

ANALYSIS OF GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM

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Executive Summary

In this study report home grown school feeding program (Ghana School Feeding Program-GSFP) has been analyzed in four districts in Ghana with respect to community involvement in program organization and management as well as socioeconomic impacts. From food sovereignty perspective, the study objectives were to demonstrate that improving access to market through GSFP improves household income and food access. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches has been used in data collection. A total of 360 people/households were interviewed. Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning were used as proxies for Food Sovereignty. There was significantly positive correlation between market access provided by Irrigation Company Upper Region Limited (ICOUR), which sold rice paddy to GSFP food contractors/suppliers, and household food insecurity score. Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning (especially rice which is one of the staples) increased from 6 months to 9 months as a result of access to production resources through credit packages and market access. However, the study recommends more empirical evidence from research to support the claim that using locally produced food for school feeding actually reduces poverty and malnutrition in farming communities. Low community involvement, food quality and food safety concerns, food procurement, management and sustainability challenges have also been discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of Ghana School Feeding Program forms part of the social science aspects of an interdisciplinary PhD research program being carried out in three countries including Ghana, India and Ecuador. The program aims at Tailoring Food Science and Technology to Endogenous Patterns of Local Food Supply for Future Nutrition (TELFUN). The central theme of TELFUN is enhancing Food Sovereignty through strengthening local food networks. Briefly, the Food Sovereignty concept as mooted by social movements for the governance of food and agriculture, addresses pressing issues of hunger and poverty (Figure 1) and the need to reverse the situation by empowering local communities to have control over their productive resources, use ecologically friendly means of production, access local market as well as nutritious and culturally accepted food (Pretty and Koohafkan, 2002; Altieri, 2002; Windfuhr 2005; Quaye 2007; Mazhar *et al* 2007).

Box 1. Overall Research Problem Statement: The problem of persistent hunger and poverty in developing countries

Conventional food policies have failed to address the issues of food sovereignty in developing economies where most of the people are poor and largely engaged in small scale Agriculture. On-going international and national food sovereignty debate points to the fact that conventional food policies focus on traditional agro-business models, marked by technological practices unsuitable for local food production and consumption systems. The research hypothesis is that conventional technology practices, developed from the idea of global chains, are not necessarily appropriate for local food networks. Therefore there is the need to re-design or tailor applied sciences and technologies to the needs of these networks. This is crucial for addressing the nutritional needs of large proportions of rural populations, given that world food prices are soaring beyond the reach of the majority poor.

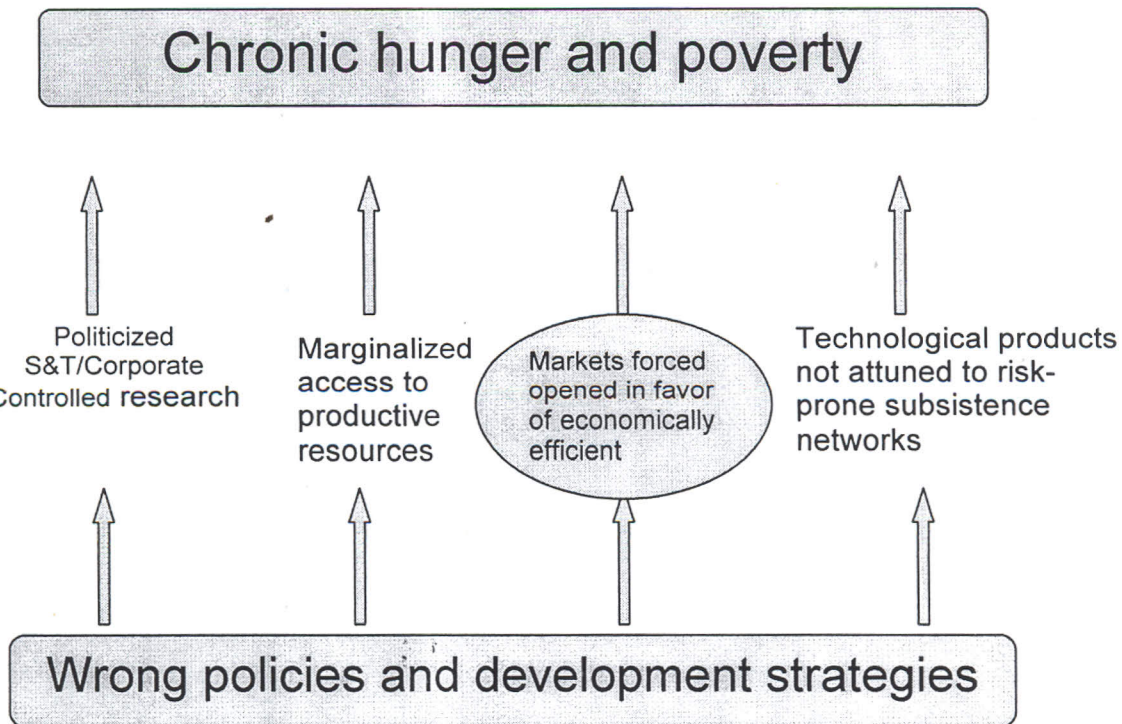
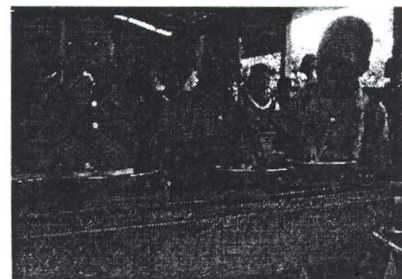


Figure 1. Schematic representation of some causes of hunger and poverty

To operationalize the Food Sovereignty concept relating to market access, selected schools participating in Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) in Ghana were analyzed to examine the socio-economic implications of strengthening the local food network through production-consumption linkages and reconstructions.



An overview of Ghana School Feeding Program

The Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP) is a government programme that has its mandate to feed school children from Kindergarten through primary one to six, on one hot meal a day. It is a four-year period programme (2007 to 2010) with funding from the Dutch and Ghana governments. The programme was born out of the New Partnership for African Development /Hunger Task Force Initiative (NEPAD/HTFI) under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union (AU). The long term goal is to contribute to



