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School Feeding Programs in Haiti: Past Experience & Future Perspectives. World Vision.

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The World Vision School Feeding Program in Haiti: Past Experience and Future Perspectives

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1. Introduction

This assessment examines the structure of school feeding programs (SFP) in Haiti and identifies the limits and potential contributions of SFPs as a broader development strategy given the contextual, livelihood and institutional conditions. A new approach to SFPs in Haiti that incorporates a livelihoods approach could help to ameliorate its current food crisis, largely a result of rising food costs rather than market availability, and addresses fundamental conditions responsible for widespread and severe poverty. Most SFPs have integrated health initiatives, such as nutrient supplementation and de-worming. However, only a few programs, most notably those operated by USAID and CRS, have begun to recognize the value of SFPs as a foundation from which to implement livelihood-strengthening development activities, for example community gardens and vocational training for youth. In general, communities, government and NGOs are open to new ways to use SFPs to support development. However, the greatest challenge comes from a lack of institutional support at the donor level. In addition to food, SFPs will require additional funds for new development activities. Also, the current monitoring and evaluation system would need to be greatly improved in order to accommodate new program goals and objectives.

World Vision Haiti (WVH) is the key development organization operating in the Department of the North, the island of La Gonave and the Central Plateau. Their programs address the agricultural, educational and food security sectors. However, WVH is not currently implementing School Feeding Programs (SFP) and has not operated any SFP since 2003. The information presented in this assessment comes from 10 days of fieldwork conducted at three World Vision Haiti (WVH) sites, Balan and Bassain Daiman in the Department of the North and the other site in Anse-a-Galet on the island of La Gonave in the Department of the West. These three sites offer a comparative perspective on the possible uses of SFP for community development. Balan and Bassain Daiman are relatively new sites for WVH, but are quickly becoming a focal point for WVH activities because a large food aid contract signed with the World Food Programme (WFP). Anse-a-Galet was one of the areas that WVH implemented its SFP from 2000-2003 and has been a focus of its area development program (ADP). Although WVH does not currently implement SFPs, all of the localities included in this study have SFPs operated by other organizations. Currently, WVH is exploring several possible funding sources to begin SFPs as early as January 2009. The range of WVH’s activities offer an excellent opportunity for designing an innovative new SFP with strong cross-sector linkages.

1.1 Physical description of the region

Haiti is a small nation of about 27,000 km2 that occupies the western part of the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic to the east. The majority of Haiti’s population of 7.93 million people, 59.6% or 4.7 million people, live in rural areas (ISHI 2003). A combination of rural population pressure, smallholder agriculture, and the reliance on wood and charcoal for cooking fuel have overstressed the environment and resulted in widespread ecological degradation. Only 1.5% of its natural forest cover remains, while 25 out of its 30 watersheds are eroded and deforested. As a result, water sources are drying up and what water is available is increasingly polluted.

Its national infrastructure of roads, electricity and potable water is in decay and only functional in and around its major urban areas. The vast majority of the country is only accessible by
footpaths, most homes lack electricity and few people have sufficient access to clean drinking water. Besides its poor roads, the national highway is only paved in parts, Haiti’s mountainous geography further isolates its localities. These conditions have made it difficult for rural people to bring their goods to market, access health care or other services, and have placed them at increased risk for waterborne and sanitation-related disease.

Haiti has a tropical climate, but the surrounding ocean, its mountains and exposure to the trade winds create extreme variations in temperature and rainfall. Annual average temperatures can vary from an average of 81F to 60F depending on proximity to the ocean and elevation. Rainfall also varies depending on exposure to the trade winds with the western part of the tropical southern peninsula receiving an average of 144 inches a year to the arid southwest coast of the northern peninsula receiving only 24 inches a year. Due to the fact that most rural farmers depend on rainfall for agriculture, farming is highly vulnerable to climate variations. As a precaution, many rural households aim to diversify the crops they plant in their gardens as well as plant several different gardens in different ecological areas. In addition, hurricanes and tropical storms commonly strike during late summer and can be devastating. Haiti is ill equipped to respond to severe hurricanes and in most cases little is done to mitigate impacts. Hurricane Jeanne struck the northern coast of Haiti in 2004 killing over 3,000 people in flooding, destroyed crops, and damaged infrastructure. Most recently, between August and September 2008, four hurricanes struck Haiti leaving many parts of the country flooded, displacing households and destroying crops. The full extent of the damage is not yet clear, but the country is in a state of emergency as aid organizations try to provide shelter, water and food for the most afflicted regions.

1.2. Relevant historical context

Haiti’s current political crisis stems from the violence leading up to the departure of former President Aristide in February 2004. Security problems continue to affect the lives of its urban population. Haiti’s lack of security stems from the failure to disarm gangs, rebel groups and ex-military with a small (only 3,000 in number) police force. The MINUSTAH (UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti) was established in June 2004 and consists of 7,000 foreign peacekeepers. Their work has largely focused on dismantling many of the armed groups controlling parts of the capital. Since 2004, there has been growing opposition to government from both right-wing and popular positions. Armed gangs continue to control parts of the city and there are frequent attacks and kidnappings mostly affecting the poor. After a two-year transition period (March 2004-May 2006), a two-Chamber Parliament was sworn in and the President, René Préval, was elected. Most recently in 2008, sharp rises in food prices led to food riots across the country. The population is highly vulnerable to food price increases since Haiti imports over 50 percent of its food including rice, a staple of the diet. While food is available on the market, few can afford to purchase what they need. Besides food, the cost of goods and services has generally gone up causing the population to suffer from laviche or the high cost of living.

1.3. Socio-economic context

Haiti is classified among countries with the lowest human development level, ranked 153rd in 177 countries. It is considered to be the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and the only LDC (“Less Developed Country”) of the Caribbean region. The proportion of the rural population living in poverty is 82% and 59% live under extreme poverty (Egset and Sletten
2003). Seventy-six percent of the population live on less than US$2 per day, while 55 percent live on less than US$1 per day. In January, the price of 110 lb bag of rice rose to US$51, making it difficult for most households to afford the purchase of this vital staple.

Haiti ranks along with Afghanistan and Somalia as one of the three countries of the world with the worst daily caloric deficit per inhabitant (WFP 2008). Rural areas are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity. Approximately 70% of rural households eat one meal a day. Chronic malnutrition presents a problem to the health and development of rural children. The malnutrition rate for rural children is 27%, compared to 12% for urban children. As a result of malnutrition, half of all Haitian children are underweight, nearly one-quarter of children 6-59 months are stunted, 3.6% are wasted, and 22% are underweight. In response to Haiti’s growing food crisis, WFP stepped up its operations in July 2008 to provide emergency food aid to its most vulnerable population. WVH is one of the implementing partners for the emergency food distribution and is currently preparing for a general distribution in the fall.

High rates of morbidity and mortality are due to limited access to primary health services and a growing HIV/AIDS epidemic. Maternal mortality between the years 1994-2000 averaged 523 deaths per 100,000 births. The mortality rate for infants is 125 per 1000 live births. HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of adult deaths in Haiti and is the worse affected country outside of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2004, the adult (15-49 years old) prevalence rate was 4.9%. The proportion of the rural population living in close proximity (<5 km) to health establishments was 53.7% for dispensaries, 34.9% for health centers, 26.8% for pharmacies, 16.2% for private practices, and 8.2% for hospitals (EMMUS III). Additionally, the proportion of rural people with access to clean drinking water is 46%. The majority of rural people (50.5%) get their drinking water directly from an uncapped spring or a river and 22.8% from a public tap. Less than a quarter of the population lives in a household with access to a latrine or other sanitation facility (EVCH).

1.4 Principal livelihoods of the region, brief descriptions

Households in the region rely on a mixed livelihood system of agriculture and commerce with a dual orientation to meet consumption needs and to generate revenue. Typically, agriculture and the sale of farm goods is the principal revenue stream for the majority of rural households but is also supplemented by other types of commercial trade, fishing, animal husbandry, remittances, wage-labor and charcoal production. Agricultural production occurs in small, dispersed, rainfed gardens where low technology and labor-intensive farming practices produce a variety of crops for direct consumption and/or market exchange. Two major constraints on agricultural production are shortages of arable land due to population pressure and a degraded environment. A third constraint is control over an adequate supply of agricultural labor during seasons of high activity. Weeding, soil preparation and repairing drainage canals are regular activities that often require more labor in a period of time than the individual cultivator can provide. Households may rely on children to supplement the labor of adults. This might delay some children enrolled in school from beginning classes on time.

