

**DRAFT SCHOOL FEEDING POLICY —
A HUNGER SAFETY NET THAT
SUPPORTS LEARNING, HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**



INFORMAL CONSULTATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

School feeding is a versatile safety net programme in support of vulnerable children and their families. When combined with other initiatives school feeding can effectively meet education, health and community development objectives. Linkages with local procurement strengthen the sustainability of school feeding while increasing farmer incomes. In partnership, WFP will continue to refine school feeding responses to address rising food prices, eliminate hunger and malnutrition, combat HIV/AIDS and benefit communities.

This document brings into line WFP school feeding policy and practice under a framework that supports governments and communities. It is in line with WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2011) and clarifies the objectives of school feeding programmes in specific contexts, defines minimum requirements for implementation, and establishes design parameters based on best practice, corporate lessons and research.

WFP's school feeding programmes will be designed and implemented in partnership to achieve results that are measured taking into consideration: i) the assessed situation and needs; ii) how best to align the programmes in support of government priorities and plans; and iii) the range of complementary resources that can be leveraged from governments and partners. WFP is committed to implementing the school feeding policy framework, understanding that a sequenced approach will be required to align new and ongoing programmes.

POLICY RATIONALE

1. School feeding is a well-recognized safety net that alleviates hunger while supporting education, health and community development. Studies show that school feeding, deworming and malaria prevention have clear impacts on attendance and learning (Jukes, Drake and Bundy, 2007). Hunger can impede the ability of children to learn and develop as healthy, productive adults. The interaction between hunger, poor nutrition status and disease prevents children from going to school, poor families from investing in their children's education, and children from learning once they are in school. School feeding also promotes development through, for example, local purchases of food and support for agricultural production activities.

Of primary school-age children worldwide, 72 million are not in school. Of these:

 - 95 percent are in developing countries;
 - 57 percent are girls;
 - 48–56 percent are stunted and up to 62 percent are underweight; and
 - 53 percent suffer from iron deficiency anaemia, 5 percent from iodine deficiency and 7 percent from vitamin A deficiency.

Sources: UNESCO 2007; WFP 2007
2. WFP has traditionally supported school feeding to reach poor and hungry children, in particular girls, enabling them to attend school and learn. Specifically, the rationale for school feeding programmes was to address short-term hunger to improve access to education and learning through increased enrolment, attendance, retention and gender equality at school. School feeding programmes have acted as food-based safety nets that benefit families with school-age children and contribute to community development. More recently, WFP has provided significant capacity development in support of national school feeding programmes, including the introduction of local purchases to supply food items to schools.
3. School feeding has been endorsed in a number of international fora and has received government commitment and support. The United Nations Millennium Project recommended that school feeding be expanded to reach all children in hunger hotspots using locally produced foods.¹ School feeding responds directly to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to hunger and poverty (MDG 1), education (MDG 2) and gender equality (MDG 3), and contributes indirectly to all other MDGs. Further, school feeding programmes contribute to all six “Education for All” goals contained in the Dakar Framework for Action.² School feeding was included in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development

¹ Source: UN Millennium Project. 2005. Ten key recommendations. See <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/resources/keyrec.htm>

² The Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All was signed at the World Education Forum in Senegal in 2000 (UNESCO, 2000).

Programme (CAADP), adopted by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2003 and later endorsed in the African Union Food Security Summit held in Abuja in 2006. School feeding has been included in the Africa–European Union Summit Action Plan 2008–2010 and identified as an important strategy at the 2007 meeting in Dakar of the High-Level Group on Education for All. More recently, school feeding has been included in action plans or declarations responding to the impact of rising food prices (the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) Yokohama Declaration and the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security).

4. Several WFP policy documents address school feeding issues directly and others align thematic areas to school feeding.³ However, WFP does not have a comprehensive policy that addresses the different contextual situations in which WFP school feeding takes place. This document brings WFP school feeding policy and practice in line with a conceptual and operational framework that supports communities and governments to meet specific education, nutrition, health and development objectives. The approach is aligned with WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2011) and helps to clarify the objectives of school feeding programmes in specific contexts, taking into consideration local priorities and capacities. It also consolidates recent research, operational best practice and evaluation findings in a conceptual framework that allows for the evaluation of concrete results.

³ School feeding is mentioned in the following policy documents: "WFP Strategic Plan (2004–2007)" (WFP/EB.3/2003/4-A1); "Enabling Development Policy" (WFP/EB.A/99/4-A); "Exit Strategies for School Feeding: WFP's Experience" (WFP/EB.1/2003/4-C); "Expanded School Feeding and Health Programme: New Partnership in Uganda" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-D/Add.1); "Building National and Regional Capacities" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-B); "Gender Policy (2003–2007)" (WFP/EB.3/2002/4-A). The following policies are relevant to school feeding programmes: "WFP and Food-Based Safety Nets: Concepts, Experiences and Future Programming Opportunities" (WFP/EB.3/2004/4-A); "Programming in the Era of AIDS: WFP's Response to HIV/AIDS" (WFP/EB.1/2003/4-B).