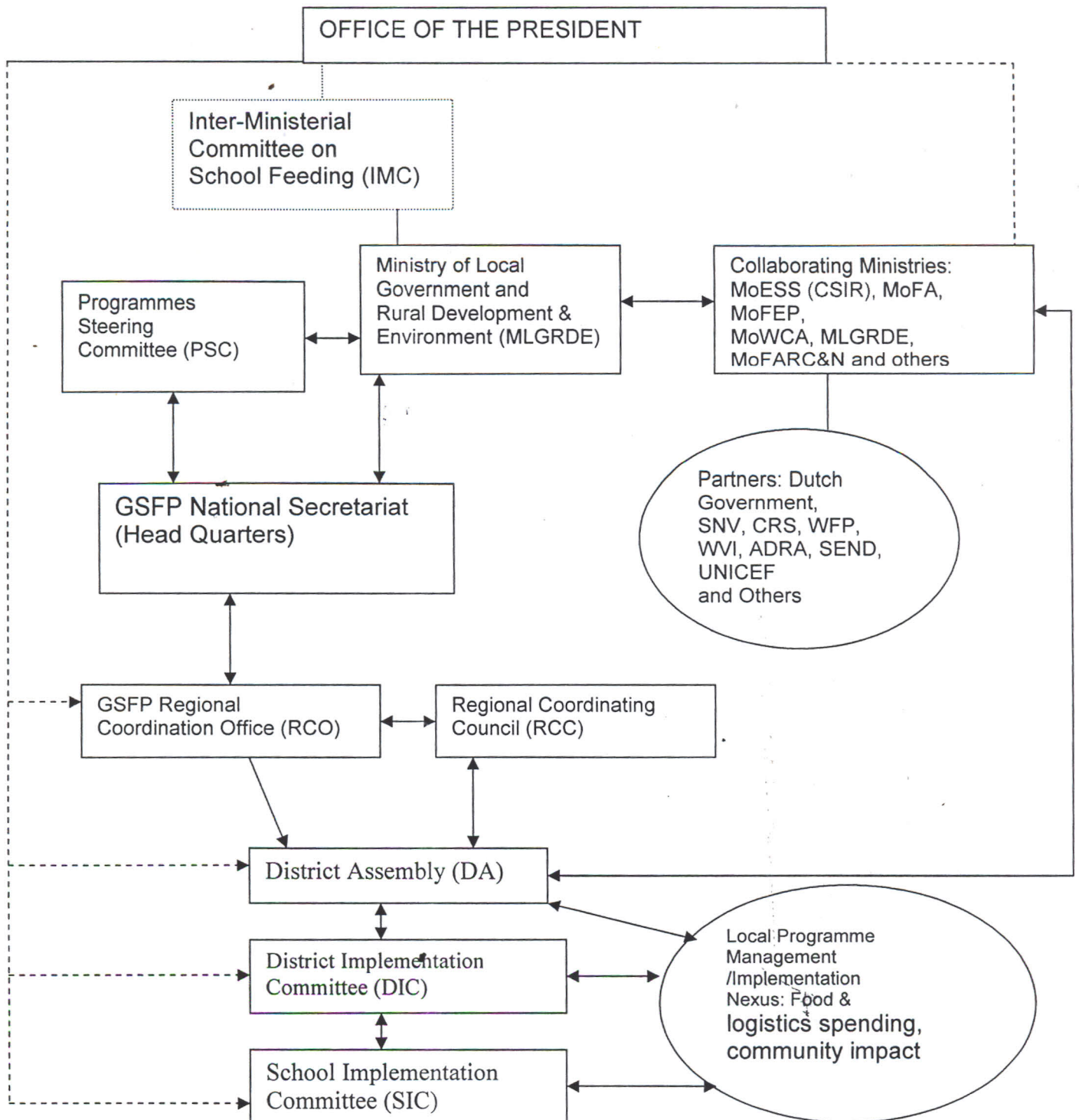
poverty reduction and food sovereignty in Ghana. The GSFP programme is expected to link the demand for food created by school feeding to the supply of food by small scale farmers through local procurement mechanisms. Thus, the demand for home-grown food is expected to stimulate local market forces in such a way as to inspire small scale farmers to expand production. The GSFP which is strategically designed to fight hunger and reduce poverty, focuses on locally grown foodstuffs like maize, rice, soyabean, cowpea, millet and sorghum. The program has wider implications for farmers in strengthening community food production and consumption systems through reduction in post harvest losses, provision of ready market for farm produce and incentives for increased production which will ultimately enhance food sovereignty.

The programme was commenced in September 2005 with a pilot involving 10 primary schools and later rolled out to 200 schools in July 2006 with 63,000 pupils benefiting. All 138 districts in Ghana (5 schools per district) are expected to benefit from the program by December 2006 (GSFP Bulletin, 2006). The program is being implemented in collaboration with other development partners and donors like IFAD, FAO, WFP, USAID, DFID, CIDA and Royal Dutch Government. Specifically the primary objectives of GSFP are as follows:

- To crease enrolment, retention in school and attendance rate
- To enhance the nutritional status of all school going children
- To create wealth at the rural level through increased production and Agricultural development
- to promote entrepreneurships in the local networks ; job creation opportunities
- To create accessibility to market
- To eradicate extreme poverty and lead to reduction in hunger
- To promote gender equity and empowerment of women
- To ensure improved environmental sustainability

GSFP focuses on stakeholder involvement and decentralization using existing structures of District Assemblies and Regional Coordinating Council in implementation.

GSFP PROGRAMME ACTORS AND RELATIONSHIPS



(Source: Adopted from GSFP Monitoring reports)

The following are the key actors in the implementation of the GSFP.

1) **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)**. For the start-up phase and programme establishment period up through the end of 2007, the IMC was the decision-making and oversight authority over the GSFP and all other feeding programmes in the country. It provided policy guidance, direction, and policy decisions, to the GSFP National Secretariat, and also served as an advisory body to the MLGRDE on the GSFP. Membership consisted of Ministers from Collaborating Ministries, and chaired by the Minister for Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development & Environment (MLGRDE). The IMC was phased out at the end of 2007 and its Ministerial membership fused into a Programme Steering Committee.

2) **Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development & Environment (MLGRDE)**. The ministry directly responsible for all local government and development activities carried out at District and sub-district levels under the Local Government Act (Act 462); and for the programme, the coordination of all inputs, activities, and outputs of cooperating ministries (Agriculture, Education, Health, Women & Children Affairs, etc.). MLGRDE is the oversight Ministry for the GSFP, and government partner to funding agencies supporting the programme.

3) **Programmes (Steering) Committee (PSC)** – The current National Technical Committee is aimed to assist the activities of cooperating ministries with the implementation activities of GSFP. With the appointment of specific sector experts at the NS, the NTC was phased out by the end of 2007, and its policy guidance and liaison roles subsumed into the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) to replace the IMC. Membership of the PSC consisted of the sector Ministers (or Chief Directors or Directors appointed by the Ministers of Collaborating Ministries as representatives), and Executive Director of the GSFP National Secretariat to provide the direct programme link between each ministry and the GSFP.

4) Collaborating Ministries and Ministry, Department and Agencies MDAs (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA),

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MoESS), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), Ministry of Health (MoH) – Collaborating Ministries (CMs), and MDAs who are the core partners with MLGRDE in the implementation of the programme. The Ministers of these CMs or their representatives serve on the PSC, and pass down decisions relating to their sectors down to their district level teams/leadership, and ensure the district level teams execute their roles and implement specified cooperative activities to support the GSFP objectives.

5) GSFP National Secretariat (NS) is a program implementation outfit under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development & Environment (MLGRDE). It is staffed by senior experts and consultants under contract to act as a programme coordinating and management unit (PCMU) for all aspects of the school feeding initiative, technical oversight and support for district level implementing structures (DIC, SIC), advising on program content, implementing sensitization and outreach, supporting capacity building needs of district level structures, executing and coordinating national level procurement, ensuring programme accountability and reporting, and providing technical and policy inputs to the MLGRDE and the PSC. The NS is under the leadership of an Executive Director (ED) who is a member of the PSC.