Commerce is nearly as common a livelihood activity as agriculture and generates a substantial amount of cash for peasant households. Commerce refers to the buying and reselling of food and consumer staples in Haiti’s internal marketplaces. It is the domain of women, because they possess the necessary skills, knowledge and social connections. Like agriculture, marketing is a
labor-intensive activity that exhibits seasonal peaks corresponding to harvests and fluctuating consumer demand. In addition many other factors, such as market size and the purchasing power of customers, scarcity of trading capital is the most likely the greatest barrier to profitable petty commerce. A steady and affordable supply of credit is one of a market woman’s most valuable asset.

Food security for most rural households comes from consuming part of what they produce and from selling their produce in order to make food purchases on the market. Households purchase essential food commodities such as rice, beans, oil and flour. School fees also represent a significant expenditure for rural households. Investments in education, especially primary school, are a priority for households but the immediate need for food can prevent a household from sending children to school.

Balan, one of the field sites visited, is a designated ADP area. WVH’s operations in this region are located in Balan and most of its programming is conducted nearby. As part of a household’s livelihood strategy, agriculture in Balan enjoys sufficient rainfall and fertile soil. Balan’s proximity to Cap Haitien, the departmental center in the Department of the North, and Haiti’s second largest city, creates a demand for locally grown agricultural commodities. Additionally, the demand for skilled and unskilled labor in Cap Haitian offers another means to households for earning cash outside of farming.

In contrast, Anse-a-Galet on the island of La Gonave, lacks adequate rainfall and favorable soils. As an island, its farmers and market women have little access to the mainland marketplaces, especially in Port-au-Prince. None of the roads on La Gonave are paved and transportation is limited and costly. Production on the island is destined for its local markets and the price of imported goods is especially high here given the additional costs of shipping.

1.5 Educational Characteristics

Literacy rates in Haiti for the general population were 54.1% in 2003 with literacy rates among men (60%) generally higher than for women (48.6%). The literacy rate among Haiti’s rural population is only 38.6% due to the low availability and affordability of education in rural areas. Additionally, the literacy rate among rural men (45.3%) is higher than among rural women (32.1%). These rates reflect a tendency among parents with limited means to prioritize the education of their boys over girls. The gender difference in school enrollment widens with age. The difference between young boys and girls (ages 3-5) is less pronounced, 47% of boys and 43% of girls attend pre-school. Primary school enrollment for rural areas is similar to preschool enrollment, approximately 50% of children aged 6-11 years are enrolled in primary school. The dropout rate after primary school is extremely high in rural areas. Only 8.7% of the rural population have attended school beyond the primary level, 36.6% have completed primary school, and 54.7% have never attended school (ECVH 2003). As the cost of living continues to rise, it is likely that households will have to sacrifice the education of some of its children in order to afford food. In these cases, households prefer to send their boys to school rather than their girls.

The underlying problems that adversely affected primary education include poor physical infrastructure, lack of basic school materials and teaching aids, irregular school schedules, lack of trained teachers, and the inability of parents to provide greater supervision and support. The majority of schools found in rural areas are independently run or community based schools.
However, most of Haiti’s independent schools fail to meet the minimal Ministry of Education (MOE) educational standards. Almost 70% of schools are unaccredited and 60% of teachers fail to meet basic competency standards.

Besides the high cost of education, the distance to school increases with the level of education. At the primary level, 94.7% of rural children live less than 5 km from school. However, at the primary and secondary levels, proximity to school drops to 28.2% for secondary cycle 1 and 15.9% for secondary cycle 2. The high costs of transporting and housing students, in addition to the cost of education and need for labor at home, contribute to a very low proportion of students continuing their education beyond the primary level (EMMUS III).
2. School-feeding in the region

2.1 History of school feeding in the region

School feeding in Haiti began in the 1990s. It was largely funded by USAID in an effort to combat child malnutrition and to improve educational outcomes. The structure and goals of SFPs have remained relatively unchanged since then. Currently, the most significant sources of funding for SFPs are USAID, WFP, the EU, and Canada. In a recent change of approach, USAID, one of the largest sources of funding for school feeding in Haiti under its PL480, Title II funding, has introduced a new commitment to using SFPs to strengthen livelihoods. It recognizes the value of school feeding to support cross-sector activities. One example is the use of SFP for out-of-school youth living in Cite Soleil, Haiti’s largest urban informal settlement, to support vocational training. They are considering other ways to use SFP to support livelihood and health and are open to ideas from partner organizations. Other SFP implementing organizations, such as CRS and WFP, have also begun to expand the scope of SFPs to address issues of health and agriculture.

Conversations with representatives from these organizations also highlighted a shift in institutional thinking away from conventional, education-restricted SFPs. Despite the change in language and vision, the necessary resources to support those activities are not fully available. The bulk of SFP budgets are still limited to the logistics of food distribution and very little has been added to them to account for the needs associated with community development projects. For example, these additional costs could include establishing community gardens or equipping a vocational center. Transitioning towards an SFP for community development will require additional resource commitments by donors. It may also require implementing organizations to find secondary funding to support livelihood based development activities associated with SFP. Discussions with WVH staff identified institutional support as the greatest challenge to implementing livelihoods based SFP. WVH has the capacity and interest to create cross-sector linkages between SFP and its other programs, but will need donor resources to support those linkages for the long-term.

USAID and WFP are planning to ramp up their commitments to SFP. Since the beginning of its SFP program in Haiti, USAID has increased its support from 44,000 to 390,000 meals a day. The recent food crisis in Haiti has also given the country a “fast-track” status making it a regional priority for food security interventions. One recent intervention is the extension of SFP into the current summer by providing parents and children with a weekly take-home ration. Additionally, WFP has plans to begin a single year SFP (which could become a multi-year program) at schools in the Departments of the Northwest, North, and Artibonite (former CARE Haiti sites) to provide 350,000 meals a day. The WFP approach to SFP is similar to that of USAID in that both aim to measurably improve the quality of education, meet national standards for teacher training, involve PTA in the monitoring and administration of SFP activities, and introduce new curriculum. This will become the largest funded program in the country and could provide an opportunity for WVH to become involved in SFP.

World Vision Haiti has stated its interest in a livelihoods-based SFP. WVH has been operational for 30 years and currently implements programs in the Central Plateau, La Gonave, and the Department of the North. Its partner organizations include USAID-Food for Peace (USAID-
FFP), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), ACDI/VOCA, and WFP. WVH’s current food-related projects include a mother-child health (MCH) feeding program and a single-year safety-net feeding program for vulnerable populations. As of August 2008, WVH no longer operates any school feeding programs (SFPs), also called cantines scolaires in Haitian Creole. However, WVH is strongly committed to revitalizing its SFP and is in the final stages of negotiation with partner organizations (WFP, USAID-FFP, and USDA) to restart its school feeding in January 2009. This new course of SFP would include existing sites in La Gonave and the Central Plateau and would begin new programming in the Department of the North. The new SFPs would follow WVH’s programmatic model, which includes PTAs for community organization and local governance, linkages with health interventions (vitamin supplementation and de-worming), vegetable gardening at schools, and a quality of education incentive that would prevent the participation of schools that do not meet national standards.

In 1998, with funding from USAID, WVH successfully carried out a five-year school feeding program on La Gonave. A year later, in partnership with CRS, WVH expanded operations to include the Central Plateau. This initiative reached approximately 40,000 students per year before being phased out in 2003. Food was directly distributed to schools according to the number of children enrolled. Rations included soy fortified bend (SFB), lentils, and vegetable oil. In addition to providing meals, WVH’s SFP also involved the strengthening of parent teacher associations (PTA), providing vitamin A supplements and offering de-worming treatment to children. Future SFPs will continue with this approach and will consider new livelihood-building initiatives, such as community gardens.

WVH also works in the education sector as part of its ADP (area development program) approach. The ADP programs in Haiti target areas that are poor and marginalized, have high population density, are ecologically degraded, deficient in basic services, accessible to WVH staff, and have a population showing the interest and willingness to cooperate. Its education programs include scholarships for disadvantaged children, improving the quality of education by training teachers and school monitors on educational principles and practices, providing teaching materials (including copies of the school curriculum), and working with head teachers and parents on school leadership.

One of the criticisms of SFPs (including past WVH programs) by the Government of Haiti has been the inconsistency among SFPs to improving teacher capacity. USAID has acknowledged this problem and is working to create a uniform approach to teacher training that meets the national standards established by the Haitian Ministry of Education in its National Plan for Education (PENF). The improvement of teacher training curriculums has been facilitated by the involvement of local PTAs. Another criticism of past SFPs is they only provided a meal and did not offer other kinds of interventions. Additionally, the indicators used to assess the program and impacts of meals were unclear and inconsistently applied. This second criticism stimulated several recent changes to USAID’s SFP methodology.

