



**Home Grown School Feeding**  
**Time for Donors to**  
**Deepen Engagement**

**July 2014**



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## Key Points

- **Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) aims to deliver government-led, cost-effective school feeding programmes using food that is locally grown by smallholder farmers.**
- **HGSF may be described as a 'win-win' for children and smallholder farmers alike.**
- **School feeding can incentivise the most vulnerable children to attend school and support these children to learn more effectively.**
- **HGSF reduces risks faced by smallholder farmers by facilitating their engagement with markets through school feeding programmes.**
- **HGSF is rooted in the principles of country ownership and sustainability.**
- **Every country that implements or is looking to implement HGSF programmes requires different approaches suitable to its specific context.**
- **There are a number of challenges that need to be overcome if HGSF is to have the greatest impacts.**
- **Bilateral and multilateral donor support for HGSF varies considerably. Those donors that are not prioritising HGSF urgently need to rethink their approach.**

## 1.0 Introduction

Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) aims to deliver government-led, cost-effective school feeding programmes using food that is locally grown by smallholder farmers. School feeding is an important part of social safety nets, and the sustainability of school feeding programmes can be enhanced by sourcing food from local producers. HGSF links smallholder farmers (many of whom are parents with children in school) to the education sector by facilitating their access to the school feeding market. This can enable local agricultural development, which is critical as, 'agricultural growth, as opposed to growth in general, is typically the primary source of poverty reduction' in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>1</sup>

Significant challenges remain if global development goals on hunger and education – such as the Millennium Development Goals<sup>2</sup> and the more ambitious goals established by the World Food Summit<sup>3</sup> and World Education Forum<sup>4</sup> – are to be met. An important part of the solution to achieving global development goals, including those noted above, is to ensure effective cross-sectoral collaboration. This is because many development challenges are interlinked,<sup>5</sup> and can also have intergenerational consequences.<sup>6</sup>

HGSF is one response to the need for different sectors to join-up their work in order to achieve overlapping objectives. HGSF may be described as a 'win-win' for children and smallholder farmers alike. This is because HGSF programmes aim to: tackle hunger; improve nutrition; increase educational access, participation and achievement; and support local agricultural development. Both the African Union's (AU) Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme<sup>7</sup> and the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security<sup>8</sup> have endorsed HGSF as a social protection mechanism that supports smallholder farmers and contributes to food security efforts.

However, there remains a need to further raise awareness of HGSF on the part of both national governments and the donor community. Increased funding is necessary to pilot programmes and to scale-up successful initiatives, in ways that build the evidence-base and widely communicate research findings. It is also necessary to ensure that linkages between all relevant sectors are strengthened in both existing and new HGSF initiatives.



*Female smallholder farmers planting crops to be used in Ethiopia's HGSP programme*

## 2.0 Why Are School Feeding and Smallholder Farmers Important?

### 2.1 School Feeding

Virtually every country in the world (for which data is available) is providing food for its schoolchildren, and a number of international donors are supporting school feeding programmes.<sup>9</sup> School feeding can take two main forms, which may be used separately or in combination: in-school feeding (the provision of meals, snacks and/or biscuits) and take-home rations (where the families of children who attend school are provided with food through the school).<sup>10</sup> As almost 30% of the world's population suffers from deficiencies in micronutrients,<sup>11</sup> fortifying foods with micronutrients or supplementing feeding with micronutrient-rich products (such as pills or suspensions) can be a part of school feeding programmes (this issue is discussed in more detail in section 3.5).<sup>12</sup>

The *State of School Feeding Worldwide 2013*, published by the World Food Programme (WFP) in partnership with the World Bank and Imperial College London's Partnership for Child Development (PCD), highlights the 'increasing political support and demand for evidence-based guidance on school feeding' on the part of governments across Africa and Asia.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, only an estimated 18% of schoolchildren in low-income countries receive free school meals, compared to almost half of their peers in middle-income countries.<sup>14</sup> Thus there is a genuine need for greater donor support (both financial and technical) to enable the governments of the poorest countries to improve and scale-up school feeding programmes in ways that are cost-effective and sustainable.

