

SCHOOL-BASED FEEDING AND CHILD NUTRITION/PERFORMANCE

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1. BACKGROUND

A school feeding programme was first implemented in Uganda after the 1979 war, covering all schools. Recognising that Karamoja had the worst social indicators of any district in Uganda, Government and the World Food Programme started a school feeding Project 2417 in 1983, to be followed by Project 2642 between 1993 and 1998. Just how bad these indicators were is shown by the fact that in 1977 adult literacy rate was 12% for males and 6% for females. The 1991 census has 92-93 % of Karamojong children of school going age never having attended any school. In 1999, only 44% of the 68,468 girls and 68,325 boys of school going age were enrolled in school. Even this enrolment figure was plagued by high absenteeism and drop out rates. In contrast, the National literacy rate in the same period was 54%, overall, and 44.9% for females. Less than 12% of all Karimojong girls who enrolled in Primary (P)1 completed P7, compared to the national rate of 35%¹.

Project UGA 2417: had the components of

- School feeding
- Tree-planting, and
- Income-generating activities in the form of supply of grain and oil mills to women groups.

Project 2642 carried the same components with the addition of health components such as the feeding of TB case referrals, lactating mothers and other vulnerable groups. An independent evaluation of this phase gave an achievement rating of 80%.

2. CURRENT PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

The WFP and the GoU currently cooperate in 2 major programmes - the Development Programmes and the Protracted Relief and Recovery Programmes (PRROs). Country Programmes (CPs) are sustained development programmes, usually over a long period, whilst the Recovery

portfolios generally address emergency or humanitarian situations. CP 10019.0 has three components:

- Component I: Vocational Training for Street Children and Orphans
- Component II: Support to Education and Adult Literacy in Karamoja
- Component III: Agriculture and Marketing Support

This paper shall only address the part of CP10019.0 that relates to school feeding in Karamoja. PRRO 10121.0 has Food for Assets, School Feeding, and Social Support Components. We shall dwell at length on this school feeding component which addresses the feeding and nutritional needs of schools operating in Internally Displaced Camps and in Refugee- Hosting Districts.

2.1 ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KARAMOJA

September 2000 saw the start of Project UGA 6101, which drew lessons from former phases, including the need to

- Increase focus by reducing the number of non-core components, including the income generating activities
- Network with more partners, eg DANIDA in Adult Literacy, ADRA in school feeding, and so on.

This project, which ends in December 2005, amongst other things:

- Targets 3 districts of Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Kotido in the Karamoja Region
- Targeted 60,150 pupils in Year 1, rising to 80,000 in Year 5.
- Utilises 30,369 metric tons of assorted food over five years, of which 19,599 tons, or 65%, are projected to be procured in country.
- Costs a total of US\$16,512,137, of which the Government of Uganda contributes US\$683,300, or US\$ 22.5 per tonne as transport, storage and handling subsidy.

2.2 PRRO COMPONENT II, SCHOOL FEEDING

School feeding assistance to Uganda may be seen against a larger background. Although Uganda had one of the highest economic growth rates over the last decade, 35% of the population still live below the poverty line. In addition, 1.6 million people in the North and Northeast of the

country live in Internally Displaced Peoples' camps with no access to any means of economic livelihood. At the same time, at least 42% of households in Uganda support a person orphaned by HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, disease or conflict.²

WFP under this component supplied 42,108 metric tones of assorted food items mainly maize meal, beans and vegetable cooking oil. This activity is accomplished under great security risk to aid personnel, and with complex logistics requirements. This represented sustenance to approximately 300,000 . It is noteworthy that in 2001 there was general euphoria that the destructive civil conflict prosecuted by the Lords Resistance Army was ending, and this component had been designed as part of a recovery strategy. The label had quickly to change from "recovery" to "relief"

3. PROGRAMME EVALUATION

3.1 ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KARAMOJA

Process Indicators An independent evaluation in April 2005 reported 88% performance in the attainment of school feeding targets. Meals were generally rated as of good quality, culturally acceptable and considered "tasty" by the children. There were food management problems in a few schools, with late preparation of meals and cases of food diversion reported. Other qualitative observations include reduced short-term hunger, reflected in students' improved health and nutrition status.

Outcome Indicators Enrolment and attendance figures reported in the Education Management Information System statistics show general overachievement, notwithstanding the fact that cases have also been reported of enrolment of under-age children (under 5 years old) to take advantage of the feeding facility and/or the capitation grants sent to schools based on reported enrolment.

