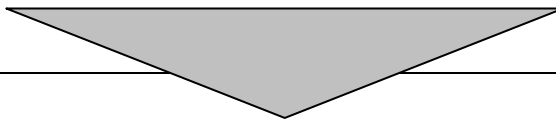
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EXIT STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL FEEDING: WFP'S EXPERIENCE

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

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.

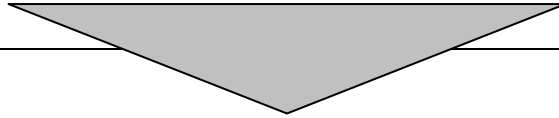
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Executive Summary



WFP reviewed its experience in phasing out its school feeding programmes in 8 of more than 20 countries where it had ended its involvement in such activities. These case studies were complemented by a desk review of available WFP documentation on phase-out activities and a review of the experiences of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in phasing out school feeding and other programmes.

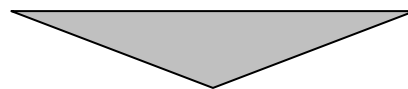
The study concludes that a successful exit strategy is one that is developed in coordination with implementing partners, beneficiaries and the relevant government authorities, and is based on six key components: the setting of milestones for achievement; government commitment; community contributions; technical support; management and communication; and the involvement of the private sector.

However, school feeding programmes vary depending on country-specific circumstances. The elements outlined in this document provide a broad framework for successful exits, but a country may not need to utilize all six components to maintain continued benefits. Strategies should therefore be tailored to the circumstances.

Successful exits require achievable milestones that are taken seriously by all parties and monitored as the activities evolve. Ideally, the original design of each WFP school feeding activity includes the key features necessary for an eventual phase-out. If this is not the case, the appropriate measures can be integrated into the activity during the life of the project.

The School Feeding Support Unit will assist country offices in putting in place and monitoring realistic exit strategies.

Draft Decision*



The Board takes note of the study on exit strategies for WFP school feeding activities (WFP/EB.1/2003/4-C). The Board encourages the School Feeding Support Unit and regional bureaux to assist national Governments and WFP country offices in applying the lessons from the study.

* 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.



INTRODUCTION

1. Since the launch of WFP's Global School Feeding Campaign in 2001, the Programme has been investigating the best ways to ensure that phase-out strategies are successful. Achieving the goal of sustainable development lies at the heart of successful exit strategies. For school feeding projects this means maintaining enrolment and attendance levels for girls and boys, and maintaining the programme's impact on nutritional status, especially short-term hunger.
2. This document outlines the main elements of successful school feeding exit strategies and discusses key programming issues that need to be taken into account to ensure a smooth transition. The document is submitted for the Executive Board's consideration.

METHODOLOGY

3. WFP has phased out its school feeding operations in approximately 22 countries.¹ The Programme reviewed its school feeding phase-out experience in 8 countries. Case studies were carried out in Botswana, Brazil, Cape Verde,² El Salvador,³ Jamaica, Namibia, Paraguay and Swaziland. They were complemented by a desk review of available WFP documentation on phase-out activities and the subsequent results. WFP also examined the phase-out experience of NGOs in school feeding operations and development programmes.⁴
4. Countries reviewed in the study were selected using the following criteria:
 - Phase-out operations had to have occurred within the previous ten years to ensure that national officials could recall the experience and provide useful and relevant information.
 - Country Programmes had to represent a variety of phase-out situations to enable contrasting experiences to be captured.
 - Countries had to represent a balance of geographic regions and disparate country circumstances.
5. It was not possible to select a country in the Asia-Pacific region, as there were no cases identified that met WFP's phase-out criteria. It should be noted that in all cases except Cape Verde and El Salvador, the end of WFP's support for school feeding coincided with the cessation of all WFP operations in that country and the closure of the WFP office. This

¹ These include: Barbados, Botswana, Brazil, Solomon Islands, Comoros, Cyprus, East Timor, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Jamaica, Jordan, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Swaziland, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey and Uruguay. A number of complicating factors make it difficult to ascertain the exact number: WFP school feeding activities have not always been clearly defined, differentiated from other activities, and/or named in a way that facilitates tracking school feeding in historical records. In addition, in some countries WFP began new school feeding programmes or undertook activities with similar goals (such as "take-home rations" programmes) after phasing out an earlier/original school feeding activity.