Rigorous research<sup>15</sup> presents evidence that school feeding programmes can act as an incentive for the most vulnerable children to attend school. This research also demonstrates that school feeding programmes can improve cognition through alleviating hunger and inhibiting chronic undernourishment, which in turn directly affects educational achievement. It is important to note that while school feeding programmes benefit all children, they are inherently pro-poor, and studies have shown that they particularly benefit girls and other excluded groups. Furthermore, the links between school feeding and better educational outcomes generates a positive effect on the well-being of the next generation because both maternal and paternal education levels are strong determinants of child growth and development (as measured by stunting).<sup>16</sup> School feeding is particularly beneficial when programmes are well-designed and supported by complementary interventions, e.g. deworming, malaria prevention and provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, preferably as part of an integrated programme,<sup>17</sup> such as the one in Nigeria's Osun State (see overleaf).

Of course school feeding is not a 'magic bullet' for ensuring child development. Its impact is greatest when education systems are strengthened in inclusive ways so that the 'building blocks' for successful learning (e.g. teachers, curricula and education materials, infrastructure, etc.) are available and accessible to all children.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, it is important to understand that school feeding should be a part of wider social protection systems that support vulnerable children.

### 2.2 Smallholder Farmers

There is no universal definition of what constitutes a smallholder farmer. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) suggests that 'households with less than a threshold land size of two hectares may be characterized as smallholders',<sup>19</sup> although it acknowledges that this ignores the diversity of national contexts as well as other dimensions of scale. Definitional challenges notwithstanding, it is estimated that there are 500 million smallholder farmers in the world<sup>20</sup> who grow the majority of food in low- and middle-income countries, including around 80% of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>21</sup>

## Nigeria: An integrated approach to HGSF<sup>22</sup>

Since the launch of the new phase of Osun State's HGSF programme (known as O'Meals) in 2011, school enrolment has increased by 24%. O'Meals currently reaches over 250,000 children in 1328 government-run schools. The cost of the programme is approximately £0.18 (EUR 0.22) per child per day. O'Meals is widely considered to be a model of good practice for HGSF in Nigeria (and other countries in West Africa).

Over 1000 local farmers and fisherfolk have been provided with opportunities to sell their produce to serve the programme. In addition, around 3100 local women have become employed as cooks through the programme. Crucially, O'Meals is not only focused on the production and consumption of food. Children are regularly dewormed (which prevents intestinal worms from taking the nutrients from food that is consumed) and also receive education on good sanitation and hygiene practices.

Since 2007, the HGSF programme has been entirely funded by the Government of Osun State. However, the lack of strong empirical evidence on the impact of O'Meals highlights the pressing requirement for more systematic and rigorous impact evaluations to be undertaken in partnership with domestic actors. Furthermore, at a meeting organised by PCD and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food for Development on 22 January 2014, the Governor of Osun State, H.E. Engr. Rauf Aregbesola, requested donor support to further combat corruption. In particular the Governor highlighted the need for O'Meals to be administered through computerised systems, in order to: eliminate manual processing; promote transparency; enhance programme efficiency; and minimise opportunities for corruption.

While food issues in international development (and beyond) are controversial, no one seriously denies the necessity of supporting investments in smallholder farming in order to reduce poverty and inequality, and ensure the realisation of the right to food. It is widely recognised that smallholders require various forms of support to overcome political exclusion, meet their economic potential and successfully manage risk in ways that are sustainable.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, as smallholders are a highly heterogeneous group who may participate in different markets to varying extents, it is critical that policies respond to the diverse realities of these farmers.<sup>24</sup>