6) GSFP Regional Coordination Offices (RCO) is staffed by a Regional Coordinator (RC), supporting monitors and secretariat to oversee district coordinators at the DIC level. The RCO plays a key role in ensuring accountability and reporting to NS.

7) Office of the Regional Coordinating Council (ORCC) reviews and helps harmonize and coordinate DA development activities. The ORCC provides support for the GSFP Regional Coordination Offices directly and also provide linkage to district leadership and facilitate the RCO's coordination efforts.

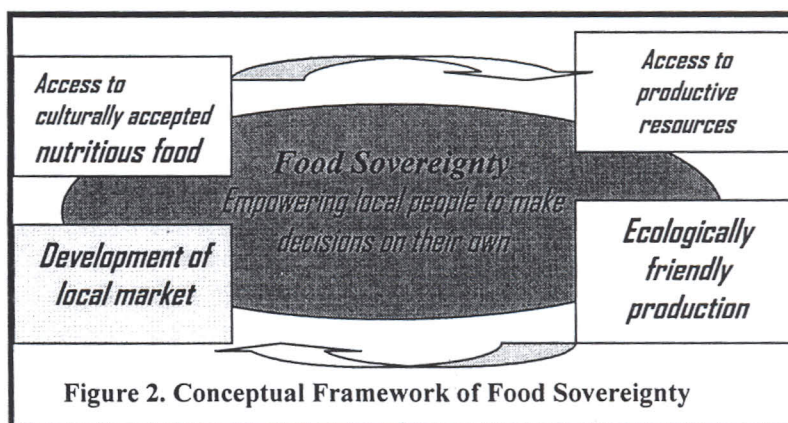
8) District Assembly is the core implementing body for the GSFP. It has the key responsibility for setting up the DIC, ensuring that the SICs are properly set up, ensuring the provision of specified infrastructure, coordinating the sectoral cooperating activities

of other district level MDAs, and mobilizing community support and inputs for SICs and the schools. The DA receives the programming funding for the district and enforces appropriate procedures under the Financial Management Acts to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of the funds for designated purposes.

TELFUN research program seeks to play a complementary role to such existing initiatives using the local cowpea network, emphasizing re-location of science and technology developments to local food networks and tailoring technologies to local environment (Ruivenkamp 2007).

Structure of the Study Report

This study focuses on improving access to local market or the development of local market of the food sovereignty conceptual framework shown in figure 2. The report is structured along 5 main sections including



introduction, objectives and methodology, survey findings, discussions and conclusions. Some recommendations are also made for future research pathways.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The TELFUN project integrates conceptual and methodological research issues across various disciplines and diverse regional conditions to improve generic understanding of Food Sovereignty. Therefore the broad objective of this study is to operationalize the Food Sovereignty concept using the School Feeding Program in Ghana (GSFP).

Specific objectives are as follows:

1. to assess the impact of GSFP;
2. to establish that improving access to market through GSFP improves household income;
3. to establish that improved household income enhances household food access and Food Sovereignty

Box 2. The objectives stated above address sub-question 4 of the PhD proposal

Sub question 4. What are the socio-economic implications of strengthening the local food network? (Using the GSFP as case study)

2.2 Methodology

Methods

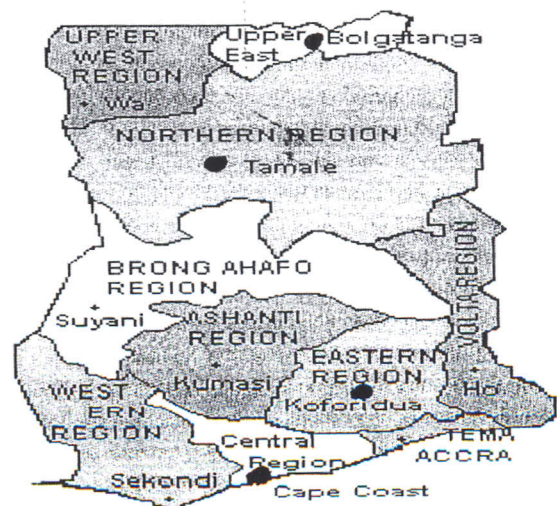
Quantitative-Qualitative approach is used to collect data and information. Conventional survey instrument was designed for one-on-one interview while focused group discussion ((Borgatti 1999; Denzin and Lincoln 2005), and narrative /key informants interviews were conducted to gather qualitative information using an interview guide. Questions covered Socio-economic profile of respondents, participation in GSFP/Information flow, market access, impact on household food availability and access to productive resources. Interviews were conducted from August - November 2008.



Interactions with some elders in Mfantseman District

Pre-Survey Arrangement

A thorough review of GSFP monitoring reports was done prior to the survey. This helped in survey area selection process. A survey plan detailing all activities to be undertaken against a time frame was then compiled. Some key contacts were identified with the help of SNV (Dutch Non-



governmental organization). Enumerators were selected based on experience in survey work, time availability, intellectual ability, familiarity with the survey terrain and proficiency in the local languages to minimize interpretational errors or language barrier problems. The questionnaire was pre-tested in the Manya Krobo district and the necessary changes effected to improve on the quality of data collection.

Survey areas and sampling

Four districts were selected after reviewing monitoring and evaluation reports on GSFP (www.sign-ghanaschoolprogram.org). This included Manya Krobo (Eastern Region) and Mfantsiman (Central Region) in Southern Ghana; Tolon Kumbungu (Northern Region) and Navrongo (Upper East Region) in Northern Ghana. Selection Criteria included Involvement of Community in GSFP, Farmer access to GSFP Market and accessibility of location.

Table 1 Survey areas

Location /District	Region	Communities	Sample Size (360)
Manya Krobo	Eastern	Asitey and Mensa Dawa	28%
Mfantsiman	Central	Akatakya, Eguase and Acquakrom	33%
Kassena Nankana	Upper East	ICOUR Rice farmers in Navrongo	28%
Tolon Kumbungu ¹	Northern	Kpalgun	11%

The Sample

A total of 360 farmers and parents of children in GSFP were randomly selected for structured interviews. Group discussions were also held with local people and community leaders. Key informant interviews targeted prime stakeholders such as personnel of the District Assemblies, including District Coordinating Directors, and heads of GSFP primary schools and matrons of GSFP.

¹ Sample size in Tolon Kumbungu was low; because similar information was being collected by the nutritionist; multidisciplinary research and data sharing

Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Causal inferences were drawn to establish the relationship between market access (GSFP) and Food Sovereignty using Household Food Insecurity Assess Scale (HFIAS) and Months of Adequate Household Food Provisioning as proxies². Emerging patterns as a result of the implementation of GSFP have also been described.

Table 2 presents explanatory and dependant variables used in this study to explain the Food Sovereignty concept - causal claims in this study (Gerring 2001, 118).