The first of these changes is to improve existing assessment methods to better evaluate the success of programs. For example, programs that fail to meet the national standards for teacher education will not be eligible for SFP. They also plan to introduce new capacity building approaches that better conform to the Ministry of Education standards. Another area is an emphasis on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of SFP, including greater involvement of PTAs in the management of SFPs. The PTA is seen as a source of community support and involvement critical to success and sustainability.
USAID also plans to improve its monitoring and evaluation services at schools, both public and independent, to ensure that program policies and expectations are being met. Poor monitoring in the past resulted in “ghost classrooms” or classes of students that existed on paper and received meals, but in reality did not exist. Finally, USAID is exploring innovative activities, such as early grade reading programs that introduce new elements to the school curriculum. It is also formalizing an HIV/AIDS and life-skills curriculum that prepares students as early as the first grade.

2.2 Structure of the program

2.2.1. Type of feeding program

Site visits to SFP schools and discussions with school directors revealed that SFPs are run similarly across the country. There were no significant differences in the structure and outcomes of SFPs between those found in Balan, Baissin Caiman, and Anse-a-Galet. The only major difference is the inclusion of health objectives (vitamin supplements and de-worming) in the WFP programs. Most of these programs were on hold because of the summer recess, and I was only able to visit the site and to talk with community and school officials. However, one of the sites I visited in Balan, operated by WFP, was still providing meals to children. In June 2008, WFP extended all of its SFPs through the summer to account for the acute food crisis.

The selection of schools to participate in the SFP is based on criteria established by donors and government. Most donors require schools to have the necessary infrastructure (warehouse for storing food, kitchen and eating area) and must meet certain educational standards. Selection criteria used by WFH for the 2000-03 program included:

- More than 3 years in operation with at least six separate classrooms.
- More than 150 students.
- Provide primary school education.
- Basic infrastructure such as a kitchen, warehouse, latrines (for both boys and girls) and clean drinking water.
- Receives some pedagogical support from another institution.
- Demonstrated quality of education.
- Keeps an accurate register of its students.
- The school has an affiliated PTA (parent-teacher association).
- School is within an ADP.
- The area is accessible and contains a vulnerable population.

Revisions to the above criteria have been made since 2003 and now include more rigorous pedagogical requirements that meet the Ministry of Education standards for primary education. These new criteria are intended to ensure that children receive a quality of education that fits national standards. The goal is to eliminate schools that use SFPs to increase their enrollments without providing adequate educational quality. Government and donors want to be sure that the educational outcome objectives of SFPs can be achieved.

The greatest objection to SFP eligibility requirements came from parents and school officials. The selection of schools for feeding is a highly contentious issue, because the eligibility requirements established exclude the children from the most vulnerable areas. Most of the
schools in remote rural areas do not meet the infrastructure and educational standards needed to be eligible for SFP. With the proposed revisions to further increase eligibility requirements, this will further reduce the number of rural schools. The SPF-eligible schools tend to have greater resources tuition costs and are usually located in larger settlements that do not serve more remote rural localities. There was widespread agreement that those children most in need of food were not being served by the SFPs.

Discussions with school directors identified several possibilities for resolving this problem. First, they suggested that the eligibility requirements should be relaxed to allow for greater inclusion of poor rural communities. Second, implementing organizations, like WVH, could work with schools to improve their infrastructure and offer teacher training. This could help some schools in the poorest areas to become eligible for SFP. For example, a food for work program could be used to build and/or repair necessary structures. Third, SFP eligible schools could volunteer to host children from non-eligible schools. This would mean that children at non-eligible schools would participate in an SFP at another school by consuming their meals at the school that meets the selection criteria.

2.2.2. Ration size and composition

The composition of a student ration includes soy-fortified bulgur (SFB), lentils or another legume and vegetable oil. In some cases, SFB was replaced with corn-soy blend (CSB) or on rare occasions rice was provided. During WVH’s 2000-03 SFP, the monthly ration calculation per child included: corn-soy blend (8kg), soy-fortified bulgur wheat (10kg), lentils (3kg) and oil (3kg). In addition to the above, WFP also provides peanut butter and canned sardines, a welcome addition to the standard rations which allows for more creativity and meal diversity.

One of the most common concerns by parents was that the SFP meals were not “balanced” because they lack fresh vegetables. Parents and children also reported that spices were necessary to make the rations palatable. It is common for schools and PTAs to ask parents to provide a cash supplement to support the SFP. Some of this cash is used to purchase spices (salt, sugar, and flavoring cubes) and vegetables (carrots, cabbage, tomato) to be integrated into the rations. In cases where a family cannot afford to pay the SFP supplement, families provided fuelwood or wild greens.
A young girl participating in a WFP supported summer camp program at a primary school in Balan. She is eating a midday meal of rice.

Parents agreed that a SFP cookbook would help them prepare more appealing meals from the rations. With limited ingredients, SFP meals are bland to begin with and quickly become boring. Everyone agreed that more could be done to improve the appeal of SFPs to children. A priority should be made to develop and disseminate new cooking techniques, besides boiling, to diversify the taste of food. Another suggestion by parents was to improve the hygiene of kitchens. Cooks are not given any training on hygiene, and the kitchens are often small and unkempt. On several site visits, I noticed rodent droppings in the kitchens used to prepare food for children.
A kitchen structure at a primary school in Anse-a-Galet. The school does not belong to a School Feeding Program, but does prepare and serve its own meals using this kitchen. The structure once served the School Feeding Program on La Gonave.

A cooking competition using SFP rations would help to encourage a diversity of cooking styles and flavors using a minimum of ingredients. The best recipes could be published in a recipe book and distributed to schools. These books would help to keep meals appealing to children. The books would also provide a chance for students to become involved as judges, writers, and artists. This is another way in which children can begin to feel ownership over their SFP. Additionally, cooks should be provided with hygiene training to improve the quality and safety of food. Kitchens and food storage areas need to be better guarded against rodents.
Kitchen at a primary school in Baissain Daiman. The space was not in use over the summer, but serves as the primary cooking area for the school feeding program.

The use of wood for cooking fuel this poses environmental and the health problems. Much of Haiti’s trees have been consumed for cooking fuel, either as wood or charcoal, and communities felt that the SFPs should be more environmentally sustainable by, for example, using fuel-efficient stoves, which would help reduce the quantity of fuel required and could promote local interest in the technology. In fact, WFP has outfitted several of its schools with fuel-efficient stoves. The use of wood for fuel also poses a health hazard to children, especially in schools where kitchen smoke invades classrooms. SFPs should aim to avoid exposing children to smoke that can result in respiratory problems.

Distributions of food were made directly to the schools according to the number of children enrolled in the primary school program. Only children enrolled in a school with SFP received rations. Many primary schools also have a kindergarten program that does not fall under SFP. When meals are served to primary school children, children enrolled in the kindergarten program have to sit by and watch as their older peers eat. This creates for an extremely uncomfortable situation, and in many cases school directors have included kindergarteners in the distribution of rations. As a result, the rations are more quickly consumed and not sufficient for the primary school students.
Another problem with SFPs is the ration size. WVH and school staff reported that the quantity and composition of rations have not been sufficient. School directors felt that ration sizes did not take into account the presence of older (and larger) children enrolled in primary school. Delays in starting school, withdrawing from school temporarily and not completing grades tend to increase the average age of students. As a result, the average age of the primary school student is higher than what may be anticipated by SFP ration sizes. Because of the demand by students for larger meals, schools found it difficult to adequately manage food stocks. SFP schools are given food on a quarterly basis (every two months on an eight month school year). If they provided larger meals to satisfy students, they were left with a shortage by the end of the quarter. During one visit, I observed several teenage primary school children. Older children often complained that school meals were not satisfying and they finished still hungry.

2.2.3. Management strategies of the program

At all of the schools visited, there was some level of coordination between parents, teachers, and school directors in the management of the SFP. However, the degree to which parents were involved beyond the cooking of food and their cash contributions varied greatly. In many cases, SFP management was under the complete control of the school director. In these situations, interviews with parents demonstrated a high level of suspicion of the school director and
discontent with the program’s management.

PTAs were an important component to the success of SFPs. Typically, schools without strong PTAs showed little parent involvement and little desire to participate in SFP management. These programs tended not to include other community development activities. In a few schools, the problem of theft was a concern. Poor accounting of rations and inadequate warehouse security encourage theft. In contrast, schools with strong PTAs were more likely to include kitchen gardens, benefit from more efficient management and demonstrated greater interest in SFPs. Most PTAs were at least partly responsible for receiving, warehousing, cooking, and monthly monitoring of the program.