² In Cape Verde, a plan to gradually phase out WFP school feeding assistance by September 2000 was well under way when it became clear that programme quality was being compromised and that the programme could not be sustained if WFP assistance ended. The Executive Board subsequently agreed to continue WFP assistance for school feeding in Cape Verde from October 2000 until September 2004.

³ Initial plans to phase out the El Salvador school feeding activity by 2002 were interrupted by a succession of natural disasters that precluded WFP's exit. As a result, phase-out operations were extended until 2007.

⁴ Levinger, B. and McLeod, J., 2002. *'Hello, I Must Be Going': Ensuring Quality Services and Sustainable Benefits through Well-Designed Exit Strategies*. Newton, Mass.: Education Development Center.



influenced the impact of the phase-out, as WFP was not just exiting from the school feeding programme, but also leaving the country. In El Salvador, phase-out operations were under way but incomplete. The inclusion of this country afforded a unique review of an exit in progress.

6. The case studies were based on interviews with former WFP national staff and with government officials who had been working on the school feeding programme at the time of WFP's phase-out. Current school feeding programmes in each country were also reviewed, and various ministry officials and community stakeholders such as parents, teachers, principals and representatives from area NGOs were interviewed. These interviews and observations were designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the changes in school feeding since WFP's phase-out. Of the eight countries that provided the case studies, all still have school feeding programmes. Two (Cape Verde and El Salvador) continue to receive WFP assistance, and six (Brazil, Botswana, Jamaica, Namibia, Paraguay and Swaziland) have continued their programmes without WFP assistance. Brazil's school feeding programme is one of the world's largest, with 37 million children participating.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL EXIT STRATEGIES

7. From the outset of a project, identification of anticipated benefits and the development of an exit strategy that will maintain them should be incorporated in planning discussions, and such benefits, together with the strategy, should be monitored in project activities. An exit strategy should be developed in coordination with implementing partners, beneficiaries and the relevant government authorities, and should be based on six key components:
 - the setting of milestones for achievement;
 - government commitment;
 - community contributions;
 - technical support;
 - management and communication; and
 - involving the private sector.
8. Ensuring that these factors are built into the programme design from the earliest possible moment is key to a successful exit. This does not mean, however, that operations already ongoing are precluded from the benefits of strategic planning for phasing out. Objective assessments of ongoing school feeding programmes can identify programme strengths and weaknesses and contribute to the development of a detailed phase-out plan. As programmes evolve and as different economic or political factors alter the project scope, periodic assessments become an increasingly important tool in all phases of an operation.
9. While this document identifies six features of successful exit strategies, a programme does not necessarily need all six to maintain the benefit stream after WFP ends its assistance. Country offices need to review closely the issues covered in these six areas and decide with their partners which ones are of most importance, given their country context.

How to Know When to Leave: Setting Milestones for Achievement

10. When should WFP phase out support, and why? What indicates that previously agreed-upon benefits can be maintained? Documenting achievements against a set of



predetermined milestones helps answer the question, "When is it time to go?" The identification of and responsibility for reaching these milestones should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders and agreed to by all parties involved. One critical milestone that determines the sustainability of a national government or community-based programme is the development of institutional capacity to manage it.

11. In six of the eight countries studied, phase-out operations were initiated because those countries had reached a certain socio-economic level. In line with WFP's 1994 Executive Board decision to phase out activities in all countries with a middle-income status, plans were initiated to close operations in Botswana, Brazil, Jamaica, Namibia and Paraguay. Although all of the countries were deemed economically capable of running independent national operations, Botswana's experience shows that other factors can affect a country's ability to manage a school feeding programme.
12. In Botswana, the end of operations had been anticipated and the phase-down had been carefully planned to occur over a number of years. WFP assistance was slowly phased out while government funds were increased. After assistance ended, government officials realized that despite rapid economic growth, their human resource capacity had not grown commensurately. Although the country was prepared economically and had indeed reached a critical "milestone", certain skill sets were lacking to run the programme efficiently and manage important oversight duties. Botswana highlights the importance of assessing not only macro-economic indicators, but also institutional capacity.
13. In contrast, the phase-out from Cape Verde appears to have been "triggered" when the country achieved "universal education". The accomplishment was reached in the face of economic hardship at the household level, which continued to make it difficult for families to send their children to school. The Government also faced adverse economic circumstances. The initiation of WFP's phase-down, which gradually reduced the number of schools and regions benefiting from WFP assistance, soon resulted in schools with insufficient food and declining rates of enrolment and attendance. While a stated "milestone" for the project had been met, WFP's phase-out was not successful since benefits could not be maintained. Realizing the problem, WFP reversed its strategy and began to raise the number of schools it assisted, increasing the focus on community involvement and the participation of parent/teacher associations.
14. These contrasting experiences suggest that a more comprehensive set of indicators should be used for determining when to phase out and that institutional capacity (at the community, local or national level) should be a major factor in the initial design of all school feeding plans and in setting milestones. Even where a phase-out is initiated for reasons other than project-specific achievements (such as in Botswana, Jamaica, Namibia and Paraguay, where WFP closed down country operations), the exit can still be successful if the process bolsters other key characteristics that sustain project benefits.