A wide-range of evidence points to the need to prioritise the empowerment of smallholder farmers. At the global level, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (a landmark intergovernmental process that completed its work at the end of the last decade) called for a re-orientation of the current agricultural system in order to 'improve the situation for poor rural people, especially small-scale farmers, rural laborers and others with limited resources'.<sup>25</sup> In a 2012 report to the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food went even further, arguing that the main structural cause of hunger and inadequate diets are 'inequitable food systems that are not sufficiently inclusive of the poorest, small-scale farmers'.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, two reports on food and hunger commissioned by European governments in recent years have attracted global attention. In 2008, the Government of Ireland's Hunger Task Force said that 'increasing the productivity of smallholder, mainly women, farmers in Africa'<sup>27</sup> should be one of three priorities for tackling global hunger. Three years later, the UK's Government Office for Science analysed the future of food and farming, and stated that 'smallholder farming has been long neglected. It is not a single solution, but an important component of both hunger and poverty reduction'.<sup>28</sup> All the above reports and many others have highlighted the links between agricultural development and progress in other sectors, notably those of nutrition, health and education.



*School cook preparing lunch in Zanzibar*

## 3.0 Aiming for a Win-Win: Home Grown School Feeding

### 3.1 What Does HGSF Involve in Practice?

HGSF involves twin strategies: school feeding and structured demand. As school feeding programmes run for a fixed number of days a year and have a pre-determined food basket, they can provide predictable market opportunities for smallholder farmers. In this context, 'structured demand' means utilising public procurement to supply food to schools, in order to support smallholders to gain access to markets. This could potentially provide them with a platform from which they can enhance their productivity through investments in technology and better management practices.<sup>29</sup> Recent estimates suggest that the demand for maize from current school feeding programmes in sub-Saharan Africa represents approximately 10% of total maize production.<sup>30</sup> The potential demand if school feeding programmes on the continent were universalised would be around 40% of total maize production.<sup>31</sup>

Today at least 20 African countries implement HGSF programmes, ranging from government programmes that are partially supported by development partners to fully government-funded programmes. The transition from programmes that still require external support to those that are fully owned by national governments is a key objective of HGSF. Kenya provides a good example of a country undergoing this transition process.

#### Kenya: Striving for local ownership and sustainability through HGSF

In 2009, the Government of Kenya started the Home Grown School Meals (HGSM) programme. HGSM initially supported 540,000 school children in 1,700 primary schools (mostly in semi-arid districts), with the authorities pledging to add 50,000 students each year until all WFP-supported schools were supported by the national government. HGSM aims to increase food supply, improve incomes and reduce hunger and malnutrition. The Government of Kenya allocated US\$5.3 million to HGSM from its own budget to begin with, which was supplemented by a US\$2 million grant from the Government of Japan.