Table 2. Case Selection

Explanatory Variables (Xs)	Dependent Variables (Ys) Food Sovereignty
farmer access to market (variation before and after GSFP)	Household food availability (Before Vs After GSFP)
locality Vs outside locality purchases	Farmer household income (Before Vs After GSFP)

3.0 FINDINGS

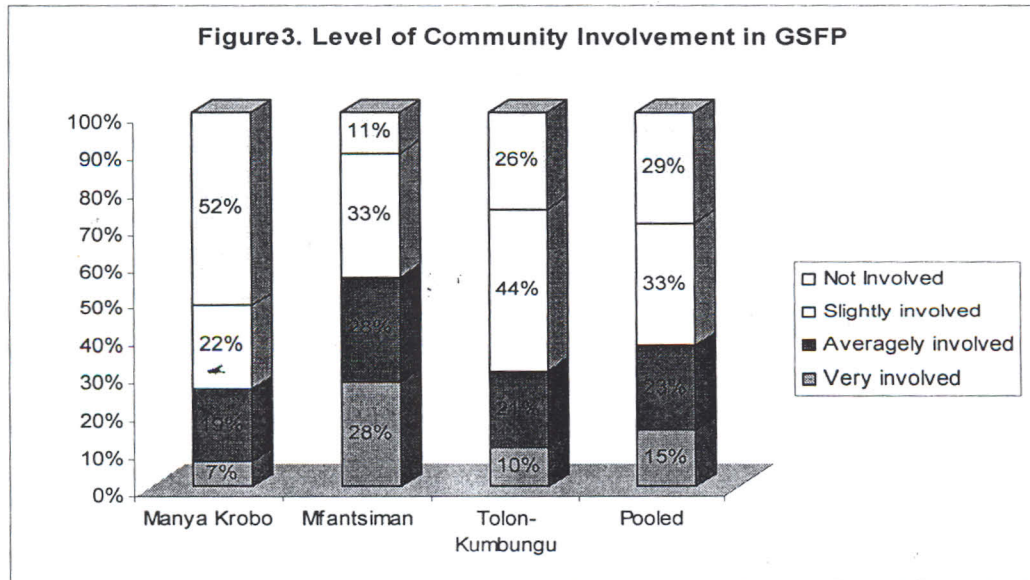
This section covers Awareness and Community Involvement in GSFP, Impact of GSFP, Assessment of Food Sovereignty and Food Culture.

3.1 Awareness and Community involvement in GSFP

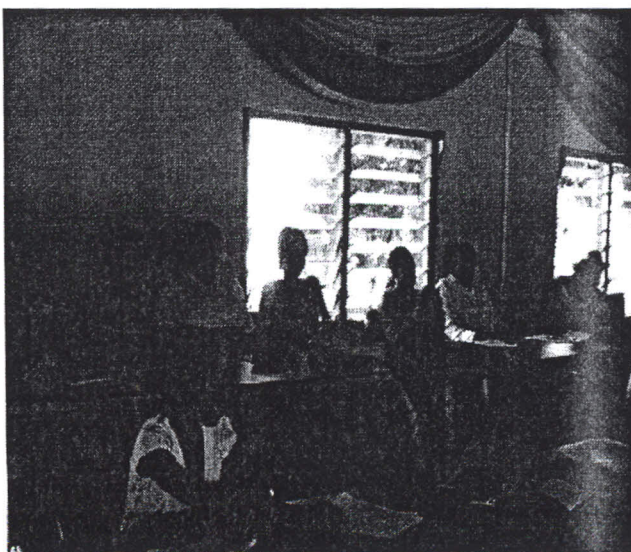
Awareness and community involvement in decision making and management of GSFP were analyzed for three districts, namely Manya Krobo, Mfantsiman and Tolon Kumbungu in Eastern, Central and Northern Regions of Ghana respectively. It must be noted that Kassena Nankana District was included in the sample purposely for the analysis of market access by farmers and not necessarily part of the GSFP communities. Awareness about GSFP among respondents was extremely high. Almost all the

² The House Food Insecurity Access Scale and Months of Adequate Household Provisioning are nutrition-related tools that measure access to food at the household level.

respondents had heard about the program either from the media or through personal observation. However the extent of knowledge about the program management process was scanty. On the whole only 15 percent of the respondents expressed high level of involvement of community members in decision making and management of GSFP. At the district level, Manya Krobo (7%), Mfantseman (28%) and Tolon Kumbungu (10%). See Figure 3.



Approximately 39%, 12% and 5% of sample interviewed in Mfantseman, Manya Krobo and Tolon Kumbungu districts respectively were actively participating in the GSFP either as a member of the management committee or farmer who had market access. The rest only knew that pupils were fed at School.



Box 3. Meeting with SEND FOUNDATION- Sensitization programme

Issues discussed were

Stakeholders & Community Involvement

Constitution of School Implementation Committee (SIC)

Roles and Responsibilities

Extent of Involvement of PTA

Funding and Program Sustainability

Participants

1. Farmer groups
2. District Assembly
3. Matrons
4. Head teachers
5. Good women society

Close to 90 percent of the sample interviewed had wards in GSFP Schools. Except for Kassena Nankana district where some farmers indirectly had access to GSFP, food purchases were mostly done in the open market basically from traders. At the time of the survey, a sensitization programme was being held in Manya Krobo District to educate community members on the GSFP as part of measures adopted to improve community involvement in response to monitoring recommendations.

3.2 Community Assessment and Impact of GSFP

The GSFP was assessed as a good program as shown in Figure 4 although there were some flaws in its management. There were general complaints on poor implementation, inclusion of non-vulnerable communities and politicization of GSFP. Parents expressed their rights to have a stake in deciding what kids eat at school. For most of the

Box 4. Interview with School Matron - Mary Odonpleh
Since the number of pupils has increased the funding situation need to be reviewed upwards. The following were bought for three months feeding: 10 bags of maize; 10 bags of beans; 5bags of gari; 25 tubers of yams per meal. For school population of 435 only \$370 is spent per week. This is woefully inadequate. Both quality and quantity of food are compromised