The Importance of Government Commitment

15. All WFP operations are initiated with legal agreements granting government permission to implement operations. Implicit in these agreements is the Government's commitment to the project. However, the nature of this "commitment" varies considerably. Experience shows that phase-outs are more successful if the commitment actually involves budget contributions and an active role in implementation. This was the case in Botswana, Brazil, El Salvador, Jamaica and Namibia. Because governments had been contributing financially to the school feeding programmes from the beginning, government officials reported that it was not especially difficult to secure the additional budget resources necessary for the phase-out and eventual take-over by the Government.



16. For example, in Botswana the phase-out plan stipulated that WFP-provided resources decline over a five-year period while government-provided resources increase. This appears to have been a highly successful "staged" process that was acknowledged by officials as allowing a reasonable amount of time to increase government resource inputs and take over management procedures. The fact that there was government financial commitment and established budget lines appeared to smooth WFP's exit from the programme.
17. WFP's experience in Namibia also shows the importance of government involvement in implementation. From the beginning of WFP's assistance, officials made a significant investment in time and resources. At the national level, the programme received a budget allocation and was coordinated by high-level staff who worked directly with WFP counterparts on the programme's structure and on implementation issues and monitoring practices. Locally, government employees participated in training workshops focused on skill development activities and commodity storage and preparation exercises.
18. A contrasting experience occurred in Cape Verde. Here the Government was WFP's key implementing partner, yet its commitment in terms of resources devoted to the school feeding programme was based on external support. Other bilateral donors had been paying for government counterparts while WFP provided 100 percent of programme needs until the phase-out was initiated. This made the phase-out process extremely difficult and ultimately caused its failure as the Government of Cape Verde had to start from zero to find sufficient financial and human resources for the programme.
19. While funding is critical for the continuation of school feeding operations, El Salvador demonstrates how strong government commitment can lead to creative solutions while adequate funding is secured. Although El Salvador could not immediately establish large-scale annual appropriations, political support coupled with close oversight and collaboration from senior staff led to the use of non-traditional funds. While the non-WFP-assisted national programme receives some regular government funds, most of the funding comes from special resources gained from the privatization of the country's telephone company. As these funds are temporary and continue to diminish, the resources are seen as a good solution during a time of transition, with the understanding that a more stable source of funding or annual appropriation will be critical to maintain the stream of benefits in the future.

Community Contributions—Cash or In Kind

20. While government support is critical for providing institutional support to the programme, a commitment from the community, in particular from parents, is also essential. School feeding programmes that incorporate some form of parental or community contribution, whether it be a cash payment or in kind (through donated food or labour), tend to be the strongest programmes post-WFP assistance. Programmes that build this component in from the beginning and consistently maintain it have the most success. The programmes in Jamaica, Namibia and Swaziland have such components. In Namibia, the community has provided a cash component to bolster cooks' salaries, which are paid in food. In addition, community members donate fuelwood and additional food resources to enrich student meals. In Jamaica and Swaziland, parents have made a financial contribution from the beginning of the programme, and this has been progressively increased over the years as costs have risen. While parents in El Salvador do not make cash contributions, they do provide in-kind contributions such as supplementary food resources and organized volunteer labour for the preparation and distribution of food.