WFP'S REACH

5. For over 40 years WFP has demonstrated effectiveness in implementing school feeding programmes in a range of situations and contexts from the onset of an emergency, to protracted relief and post-crisis situations, through to stable environments. WFP's deep field presence, combined with recognized capacity in policy, programme design and management, logistics and procurement, has rendered WFP the largest organizer of school feeding programmes in the world. WFP has secured

WFP School Feeding – Key Figures Annual Performance Report 2007

Beneficiaries: 19.3 million

Gender: 48% girls

By region

Latin America: 8.7%

Middle East and Central Asia: 3.4%

South and South-East Asia: 35.8%

Sub-Saharan Africa: 51.8%, of which

Eastern and Central Africa: 21.3%

Southern Africa: 9.7%

The Sudan: 4.1%

West Africa: 16.7%

By modality

School meals: 90.4%

Only take-home rations: 9.6%

Food Distribution: 535,000 mt

Estimated expenditures: US\$357 million

- government commitments for school feeding programmes and has a well-established network of implementing partners.
6. School feeding can take different forms: the provision of school meals or snacks eaten during school hours or the distribution of dry take-home food rations distributed to pupils at the end of each month or school term if they attended school regularly. Most programmes target primary schools but support also reaches preschools as part of early childhood development programmes and children attending non-formal education. In some cases, girls attending lower secondary schools benefit from take-home rations.
7. Standardized reporting generates outcome-level data for some 70 countries, providing a comparable basis for assessing the educational context in which activities are implemented. It also shows important educational benefits at the outcome level associated with WFP school feeding programmes. For example, in 2007, net enrolment rates in WFP-assisted schools averaged 83 and 78 percent for boys and girls respectively — both above WFP's target of 70 percent. Attendance rates for boys and girls were about 93 percent, again exceeding targets. Teachers in 93 percent of surveyed schools observed positive changes in classroom behaviour when school lunches were provided: increased attentiveness, attention span, concentration and learning abilities. Also, school feeding had a positive outcome on enrolment of girls; the average ratio of girls to boys in 57 surveyed countries was 0.96 (WFP, 2007a).
8. WFP is well-positioned to support school feeding programmes and demonstrate results from these programmes. However, the organization

recognizes that food can make a substantial impact on children's lives only when part of a package. There is a wide consensus that distribution of food should be accompanied by complementary interventions to enhance the impact of school feeding programmes. For education to have its maximum impact, early investments in children's nutrition – prior to their reaching school age – are required.

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

9. School feeding is a hunger safety net that yields multiple results in different situations, depending on the assessed needs in a specific context. Notably, school feeding programmes are context-specific and may not be appropriate in every situation. Programmes will be designed and implemented to achieve results that are measured and explicitly aligned to WFP Strategic Objectives, considering: i) the assessed situation and needs; ii) how best to align school feeding programmes in support of government priorities and plans; and iii) the range of complementary resources that can be leveraged from governments and partners.

Expected Outcomes

10. The following are measurable, context-specific outcomes for school feeding programmes:
 - **Immediate food needs met:** Food gaps are met by increasing the quantity of food consumed by children, households or targeted vulnerable groups, particularly in emergency situations including conflict, natural disasters and economic shocks such as a steep rise in food prices.
 - **Short-term hunger alleviated to improve learning capacity:** Short-term hunger is a transitory non-clinical form of hunger that can affect physical and learning capacity. Breakfast can improve performance for cognitive tasks carried out in the same morning (Grantham-McGregor, Chang and Walker, 1998). Children who are hungry in class are more likely to have difficulty concentrating and performing complex tasks, even if they are otherwise well nourished (Del Rosso and Marek, 1996).
 - **Increased enrolment, attendance retention and completion:** School feeding programmes enable children to enrol and stay in school, and are an incentive for families to send children to school, including children from vulnerable groups. Ongoing monitoring has shown that in WFP-assisted schools, absolute enrolment increased by 28 percent for girls and by 22 percent for boys in the first year of assistance; these benefits are confirmed in other studies (WFP, 2007b; Adelman, Gilligan and Lehrer, 2007; Drèze and Kingdon, 2001; Powell, et al., 1998). Children attending school are less likely to be sent to work.