Under the most common SFP management structure, the school director retained the greatest authority and responsibility. This person coordinated with donor organization, provided the lists of children, addressed school eligibility requirements, and oversaw the rationing food stocks as well as the storage and cooking of food. Under the direction of the school director, a PTA organized the fund-raising and in-kind donations for additional food items and cooking fuel and provided labor for cooking, serving, and clean-up.

2.2.4. Duration of the program

Most SFPs are implemented during the school year from September to July, and children are only fed on school days. WFP has decided to extend its SFPs through the summer of 2008 and may provide take home rations for children over weekends and holidays. All communities agreed that the current food crisis made this extended SFP design the most preferable.

None of the SFPs could be sustained without a donor organization. The cost of rations is too high for schools and/or parents to assume. The USAID Food for Peace program funded the 2000-2003 WVH project. The project duration was not driven by community development logic. Rather, it was initiated by an external funder (USAID) to respond to widespread food insecurity. The end of programming was also determined by an external assessment of the food security situation and concerns over program effectiveness.

Because of Haiti’s food crisis, the current trend by donors is to increase in the number of SFPs. Major donors, such as WFP and USAID, have not set a specific duration for their SFPs. All organizations plan to renew their budgets when they expire and continue with SFP into the foreseeable future.

2.2.5. Frequency of feeding

All SFP schools provided a minimum of one hot meal a day for all students enrolled in primary school (grades 1-6). Schools would prefer to offer two meals a day, a morning snack followed by a larger afternoon meal; however, the amount of food precludes this. Discussions with parents highlighted that many students do not eat at home before school. Parents give children cash to purchase food sold outside of school. Depending on what parents can afford, children will usually buy hot chocolate milk, cookies, crackers, cassava bread with peanut butter or bread and butter. A snack in the morning would ensure that all children have eaten before school.

A USAID assessment found that the presence of SFP did not affect the number of meals children received at home (before and after coming to school). Parents did not consider SFP a substitute for eating at home (SFP children did not eat less meals at home); rather it complemented the
number of meals consumed at home. In the absence of SFP, parents still gave children money to buy a meal or prepared a lunch for them to consume during the day. For these children, the meal they consumed at school was their first meal of the day, especially in rural areas.

Disruptions in feeding are rare and usually occur because rations are consumed before the next delivery arrives. When breaks in the pipeline do occur, they were most commonly caused by washed-out roads during the rainy season. Less commonly, trucks would be unable to leave Port-au-Prince, because of security issues in and surrounding the city.
3. School feeding and educational outcomes

3.1 Patterns

3.1.1. Enrolment and retention

SFPs neither directly motivated parents to enroll their children in school nor did they encourage parents to keep their children enrolled. All parents strive to send both boys and girls to primary school, however the main reason for not enrolling a child is the cost of school fees (this mostly includes books and uniforms). Households explained that with the rise in the cost of living, largely due to the rise of food prices, they have to sacrifice the education of their children in order to eat. This sacrifice might delay enrolment, pull a child temporarily from school or cease to send a child altogether. Parents who already sent children to schools with a SFP, expressed appreciation for the program but explained that other factors, largely their ability to pay school fees, determined if their child would remain in school. Finally, there is no evidence to suggest that once fed, students will leave school for the day.

USAID evaluations of SFPs also demonstrate that there is no significant difference in student performance on national exams with the introduction of hot meals. Discussions with teachers also supported this finding. Teachers felt that without additional training and improved classroom resources, the addition of meals is not sufficient to raise student performance. Meals would have to be combined with other investments to yield any significant results. However, teachers agreed that children increase their attention span when they eat during the day. Most schools sent hungry children home an hour or two early because they could no longer pay attention. With SFPs, children could stay in school for the entire day and in some cases would stay after school for additional help (Vilgrain and Charles 2003).

Passing Rate for the National Primary School Exam (CEP) For WV Haiti Regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Rate for National Exam (CEP)</th>
<th>Non SFP School</th>
<th>SFP School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>77.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>76.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Vilgrain and Charles 2003)

Another finding from discussions with teachers was the correlation between hunger and aggression among students. Teachers reported that aggression among students has risen as food has become more expensive. They feel that hungry students are more likely to have behavior problems because of greater irritability. Teachers welcomed SFPs as a way to help reduce student aggression.

In its current form, SFPs in Haiti only offer one wet ration a day and a few provide additional services such as de-worming and vitamin supplementation (WFP SFPs). However, the introduction of new activities to the traditional SFP model may increase their perceived value by parents and students. An enhanced SFP model is likely to give it more weight in parents’ decisions to enroll and retain their children in school.

Data from a past assessment of WVH SFPs in La Gonave and the Central Plateau demonstrated that primary school dropout rates are lower for those schools with SFP than non-SFP schools. These differences were not tested for statistical significance. It’s also possible that the selection criteria for SFP schools selected for schools with greater resources thus improving its ability to
retain students. The study also found that SFP had a moderate affect on the regular attendance of children and reduced the number of long-term absence of children. However, the presence of SFP was not directly correlated with the dropout rate (Vilgrain and Charles 2003).

Primary school dropout rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dropout Rate</th>
<th>Non SFP School</th>
<th>SFP School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although SFP may not have a clear impact on the decision to send children to school, it is more likely that the presence of SFP at a school may draw more students than those that do not offer SFP. All other factors equal (the quality of education and the proximity of the school), prospective students are more likely to attend the schools that offer a meal. Schools advertise the fact that they participate in SFP as a way to attract more students. Schools in rural Haiti are tuition driven and little support comes from the national government. Therefore, SFP helps to build a school’s reputation and is likely to increase its enrollment.

USAID’s findings also indicated that parents choosing a school for their children considered the presence of SFP as a primary criterion. Parents who did send their children to school with SFP were more likely to send them on the first day of class rather than delay the start of school. However, the presence or absence of SFP did not influence the decision of parents to send their children to school, but rather the decision of which school (Vilgrain and Charles 2003).

3.1.2. Girls’ enrolment and retention

The presence of SFP does not influence the enrolment and retention of girls. Rural households place nearly equal value on the education of girls as they do for boys. Cultural values against the education of females do not appear to have an affect on enrollment until at least secondary school and beyond. The value of education for boys and girls is nearly equal, although under extreme circumstances where parents can only afford to send one child to school, they will more likely send a boy. The current assistance offered by SFP would have to be significantly increased (additional take home rations to feed the entire household) for it to free up enough cash (that would have been spent on food) for an extremely poor household to send all its children to school.
Girls at a primary school in Balan participating in a WFP summer program. Over the summer they benefit from part time classes that reinforce lessons and provide educational outings.

### 3.1.3. Infrastructure capacity

SFPs increase the enrollment of children at implementing schools, but none of the school directors suggested that increased enrollment has overwhelmed their capacity. The infrastructure problems most schools face includes sufficient space for storing food in a secure and clean environment, sufficient room for a cafeteria for all children (many schools have children eating in the classroom), and a kitchen large enough to prepare all meals at once.
Storage area at a primary school in Anse-a-Galet that had been used to warehouse rations. The space was not in use over the summer, but would serve as the primary storage if a School Feeding Program were to begin.

3.1.4. Teacher skill levels, training opportunities

Teacher skill levels vary significantly by school. Most schools in rural Haiti are privately run and there is little consistency in teacher training and skill levels between schools. Schools with greater resources can afford to pay teachers a higher salary, thus attracting better teachers. Many of the teachers at small rural schools are from the community. Communities play little to no role in supporting teachers. Additionally, training opportunities for teachers, especially at poorer schools, are extremely limited. Few teachers receive any type of training beyond their degrees. One of the problems faced by some schools is losing teachers to better positions once they receive training.

3.2 Constraints, challenges, and opportunities for education

The greatest constraints to improving educational outcomes include donor commitments for teacher training and to expand the range of school activities linked to SFP. The evidence from USAID’s 2003 assessment highlights the importance of teacher training for promoting educational success. Simply providing meals to children did not have a significant impact on
exam scores. Donors will have to commit to investing in teachers and improving the quality of curriculum in addition to providing meals. Donors also need to diversify the type of educational experiences linked to SFP. The inclusion of competitions, awards, outings and extra-curricular activities can motivate students to excel and provide additional formats for learning besides the traditional classroom setting.