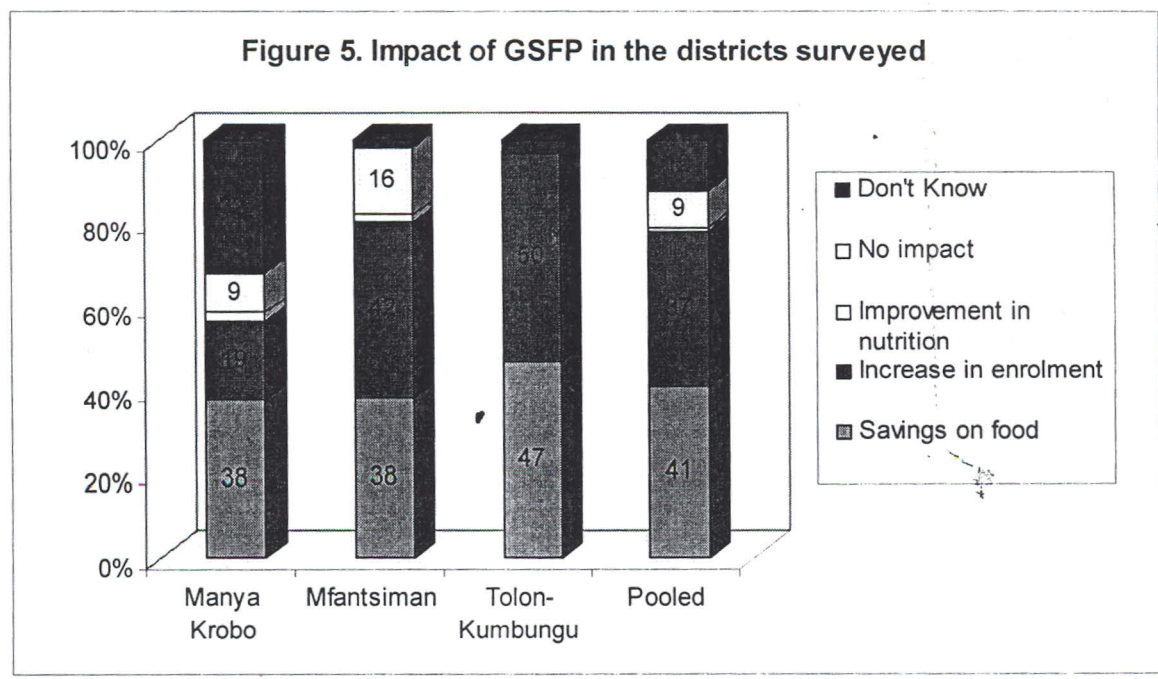
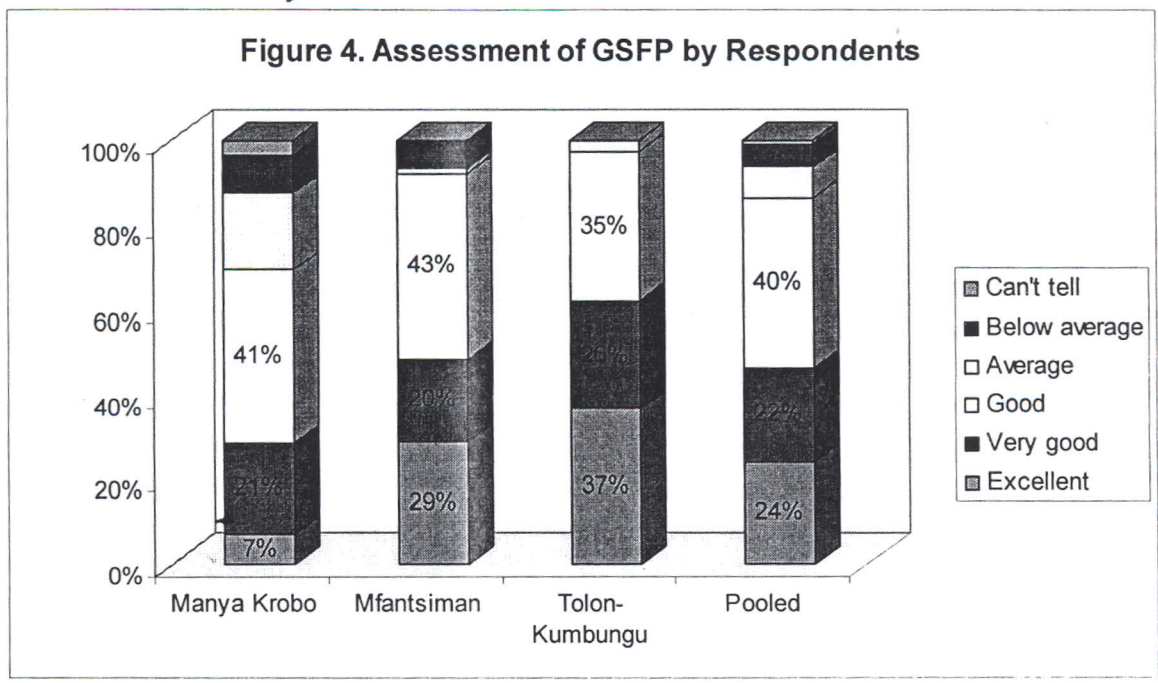
School Menu

1. *Waakye (rice and beans) with fish stew once per week*
2. *Plain rice with fish stew twice per week*
3. *Yam/gari beans twice a week*
4. *Banku (steamed fermented cassava and maize dough)with nkrn stew once a week*

parents, savings on food (See Figure 5) was very beneficial but were skeptical about the quality and quantity of food served. The positive impact on school enrolment was evident in the increased pupil populations (For example school population in Eguase Anglican primary in the Mfantseman District had increased from 375 to 437). However, there were reported cases of pupils shifting from *non- GSFP schools to GSFP schools*.

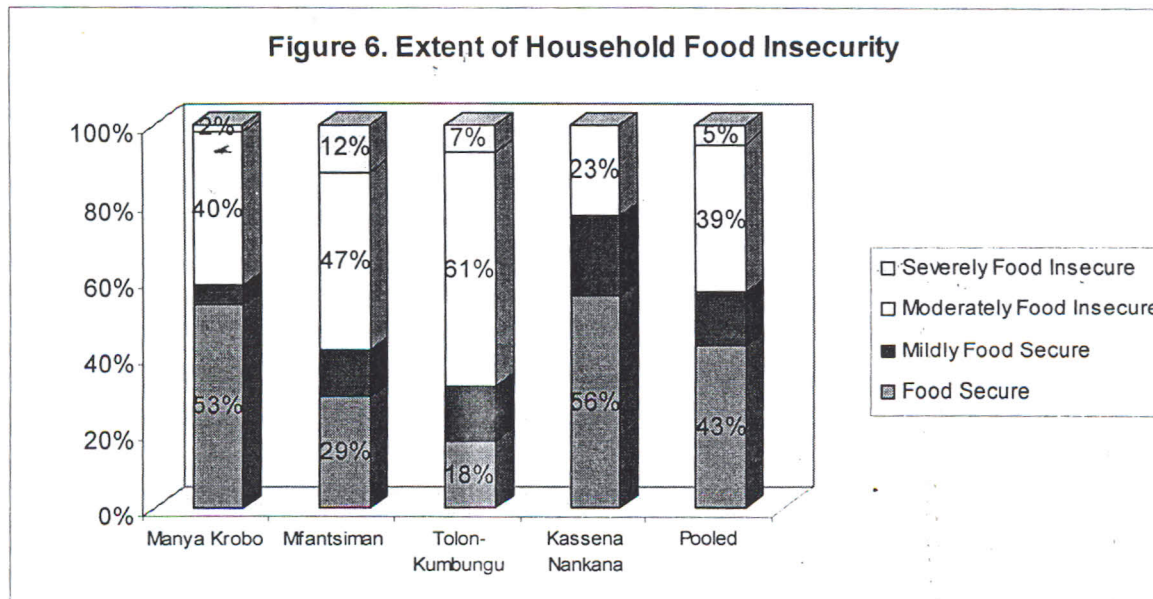
Food served at school was a replacement rather than supplementary. Sixty percent (60%) of sample interviewed in Mfantseman District had had complaints about the poor quality of food served at school. In Manya Krobo and Tolon Kumbungu Districts, a third of the sample interviewed had received complaints from wards about the quality and quantity of food, limited dishes served as well as irregular supply of meals. In some cases these complaints were reported to school authorities but the situation persisted due to

inadequate funding. Basically locally grown food was bought from the district's markets and in some cases regional markets, which were outside the GSFP beneficiary communities. Tolon Kumbungu had community vegetable farm to support GSFP.