- **Reduced gender and social inequalities:** School feeding programmes contribute to social equity by directly tackling gender and social inequalities in education. Further, school feeding programmes encourage families to send girls and other vulnerable children, including orphans, to school (Edström, et al., 2007). Also, school feeding generates opportunities for assisted students to share a nutritious meal, regardless of their social class or gender.
- **Improved health and nutrition status:** School feeding programmes provide macronutrients together with essential micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), enabling students to learn, function, and develop physically and intellectually. Micronutrient deficiencies are a risk factor for both health and learning. For example, iron deficiency anaemia affects learning capacity and is associated with hookworm infestation and other infectious diseases. Importantly, school feeding represents opportunities to leverage additional support to improve the health and nutrition of preschool-aged children.
- **Increased health and nutrition knowledge:** Children in school have the opportunity to acquire information on health including HIV/AIDS, sanitation and nutrition education from an early age, if these topics are included in the curriculum.
- **Increased incomes for small farmers:** When food is purchased locally, school feeding programmes can promote sustainable development solutions by supporting reliable markets for small farmers and local producers, and can also help them access markets (WFP, 2008).
- **Increased development opportunities:** School feeding programmes can serve as a platform or “development centre” for the community by providing a channel through which a broader range of services are delivered. Community-led activities benefit both the school and the wider community, for example through woodlots and gardens. Improved school infrastructure is an important outcome in crisis and post-crisis situations. WFP will continue whenever feasible to link school feeding with local procurement, stimulating both agriculture production and market access.
- **Increased government capacity to manage school feeding programmes:** WFP helps governments successfully establish a national capacity for school feeding within line ministries. Efforts will be increased to encourage greater national ownership, and stronger institutional structures and policies to support national programmes.

- **Safe and secure learning environments provided:** When children attend school and share meals, they are able to socialize in a secure environment. School feeding can help to build social cohesion and restore a sense of normalcy for children coping with the stress of conflict and disasters.

Policy Principles

Government commitment and take-over

11. All WFP school feeding programmes will support government priorities and needs. In emergency and post-crisis contexts, school feeding may be part of the international humanitarian response to assist affected governments in their relief and recovery efforts. In more stable situations school feeding may contribute to the Poverty Reduction Strategy of governments and form part of education policies and plans. To enhance sustainability, WFP will ensure that school feeding programmes are designed in partnership, are in line with government priorities, capacities and policies, and with the specific intent to smoothly integrate school feeding within institutional and policy frameworks.
12. However, school feeding may not always be the most appropriate modality to meet government objectives, and not all complementary components may be applicable. With governments and partners, all WFP school feeding programmes will develop a hand-over or exit strategy at the design stage. Strategies would capture the reality of making the transition to different contexts – or phasing out – and the need to adjust objectives and tools to fit evolving situations (WFP, 2007c).
13. As part of WFP’s commitment to handing over or exiting, an assessment will help determine the most appropriate course of action. WFP will aim for a process that takes place in stages as government inputs and management procedures are put into effect. When governments contribute financially to WFP school feeding programmes, it is easier to secure the required resources necessary for the eventual take-over, as seen in El Salvador, Honduras and Cape Verde. It is also important to work towards inclusion of school feeding in national policy frameworks and legislation.

Partnerships

14. Partnerships are central to delivering a school feeding package to children. The Focusing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH) framework and the Essential Package recommend and reinforce the integration of school health and nutrition interventions. Within the child-friendly school concept, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is the main partner for improving the quality of education, health, nutrition and support for water and sanitation in schools, particularly through the Essential Package. WFP will continue its work with the education cluster and the Inter-Agency

Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and strengthen its work with United Nations partners, the World Bank, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

15. WFP will build on recent initiatives with partners, specifically the World Bank and others, to ensure sustainability of school feeding programmes. Two main elements of sustainability include working with governments to build cost-effective national programmes and supplying school feeding programmes from local production.

Community ownership

16. Partnerships with local stakeholders such as municipalities, women's groups and youth associations are an important force in lobbying for sustainable school feeding programmes with governments. Broader community participation will be built into projects whenever feasible so that communities are active partners and not just contributors to the programme. Care will be taken to avoid overburdening communities, especially under crisis or post-crisis situations. WFP programmes are to be managed jointly by parent committees, and WFP particularly encourages the full participation of women in these committees.

Overarching design principles

17. WFP supports school feeding, in partnership, when and where hunger is an impediment for good education, nutrition and health for children from food-insecure and disadvantaged families.
18. School feeding is an appropriate hunger safety net when it responds to national priorities and goals, and to WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2011) objectives and goals. WFP will seek synergies among its operations in a country and among sectoral activities including mother-child health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS and nutrition programmes, and livelihood support. Partnerships are essential to achieving these sectoral objectives.
19. WFP's Enhanced Commitments to Women and the goals of the 2008 Gender Policy conform to those outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, especially the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat hunger and stimulate sustainable development. These commitments are adhered to in all WFP school feeding programmes.

Context-Specific Objectives

20. The characteristics of school feeding will depend on context-specific objectives and expected outcomes. Programmes may have to consider overlapping contexts — for example, post-conflict and a situation of chronic hunger — at the same time. The context will, in general, be assessed considering two main factors: the prevailing situation in a given country or

region (onset or protracted emergency, post-conflict, post-disaster or stable⁴) and the capacity in the country for school feeding programmes (considering governance, institutional structures, complementary partner activities and implementation capacity). For example, school feeding may provide an expanded safety net for children and their families during economic shocks, for example when rising food prices threaten the continued attendance of children at school. Further, the role of school feeding in a country just devastated by a disaster or in the midst of a complex emergency will be different from a country dealing with chronic hunger in a stable environment.