The greatest challenge to SFPs is how to improve the educational outcomes of the most vulnerable schools and students. Current eligibility requirements restrict SFP to schools that have adequate infrastructure and teaching standards. The intent of these standards is to prevent schools from abusing SFP as a way to attract students without providing a quality education or having the facilities to manage a SFP. However, these guidelines have worked against the poorest communities by excluding resource poor schools from SFP. As a result, children from the most vulnerable households are excluded from SFPs. The challenge to SFP will be how to include these vulnerable populations.

Another challenge to schools participating in SFPs is the absence of teaching support. This can include classroom resources (e.g., books, maps, teaching instruments), pedagogical training for teachers, better salaries and/or benefits, and resources in the community to take students out of traditional classrooms into more engaged settings. These resource limitations make it difficult for teachers to improve the level of educational outcomes as expected by SFPs. Additionally, schools face the risk of losing teachers to better jobs as they receive training and improve their qualifications. Retention of trained teachers is especially problematic for resource poor rural schools where the need for good teachers is greatest.

Discussions with parents, teachers, school directors and children identified many ways SFP resources could be used to improve education. However, most of these ideas would require additional resources from donors and/or parents. If donors want to see improvements in educational outcomes, they will have to start making additional resources available beyond what they already provide in terms of rations. The following ideas capture some of the most interesting opportunities for using SFP (both existing rations and additional resources) for encouraging positive educational outcomes.

An education competition with awards is a popular idea for motivating students, teachers and schools to excel. SFP could facilitate greater participation between schools and the Ministry of Education. The top three students at a school, teachers with classes having top students, and schools with the highest passing rate on national exams would be recognized. During a site visit in Balan, a school inspector described the success of such a program. During the first year of the award competition, only seven schools in the region participated. However, by year two 12 school participated and in the current competition 26 schools participated. The goals of the competition are both to award excellence and to build self-esteem among students and teachers. The highlight of the competition was an awards ceremony where certificates were delivered to winners. Beyond the award ceremony, names of winners were published in newspapers and announced on the radio. Depending on the funds available, students were also given scholarships and schools received reference books.

Another use of SFP to support educational outcomes is to extend SFPs over the summer and introduce summer camps during the two-month recess. This could be an opportunity to open admission to camps to all children in the community. During the field visit, WFP was conducting summer camps as part of its expanding food relief efforts. The goal of camps is to
improve educational outcomes and to provide livelihood-based training. Activities can offer some vocational training, for example sewing, painting, or construction work. Camps could provide remedial lessons in difficult subjects. School outings could take students to view sites of local historical or cultural interest and could structure experiments in science and nature. These types of experiential learning opportunities would foster the development of local knowledge, build greater appreciation for the environment, and to experience how knowledge can be applied to addressing community issues. Finally, activities can include athletic recreation such as football, volleyball, and dancing.

Using the management of SFP as a learning experience would encourage a sense of ownership and investment into the project. Some of the PTA groups suggested that children should participate more in SFPs for the purpose of learning. For example, students could participate in the accounting and management of rations, develop menus or meal ideas or organize school gardens to provide vegetables as a supplement to rations. This approach could help SFPs become more intergraded into the community rather than being seen as a gift from outsiders.
4. School feeding and nutritional and health outcomes

4.1 Patterns

4.1.1. Major nutrition/health issues at the schools

Widespread food insecurity across rural Haiti has placed school children at risk for malnutrition, both in terms of caloric intake and micronutrients. Access to food has become restricted and many households are resorting to such coping strategies as consuming less food per meal, eating less frequently during the day, and eliminating more expensive food items such as rice.

Discussions with WFP identified iodine, iron, and B-complex as the most common types of micronutrient deficiencies. Besides SFP, schools do not have the resources to combat malnutrition on a systematic basis. Some school directors explained that they would sometimes purchase food for a few children. These measures, however, are on a case-by-case basis and not continued over the long term.

Children may receive food aid through other types of assistance programs. For example, WVH implements a mother-child feeding program for pregnant and/or lactating mothers and malnourished children. However, these programs are designed for under-five children. WFP has also begun a general food distribution program aimed at vulnerable populations. This is a short-term distribution and only lasting a few months.

4.1.2. Existence of the WFP Essential Package

All of the SFPs operated by WFP include the “essential package” (EP); helminth de-worming, latrine construction, clean water, and sanitation and hygiene messages. All schools visited had a water source, although it was not clear if the water was potable. All schools visited also had at least one set of latrines for boys and girls. Hygiene messages include body and dental care with an emphasis on preventing the transmission of parasitic infections. De-worming is conducted at all schools in WFP intervention areas, regardless of SFP, every six months. This activity is coordinated by a school health committee and includes WFP, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health. Some of the WFP SFP schools did have improved stoves. HIV/AIDS education was limited to older grades and only conducted during World AIDS month (December). The promotion of girl’s education, on the EP components, was not actively pursued because the male to female ratio among young school children is nearly equal.

The components of the EP not found but needed were malaria prevention and school gardens. Haiti’s malaria rate is ranked 52nd out of all countries with 1.18 cases per 1,000. Despite widespread support for the school garden idea, WFP has not included gardens with its SFPs.

4.1.3. Types of health and nutritional interventions

Besides de-worming and hygiene education, there are no other health interventions linked to SFP currently conducted at schools. The Ministry of Health is proposing to use the current de-worming structure to implement a vaccination program for school children. Outside of SFPs, there are no other interventions to address childhood nutritional deficiencies. One of the problems with the health interventions implemented with SFPs has been the lack of consistency and uniformity among organizations. USAID is currently working to restructure its de-worming intervention to ensure uniform implementation for all of its SFPs.
4.1.4. Types of life skills (e.g. HIV/AIDS prevention)

Little was being done to promote life skills for HIV/AIDS prevention. However, USAID plans to expand its HIV/AIDS life skills curriculum beyond December for HIV/AIDS awareness month. They are in the process of preparing a new year-long HIV/AIDS life skills curriculum for the fifth and sixth grade levels and are developing a completely new curriculum for young children in the first grade.

4.2 Constraints, challenges, and opportunities for nutrition and health outcomes

The greatest constraint to improving health, hygiene and nutrition outcomes is the lack of capacity within communities to provide the resources and skills necessary for these interventions. In most cases, it would require bringing in outside health staff or providing training to existing community workers. The success of health, hygiene and nutrition interventions rests on the willingness of donors to invest in developing this area of SFP.

SFP offers a valuable opportunity for the integration of hygiene and HIV/AIDS life skills messages into school curriculum. Discussions with schools demonstrated an interest in expanding this area of instruction, but lack the curriculum tools to do so. Through the context of teacher training and pedagogical development, classrooms could be used to transmit nutritional, hygiene and HIV/AIDS prevention messages.

Another opportunity is to expand de-worming activities into all SFP schools. Currently, only WFP schools implement de-worming activities. The structure for de-worming is already in place and includes support from the Ministry of Health. This structure could be used to implement other types of health activities, such as immunizations or malaria control. WVH already has an active health sector that could be called on to integrate new types of health interventions into SFPs. The challenge, as identified by USAID, will be to standardize health interventions so that all SFP schools receive the same level of care.
5. School feeding as a development strategy

Haiti has great potential for reconfiguring its current SFP to address community development issues by creating cross-sector linkages between food assistance and livelihood strengthening initiatives. All stakeholders, donors, NGOs, and communities show a strong interest in expanding the current program. This could be through the addition of activities to both support SFP and to expand its impact. Donors want to broaden the scope of SFP to include other essential services. WFP and USAID are actively seeking new ways to use food aid for development. WVH and other implementing NGOs already employ a livelihoods framework and encourage cross-sector integration for its ongoing projects. Finally, the participants involved in SFP see its current shortcomings and the potential for expanding its activities into areas such as community gardens, vocational training, or new educational opportunities. The following chapter explores possible approaches for implementing school feeding as a development strategy.

5.1 Participation and integration of the community/parents

All of the communities visited were clearly in support of their current SFP or establishing a new SFPs in cases where they were existent. However, using schools as a site for an integrated SFP-community development approach comes with its challenges. Traditionally, schools have not played a large role in community development. This is largely because most schools in rural Haiti are privately-run, for-profit institutions. The goals of the school do not always coincide with the best interests of the community. For the most part, school directors are concerned with enrollment numbers and the performance of their students on national exams. School directors will have to be convinced that the benefits from involving their school in community development will pay off. Parents of schoolchildren will also have to be convinced that the integration of new activities at school will provide their children with greater educational opportunities.

The fact that most rural primary schools are private creates a sense of competition between schools, making inter-school collaboration difficult. Support for a specific school’s activities would not be community wide, but only from parents who send their children there. It is possible that this sense of competition could lead to a fragmentation of a community-wide development effort. Ensuring that each school receives equal resources and voice in the overall community initiative is important for ensuring equality and friendly cooperation.