- a. enrolment of under-age children (under 5 years old) to take advantage of the feeding facility
- b. capitation grants are sent to schools based on reported enrolment.

The food assistance programme is credited with

- Reduction of gender disparities in the lower primary classes. The provision of Girls' Take Home Rations has increased the ratio of girls from 44% to 52 of the pupils in Primary 1.
- Increase of sustained school attendance from 20% of the pre-project school age population of 136,793 to 40%.
- Reduction in fees payable in boarding schools, making them affordable to parents; as a result, there was a 63% increase in enrolment.
- Increasing attendance of girls from 9,828 in 1999 to 22,216 in 2003
- Improvement of the school environment through tree-planting, school gardens, fuel-efficient stoves and so on³.

3.2 PRRO COMPONENT II, SCHOOL FEEDING (OUTSIDE KARAMOJA)

School feeding coverage in needy districts is low, and not all schools in each district or even in some sub-counties are covered.⁴ An elaborate strategy for roll-out of school feeding to districts in need, supported by clearly defined criteria aborted with the collapse of implementation arrangements for an expanded school feeding programme that would target 20 districts.

4. PLANS FOR 2006-2010

Karamoja Region The Executive Board of the United Nations World Food Programme has approved US\$ 24,585,082 for 40,859 tonnes of food commodities to be served over the five-year period from calendar 2006 to 2010. The special focus of food assistance will be on girls' education, within the overall objectives of

- (i) Increasing enrolment and attendance of both boys and girls
- (ii) Reduction of drop out rates, particularly after Primary 2 where the need to help with domestic chores increases the drop out rate dramatically

To reduce the gender gap in the higher classes (grades) from 4-7 girls will receive 25 kgs. of fortified Corn Soy blend and 3.7 litres of fortified vegetable oil for 80% attendance in the school term.⁵

Other Regions Consultations started early this year to design a programme that would be run by the Government of Uganda, but with a 50% buy-in by the UNWFP. If agreement were reached on implementation structures and modalities, this programme was to:

- (i) Target 20 districts characterized by high food insecurity and conflict or post-conflict history
- (ii) Have 80% of all food requirements purchased locally
- (iii) Have phase 1 of the programme characterized by the supply of milk
- (iv) Have 2,375,000 litres of milk purchased in the first year, and increasing amounts in the following years
- (v) Have 563,300 beneficiaries in the first year, rising to 2,500,000 in Year 5.
- (vi) Cost US\$ 184 million.

In light of budget constraints, it is probable that this initiative will take some time before coming on-stream, or will be implemented in a severely modified form.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

A school feeding system survives effectively if its design and implementation are planned with care. De Rosso, 1999 recommends the following seven steps in the design and implementation of an effective school feeding programme, which are in agreement with methods used in the Ugandan experience:

- Step 1*** *Build a consensus on a policy and objectives that focuses on how school feeding can effectively contribute to improving education and to meeting the nutrient and health of school age children*
- Step 2*** *Develop targeting criteria and mechanisms **that concentrate programme resources on high-risk** children and communities*
- Step 3*** *Analyse and identify alternative financing and cost options for SFPs*
- Step 4*** *Elaborate appropriate guidelines for ration composition and the timing of meals*
- Step 5*** *Identify and address any potential bottlenecks in implementation: such as availability of supplies and other*

resources, the appropriateness of cooking practices and the management of private sector inputs

Step 6 *Develop monitoring systems that focus on programme processes, that is how programme is functioning, and institute an evaluation system to assess the impact of the programme on specific outcomes*

Step 7 *Integrate feeding programmes with other interventions that address the principal nutrition and health problems of the school-age population⁶*

¹ Education Planning Department, Ministry of Education and Sports, 1997.

² WFP/EB.A/2005/7-A, 25th April, 2005. Summary Report of the Evaluation of WFP's Development and Recovery Portfolio in Uganda

³ United Nations World Food Programme: *Draft Country Programme-Uganda 10426.0 (2006-20100*

⁴ Summary Report of the Evaluation

⁵ UNWFP: *Draft Country Programme*

⁶ Del ROSSO, J. M. 1999. School Feeding Programs: Improving Effectiveness and Increasing the Benefit to Education. A Guide for Programme Managers. [http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/...](http://www.schoolsandhealth.org/) [viewed 27/8/2005]