

Home grown school feeding programmes – not only a free lunch
Study Group Food Security in Developing Countries (SVVO) of Wageningen University
meeting 29 June 2010

symposium

On Tuesday June 29th a convention was organised by SVVO, concerning SIGN, the Dutch contribution to the Ghana School Feeding Program. The meeting consisted of three presentations followed by a plenary discussion.

The first presentation by *Rutger Schilpzand*, partner of Schuttelaar & Partners and one of the initiators of SIGN outlined the organizational structure and objectives of the GSFP and SIGN. He emphasized on the many (inter)national partners having a stake in the GSFP among which World Food Programme, World bank, Bill en Melinda Gates Foundation and the local platform of Civil Society Organizations. According to Schilpzand, the multi stakeholder approach is very promising; Yet, collaboration and coordination between so many partners also forms a constant challenge. Then Daniel Mumuni, Deputy Coordinator of SIGN who gave more detailed information to the GSFP, mentioning the successes as well as the challenges, like low community involvement contrary to the GSFP objective of purchasing local foodstuffs directly from the GSFP communities direct. Lastly Tineke Martens, policy officer at the ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food quality (LNV) presented results of her research in Ghana (2007), as a student of Wageningen University on the effect of the GSFP on the nutritional status of participating children. One finding was that the GSFP indeed has a positive effect on nutritional variety on a child's daily food intake. Also she studied the GSFPs effect on the demand for locally produced food. This additional demand was 4-6% for rice and yam and less than 1% for cassava, maize and plantain.

Participants mentioned bottom-up and empowerment approaches as effective ways to increase community/farmers participation. The Hunger Project and Plan Ghana were set as positive examples. For the GSFP, it being an already existing program, it was suggested to invest more in sensitization and improving upon knowledge and skills necessary for increasing food production as a way to improve farmers participation. Further the important role women are playing in this program was recognized; women need to be well aware of the objectives of this program and their roles and responsibilities as cooks and caterers. Finally the role of the Government of Ghana was mentioned as an influencing factor for the well being of the program. Transparency and ownership were mentioned as key.