Additionally, decisions made by schools are likely to be dominated by school directors and not benefit from broader participation. As a private business, school directors are traditionally responsible for the management of the school and seldom involve parents or teachers. The success of a community-development SFP requires that the interests of all stakeholders are heard in the decision making process. A separate decision making committee would have to be established that includes parents, teachers, community leaders and the school directors. In this context, the power of the school director could be kept in check and would allow for outside perspectives. At the same time, the school director would have to accept the decisions of the committee since they affect the operating of his/her school. Implementation of new ideas for SFP ultimately depends on the cooperation of the school director.
PTAs could provide a foundation for a community-development oriented SFP. PTAs are volunteer organizations that share management responsibilities with the school director over issues such as teacher training, infrastructure, and school programs. All of the organizations interviewed for this report have highlighted the importance PTAs in the management of SFPs. In most communities, PTAs existed prior to SFPs and resources provided through SFPs would help to strengthen their capacity. In communities where PTAs do not exist, SFPs can promote the creation of these groups. The experience of most PTAs has been the initial resistance by school directors to sharing decision-making authority.

PTAs are organized from the base or locality level but include a national federation. Their structure of association, from local to national, is based on existing socio-cultural models and is similar to the organization of the national peasant movement (gwoupman peyisan). PTAs at the base level consist of stakeholders, largely parents and teachers, from a locality who share an interest in managing and developing schools in their locality. Several of these local PTAs often form a larger PTA representing the interests and needs of the communal ward. Members of locality PTA will serve as members of communal ward PTAs. This type of representation and coordination continues to the district, communal, departmental and finally national level. Each level of organization has a corresponding partner in the Ministry of Education. The most comprehensive level of PTA organization, the national federation of PTAs, works directly with the Haitian Ministry of Education to prepare reports and to design policy.

CRS, a partner organization of WVH, is currently implementing SFPs in the Grand Anse (southern peninsula) region of Haiti. They serve 45,000 meals a day at 128 schools. Their SFP includes improving the quality of education, teacher training, PTA development, curriculum, and health, hygiene and nutrition. Their strategy is to recruit one animator in each zone, or communal ward, as someone who can begin the process of building capacity with PTA. These individuals are responsible for mobilizing parents, teachers, and the school director. They also monitor SFP activities and collect basic data, such as school attendance rates. In addition, the PTA also forms its own monitoring unit that follows food utilization at each school. Reporting by the animator and the monitoring unit is done on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. CRS emphasizes the importance of PTA in all of their SFPs for managing food and running the cantine (the place where meals are served). Besides these duties, CRS provides small grants to PTAs for community development. Most of these grants are used to physical infrastructure for the school, such as additional classrooms. Other projects funded by CRS in conjunction with its SFP have been latrine construction and community gardens. However, PTA groups require additional capacity building in the area of finances and grant management to fully realize the potential of this program to promote community development.

In addition, CRS and its partner PTAs have had success with community bookstores. These operations are managed by PTA and sell books purchased in Port-au-Prince directly to parents. The bookstore organizes the purchase and transport of books from the capital city directly to the locality. This serves to cut out the price increases associated with middlemen (in this case market women who typically provide the link for imported commodities from urban to rural). Community bookstores can save parents as much as 25 to 30 percent compared to purchasing the book locally from a market woman. Another advantage of the community bookstore is that its books are new, are the most current edition and are what most children attending more prestigious urban schools are using.
Another SFP related livelihoods project supported by CRS is a PTA credit cooperative. The credit cooperative is a place for parents and teachers to save cash. A member is eligible for a small loan every three to six months. Teachers can obtain low interest (2%) loans for personal use. Repayment is taken directly from the teacher’s paycheck each month. Parents can also obtain low interest loans, but they can only use this credit to pay for their child’s school fees. The cooperative has noted two important impacts of the program. First, teachers, some of whom are new to the area and don’t have existing social networks, are able to borrow money without recourse to the informal moneylenders who charge exorbitant interest rates (sometimes greater than 100%). Second, more parents, especially from poorer households, are able to send their children to school because of the long repayment period. Parents can space out payments over six to twelve months and are less likely to resort to desperate asset or livestock sales.

In addition to PTA members, there needs to be greater involvement by children. During a focus group with primary school children, it was clear that youth want greater involvement in their SFP. Involving students at a level appropriate to their capacity will help create a sense of ownership and control. It can also be made into an educational experience (e.g., nutrition, budgeting, community development, etiquette). For example, children were excited about the idea of writing their own menu. Children were also excited about managing their own vegetable gardens. However, caution needs to be taken when designing roles for children. The goal of involving children must be to provide new educational opportunities such as those mentioned and not as a source of available labor (e.g., washing dishes after each SFP meal).

5.2. Integration into other ADP activities

All of the schools visited are within WVH’s ADP area and include their target population. WVH does not implement SFP, however it does provide educational support to some of the schools in the form of student scholarships and infrastructure repair. Not all of the schools benefit from these programs. It’s possible to begin expanding the range of ADP activities currently offered to schools. Besides its education sector, WVH can link existing programs in agricultural extension, health, food for work, and community mobilization to new SFP activities.

WVH’s educational sector offers scholarships, teacher training, school monitoring on educational principles and practices, provides teaching materials, and works with teachers and parents on school leadership. The sector also has projects on vocational skills training. Ideally, these activities would be attached to any new SFP.

One of WVH’s strongest sectors is its agricultural extension. Ongoing activities include innovative technologies to improve soil quality and increase production. Demonstration gardens in the study sites offered new approaches to composting and irrigation. The establishment of a school garden using WVH’s agricultural extension knowledge would improve food diversity at meals and offer another way to demonstrate agricultural technology. Ideally, the same activities at demonstration plots could be replicated at school gardens.

Supporting similar activities for students at home is a way to disseminate new agricultural techniques and environmental preservation efforts beyond the schoolyard. Children could be given the resources to establish their own gardens at home similar to the ones at school. This would further promote community involvement in SFP activities and serve the interests of the agricultural extension program. Home gardens could provide another source of revenue for student school fees and a source of food. Children could also become involved in reforestation
projects by planting saplings at home. Saplings could be grown as part of a school project and focus on fruit bearing trees as a source of food and cash.

A school garden at a primary school in Anse-a-Galet. The garden was cultivated to supplement foods provided by the School Feeding Program. When the program ended, the school continued to use the garden for meals.

The health and sanitation sector’s major program is the mother-child health project that includes a range of nutritional and health services aimed at pregnant/lactating mothers and their under-5 children. Existing capacities from MCH programs can be used to support health initiatives for SFP. This could include de-worming, immunizations, malnutrition monitoring, vitamin supplementation, and other basic primary care services.

WVH also has extensive food for work (FFW) projects in all of its ADP areas. Its possible to write new FFW proposals aimed at improving the infrastructure of schools and school gardens. Lack of necessary infrastructure is one of the reasons why schools serving the most vulnerable populations are excluded from SFP. FFW activities could help to rebuild structures. They could also be used to establish school gardens.

Community mobilization activities include the training of community leaders and promoting group formation. These activities could easily be conducted with PTAs as a way of strengthening the capacity of these groups to manage SFPs. Most of the groups encountered during site visits would benefit from this sort of social mobilization work. It would improve
their capacity to manage projects and develop new ideas for SFP. For example, PTAs could develop cooperative ventures with schools in such things as community gardens or animal husbandry activities (i.e. a chicken project). The benefits of these projects would be shared by schools and participating households. Other examples offered by communities include food-processing activities, such as peanut butter production, fruit drying, cassava bread, and breadfruit flour processing.

5.3 Livelihood activities that can be promoted around school feeding

Through the involvement of PTA member households, SFPs can become a means of promoting livelihood activities, especially those focusing on agriculture and marketing. Communities agree that the most important activity to emphasize is agriculture for the purposes of introducing dietary diversity and for increasing the quantity of food served. A school garden managed collectively by PTA members, teachers and school children can be used to promote innovative technologies and new varieties of food as well as to teach children. Produce from the school garden can be marketed for cash to purchase the salt, sugar and seasonings used to prepare meals.

If a garden on school grounds is not feasible, the SFP could be linked to a community-based garden. An arrangement between participating households and SFP could be established to deliver some of the produce to schools in exchange for SFP resources. The remainder of the garden produce could be retained by participants for their own consumption.

Besides gardening, SFPs could introduce small poultry programs such as chickens, guinea fowl, or turkey. These programs offer dual benefits—a supplemental source of food and an educational opportunity for children. Outside support in the form of training, feed, shelter and veterinary support would be required. If successful, the program could provide schoolchildren with mature chicks to bring home.