21. The policy framework identifies the main attributes of school feeding by Strategic Objective and goal, defines minimum requirements for activity implementation and establishes design parameters or boundaries for action based on best practice, corporate lessons and research.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: SAVE LIVES AND PROTECT LIVELIHOODS IN EMERGENCIES

School Feeding at the Onset of an Emergency

22. At the onset of a crisis (natural disaster, economic shock such as rising food prices, conflict) the school infrastructure and educational environment may provide an effective way to scale up ongoing programmes to distribute food assistance and meet immediate food needs. Schools may be among the only institutions that continue to operate; consequently they can serve as a gathering point for the affected community. The aim is to meet immediate food needs of communities and prevent a decline in the nutrition and health status of children.
23. The response is part of a broader humanitarian strategy using modalities such as general food distribution to reach affected families. Access to and quality of education services may not be the main concerns in the initial weeks of an emergency response. WFP's ongoing arrangements with governments and partners would be enhanced with standby arrangements as required.
24. When responding to complex shocks such as rising food prices, existing social protection and safety net interventions may need to be reformulated to meet new needs. It is critical to design strategies and programmes that are based on clear objectives and a strategy to scale up and down, and are cost-effective.

⁴ Allocation of resources in stable situations will follow the Strategic Plan criteria: WFP will allocate at least 90 percent of such resources to countries that are least developed or low income (gross national income per capita three-year average under US\$900) and that face chronic malnutrition (measured as a 25 percent or greater rate of stunting among children under 5).

Minimum requirements

25. School feeding implementation structures are used to provide assistance at the onset of an emergency where programmes already exist prior to the emergency and where schools are part of a national disaster risk-reduction or contingency plan. Using schools or other learning environments as a platform, the emergency response is most effective when food stocks and other essential items are pre-positioned, and communities are involved in disaster response planning and training that emphasizes the school as a secure environment for children and their families.

Design parameters

26. The response is short term and designed with an explicit hand-over strategy. Where possible, mechanisms for scaling down are part of the design.
27. The food basket would be revised according to assessed needs and objectives, and would cover the entire period of vulnerability, irrespective of the school schedule (weekends, vacation time, etc.).
28. Ideally, distributions take place when school is not in session to avoid disruption to the learning environment; there needs to be sufficient space in schools to organize the distribution.
29. A rationale for using schools is that a robust logistics capacity and food management capacity is in place or can be scaled up to reach affected areas.

School Feeding in Protracted Crisis Situations

30. After the initial response to a crisis, whether conflict-related or derived from economic shocks or natural disasters, and in protracted crises, school feeding programmes can form part of a wider humanitarian response or safety net for school-age children and their families, including in refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) camps (INEE, 2006). Retaining students in school, with special attention to gender and social gaps, is a main objective in emergency situations. It is important to ensure continuity in a child's education during an emergency, and going to school regularly benefits children in several additional ways. For example, addressing the psycho-social trauma caused by disturbing events and death, and providing protection and socialization, is crucial. Girls are particularly vulnerable, as are former child soldiers and returnees (WFP, 2007c). Based on the findings of a needs assessment, the aim of school feeding in crises is to address acute hunger including micronutrient deficiencies.
31. To respond to economic shocks, for example those related to increasing food prices, WFP will support governments to scale up school feeding as part of their safety net strategies. WFP will expand school feeding to

reinforce livelihoods and prevent the adoption of negative coping strategies.

32. In crisis situations school feeding programmes can serve as a platform for other interventions through schools, filling gaps as required. WFP is in an excellent position to work through the education cluster when activated and to coordinate with other partners (World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), NGOs) to help meet the assessed needs of children during an emergency.

Minimum requirements

33. In order to avoid overstressing the education system, schools with the means to maintain student enrolment will be targeted. As part of a coordinated response WFP will work with partners to meet all humanitarian educational standards, including the INEE Minimum Standards.
34. Many families may not be able to make a contribution to the school committee; however, over time, some form of contribution, for example helping to prepare meals, provides a stronger base for building effective programmes.

Design Parameters

35. As the situation begins to stabilize and government commitment increases, programme objectives and modalities evolve with the context. A phase-out or hand-over strategy will be developed during the course of the operation, taking into consideration the appropriateness of school feeding as part of the government's longer-term priorities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: PREVENT ACUTE HUNGER AND INVEST IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Schools as a Platform to Strengthen the Resiliency of Communities to Shocks including Climate Change

36. Climate-related shocks have educational implications that compound wider risks and vulnerabilities, perpetuating hunger and generational setbacks to human development. For example, Indian women born during a flood in the 1970s were 19 percent less likely to have attended primary school. Human development, including education, is the most secure foundation for adaptation to climate change. Thus adaptation planning should be an integral part of wider strategies for hunger reduction.
37. The *Human Development Report 2007/2008* promotes investments in education as one of several main measures to empower and enable vulnerable people to adapt to climate change (United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), 2008). Further, in the context of the United Nation's goal to "Deliver as One" on the climate change challenge, schools can play a role in community disaster preparedness and serve as platforms for building community resiliency to a range of livelihood threats. In Ethiopia, for example, the Ministry of Education and WFP created CHILD — the Children in Local Development project — to transform over 100 primary schools into demonstration centres for environmental and food-security activities. CHILD demonstrates that, progressively, climate change concerns can be incorporated at complementary levels within a community.