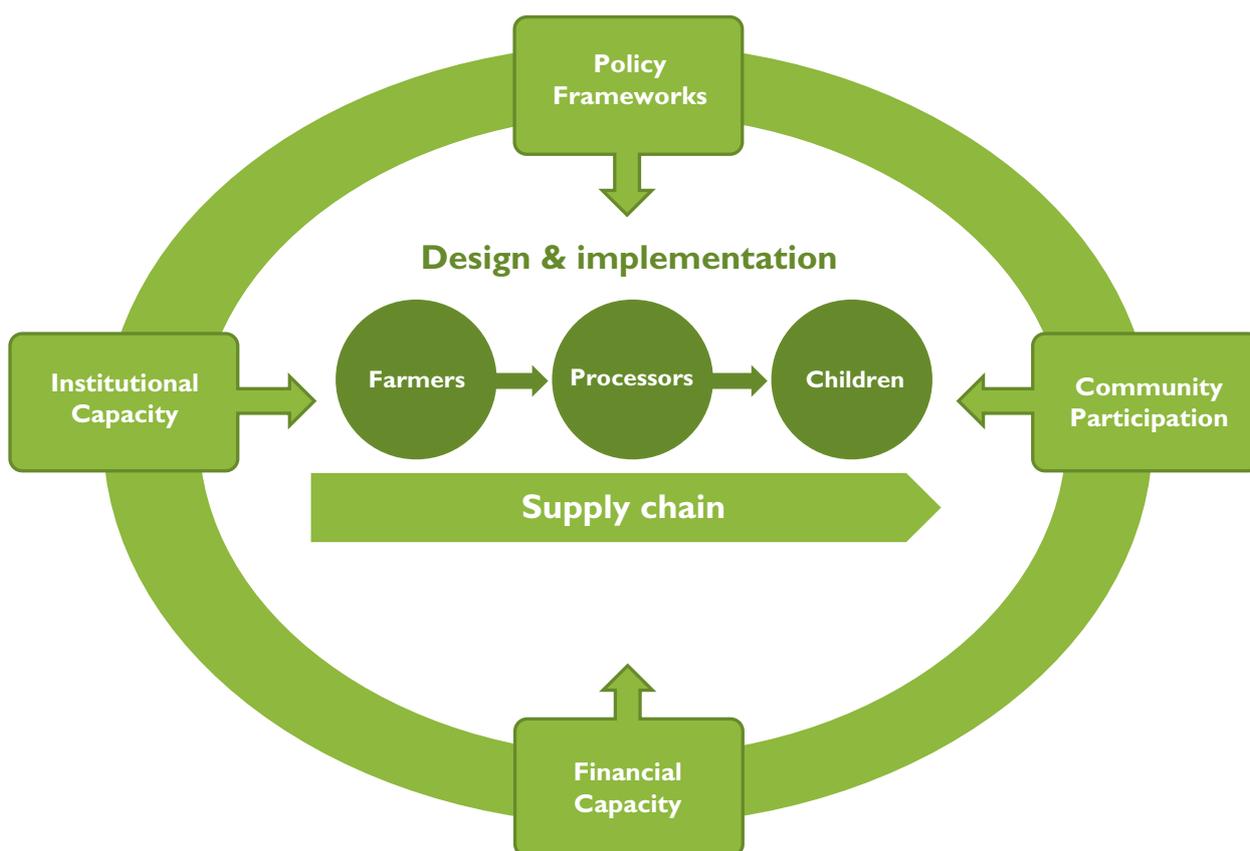
Currently, HGSM reaches 760,895 pre-primary and primary schoolchildren in 2,115 schools. Funds are disbursed directly to schools and are administered by School Management Committees (SMCs), which are composed of parents, teachers, and community members. SMCs are responsible for purchasing food from local farmers, cooperatives and traders, in line with government regulations and guidelines. The cost is approximately £0.07 (EUR 0.08) per child per day. Local purchases reduce the costs related to transport, warehousing and general distribution. The Kenya National School Health, Nutrition and Meals Programme strategy plan (currently in draft) is very much geared towards promoting the participation of communities in the whole management process.

Despite clear progress, the Ministry of Education's School Health, Nutrition and Meals unit does not possess adequate funds to handle the expanded demands that would be placed upon it by the proposed new strategy. The unit is in particular need of capacity building for its programme managers, including on monitoring and evaluation (M&E). At the same time, many smallholders are struggling to access agricultural inputs, technology and knowledge, and rural infrastructure challenges remain significant.<sup>32</sup> Therefore support from development partners is essential for the success of the HGSM programme.

### 3.2 The HGSF Framework for Analysis

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' HGSF model. Every country that implements or is looking to implement HGSF programmes requires different approaches suitable to its specific context. The HGSF Framework for Analysis (see diagram) maps the processes and the potential impacts across the supply chain (in the diagram farmers, processors and schoolchildren are highlighted but there are other stakeholders in the supply chain) in relation to HGSF programmes.

The Framework considers the practical design and implementation of HGSF programmes in the context of policies and laws, institutional capacity and coordination, financial capacity, and community participation. These five components, along with 20 associated benchmarks of good practice, are now considered to represent the global standard for systematic consideration of school feeding.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the Framework aims to assess the extent to which there is an enabling environment for HGSF in a given country context. The Framework is also used to explore the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of programmes. It is important to note that when countries are comparing the costs of buying locally- versus externally-sourced food, local procurement may be more expensive initially. However, food bought within a country means that money stays within the borders, providing opportunities for longer-term returns on investment.