3.3 Food Sovereignty Assessment

Food Sovereignty Assessment (FSA) (Bell-Sheetter 2004) and Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) Measurement Tools (FANTA/FAO) have been employed in this study. The HFIAS employs 9 questions about food-related experiences of households when facing inadequate access to food. The scale covers experiencing anxiety and uncertainty about the household food supply; altering quality of the diet; and reducing quantity of food consumed. The graph below depicts the distribution of food access classification obtained from data analysis. The FSA tool was used to identify barriers and opportunities in food related cultural practices.



As shown in figure 6, respondents in Kassena Nanakana had the highest food secure households. These farmers, who were members of nucleus out-growers farming scheme, received credit assistance in the form of production inputs from the Agricultural Development Bank through Irrigation Company Upper Region Limited (ICOUR). The project provided guaranteed market for rice farmers' produce. There was significantly positive correlation between market access provided by ICOUR (which sold rice paddy to GSFP food contractors/suppliers) and household food insecurity score. Total rice production of farmers interviewed had increased from 3228 bags of 85-kg to 4167 bags

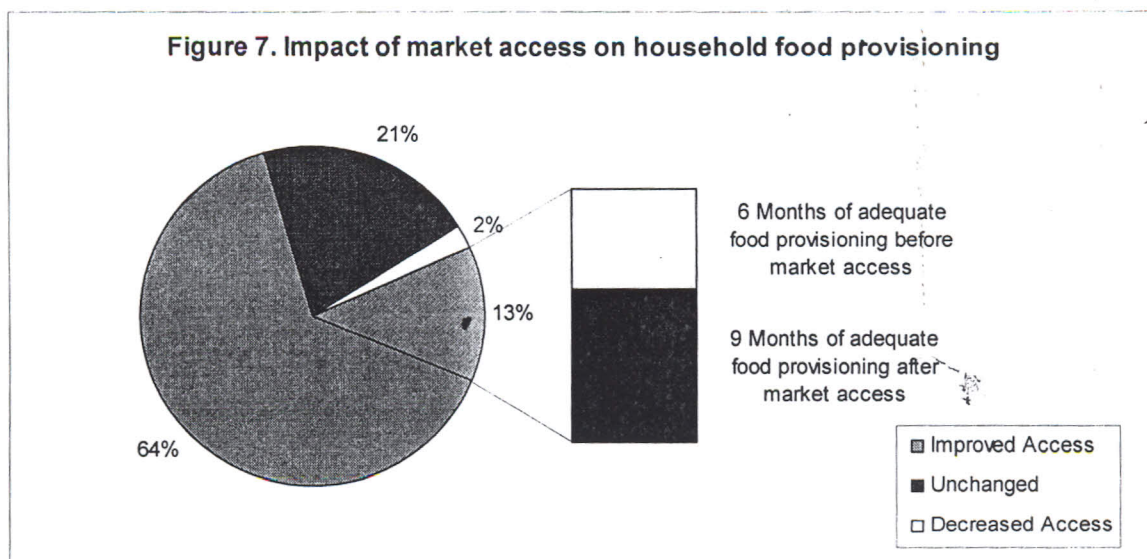
of the same weight; corresponding to about 30% improvement in 2007 as compared to 2006 production without credit assistance. Revenues accruing from rice production increased by 80% (GHC79,992 in 2006 to GHC 144,358 in 2007) partly due to high food prices.

As depicted in figure 7, months of adequate food provisioning (especially rice which is the staple) increased from 6 to 9 months as result of access to credit package for production resources and market access.

Table 3. Correlation between Market Access and Food Insecurity

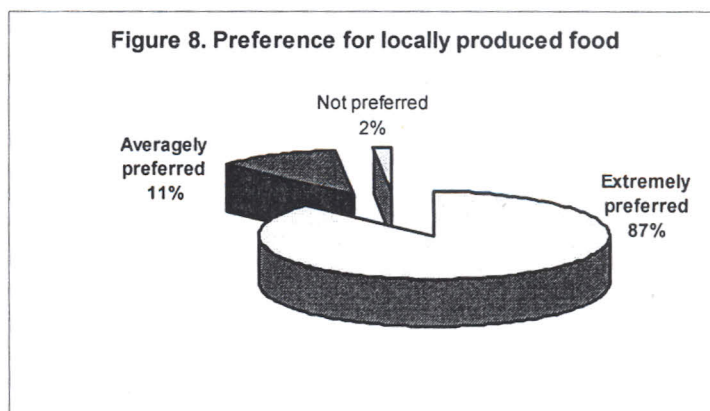
		Market Access(Direct and Indirect)	Total Food Insecurity Score	Food security Classification
Market Access(Direct and Indirect)	Pearson Correlation	1	.282**	.273**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
	N	360	360	360
Total Food Insecurity Score	Pearson Correlation	.282**	1	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	360	360	360
Food security Classification	Pearson Correlation	.273**	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	360	360	360

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



3.4 Food Culture

At the household level locally produced foods were extremely preferred and consumed most often although kids had strong preference for rice (which is mostly imported). Overall, 31 percent of the sample



interviewed consumed locally grown foods from their own farms while 58 percent sourced locally grown foods from the market when run out of stock of own farm produce. Only 11 percent of the sample interviewed solely depended on market for household food provision. Preference for locally grown foods was extremely high in all the districts surveyed as shown in figure 8. Frequency of consumption was high; 100% often in Tolon-Kumbungu, Manya Krobo(100%), Kassena Nankana (94%) and Mfantsiman (85%).

Traditionally Manya Krobo District had a lot of yam varieties but lost them as a result of high rate of deforestation. It was also observed that the elderly were more interested in traditional foods than the young generation. Some traditional food related practices that had ceased to be in use included the use of 'sibaa' (steamed mash yam mixed with maize dough) during festivals. This practice has now been limited to the elderly and fetish priests. The *dipo* rite, which was used to train young girls on roles and responsibility of wives as well as passing on traditional cooking skills, was gradually losing its significance. In the Mfantsiman district, some chiefs commented on

Box 5. Reasons for extreme preference for locally grown foods in the communities

- *Nutritious, healthy and tasty*
- *Fresh and natural*
- *Have less or no chemicals*
- *Local foods are real food not artificial*
- *Eating habits are more culturally related/part of our social value*
- *Local foods are easily available and inexpensive*
- *We feel good about local foods/give us identity*
- *"However not easy to cook"*

pressure on farmlands for estate development which has negative implications on community food sovereignty.