38. Climate-friendly schools — schools that promote environmental and climate change awareness and the adoption of sound environmental practices — should increasingly become part of WFP's toolbox. The approach builds on elements of the Essential Package and is tailored to address community-specific threats. The package of activities may include water harvesting facilities, fuel-efficient stoves, woodlots and agroforestry models to produce fuel and nutritious foods, and awareness-raising related to conservation and climate change mitigation measures.

Minimum requirements

39. A community-based, demand-driven approach, combined with sound technical partners, is a minimum requirement for the implementation of climate-friendly school activities. Current research and practice demonstrate that school feeding has the potential to achieve a range of outcomes but it also shows that results depend on responding to the context, developing the proper design and ensuring synergies among partners.
40. WFP's main role is to advocate for climate-friendly schools and build the required partnerships to carry out an appropriate package. An assessment would ascertain community demand for such a package and the feasibility of partners to provide financial and technical resources. WFP is in an excellent position to work with existing partners, and to coordinate with governments in support of climate-friendly schools. Examples are UNICEF and its Environmental Education Resource Pack for Child-Friendly Schools, developed together with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and others such as FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNHCR and NGOs.

Design parameters

41. While the school is a platform for community adaptation and risk-reduction activities, most activities will be implemented by the community. A main concern is to avoid burdening teachers or introducing activities that will falter when school is not in session.

42. From the onset it is important to clarify WFP's role as catalytic, which involves: i) using the school feeding programme as an entry point for awareness-raising with students and parents; ii) supporting programmes that are energy-efficient and conserve water; and iii) working with partners in the formulation stage to design community adaptation activities that reduce environmental degradation. This will require that the design goes beyond traditional approaches and identifies from the beginning hand-over mechanisms with communities, partners and government authorities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: RESTORE AND REBUILD LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS IN POST-CONFLICT, POST-DISASTER OR TRANSITION SITUATIONS

School Feeding in Post-Conflict, Post-Disaster or Transition Situations

43. During the transition from relief to recovery, the role of WFP changes from being a lead emergency responder to a key partner supporting the host government's integrated recovery and early development strategy. In post-crisis or post-conflict situations, a government priority will be to ensure that all school-age children have access to education. Thus, programmes will emphasize modalities to increase enrolment, attendance and learning, and to close the gender and social gaps. In protracted situations where IDPs and refugees have been displaced for a long period of time, completion of basic education may be a priority.
44. School feeding safety net programmes in post-emergency or post-conflict situations can promote a return to normalcy for children.⁵ School meals improve social cohesion in affected communities and help children integrate into a peer group after periods of disruption.⁶ This is particularly relevant in programmes supporting the return of refugees or IDPs. Incentives such as school meals or take-home rations can prevent children from missing school in order to work.
45. Nutrition could be an important objective of school feeding, as determined through a comprehensive needs assessment that considers education, nutrition and health. When objectives include health and nutrition, partners (ministries of education and health, UNICEF, WHO, NGOs) would provide services such as safe water and sanitation, deworming, micronutrients (in the form of supplements, micronutrient powders or micronutrient-rich foods), training on life skills and HIV/AIDS, and malaria prevention to

⁵ "A benefit of school feeding is its potential to promote a quicker return to normalcy after unsettling and often traumatizing emergency conditions have eased. [...] In situations of slower-onset or more protracted emergencies, the potential of school feeding is more of preserving a sense of normalcy, linked to other psychosocial benefits." (WFP, 2007c)

⁶ The social benefits of school feeding were observed in Sri Lanka's northeast, where children affected by many years of conflict and civil war were given the opportunity to share meals at school. The social aspects of sharing a meal with classmates are a very important benefit of the programme (WFP, 2007c).

form an effective package. Deworming and micronutrients should be provided together.

46. WFP's partnership base would expand to ensure that school reconstruction needs, including basic school infrastructure, are addressed. For example, school feeding programmes can be an important support for governments as they restore the educational system. They have been part of government "back-to-school" campaigns after a conflict, including campaigns to reach internally displaced children and support the demilitarization of children (WFP, 2004). School feeding can also support the return of IDPs and refugees because it can signal that basic services are functioning, it is safe to go home and children's education might not be interrupted.

