

SIGN MISSION REPORT TO GHANA

Duration: 24-31 May 2008.

SIGN delegation:

Hans Eenhoorn

Paul Wessels

Rutger Schilpzand

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- List of abbreviations:
 - GSFP - Ghana Schoolfeeding Programme
 - SIGN - Schoolfeeding Initiative Ghana Netherlands
 - MLGRD - Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Environment
 - SEND - Social Enterprise Development Foundation
 - SIC - School Implementation Committee
 - WFP - World Food Programme
 - MoU- Memorandum of Understanding
 - CRS - Catholic Relief Services
 - S&P - Schuttelaar and Partners
 - M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation
 - DGIS - Directorate General for International Cooperation
 - RNE - Royal Dutch Embassy
 - MoFA - Ministry of Food and Agriculture
 - MoH - Ministry of Health
 - MoEduc - Ministry of Education
 - FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization
 - MoFEP - Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
 - AFDB - African Development Bank
 - NS - National Secretariat
 - VREL - Volta River Estates Limited
 - IFDC - International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development
 - GAIN - Ghana Agriculture Initiative Network

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The outcome of the current developments is important for the commitment of SIGN. We see the government intervention in the management of GSFP as an important step that will hopefully lead to a restoration of the programme in the next coming months. In order to be able to go ahead with our planned activities we need to get involved in the process of this restoration and consequently inform the SIGN platform that will meet the 5th of June. The board therefore decided to plan a working visit in the same week as the presentation of the SNV inventory as a lot of GSFP stakeholders will attend that meeting.

1.1 Purpose visit

- To receive the latest information on the developments of the GSFP programme and the next steps to be taken the key stakeholders (MLGRDE, National Secretariat, Royal Dutch Embassy, SNV and others)
- To clarify our position and to share our 2008 plans vis-à-vis the GSFP and discuss ways to get these realised
- to strengthen relationships, set up new ones and to discuss the work in progress
- to be actively present at the discussions and presentation of the SEND monitoring report, the SNV inventory and the Embassy meeting with Development Partners

2. EVALUATION STUDIES

GSFP has been subject in 2007 to three studies to create a basic overview of the current state of affairs of the program at school level and if GSFP is working along the lines that have been described in the GSFP Program Document 2007-2010.

These studies are:

1. Audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (not published)
2. 'Whose decision counts' ([read full report](#))- a monitoring report on the GSFP by SEND
3. 'A national inventory of the GSFP' by SNV ([read full report](#))

The PWC-audit on the GSFP activities and procedures in 2006, commissioned by both the Dutch Embassy and the Ministry of LGRDE, has not been made publicly available and therefore is not discussed in detailed. By means of intensive publicity in the Ghanaian press it became clear that this audit concluded that the management and professionalism of GSFP showed serious shortcomings and that financial and organizational procedures, if sufficiently present, have not been adequately followed. This led to the dismissal of the executive chairman of GSFP, dr. Tuffour.

The other two studies have been presented to the press at 27 May and to the stakeholders at 29 May and raised much attention. Besides, Samuel Zan Akologo, country director SEND Ghana, and Peter de Haan, country director SNV Ghana, had the opportunity to inform the Ghanaian audience about their studies in a breakfast television show at 28 May.

SIGN had an active role related to both activities:

1. Hans Eenhoorn has been invited to give his view on he results at the press conference. He stressed that the glass is half full and that, although a lot is not yet going in good order, it is a great achievement that half a million school children in thousand schools receive a meal.
2. SIGN issued a bulletin about the results to inform its stakeholders in the Netherlands at the same day
3. Rutger Schilpzand was asked to give a presentation at the stakeholder meeting. He stressed the importance to cluster and prioritize the many recommendations into realistic steps, in order to regain credibility for the program.

In the annex Hans' and Rutger's presentations and the summaries of the two studies can be found.

2.1 Discussion

The SEND study has been conducted in 41 schools in 7 regions, by the existing NGO monitoring system in which many grassroots NGOs are participating. Its focus was on financial and organizational transparency. Funded by Cordaid, the study has been based upon the existing MoU with the National Secretariat. Main conclusions are:

- more civil society involvement in GSFP is needed
- financial management of the program should be accountable; training is needed
- monitoring and supervisory capacity of the program must be enhanced; responsibilities must be clearly defined; training is needed
- holistic planning, involvement of all stakeholders with priority to the district directorates of health, agric, education.
- more important role of Min. of Agriculture and farmer's organizations

The SNV study took place in 720 schools nationwide, in cooperation with 50 organizations (including regional GSFP officials), based upon the existing MoU with the National Secretariat. Main conclusions:

- Although hunger and poverty is more prominent in the three northern regions, there is a serious underrepresentation of schools in these regions in comparison to the south. Unfortunately the 843 CRS-schools in the Northern regions were not accounted for.
 - Higher pupil enrolment is a success, but raises new problems: too many pupils per classroom and per teacher
 - Many schools have insufficient facilities: water and sanitation, cooking (stoves, kitchen, storage)
 - Cooks are insufficiently trained
 - Only 20% of food is bought in the local communities
- Insufficient involvement of district and school implementing committees. In the northern regions a remarkably high percentage of schools have a SIC operational. This, we think, can be attributed to the fact that these schools are also served by WFP.