21. In contrast, the programmes in Cape Verde and Paraguay did not incorporate a community or parental contribution, and this can be linked with some of the problems these programmes faced once WFP withdrew. In both countries, government officials found parents unwilling, and in some cases unable, to contribute when new payment schemes were initiated as WFP's support ended. These school feeding programmes have remained weak or non-operational.
22. However, there are certain problems that are common in systems that incorporate community or parental contributions. In Swaziland, there were reports of children missing lunch because parents could not afford the contribution, and reports of children dropping out of school because parents could not afford the fees. While many families in WFP-supported countries are not able to make substantial monetary contributions, some form of payment does appear to provide a stronger base for building sustainable programmes. Reduced or in-kind contributions are also an option. Teachers in Jamaica were allowed to provide up to 20 percent of the school food, without a charge to students identified as needy. Parents in Botswana were allowed to make cash or in-kind contributions. While the programme eroded over the years, public pressure compelled the Government to start an official payment system for cooks and to cover non-food-item-related costs. Today, the Government of Botswana is attempting to introduce some mechanism for cost-sharing, but it admits this will be difficult because the tradition of cost contributions has been lost.
23. In addition to facilitating WFP's phase-out and assisting Governments in sustaining school feeding programmes, programmes that actively involve communities and parents have other benefits that should not be overlooked. WFP's school feeding phase-out studies have shown that programmes with active community and parental involvement in school feeding also result in more actively involved parents with greater interests in other education-related activities. Community contributions to school maintenance, together with homework supervision and increased awareness of the linkages between good nutrition and education, are some of the diverse benefits for children that develop in such circumstances.

Technical Support—During and Beyond

24. Long-term and varied technical support represents the third key element for planning a successful exit strategy. Technical support throughout the project, during the phase-out and beyond, is particularly important for ensuring an adequate transfer of skills and maintaining the programme's stream of benefits long after external assistance has ended. Continuing technical support beyond the provision of food should be considered in some project phase-out plans. In each of the case studies, all forms of WFP support—food and technical resources—ended concurrently. Technical resources provided by WFP in a typical school feeding programme could include: data collection and assessment, project management skills, and knowledge of various computer software packages to analyse data, track commodities and manage pipelines.
25. While commodity inputs lend themselves to a staged or multi-year phase-out process, it is much more difficult to gradually phase out technical support such as operational advice and monitoring visits. However, technical support for training and institutional capacity-building (including skills at the community and school level) is critical for successful exit strategies. Identified weaknesses in these areas can signal the need for an increase in training and other technical support during the phase-out period.
26. In Namibia, the ongoing strength of the national school feeding programme was attributed to the fact there had been substantial and WFP-supported investment in community and regional-based training from the beginning of the programme. These



training sessions were carefully planned, involved key community leaders and aimed to solidify the community's commitment and ability to manage the programme efficiently before it commenced in each region.

27. In Brazil in 1988, as part of a larger reform process, the Government decentralized food distribution in the school feeding programme and transferred full responsibility for social services, including education, to the municipalities. By focusing on technical support during its phase-out, WFP assisted local authorities in taking full responsibility for what had been the WFP school feeding programme. Technical support provided by WFP helped build capacity that enabled municipal authorities to move more effectively to a fully decentralized system.
28. WFP and host countries, however, should ensure that there are long-term commitments and adequate resources for maintaining and improving the skills necessary for food procurement, storage, preparation and monitoring during the post-WFP period. Training in areas such as programme monitoring, commodity management and food safety often underpin a programme's strength and success, and sufficient resources must be devoted to maintain it.
29. The review in Botswana suggests that the Government has not maintained adequate resources for these aspects of the school feeding programme, and this has led to some weaknesses in the post-WFP operation. While support was initially strong, continued training needs were not addressed by the Government, and this began to affect the programme as employees changed jobs or retired.
30. In Botswana and Jamaica, government officials spoke of the problems they encountered while procuring commodities on the international market after WFP's departure. They were not adequately prepared for these problems, which caused disruptions in the programme's food supply. This point is highlighted by the current situation in El Salvador, where the Government found commodity procurement too difficult to manage. The part of the programme now run by the Government operates under a voucher system that provides schools with cash to purchase food locally. The average cost of the voucher programme is approximately US\$0.12 per child per day for the voucher programme, and about US\$0.8 per student per day for WFP assistance. Although the Government is concerned about costs, it was inadequately prepared to manage the technical requirements involved and decided to initiate its own system. As a result, part of the country operates under a voucher programme while remaining WFP operations continue under the old system, and the Government pays for the operation of both.⁵ While WFP is working to resolve these difficulties, the problems previously mentioned could have been addressed through continuing WFP technical support.
31. In Botswana, Cape Verde, Jamaica and Swaziland, officials expressed a desire for more training and technical support from the Programme both during the WFP school feeding programme and after WFP's departure. Several common problem areas included the development of data collection and reporting systems; food safety issues; the evaluation and utilization of new commodities; and adequate training for managing the tender process.
32. Investments in training infrastructure or the "training of trainers" and working with government or other officials to plan and budget long-term training programmes should be included in exit strategies. Maintaining some technical support would ensure a smooth