Minimum requirements

47. WFP will advocate for and prioritize actions to ensure that the necessary learning infrastructure is put in place over time. WFP will work with partners to meet educational standards for humanitarian situations, including the INEE Minimum Standards.
48. Efforts to boost capacity development processes with governments and communities should aim to improve the quality of education and reduce hunger in the country. Many communities and families may not be able to make substantial contributions in post-emergency situations; in-kind contributions may be an option.

Design parameters

49. Efficiency considerations will need to be analysed in the context of programme objectives and alternative programming options. For example, take-home rations can encourage attendance, particularly of girls or other vulnerable groups that may be excluded from the school system. Under certain circumstances, food incentives for cooks and teachers may also be considered.
50. An exit or hand-over strategy is part of school feeding programmes in post-disaster or post-conflict situations, with the stipulation that such strategies evolve with the recovery process (WFP, 2005). Linking school feeding programmes with local procurement can be an effective way to initiate the transition from recovery to development.⁷

⁷ In Chile, the school feeding programme was used in the southern part of the country to reactivate the local economy after a natural disaster by linking school feeding with local agricultural production (WFP, 2008).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: REDUCE CHRONIC HUNGER AND UNDERNUTRITION

School Feeding in Situations of Chronic Hunger

51. In more stable situations school feeding safety nets should be part of government sectoral policies and strategies to assist school-age children. Programmes aim to reduce chronic hunger in two ways, by addressing short-term hunger and underlying causes of hunger, particularly poor educational attainment within populations. By alleviating short-term hunger and providing an incentive for children to go to school, programmes aim to encourage children to complete a full cycle of basic education.⁸ School feeding can facilitate access to basic education and vocational skills training for children made vulnerable by HIV, helping to strengthen and support livelihoods. Reducing the gender gap, especially with respect to completion, is a main priority.
52. School feeding programmes that support the strengthening of livelihoods are best implemented as part of a package of activities that address, at a minimum: i) students' nutrition and health through deworming campaigns, micronutrient fortification or supplementation, and their hygiene; ii) educational quality; and iii) community-based development processes that empower communities to find their own solutions to hunger. For example, an emphasis on locally produced foods and an awareness of proper eating habits and lifestyle choices can contribute to the health of children. Also, HIV/AIDS awareness and life skills training should be promoted. Local food purchases can promote sustainable development solutions by, among other things, developing more reliable markets and better market access for small farmers and local producers.

Minimum requirements

53. Schools need to have the adequate infrastructure and facilities to allow providing food and complementary activities to improve the nutrition, health and education status of children. Where needed, there should be a commitment to upgrading the infrastructure of schools to progressively achieve standards of adequacy. Particular attention will be given to maintaining appropriate pupil/teacher and pupil/classroom ratios.
54. School feeding programmes must have an "institutional home" within the government that is responsible and accountable for implementation. WFP country offices will ensure that school feeding programmes are part of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process and sector-wide approaches including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and education and health sector plans.

⁸ Basic education refers to the whole range of educational activities that take place in various settings (formal, non-formal and informal), and that aim to meet basic learning needs.

Design parameters

55. School feeding programmes increasingly become an integral element of government policies and strategies to alleviate hunger and poverty. When integrated within the national institutional framework, the influence of school feeding programmes to address the nutrition, health and educational needs of children is much greater.
56. As government capacity increases, so does the level of responsibility of the designated institution to manage school feeding programmes and the feasibility of a progressive hand-over from WFP to the government, or a phasing out of the programme. Programmes should be designed keeping in mind the government's capacity to eventually take over school feeding components, and their cost effectiveness.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF COUNTRIES CAPACITY TO REDUCE HUNGER, INCLUDING THROUGH HAND-OVER STRATEGIES AND LOCAL PURCHASE

School Feeding as Part of National Programmes for Hunger Reduction

57. As governments embark on developing strategies to prioritize hunger reduction, WFP can offer support in a number of policy and technical areas. When requested by governments, WFP will help them to decrease the role of external assistance, food and otherwise, and increase institutional support for school feeding. A hand-over strategy is an integral part of school feeding safety net programmes in a country and includes approaches and tools to strengthen the capacity of the government to design, finance and manage the programme over time. It also includes assisting the government in deciding on the role and relevance of school feeding within its national hunger-reduction strategies. The hand-over process requires significant time and resources along with careful planning and follow-up.
58. An important tool to support the hand-over process is local purchases to supply school feeding programmes. Linking school feeding programmes and locally produced food, including local capacity to do milling and fortification, benefits children, small farmers and local economies. WFP aims to create synergies between school feeding programmes and other social and agricultural programmes, meeting the educational needs of children while supporting agricultural and economic development. One example of this approach is "home-grown school feeding".⁹

⁹ In November 2003, WFP and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote home-grown school feeding in African countries. Twelve pilot countries were selected and to date, three (Uganda, Ghana and Nigeria) have produced action plans. Two countries are now in the implementation stage (Ghana and Nigeria).