4.0 DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Emerging issues

Low community involvement: Per the project document GSFP was supposed to be owned and managed by beneficiary communities through active participation of local stakeholders. Management decisions were to be decentralized and highly participatory. Local people in the communities were to be sensitized and educated enough to make informed decisions. As depicted in the programme actors' relationships (described in the introductory section), the institutional arrangements were meant for decentralized management involving all stakeholders. It was also to promote accountability and transparency in project management. From survey findings this did not happen. Community members had very little knowledge on project implementation guidelines and did not know much about their rights to access the GSFP market. Low community participation has Food Sovereignty implications. Community members are not empowered to make decisions concerning GSFP which ultimately affect their livelihoods.

Management and sustainability challenges

From the survey findings respondents rated GSFP as good in respect of savings on food gained by parents, tremendous impact on school enrolment and retention in school as evidenced in monitoring reports (May 2007). However there were fears of politicization of the programme. Also report in WPF documents indicates that to be successful, school feeding programme initiative will need to fashion robust and transparent governance structures to provide a credible framework for collective action. It will have to create, and sustain, dedicated financial resources to enable the initiative to survive the vicissitudes of changes in political climate.

Food quality concerns: From the survey findings, there were a lot of complaints about poor quality of food served. This issue came up in all the districts surveyed. Quality

control and food safety aspects of the GSFP seem to be missing. This needs to be addressed if project objective of improving nutritional status of school children is to be achieved. There is substantial evidence to show that malnutrition adversely affects children's ability to learn (Grantham-McGregor, 2005; Kristjansson et al., 2006; Casely-Hayford, 2006).

Food Procurement Challenges: In the GSFP document, a School Implementation Committee (SIC), chaired by the Head teacher of GSFP beneficial school, is supposed to be responsible for the procurement, cooking and feeding of the children. This committee is to ensure that food purchases are done at the community level. However there were variations in the procurement mechanisms in the districts surveyed. For example in the Mfantseman District purchases were done by food contractors/caterers who used the services of local women in food preparation (in school kitchens). In Manya Krobo and Kassena Nankana, food stuff purchases were done by school matrons and food prepared from the school kitchens. In Tolon Kumbungu District, food purchases by contractors were supplemented with vegetables from community farm. On the average, US\$ 0.32 was spent per child a day (This amount has been reviewed upwards to US\$0.4). Three main procurement models have been identified by school feeding program evaluators in case studies done in India, South Africa, Ghana, Brazil and Thailand. These included supplier, school-based and the caterer models (WFP, 2007).

In the Supplier Model suppliers are generally contracted to supply the food items to the schools. The supplier may be a registered company (sole proprietorship) or an unregistered business concern run by an individual. Under the contract, the supplier buys the food (from any available and affordable outlets) and delivers to the beneficiary schools on a weekly basis and then submits invoices to the Assembly (DIC) for payment. The actual cooking is done on the school premises. The weekly supplies depend on the weekly requests by the Head teachers that are sent to the Assemblies.

In the Caterer Model food purchases are handled by contracted qualified caterers who buy and cook food at central kitchens for a number of schools and present invoices to the Assemblies for payment on a weekly basis. This arrangement is said to be more

convenient in urban and sub-urban communities, where community people are relatively apathetic and more difficult to organize into SICs. The Caterers are better organized with bigger operations than the Suppliers. They hire and pay staff that cook and serve the meals in schools. They also operate from known premises and can be easily located. There is hardly any role for the school authorities and the community people.

In the School-Based Model procurement and food preparation are handled at the school level with full participation of the community. The key element of school based model is that the decision making process lies at the grassroots. The procurement and storage of food is carried out at the school/community level, so the community decides what to buy, when to buy and the cost. The community is also responsible for overseeing the cooking and feeding of the children. There is no middleman and the system is more transparent and efficient.

Although there are advantages in both the Caterer and Supplier Models sustainability is questionable. Some of the advantages include convenience to school authorities (having time to concentrate on their academic work) and possibility of pre-financing arrangements, which helps to address some of the problems associated with the delay in the release of funds. This notwithstanding, community involvement promotes ownership which has been cited in the literature as key to successful and sustainable school feeding operations. This promotes the idea of empowering communities to make decisions concerning their own future (Chikezie, 2007; Walker *et al* 2005) as enshrined in the Food Sovereignty concept. The School-Based Model was lacking in all the schools surveyed in the current study (See reasons for not buying from farmers in the local communities).

4.2 Contribution to Food Sovereignty Concept

From GSFP monitoring reports, local supply response to the created demand has not been encouraging. As stated in the introduction, the long term goal of GSFP is to contribute to poverty reduction and food sovereignty in Ghana. The GSFP programme is expected to link the demand for food created by school feeding to the supply of food by small scale farmers through local procurement mechanisms. The Home Grown School Feeding

(HGSF)³ is the combination of quality local agricultural production and “traditional” school feeding. It is based on the premise that low farm productivity, poor agricultural market development and poor educational and nutritional outcomes are mutually reinforcing and jointly determine key aspects of rural hunger and poverty. However, *only 2 out of 30 districts assemblies (representing about 7%) facilitated access to credits for local farmers. These include Bolgatanga where the programme assisted rice farmers from Navrongo and Veve with loans of more than GHC500 per farmer; and Jirapa/Lambussie where the District Directorate of Agriculture (although has not been part of the DIC) helped 500 farmers to obtain credits (update from monitoring reports).*

Box 6. Reasons for not buying from farmers in local communities

- *Foodstuffs are supplied by the district assembly*
- *District Assemblies and Suppliers deal directly with caterers without involving SIC.*
- *Foodstuffs are not produced in large quantities in the community*
- *No funds has been given to the SIC to purchase food*