⁵ The Government absorbed all transport and logistical costs under the WFP system by 2000. In addition, it currently manages 58 percent of school feeding operations while the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and WFP each support 21 percent.



transition and address unforeseen problems that could hinder the programme's early development. Funds to pay for this type of extended training should be sought from various sources and discussed with all stakeholders. Potential sources of funds for such activities might include the Government, the local representation of a variety of donors, and the private sector.

Management and Communication

⇒ *Ensuring Programme Leadership*

33. WFP's role in a national school feeding team is often that of a leader with direct involvement in management and problem-solving issues related to the programme's implementation. Phase-out strategies should be accompanied by a management plan that ensures that this leadership role is taken over by national actors after WFP's exit.
34. In Botswana, five government departments have a role in the implementation of the school feeding programme. This is generally recognized as a programme strength that ensures appropriate technical expertise and shared responsibilities. However, the weaknesses identified in the current programme (poor monitoring, erratic school-based food distributions, no training for cooks) appear to exist in large part because of the leadership vacuum left by WFP. The Programme played a key role in coordinating ministries and holding them accountable for identified implementation problems. With WFP's departure, this role was not taken over by any other single body.
35. A careful review of the roles of each stakeholder needs to be part of a phase-out strategy. This will allow an appropriate "leadership" function to be attributed to a government body during the phase-out process. It is important to note that leadership is not only a question of management, implementation functions or providing problem-solving skills. It also involves a government's long-term policy for maintaining school feeding and understanding how this programme should fit into other social-sector policies.

⇒ *Making Sure Everyone Understands the Exit*

36. WFP must ensure that phase-out plans are clearly communicated to all stakeholders in a school feeding project, including teachers, parents and beneficiaries. Officials in several countries, particularly at the school level, complained that they had not been informed of WFP's phase-out plans. They became aware of them only as arrangements changed and resources declined. In each of these cases WFP had well-understood and detailed plans with national counterparts, but perhaps did not ensure that arrangements were made for communicating these plans to *all* stakeholders, including parents, teachers and local authorities.
37. WFP not only needs to manage and communicate the process of phase-out with national stakeholders carefully, but it must also do the same within its country office. In Jamaica, WFP's school feeding programme was extended and expanded while WFP concurrently spoke of planning to phase it out. This led to scepticism about WFP's real intentions not only among government officials, but also among WFP's national staff.
38. The phase-out process both within and outside a WFP country office must be clearly communicated and carefully managed. There should be clear guidelines on reporting procedures and the advice given to national counterparts and Governments. The periodic and independent monitoring of the phase-out processes should include a review of procedures and arrangements in the WFP office and *vis-à-vis* the Government.



39. Regardless of the duration of a phase-out (i.e., over a long or short period of time) it is recommended that the process allow for a periodic independent review. This means an objective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current programme and the likelihood that an exit will be successful. In order to ensure objectivity, the review team could be made up of: (i) a government representative; (ii) a WFP representative, but not from the country office; and (iii) a representative of a nearby country that has already completed a phase-out process successfully.
40. An independent review that lays out a time-line with specific goals could help governments better prepare for full management responsibilities. Such reviews could help countries identify issues and problems that might emerge only during or after the phase-out period and that might not be immediately evident to those closely involved.