59. Technical support throughout the project, during the phase-out and beyond, is particularly important for ensuring an adequate transfer of skills and maintaining the stream of benefits long after external assistance has ended. Trainings that involve community leaders and government officials build layers of capacity at all levels to manage school feeding programmes efficiently. WFP aims to work with governments to strengthen capacity in three main areas: i) advocacy; ii) institutional and policy to support implementation, (including financing mechanisms); and iii) design and implementation support (including targeting, monitoring and evaluation, logistics and procurement, and management and accountability) to assure quality programmes.

Minimum requirements

60. A hand-over strategy includes objectives, targets, milestones and a timeline with accountability actions. Contributions from all stakeholders must be specified for all stages of the hand-over process, with government contributions gradually increasing until the full take-over of the programme. WFP will build collaborative arrangements, including with the private sector and south-south cooperation, to augment country capacities.

Design parameters

61. WFP will clearly specify roles and responsibilities for effective capacity development, emphasizing its comparative advantage in a particular context. Not all tools are appropriate or feasible in all situations.
62. The cost effectiveness of school feeding components will be analysed periodically during the hand-over period to ensure that governments can assume responsibilities with the withdrawal of external support.

DESIGNING QUALITY PROGRAMMES

63. Quality school feeding safety net programmes meet community identified needs, are well targeted, match implementation capacities, are cost-effective, are properly timed and sequenced to link with government priorities and wider assistance programmes, and are monitored on an ongoing basis.

Situation Analysis

64. Information and an understanding of the situation are the starting points for quality programmes. To reach children with the right food, at the right place, at the right time, with the right package of activities requires that WFP and partners apply a combination of analytical tools to understand the context. Assessments will be carried out to ascertain why children suffer from hunger, their nutrition and health problems, obstacles to education, the impact of rising food prices and/or the HIV epidemic, the food security situation of the community, government priorities and

capacity to support a school-based package. For example, an assessment that identifies micronutrient deficiencies would lead to a response based on the provision of appropriate amounts of micronutrients. Or, if the problem is related to the high opportunity cost of sending children to school, cash or vouchers might be the most appropriate response. Thus, the design will be tailored to address specific problems in a given context.

65. The situation analysis includes trigger mechanisms that indicate the appropriate objectives and outcomes of school feeding programmes at given points in time and to assess partner capacity. Situation analysis, assessment or appraisals are compulsory in all situations and for all programmes in order to direct the design of a school feeding programme.

Targeting

66. In all situations, geographical targeting is the starting point for selecting schools to reach hungry and vulnerable children. It is based on a general food security analysis and an in-depth assessment of the hunger, education and health-related problems, and the potential role of food and other inputs to address the problems identified. Targeting criteria may need to be adjusted to accurately reflect a particular context and programme objective – for example the effects of rising food prices on school attendance. A programme with a main objective related to enrolment may use subnational geographical targeting to identify areas with high levels of food insecurity, high numbers of out-of-school children, high gender and social gaps in enrolment and poor retention of girls in school. At the onset of a natural disaster, with an existing school feeding network in place, the assessment might focus on the immediate food needs of children and their families, and the capacity of schools to include all affected children. If validated by the assessment, it is preferable to target all schools in a catchment area.
67. It is both impractical and ethically questionable to provide food to some children and not to others within a school or class; thus WFP targets areas of greatest need rather than specific individuals. In situations where WFP provides general food rations to IDP's and/or refugees, assessments may indicate that school feeding should be provided to children in addition to the family ration to ensure that they receive sufficient quantity and quality food, and attend school. The principal channel for WFP-supported programmes is through formal, government-supported primary day-schools.
68. Other groups that may require food assistance in an education setting include:
 - **Preschool children:** Children in centres, crèches, kindergartens and other institutions that provide educational activities.

- **Secondary students:** Secondary school students can be assisted in the context of emergency or recovery operations where secondary schools cater to clearly identified poor populations with serious access/learning constraints. Inclusion of students at boarding schools (primary and secondary) is to be limited to those institutions that serve clearly identified poor populations that would otherwise not have access to education.
- **Cooks:** As a general rule, cooks should receive compensation for their labour from the local communities or the government if voluntary labour is not feasible. However, when no such compensation can be provided, cooks can consume school meals with students (emergency contexts or when parents are too poor to make even a nominal contribution).
- **Teachers:** Teachers should be paid by the government, a sponsoring NGO or another source, not with WFP food assistance. However, in emergency/recovery operations, in the temporary absence of alternative funding sources for salaries, and as part of coordinated emergency education support with partners, WFP may consider providing, on a case-by-case basis, some assistance to teachers (meals or take-home rations as incentives, and salary equivalent when required to retain teachers). For example, in the early stages of the return process, governments may not be able to adequately pay teachers, yet education is crucial for a return to normalcy and household and community stability.
- **Students in informal learning environments:** Students who are not reached by the formal education system (street children, former child soldiers and others) should be considered if the programme provides an equivalency with the formal basic education (such as accelerated learning programmes).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Measuring Results

69. Results information is fundamental to understanding how children, their families and communities benefit from food and associated activities. Building monitoring and evaluation into a results framework during the design stage allows both qualitative and quantitative information to be collected by partners and participants, starting with the baseline.
70. Essential for measuring results are clear objectives and concrete targets. A set of performance indicators, aligned to WFP's Strategic Objectives and goals and consistent with the corporate performance results framework, permits the tracking of outcomes, outputs and process results related directly to the food input. The mandatory results framework will be the basis for reporting formats and frequency, allowing for aggregation across

activities and programmes. It is expected that even in emergency situations outcomes are to be measured.