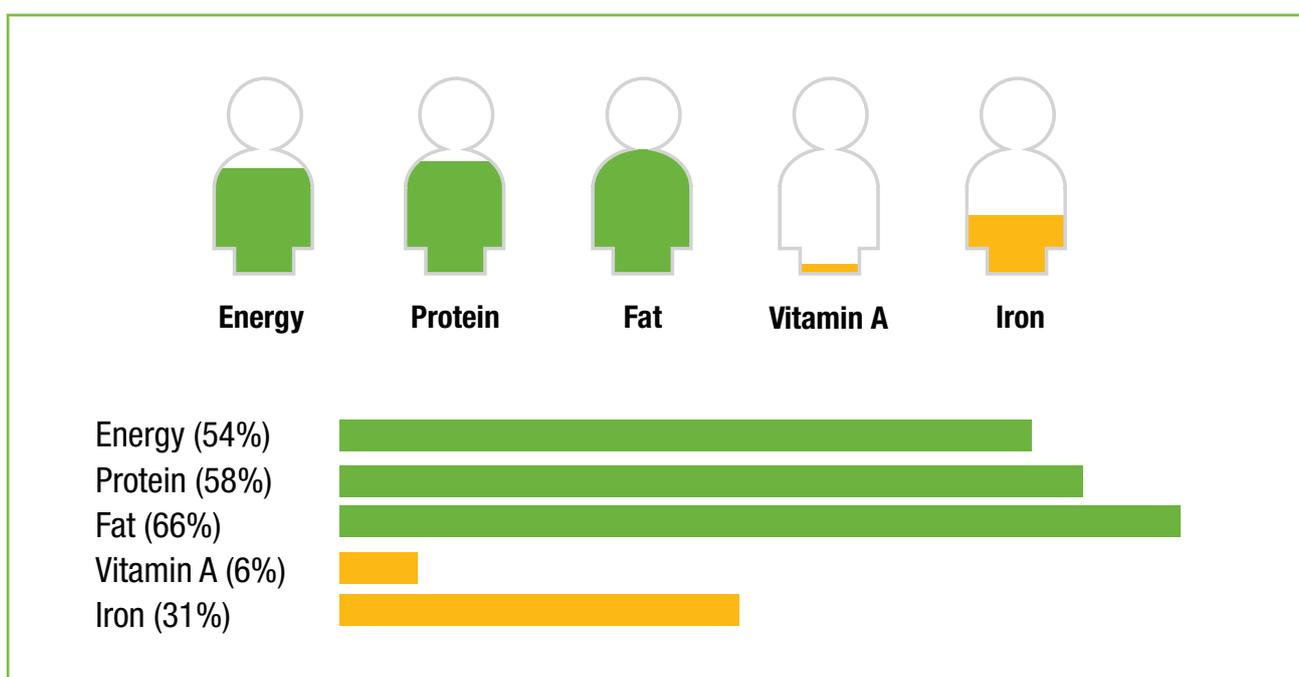


*The HGSF Framework for Analysis*

### 3.3 Complementary and Innovative Investments

HGSF is most equitable when smallholder farmers, particularly women, are empowered through the provision of training, credit (on reasonable terms) and appropriate technology, and also when there is political commitment to protect smallholders' land rights.<sup>34</sup> HGSF is most effective when there are complementary investments in physical infrastructure, education, health, and WASH.<sup>35</sup> Complementary interventions can support HGSF initiatives to ensure that agricultural policy and practice is sensitive to nutrition by increasing year-round access to appropriate, diverse and high-nutrient content food, especially for women and children.<sup>36</sup>

Innovative tools such as the menu planner developed by PCD can assist communities and governments to analyse and maximise the nutritional benefits of school meals in relation to World Health Organization (WHO) recommended nutrient intakes. The menu planner's gingerbread men represent the daily average nutritional value of a school meal (see diagram for an example). The content of meals can be adjusted by changing the weight or type of food items. In addition, the menu planner accurately calculates the cost of each meal, as it is linked to FAO databases on commodity prices. This information is also useful to farmers, as they determine what products to produce, in which quantities and at what price. Yet another potential benefit of the menu planner is that it can be used as a learning tool for nutrition education in the classroom.