A few of the schools described their participation or interest in reforestation activities. Small sapling nurseries require mostly labor, since most materials (seed and little plastic bags) are available locally. Schools could provide shelter and water for saplings and involve children at all technical phases. Most nurseries have a combination of fruit-bearing and construction wood varieties. This activity can be combined with an educational component about how to care for the trees and their value to the household. Children would plant saplings at home, at school, and in their community.

Outside of agriculture and the environment, SFPs are an excellent way to promote vocational skills that can be marketed. Several schools mentioned having sewing classes for students who have eventually gone on to become tailors. Other useful types of vocational programs in construction or mechanical repair work could be introduced.

5.4 Appropriate duration of school feeding in development context

The current food emergency in Haiti merits a year-round SFP. Given the context of rising food prices, declining food production and low incomes for purchasing food, food insecurity in Haiti will continue to be a widespread problem affecting most of the population for years to come. Donors need to commit to a long-term plan for providing food aid and ensuring that it reaches the most vulnerable rural areas. A year-round approach can take advantage of the summer months as a chance to offer vocational programs or summer camp activities for younger children.
Parents agreed that their children would benefit from summer programs that keep them active and learning. Parents also emphasized that SFPs that stop during the summer creates a gap in food availability that they are not able to fill.

Despite the pessimism about food security, rural Haiti is ready to participate in development-based approaches that build local capacity and strengthen livelihoods. The logic of most donor agencies working in Haiti contends that the country is not prepared to receive development assistance until its political and food crises are resolved. Discussions in the field suggest that this view ignores existing capacities in vulnerable communities. Rural Haiti has strong civil society groups (e.g., peasant organizations and church-based organizations), but lacks the resources at the ground level to implement ideas. Expanding SFP to include livelihood-based initiatives would be an ideal way to mobilize these organizations for the benefit of the community.

5.5 Acceptance by government agencies of broad-based school feeding

The Haitian government is fully committed to school feeding and has a Ministry for School Feeding dedicated to overseeing these activities. Discussion with the Ministry of Social Affairs for the Department of the North indicated widespread acceptance of broad-based school feeding. The Ministry of Education also supports SFP and has a relationship with WFP and the Ministry of Health to deliver health services to SFP schools. Although government is clearly in favor of SFP, most agencies lack the capacity to implement and assess these activities on their own. The Haitian government can offer guidance and supportive partnerships for SFP implementing organizations. This kind of assistance can be extremely helpful when organizations have to negotiate with local leaders and institutions about how programs are implemented. However, caution must be taken when working with local government. In some cases, local leaders may see SFP as their ticket to re-election. Organizations should implement their own needs and capacity assessments before acting to ensure that SFP resources reach those most in need.

5.6 Appropriate monitoring and evaluation

A livelihoods-based model for SFP would require additional monitoring and evaluation (M&E) components to assess the impacts of activities on school children, their households and the community. The best M&E model for SFPs in Haiti is the one developed by CRS. In their system, both community and NGO share M&E responsibilities; the kind of information collected reflects the interests of both partners; and all data are shared. Introducing livelihood-based activities into SFP will require new approaches to monitoring program activities, assessing impacts and identifying new opportunities to expand or improve activities.

Programmatic areas in a new SFP that would require M&E include:
- Food aid distribution
- Educational outcomes
- Health and Life Skills
- Livelihood Activities

All of the NGOs that conduct SFP have adequate M&E systems in place for commodity tracking. In addition to these systems, it may be worthwhile to develop instruments to monitor the cleanliness of kitchens, warehouses, and to evaluate the satisfaction of children. The last item could be a simple tool developed by schoolchildren. This could be an opportunity for children to
express their opinions about what they are eating and to make suggestions about food preparation.

USAID’s 2003 (Vilgrain and Charles) assessment of the impact of SFP on educational outcomes would be an excellent starting point from which to develop an M&E toolkit. The assessment tool already includes a set of indicators such as school attendance, drop out rate and exam performance. Baseline data for these indicators should be obtained prior to the start of SFP. In addition to these data, information about new educational programs associated with SFP should be collected. For example, if SFP include extracurricular interest groups, qualitative information about the types of activities and their educational value should be included. Students and teachers could manage this type of data collection, while WVH M&E staff could collect more sensitive education outcome indicators.

An M&E system for HIV/AIDS life skills and health would encompass both a monitoring of the program and determinants to HIV infection as well as an evaluation of behavioral outcomes and the impact on youth infection rates. M&E activities designed for health interventions would examine the full range of services included in the WFP “essentials-package”: helminth de-worming, latrine construction, clean water, and sanitation and hygiene messages.

**Monitoring Activities:**

- **Program activities:** System monitors interventions used to promote positive life skills. This includes the full range of life skill building activities such as presentations, role-play, awareness campaigning, etc. It also monitors the range of interventions used to promote health including the administration of de-worming medication, the building of latrines at schools, bringing a clean water supply to schools, and delivering sanitation and hygiene messages at school. These data are collected from program organizers regarding the success of their activities. Pre and post testing can also document changes in knowledge about health.

- **Determinants:** System monitors young people’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of HIV. These variables determine the level of risk that youth expose themselves to. It also monitors the environmental or structural causes of illness in a child’s home and school environment. Monitoring activities can also assess access to health resources outside of school. These data can be collected from anonymous surveys and small focus group discussions.

**Evaluation Activities:**

- **Behavioral Outcomes:** The system evaluates changes in the behavior of youth, both positive life skills and risk-taking behavior. Behavioral data on sanitation, hygiene and home water treatment can help to indicate the effect of educational programming. These data can be captured during anonymous surveys, observations or in small focus group discussions.

- **Impact:** System captures population-level epidemiological figures regarding STD infection among youth. Clinical data can also be collected for cases of worms and other sanitation related diseases. These data can be made available through local health clinics.

Developing an M&E system to capture the impacts of livelihood activities should build on existing toolkits already used by WVH to assess the status of its projects. These tools can be...
used as a framework from which slight modifications can be made to account for the different outcome objectives of SFP livelihood activities. For example, the M&E for school gardens should account for food production used to supplement SFP. Cash generated from sales of some of the produce should be tracked as it is used to purchase other foodstuffs for SFP. In addition to school gardens, students should be given M&E tools that allow them to record activities at home gardens sponsored by SFP. These data from these tools can provide valuable program evaluation information, but also serve as an educational tool for students as they think about farming as a livelihood activity.

The best approach to M&E for SFP is to adopt the CRS model that includes all SFP stakeholders in the collection and analysis of information. As part of its community mobilization project, CRS trains development animators or local leaders whose role is to train and mobilize the community. WVH already operates a similar project in its community capacity building interventions. Animators are responsible for building capacity within PTA groups and participate in data collection. In many cases, animators take a lead role in collecting community level data and in organizing livelihood activities.

Currently, school directors are in charge of most data collection for SFP. They document food commodity distributions and detail how these commodities are consumed. The role of directors in M&E would be similar; however, they would begin to share information and responsibilities with the PTA. CRS reports that this shared role has been achieved at most of their SFP sites, however at the WVH sites visited, PTA play no role in monitoring food commodities. Fostering an open relationship between school directors and PTA will require substantial work. WVH will need to develop an M&E structure that relies on the cooperation of both groups.

Involving teachers in M&E provides access to first-hand information about how new SFP programs are being implemented in and outside of the classroom. Teachers can provide valuable feedback about the impact of SFP on educational outcomes and how well students are learning new curriculum (e.g., HIV/AIDS life skills, hygiene). Teachers can also work closely with children to help them to provide information.

All too often, the intended beneficiaries of SFP are ignored in the M&E process. Children can be a valuable source of information and help to guide programs in positive directions. For example, children can offer information on food access at home as an indicator of general food insecurity, and they can provide ideas on food preparation to make meals more appealing. They can also help design extracurricular activities, such as summer camp activities or vocational training, to fit their interests. Gathering information from children can include written class assignments to small focus group discussions. Assessment techniques with children should encourage reflective thinking that promotes a sense of ownership over projects.

PTAs should take a lead role in the collection of M&E data related to livelihood-based activities and monitoring food distribution. The PTA can provide an important balance to the authority of school directors by helping to collect information on food distribution and consumption. Their assistance in this part of the M&E system will help promote greater transparency and accountability for food use. The PTA should work closely with the community animators in group organization and the mobilization of participation in SFP activities. Animators can also help to train PTA members to collect basic information about livelihood-based activities. This includes a basic accounting of activities. For example, in the case of a community garden, PTA members can collect information about the use of land, inputs, labor and the quantities of food
produced. This tools used for garden activities can easily be adapted from existing WVH tools used to evaluate their agricultural extension projects.