⇒ *Learning from Others—Establishing Regional Networks*

41. WFP should use the opportunity of its involvement in multiple school feeding programmes within a geographic region to develop contacts and networks *between* countries and the major players involved in school feeding operations. This would not only be a worthwhile investment to support the implementation of school-feeding programmes, but would also be important in the successful phase-out of external assistance.
42. In the neighbouring countries of Botswana and Namibia, officials appeared to have no knowledge of each other's school feeding programme. A regional network of school feeding programmes could be valuable in circumstances such as a WFP phase-out, where information-sharing and cross-border cooperation, particularly in areas such as commodity procurement, could provide efficiencies and support.

Including the Private Sector

43. In all school feeding activities there is a role for the private sector. Although WFP's experience in collaborating with the private sector in school feeding phase-outs is limited, experience shows that active private-sector involvement helps develop support and expertise among key political and economic players. The sooner that private-sector interests are involved, the earlier and more concrete the support will be. WFP should pursue strong ties with the private sector in all its school feeding activities.
44. It is important to view the private sector not only as a source of possible resources for the programme, but also as an advocate for the continuation of the programme, particularly beyond the period of external donor assistance. El Salvador has recently seen the expansion of a pilot project with private-sector partners to develop agricultural technical training and other skills-based assistance activities in conjunction with the school feeding programme. The project will help solidify efforts to enable the continuation of school feeding operations once WFP assistance ends.
45. School feeding holds long-term social, economic and political benefits for businesses. Depending on the country, school feeding might appeal to the private sector in a number of ways, such as: the need for an educated labour force; interest in using and developing management and technical capability in a "public service programme"; interest in establishing and maintaining contracts and employment. Moreover, supporting schools (which have the advantage of being in a central location) is often seen as the most effective means of benefiting the entire community. Schools can be used as a springboard to reach not only children, but also parents, teachers and local officials who play multiple roles in communities.



46. The private sector has commercial ties to WFP's school feeding programmes in a number of areas. For example, jobs can be created and income and profits generated in the following areas: procurement and transportation; milling and food fortification; the related fields of hygiene and sanitation; food equipment and place settings (plates, cups, bowls, spoons, etc.) bagging, labelling, the recycling of bagging supplies; school feeding-related surveys; and reporting, monitoring and record-keeping.
47. To strengthen links with businesses and to develop a sustainable system of support for school feeding activities in Latin America, WFP is collaborating with several partners to form an independent school feeding network there. Using a membership organization model, the Latin America network is intended to provide training, technical assistance and advocacy for school feeding and related education activities throughout the region. A conference to launch the network officially is planned for late 2003. It is envisaged that the new network will be very helpful in engaging corporations, NGOs, governments, international organizations and individual members and in ensuring that school feeding is included on local and regional political and economic agendas. Partnership networks such as these are encouraged for all school feeding activities, and can be built at the local, country and regional levels.

CONCLUSIONS

48. Planning for a successful exit requires that a number of elements be built into the project. Ideally, these features will be part of the original design of the programme. If they are not, as is the case with many of WFP's ongoing school feeding programmes, they can be integrated into such programmes during their life. The key objective is that exit strategies be more than a plan to reduce resources over time; they must be real strategies to maintain benefits after external assistance disappears. This means taking into account a variety of concerns discussed in this document.
49. School feeding programmes vary depending on country-specific circumstances. The elements outlined in this document provide a broad framework for successful exits. A country may not need to use all six components to maintain continued benefits, and should therefore tailor its strategies to its specific needs.
50. The School Feeding Support Unit will help country offices put in place realistic and concrete exit strategies. As part of this assistance, guidance on successful phasing-out will be distributed to country offices.

Overview of Case Studies

⇒ Botswana

51. WFP supported the Botswana school feeding programme from 1966 (the year of independence) to 1997. The phase-out was completed in a staged manner (reducing WFP resources while increasing those provided by the Government of Botswana) over five years (1992–1997). School feeding continues today and has been institutionalized through a strong culture of government feeding programmes for citizens of all ages.



⇒ *Brazil*

52. WFP provided school feeding assistance to Brazil from 1965 to 1996. The assistance was focused primarily in the northern and northeastern states, and on pre-school and primary schools. Secondary schools were included for a relatively short period as well. In the mid-1980s, the Government of Brazil began to decentralize education and other social services. Responsibilities for school feeding, including food purchasing and distribution, were decentralized as a part of this process. WFP assisted in this effort, especially through training and equipping the offices that were assuming responsibility. From 1992, WFP phased down from assisting 16 states to assisting just 3, and continued with capacity-building activities through the phase-out in 1996. The Programme was unable to respond to the Government of Brazil's request for another two years of WFP technical assistance for a transitional period, however. In 2001, the reviewers found that, though faced with many difficulties, the national school feeding programme in Brazil was very strong and supported by law. More than 37 million children in 5,507 municipalities received school feeding in 2001, and parents and local governments are increasingly demonstrating accountability and ownership for the programme.