*PCD menu planning tool: Example of a school lunch menu in Côte d'Ivoire's national school feeding programme. To use the menu planner please visit [www.hgsf-global.org](http://www.hgsf-global.org).*

### 3.4 The Benefits of HGSF

HGSF reduces risks faced by smallholder farmers by facilitating their engagement with markets through school feeding programmes.<sup>37</sup> By linking smallholders with school feeding programmes through strategic mechanisms, HGSF can help to stimulate wider market engagement on the part of targeted farmers through increased investment and business expansion. It is important to ensure that tendering and contract management processes for HGSF are transparent in order to minimise the potential for corruption.<sup>38</sup>

Structuring demand is a method for replacing imported food (including food aid) with domestically produced food. While what precisely constitutes 'home grown' (or 'locally grown') food beyond this may be debated, HGSF clearly provides opportunities to provide fresher and more culturally appropriate food to schoolchildren.<sup>39</sup> Therefore HGSF can contribute to improving rural (and even urban) livelihoods and reducing poverty, while supporting school feeding programmes to become sustainable.

Moreover, HGSF can make important contributions to efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition among children (particularly orphans and other vulnerable children), and can support wider efforts to achieve food security for marginalised groups, including smallholder farmers themselves.<sup>40</sup> Crucial to establishing a virtuous cycle of sustainable agricultural development and better nutrition are the positive spillovers (e.g. technology transfer) and multiplier effects (e.g. creation of additional jobs in areas such as transportation, processing and preparation of food) associated with HGSF.<sup>41</sup> Educating children about nutrition and agriculture as part of the national curriculum is an important element of the school feeding aspect of HGSF, and is particularly beneficial to orphans and other vulnerable children.

### 3.5 Making HGSF Work

The successful transition of school feeding programmes to sustainable country-owned programmes depends on the integration of school feeding into national laws, and into relevant sector policies, strategies and plans. It also requires adequate financing, including in research and national implementation capacity (across government agencies, regulators and farmers' groups). As a part of this, high quality M&E systems (see the case of Mali overleaf), as well as fair and transparent mechanisms for resolving disputes, are important. Strong communication and coordination between Ministries of Education, Agriculture and Health (and others as appropriate), as well as between national governments and donors, is also essential.

Strengthening the management of existing Strategic Grain Reserves (SGRs) is a potential benefit of HGSF programmes. SGRs involve maintaining reserves of staple crops so as to provide secure supplies of grains in the event of instability or crisis in food markets. While unpopular during the era of Structural Adjustment Programmes, contemporary research finds that SGR policies that are well-designed and properly implemented can 'significantly reduce costs and effectively improve agricultural markets and production whilst reducing volatility'.<sup>42</sup> Therefore it is necessary to: properly manage procurement from smallholders; enhance storage and stock rotation practices (to maintain the quality of food and minimise its wastage); and facilitate linkages between grain reserves and school feeding programmes.<sup>43</sup> The Bali Ministerial Declaration, adopted at the 9th World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference on 7 December 2013, permitted the continued use of 'public stockholding programmes for food security purposes', although unfortunately this was only taken as an 'interim' decision.<sup>44</sup>

A number of other challenges exist with respect to HGSF. Firstly, if public procurement is used to purchase food from relatively stronger smallholder farmers (i.e. those that are already profitable), then there is a danger that inequality may increase. At the same time, smallholders need to be adequately prepared to participate in HGSF programmes, and

eventually be able to demonstrate value for money. This dilemma may require a careful balancing act in the short-term. In the medium- to long-term, it will necessitate supporting the most marginalised smallholders to increase their productive capacity and organise themselves (e.g. by forming farmer groups). This relates to a second challenge. Measuring how structured demand creates opportunities for smallholders to access other markets (at local to global levels) is not simple, and requires further attention. Thirdly, in regions where levels of malnourishment are high, micronutrient powders can be useful. These products are frequently not locally produced, which may appear to go against the ethos of HGSF. However, micronutrient powders are only a short-term measure. Once widespread malnourishment has been addressed, food that is locally sourced should be sufficient to meet children's nutritional requirements.