71. WFP remains committed to collecting baseline information for school feeding programmes, an essential tool for measuring outcomes. Baselines and follow-up survey formats and frequency need to align with this policy. If the main objective is nutrition-related, targeting should be done in areas with the greatest undernutrition, and nutrition baselines conducted to monitor results.

Type, Quality and Timing of Food

72. To effectively alleviate short-term hunger and improve learning capacity through food, it is important to ensure that children consume the food while at school. On-site school feeding is therefore the appropriate modality for these objectives. Importantly, to increase concentration in class, food will be provided to children in the first hours of the morning,
73. The composition of rations for on-site meals will be determined primarily by local food habits and preferences, subject to the range and quantities of foods provided and the cash resources available to WFP for local purchases. Food should be fortified to achieve nutrition and learning outcomes, palatable to children, and locally grown and locally prepared so that benefits reach beyond the school to the local community (Kristjansson, 2008).
74. Substitution can occur when children are given less food at home because they receive a meal at school (Kristjansson, 2008). A proven and effective response is to provide take-home rations accompanied with advocacy on the importance of adequate and high-quality food for children. Take-home rations are appropriate for increasing enrolment, reducing gender and social gaps, and increasing retention. The kinds of rations and their frequency will be designed to reflect food needs and preferences. WFP will collaborate with partners to further enhance the nutritional value of food rations, with the aim of addressing nutritional requirements at critical life-cycle stages
75. However, take-home rations do not necessarily address the issue of short-term hunger in class or learning capacity in the classroom. The use of vouchers and cash transfers may be an appropriate tool for providing incentives to households to increase enrolment and attendance, when market infrastructure is in place.

WFP CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

76. WFP is committed to implementing the school feeding policy framework detailed in this paper, understanding that a sequenced approach will be required to align both new and ongoing programmes. Alignment will be based on best practices and operational lessons. Tools and systems will

need to be updated to accommodate the new programme design, assessment, monitoring and reporting requirements. Staff will need to be trained in these areas. For some specialized areas new staff may need to be hired.

77. Specific actions that WFP will undertake and that have budget implications include:

Aligning and Updating Guidance

78. An inventory of best practices will be made available to all field staff detailing what worked well in different contexts, challenges and lessons. Many case studies, research papers and evaluations have been completed; these are to be consolidated and prepared for field use. Cross-learning will be emphasized, as well as the sharing of best practices.
79. Programme guidance and performance measurement framework will be updated. Guidance to be amended includes: the *Programme Guidance Manual* (PGM); the *School Feeding Handbook*, including monitoring and evaluation guidelines; WFP's indicator compendium; and targeting guidelines.
80. Cost-efficiency guidance specific to school feeding and its broader components will be developed. The guidance will identify procedures and methods to assess transaction costs, analyse cost-efficiency issues and incorporate efficiency analysis into programme design. Also important is the development of guidelines for designing exit and hand-over strategies.
81. Action research will be conducted to identify programmatic lessons in different situations related to: i) school feeding in emergencies; ii) designing a programme with a hunger and health approach, with school feeding as the implementation platform; iii) the use of cost-effectiveness tools that can be applied in different situations; and iv) the use of cash and vouchers as incentives.
82. Tools and systems to be adapted include:
- Food security and vulnerability analysis, needs assessments and nutrition assessments, using quantitative and qualitative tools. WFP's toolkit to support participatory approaches for community development will be reviewed and updated as required.
 - IASC education cluster joint needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation, and response mechanisms; these will be aligned with WFP's policy framework.
 - Monitoring systems, which will be designed to reflect the Strategic Objectives, goals and indicators, enabling the analysis and aggregation of results for decision-making and accountability.

- The standardized school feeding survey, which will be aligned with WFP's new Strategic Objectives to provide more focused and reliable information.

Augmenting WFP Staff Capacity

83. An initial concentrated effort will be accomplished by coordinating the work of relevant staff and units, including regional programme advisers, the Policy, Planning and Strategy Division and the Programme Design and Support Division to test new approaches and develop country strategies that identify the role of school feeding within national contexts and priorities. A key area for WFP is advocacy to increase understanding and support for school feeding among governments, the private sector, academics, regional institutions and partners. Mobilizing political commitment to formulate policies and programmes is an important area of work for WFP staff. WFP will expand partnerships for more effective school feeding activities, promoting the Essential Package, regional alliances and global networks, and will work with the private sector.

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