⇒ *Cape Verde*

53. WFP's school feeding programme began in 1979. In 1995, WFP and the Government of Cape Verde agreed to begin a gradual phase-down of WFP contributions that would continue for four years. WFP was to stop supplying commodities to an increasing number of schools each year. Those schools were then to have been supplied by the Government. But, as a result of a growing school population and economic difficulties, most government-programme schools were soon without food. WFP therefore slowed the planned rate of its phase-down and maintained some support after the four-year period had ended. WFP agreed to a new four-year project that was to resume school feeding assistance for most schools in Cape Verde from October 2000 until September 2004.

⇒ *El Salvador*

54. In 1998, WFP initiated phase-out operations that were to be completed in 2002. While the phase-out was extended until 2007 owing to a succession of natural disasters, the Government was able to assume all transport and logistics responsibilities, and the national programme currently accounts for 58 percent of the total number of school feeding beneficiaries. WFP and USAID manage the remaining portion of the programme and reach an additional 21 percent each. The Government took over responsibility for two regions in 1998 and for four additional regions in 2000. While the transitions were smooth, the country opted to change the programme to a voucher system in which individual schools purchased food locally. The Government is scheduled to take over the remaining WFP-assisted regions gradually by the end of 2007. The programme currently receives strong support from politicians and well-coordinated oversight from high-level staff. To continue the current stream of benefits in the coming years, El Salvador will need to secure significant funding levels in the national budget, provide extra training and oversight at the local level, and gain additional support from the private sector.

⇒ *Jamaica*

55. WFP's support for school feeding in Jamaica (1985–1996) represented just a short period in the country's long history of school feeding, which began in 1926. WFP's support provided a new programme component—the Nutribun—to all primary school children as a daily mid-morning snack. The Nutribun was produced in government-owned factories, and



students made a partial payment for the food. WFP's programme was extended only once but lasted for longer periods because of persistent under-utilization of provided commodities. WFP's support for all programmes in Jamaica ended in 1996, but a strong school feeding programme continues.

⇒ *Namibia*

56. WFP's assistance for school feeding started in 1991, with Namibia's independence. The programme was targeted to drought-affected areas and included some food support for pre-schools also. It was always understood that WFP's programme would last for a limited period of time (five years), and the Government planned accordingly. The programme has continued since WFP's support ended in 1997 and has a strong parental contribution component that includes providing and cooking food commodities. School feeding in pre-schools has not continued.

⇒ *Paraguay*

57. WFP began school feeding assistance in 1971, and the programme was extended and expanded through the 1970s and 1980s, culminating in 110,000 primary school student beneficiaries in 1994. WFP's decision to phase out the programme was prompted by the 1994 Executive Board decision to focus WFP activity in least developed countries (LDCs) and low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). The WFP office closed in 1995, and the final distribution of school feeding rations was carried out in 1997. There was no phase-down period, and WFP's departure came in the midst of a period of political transition. In 1999 and 2000 there was significant decentralization of government programmes, and responsibility for school feeding passed to departmental governments. Despite national laws and policy supporting school feeding nationwide, programme implementation has been problematic and has not achieved universal coverage. The central government funded school feeding in all departments in 1999 and 2000, and many departments (re-)established working programmes. In 2001, however, central government funding was delayed due to a budget deficit, and implementation was hampered.

⇒ *Swaziland*

58. WFP began school feeding in Swaziland in 1970, complementing the project already run in some schools by the NGO Save the Children/Swaziland. Both projects required parents to contribute financially, with funds used for local food supplements, and to pay cooks and organizers. WFP support expanded in the 1970s and 1980s. A 1989 evaluation found that the objectives of improving nutrition and increasing school attendance had largely been achieved, and the project ended in 1992. There was no formal phase-out period. The WFP review team found that school feeding was continuing with enormous commitment from schools and parents, despite drought and economic hardship.