Finally, WVH M&E Staff should play of a supportive role to help all M&E participants collect the information they need. This can include training, tool development, providing materials or forms, troubleshooting problems, and offering advice. WVH should take the lead on organizing all of the discrete pieces of data into a whole dataset. This requires coordination with community animators, school directors, PTAs and teachers/children. WVH should also devise a schedule for data collection and set standards on how information is recorded. Another key role for WVH will be the analysis of the dataset and the dissemination of results to all stakeholders, especially the participating communities. The dissemination part is the most critical because it will help generate locally formulated solutions to challenges SFP may encounter. Relying on local knowledge to solve problems will help SFP to adapt to local conditions and promote community involvement in the project.
6. Conclusions

6.1 Sustainability

The dependence on outside assistance to provide food for SFPs is a major barrier to ensuring the sustainability of these programs. Few, if any, SFPs in Haiti survive without donors support. This has created the view by communities that SFPs are short-term interventions that can offer little in the way of lasting impact. The issue of sustainability is concerning to donors and more attention is being given to the issue. One possibility is the investment into school-community gardens. If programs can support agriculture (for the purposes of direct consumption and marketing) on school and/or community lands, this would offer greater food diversity during SFPs and could potentially sustain the SFP, albeit in a reduced form, after the exit of donors.

Another challenge to sustainability is the uncoordinated manner in which implementing organizations select and carry out SFPs. Improved coordination between organizations could offer a way for one organization to exit and another to fill its place to ensure that there is no disruption in programming. This would require greater communication and collaboration by donors and organizations, but would improve community faith in SFPs as medium to long term rather than year-to-year interventions. Parents might be better motivated to send children to school with the assurance that their SFP is likely to continue. Enrollment rates always rise with the introduction of SFP. However, if SFPs pull out unexpectedly, drop out rates are likely to increase as parents lose one of the incentives to send their children to a participating school (the cost of feeding a child met by the SFP).

The other aspect of sustainability, besides the provision of meals, is the durability of PTAs. If funding for SFPs are discontinued, PTAs no longer receive support for teacher training and capacity building. In the case of Haiti, the work of PTAs has become important in the management of schools and ensuring quality education. Pulling support from PTAs undermines their capacity to improve education and weakens their confidence in SFP implementing organizations as real partners in community development.

Another aspect to consider is the implications of conducting SFPs at some schools rather than others in a community. Schools that offer a feeding program will experience an increase in enrollment, while those left out (possibly because they do not meet the standards required to be an eligible site) will experience a sharp decline possibly threatening the survival of that institution. When SFP activities have ended, the community is left fewer schools, a higher student-to-teacher ratio, and increased demands on the limited resources of remaining schools.

6.2 Exit strategies: how do communities/government agencies assume the responsibility

SFPs in Haiti lack an exit strategy because there is little capacity within communities and/or government agencies to assume the responsibilities of funding these programs. A more appropriate exit strategy involves transferring control over food from donors to government agencies and communities. However, donor agencies would still need to supply food and covered the costs of transporting food.
6.3 Expanding the role of SFPs: directions for a livelihoods approach for development

In conclusion, there is broad support within donor agencies, government and communities for expanding the role of SFPs to include a livelihood development model. The transformation of SFP from a feeding to a livelihoods-based model is possible, but its success will require new funding commitments, collaborations and local capacity building. The following items highlight some of the major changes and initiatives that will need to accompany this transformation.

Before an expanded SFP can be realized, donors need to step up their commitments and begin funding new livelihood-based initiatives and to clearly establish food aid as a long-term priority. Conversations with implementing NGOs shared a common cynicism about donor rhetoric without making actual commitments. Additionally, the budgets for projects need to allow for greater proportions of resources to go into livelihood programming for SFP. Often only a small percentage of total funding is allowed to be spent on livelihood initiatives. Donors need to increase funding and give greater attention to development-oriented activities. The aid environment in Haiti is dominated by relief efforts.

Before SFP can begin to have a measurable affect on the most vulnerable populations, the current selection criteria need to be reexamined. The current standards set high demands on a school, both academic and infrastructure, that are unrealistic for the poorest schools. Either criterion need to be adjusted so that schools that serve vulnerable populations in remote rural areas can participate or donors need to invest resources into these schools to bring them up to the necessary standards. An SFP that helps the most vulnerable population will not work until those schools that serve these populations are included.

Successful community-based development depends on the involvement of local stakeholders in the management of projects. Transforming SFP from a top-down approach to one that depends on community involvement requires an assessment of local capacity and an investment into capacity building activities. This includes group organization, project management, mobilization and critical thinking about problems and potential solutions. Shifting responsibility also means shifting ownership of programs away from donors to local communities. This will hopefully encourage communities to invest into programs and thus improve the quality of outcomes. A key player in community mobilization will be local animators who are trained specifically for this function. Capacity building and awareness-raising should be given to all stakeholders, especially PTAs and school directors, who bear the majority of responsibility. Besides capacity building, the majority of schools will need to develop these relationships between PTA and school directors. Since PTAs will be taking on greater management authority, school directors need to appreciate the value of sharing power with PTAs for the sake of the project. SFPs need to be conceived as a community project that takes place at schools rather than a school-controlled project that excludes community input.

There needs to be institutional will and capacity from WVH to cross-link existing programs with a revised SFP. This will demand that WVH share existing expertise, technical and organizational, from its health, agriculture, capacity building and education sectors with a new SFP. Taking on additional responsibilities with SFP will also increase the workload of managers and field staff. Sufficient accommodations and planning should be made so that WVH can maintain its high level of quality as its workload increases. Cross-linking sectors will also create a greater demand for communication and cooperation between sectors than already exists.
Program activities will need to be synchronized so that SFP operates as a single cohesive initiative.

A clear direction to begin with is a school garden project. Nearly all schools agreed that a garden run by parents, children and teachers would help to improve the dietary diversity of SFPs. Besides consumption, the gardens can strengthen livelihoods through the introduction of new farming techniques. The next step would be to provide students and their households with the resources to establish their own gardens modeled after the school garden. This will also help to improve food security at home. Another important element of a new SFP are summer camps. The purpose is to extend food aid through the summer months and to introduce extracurricular activities, such as vocational training, to students as a part of livelihood strengthening.

Vocational training should rely on local capacities, such as in sewing or construction, and bring community members into the vocational classroom.

Finally, collecting baseline information through solid M&E work helps to assess project impact. The affects of a new SFP will be most apparent in short-term outcomes, such as immediate food security. Long-term impacts, such as the affect of vocational training or reforestation, are more difficult to measure since the outcomes may not be apparent until several years after they are implemented. Collecting reliable data and preserving this information is the best way to anticipate the need for a long-term assessment. This requires that M&E structures be developed early on and constantly reinforced during the project.
**Field Visit Itinerary**

**Sunday Aug 3:** Travel to Port-au-Prince, Haiti

**Monday Aug 4:**
- Interview with Robert Powers, education sector coordinator, USAID
- Interview with Wildeness Etienne, SFP program coordinator, CRS
- Interview with Wesley Charles, country director WVH

**Tuesday Aug 5:** Review of key documents & field visit planning

**Wednesday Aug 6:**
- Travel to Cap Haitien (Balan Field Site, Plain du Nord)
- Focus group meeting with Dept. North WVH staff
- Interview District School Inspector

**Thursday Aug 7:**
- Focus group meeting with School Directors and Teachers
- Observation of School Feeding
- Interview with WFP, Dept of the North regional coordinator
- Interview with Ministry of Social Affairs, Dept of the North

**Friday Aug 8:**
- Focus group meeting with school children
- Household visits

**Saturday Aug 9:**
- Focus group meeting with parents from two SFP schools (Bassain Diaman field site, Acul du Nord)

**Sunday Aug 10:**
- Travel to Port-au-Prince

**Monday Aug 11:**
- Travel to La Gonave (Anse a Galet field site)
- Meet with WV staff
- Focus group meeting with parents who had children in 2000-03 SFP
- Focus group meeting with school directors (10 school represented)
- Meeting with regional officials, mayor, school inspectors, etc.
- Site visits to 6 schools in Anse a Galet

**Tuesday Aug 12:**
- Rural site visits (Ti Palmiste)
- Meeting with parents, teachers and school directors
- Site visits to primary schools
- Travel to Port-au-Prince

**Wednesday Aug 13:**
- Exit meeting with WV Haiti staff

**Thursday Aug 14:**
- Travel to the US
Sources