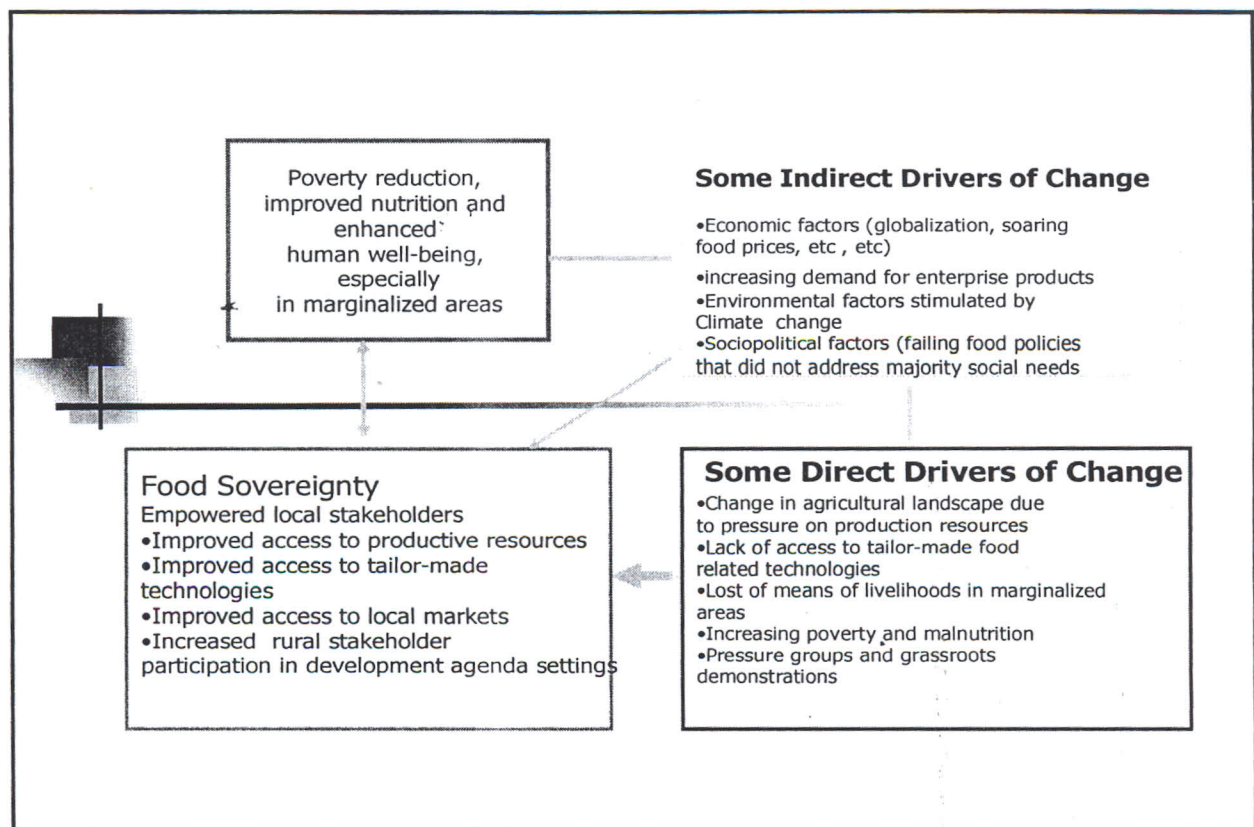
Source: Verbatim comments by some respondents, PM&E Survey, SEND Ghana

Farmers in the marginalized areas, especially those in hunger hotspots can not just produce. There must be the enabling environment to encourage production. Farmers need to have access to productive resources and technology to produce. Technologies to improve productivity and production and respond to market opportunities are not accessible. Farmers therefore need to be organized, provided with extension services and credit assistance so as not to be crowded out of their own local markets opportunities.

³ Home Grown School Feeding is a generic term with emphasis on feeding school pupils with locally produced food. The Ghanaian version is GSFP.

Farmers must be organized to work collectively through institutional marketing structures and co-operatives. Irrigation infrastructure and rural roads must be constructed. If farmers are not empowered in the market place in their own rural communities, others will definitely benefit from the market opportunities

Figure 9. Need For Change in Food Polices for Enhanced Food Sovereignty



From the survey the rice farmers interviewed in Kassena Nanakana District were more food secured although the district was the second most food insecure region in Ghana (GSS, 2006). The region, with a population of about 950,000, had poverty rate of 78

percent, mean annual household income of USD 604 and mean annual per capita income of USD130.

There were some differences in food cultural practices in the districts surveyed. In southern Ghana for instance, food supply situation in Eastern Region (Manya Krobo) was better than Central Region (Mfantseman District) probably due to differences in availability of production resources and not limited to performance in GSFP as shown in the survey finding. Percentage of food secure households in Manya Krobo was 53%, Mfantseman (27%), Tolon Kumbungu (18%) and Kassena Nankana (56%).

4.3 *Food Sovereignty measurement challenges*

Until now, there are no tools for measuring Food Sovereignty and this gives indications on the level of acceptance of the concept. Obviously there is urgent need for policy push initiatives. The Food Sovereignty Assessment tool employed in this study just helped with identification of barriers and opportunities in food-related cultural practices. Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) Measurement Tools was used as a proxy to describe the Food Sovereignty situation in the districts surveyed. Any Food Sovereignty measurement tool should capture the following:

1. Empowerment - Local people being empowered to produce what they want to produce. In this particular study rice was a staple food in the Kassena Nankana district. Hence the rice farmers always reserved some rice for home consumption. Obviously this impacted on household food availability.
2. Access to production resources - Local people having access to production resources. ICOUR had Credit Assistance package (extension services, irrigation facilities, fertilizer and other farm inputs) for the farmers. Farmers were organized into nucleus outgrower groups in order to access the credit package – for 2007 production season. Interestingly *Jasmine 85* hybrid rice variety, an open pollinated variety, was promoted. This could meet both domestic and market preference
3. Market access - Local market linkages being created for farmers. In the Kassena Nankana district this impacted positively on farmer incomes and household food

availability. Practically a direct linkage to GSFP with the involvement of middlemen would have given a better result.

4. External influences like weather conditions – For example the 2007 farming season was a normal one. Farmers testified that weather conditions were favorable. Bad weather conditions negatively affect productivity especially if such risks are not managed well.

4.4 Suggestions

Suggestions from the community are bulleted below:

- Organize GSFP sensitization sessions at social gatherings
- Organize community and school farms
- Organize food stuff donation campaigns
- Use qualified cooks
- Management process must be transparent
- Use experienced project managers
- Purchase from community farmers
- Assist local farmers to produce
- Involve community members to own the program
- Do not politicize GSFP



Interview with former 'kenkey' supplier to GSFP in Mfantseman District – Central Region



Interaction with Single Mothers Association busy processing rice in Bolgatanga – Upper East Region

5. Conclusions

The Ghana School Feeding Program has been analyzed in four districts of Ghana including Manya Krobo and Mfantseman districts in Southern Ghana, and Kassena

Nankana and Tolon Kumbungu districts in Northern Ghana. The GSFP analysis was done with respect to community involvement in program organization and management as well as socioeconomic impacts from Food Sovereignty perspectives. The following were conclusions from the study:

- Awareness about GSFP among respondents was extremely high. Almost all the respondents had heard about the program either from the media or through personal observation. However the extent of knowledge about the program management process was scanty.
- Community involvement was low. Except for Kassena Nankana district where some farmers indirectly had access to GSFP, food purchases were mostly done in the open market basically from traders. From the literature community involvement promotes community ownership which has been cited as key to successful and sustainable school feeding operations
- The GSFP was assessed as a good program although there were some flaws in its management. There were general complains on poor implementation, poor quality food, inclusion of non-vulnerable communities and politicization of GSFP.
- There was significantly positive correlation between market access provided by ICOUR (which sold rice paddy to GSFP food contractors/suppliers) and household food insecurity score.
- Total rice production of farmers interviewed had increased from 3228 bags of 85-kg to 4167 bags of 85-kg; translating into 30% improvement in 2007 as compared to 2006 production without credit assistance.
- Revenues accruing from rice production increased by 80% (GHC79992 in 2006 to GHC 144358 in 2007) partly due to high food prices.
- Months of Adequate Food Provisioning (especially rice which is the staple) increased from 6 to 9 months as result of access to credit package for production resources and market access.
- Preference for locally grown food was extremely high in all the districts surveyed
- Farmers in marginalized areas especially those in hunger hot spots can not just produce to respond to school feeding program needs. There must be the enabling environment to encourage production.

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