## **Mali: Taking monitoring and evaluation of HGSF seriously**

Historically, only school feeding programmes implemented by partner agencies were active and appropriately monitored in Mali. In January 2008, the national government organised a forum on school feeding, aware of the important role that such programmes could come to play in both education and local economic development. This forum produced a national school feeding policy, which was validated in November 2009. The same year, a national (government-run) programme was launched in 651 schools, located in the 166 most vulnerable communities.

In Mali, HGSF means that purchase and consumption should take place in the same village or community. However, due to irregular production of foodstuffs in the country, buying in one region of Mali to consume in another region of the country is also acceptable if the supply of food in a particular region is inadequate. Today, the Malian Government provides food supplies and cooking equipment, and supports the restoration and construction of canteens, as part of the national programme. The state allocates around £5 million (EUR 6.1 million) to the HGSF programme. Before the Malian crisis of 2012, school feeding programmes as a whole reached 15.4% of all schools in Mali. Amongst schools in food insecure areas, 26.1% of schools were served by such programmes.

The national government has recognised that its HGSF initiative requires further improvements, particularly in terms of a viable M&E system. Hence, with the support of PCD, a national M&E strategy was developed. It defines roles and responsibilities of all actors in the implementation chain and a five-year action plan. The M&E strategy also includes a toolbox. A workshop on M&E of HGSF, organised by the Government of Mali and PCD in October 2013, trained participants at the national level on how to use M&E tools to support implementation of the National Strategy for School Feeding. Selected trainings are ongoing at sub-national levels targeting regional and local level actors. The Government of Mali continues to seek technical assistance and evidenced-based research to improve the delivery and sustainability of its HGSF programme, including with respect to M&E.



*Children sharing school lunch in Mali*

## 4.0 Analysis of Official Donors

### 4.1 The WFP and World Bank

Despite the evidence and arguments outlined above, bilateral and multilateral donor support for HGSF varies considerably. Both WFP and the World Bank are involved in the HGSF movement. In 2009, WFP launched Purchase for Progress (P4P), a pilot programme in 20 countries. P4P uses WFP's demand for staple food (including for its school meals) to offer smallholder farmers opportunities to enhance productivity, sell surplus produce at pre-determined prices, and utilise these contracts as a platform for accessing other agricultural markets.<sup>45</sup> WFP has also partnered with the Government of Brazil to establish a Centre of Excellence against Hunger, which provides policy advice and technical assistance to low-income countries on HGSF.<sup>46</sup>

In terms of the World Bank, school feeding featured strongly when countries made requests to the organisation for funding following the onset of the global food crisis in 2008.<sup>47</sup> The main motivation behind these requests was for school feeding to act as a social safety net for the poorest children.<sup>48</sup> The World Bank has focused on ensuring the sustainability of school feeding programmes, and has suggested that HGSF is a way of achieving this goal.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the World Bank's Agriculture & Rural Development Department has recently stepped up its interest in HGSF, recognising school feeding's potential to provide a stable, structured market for smallholder farmers.<sup>50</sup>

### 4.2 The US Government

The involvement of the United States in HGSF in low-income countries is more complicated. On the one hand, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has conducted assessments to support the successful implementation of HGSF in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa such as Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Rwanda.<sup>51</sup> USDA has also provided financial assistance to WFP for HGSF programmes, including over US\$77 million for Kenya specifically.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, US food aid, especially Food for Peace (commonly known as P.L. 480), the US Government's food aid programme implemented through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has been criticised for being inefficient compared to local and regional procurement.<sup>53</sup> This is due to the practice of monetization (where non-state organisations sell donated food on local markets for money to fund development projects) as well as the costs of shipping food overseas.<sup>54</sup> The Agriculture Act of 2014 (also known as the 2014 US Farm Bill) seeks, albeit in part, to address these criticisms,<sup>55</sup> including more emphasis on local and regional procurement, particularly with respect to the McGovern–Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (administered by USDA).<sup>56</sup> Yet there remains a broader concern that certain food aid programmes have undermined local agricultural production; this is particularly relevant for the US Government, as it is the largest food aid donor in the world.<sup>57</sup>

## 4.3 The European Commission & the UK Government

The European Commission (EC) is increasingly engaged in promoting nutrition, and linking this to agricultural development and efforts to improve health.<sup>58</sup> When it comes to supporting nutrition for children, the EC is heavily focused on children under five years of age, although its Communication on food security does make a few references to education.<sup>59</sup> Of particular interest is the document's call for 'better integration of nutrition in development policies, including in education and health and related capacity building'.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the organisation's most recent Communication on education does refer to 'measures to promote children's health at school (nutrition, school canteens)'.<sup>61</sup> In practice, however, the EC has not made school feeding (either in a traditional sense or in the form of HGSF) a priority; this is unsurprising as there is no reference to it in the EC's strategy for human and social development.<sup>62</sup>

The UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID) has prioritised both improving education<sup>63</sup> and tackling hunger and malnutrition (including through increasing agricultural productivity).<sup>64</sup> DFID was the largest European bilateral donor to basic nutrition in 2009.<sup>65</sup> However, similar to the EC, DFID's work on basic nutrition is focused on children under five years of age and particularly on the first 1000 days of a child's life,<sup>66</sup> in line with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement (DFID is one of three facilitators of SUN's Donor Network).<sup>67</sup> While nutrition in the first 1000 days (from conception to the age of two) is undoubtedly crucial, it is essential for nutritional support to be sustained throughout childhood, including for school-age children.<sup>68</sup>

While acknowledging that 'well designed school feeding programmes can help to increase attendance and improve learning outcomes', DFID does question their cost-effectiveness compared to other social protection initiatives, and highlights the risk that out-of-school children may not benefit from such programmes.<sup>69</sup> It is worth exploring these arguments in more detail. In regard to cost-effectiveness, as discussed above, school feeding can take different forms, and thus the costs associated with different types of intervention vary. Moreover, school feeding costs tend to equate to a smaller proportion of overall education costs as national income rises, and the potential for efficiency savings is often greatest in low-income countries.<sup>70</sup> It is also worth noting that analysing the cost-effectiveness of HGSF programmes needs to take into account the impacts of these programmes not only on children, but also on smallholder farmers.

The criticism that out-of-school children may be excluded from school feeding programmes is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, and also as explained above, school feeding programmes are a pro-poor investment that can act as a 'pull' factor for children who do not attend school. Of course, school feeding programmes alone cannot address the problem of out-of-school children. But this does not seem to be a good reason to ignore their contribution to global education goals. Secondly, take-home rations, which can be a part of school feeding programmes, can be targeted at the poorest. These rations can benefit children who are most vulnerable to not attending school regularly or even to dropping out entirely (such as orphans and children with disabilities), as well as their siblings who may not be enrolled in school at all.<sup>71</sup>



*Schoolchildren learning in the classroom in Nigeria*

## 5.0 Recommendations

### Official donors should:

- Recognise that HGSF can be a 'win-win' for marginalised children and smallholder farmers, and that transitioning from externally-supported school feeding programmes to fully government-led sustainable school feeding programmes is a priority for the AU and many African governments.
- Establish HGSF in their policies and strategies on social protection, education, nutrition and agricultural development.
- Invest in research – including dissemination of this research – and pilot projects on HGSF that are aimed at (firstly) addressing the barriers faced by smallholder farmers in accessing the school feeding market, and (secondly) assessing how structured demand creates opportunities for smallholders to access other markets.
- Call on African governments to abide by their commitment under The Maputo Declaration<sup>72</sup> to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture, and to meet the international target of allocating 20% of national budgets to education.<sup>73</sup>
- Provide technical support, including capacity building, to African and other low- and middle-income country governments on inclusive HGSF policy and programming, in ways that: promote genuine participation of smallholders; facilitate coordination between relevant Ministries; and ensure the effective management of SGRs.
- Leverage and coordinate donor support that can in turn support African and other low- and middle-income country governments to implement successful HGSF programmes.
- Facilitate South-to-South cooperation – particularly between countries that have just started implementing HGSF programmes and countries that have fully functional HGSF programmes in place – for the purposes of promoting mutual learning and engaging key decision makers.

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