These studies were very much welcomed by all stakeholders involved in GSFP. It is the first time that such an extensive inventory took place of the implementation and impact of GSFP. The outcomes are very important for next steps in the GSFP implementation. We hope that in a next comparable effort more attention could be paid to the analysis of some key findings.

Because both studies have been paid by SIGN members, this can be seen as a good example of SIGN approach: to support the school feeding program by means of additional activities, realized by Ghanaian partners of SIGN members.

Nana Ayim, spokesperson for the Secretariat, stressed the importance of cooperation and expressed an opening up for all partners. The stakeholders welcomed the studies and the Secretariat's comment as a new start for GSFP. The press can play an important role to keep the process on track.

In a separate stakeholder meeting at the Dutch Embassy it was concluded to start four informal groups to mobilize and coordinate support for GSFP on their field:

- agriculture, with IFDC, FAO and agricultural sector group
- health, with Dutch Embassy and health sector group
- education, with WFP
- governance, with SNV and Dutch Embassy

The underlined organization will start its group. Mid June they have to show results.

3. KEY CONTACTS

3.1 SNV: Peter de Haan

Communication: support funds SIGN for NS for flyer. Secretariat must endorse this and take ownership
TNO pineapple juice production remains supported by SNV, disconnected from GSFP.

New SNV staff:

head of Tamale office: Erik van Waveren

Contact person for school feeding: Adama, ex-CRS employee

Fair: SNV and SEND will decide end of June with Erik if realization in October is possible. Lay-out will be the same.

SNV is ready to assist the SIMAVI-New Energy cooperation in water and sanitation for GSFP schools.

SNV is willing to help with small projects. Peter will come with more details.

SNV is ready to assist in SIMAVI-New Energy cooperation for water & sanitation for GSFP schools, if needed.

MoU with SIGN is welcomed. SIGN will send a draft.

Cooperation with IFDC: very limited.

SNV has put the negotiations for a new MoU with NS on hold, awaiting the new Coordinator. Aspects are:

- management and evaluation
- planning
- communication

3.2 Dutch Embassy: Marius de Jong

Try to link Schokland to MoU and make one three partite agreement between DGIS, RNE and SIGN

Advise: contact Sectorgroup Agriculture. NL is not represented, as NL is not active in agriculture in Ghana.

We have to do more on communication. Additional possibilities: lottery, Ghanaian diaspora. Probably S&P should try to find a Ghanaian counterpart for communication and dialogue training and support.

There are no formal criteria when to resume payment for GSFP. Points of attention are:

- good financial management system
- plan how to address the underrepresentation of schools in the North
- plan for M&E
- plan for implementation of recommendations from the 3 studies
- certain minimum of staffing at the Secretariat, that can interact with donors and stakeholders
- operation manual should be finished
- better cooperation with the Ministries involved

RNE expects the results of the PWC audit over FY 2007 in October. They are expected not to differ dramatically from the 2006 results.

RNE is in discussion with Emos Consultancy to finalize the operational manual.

3.3 National Secretariat

Meeting with Kwame Nuako, 28/5/'08

Interim director of GSFP now is D.A. Nyankawamu, chief director of MLGDRE. Four new officials are expected to be appointed soon:

- national coordinator
- deputy NC
- consultant for food security and agriculture
- consultant for health and nutrition

Status and progress of the activities:

- AgroEco project: fields have been identified, training of mothers is ongoing. This creates supply to schools. Surplus is sold on local markets or, as a premium food, to supermarkets.

- MLGDRE will take steps before the end of the year to correct the underrepresentation of the North
- NS is building up cooperation with MoFA, MoH, MoEduc, including the budgetary aspects. It is also working on sensitization of district directors of education, agriculture and health
- Problems that are consequence of better enrolment should be addressed in cooperation with MoEd, especially on district level.
- Water & sanitation is an important point of concern. Toilet facilities is the responsibility on DA-level.
- CRS schools: NS is not aware of an exit plan or a proposal for phasing out/phasing in with GSFP.
- Cooperation with WFP will be evaluated after 6 months.

We agreed:

- better information exchange: update of the activities of SIGN partners
- SIGN will write a new offer to help with communication about the basics of GSFP, summary of the operation manual. Kwame will discuss this offer with MLGDRE. If OK, SNV will be involved in implementation. Timing is important: it has to be executed now, as a means to communicate the new start of the NS. Thereafter, a website has to be designed and built.
- It is important for the NS to have a direct SIGN contact person in Accra, to discuss directly and to represent SIGN in stakeholder meetings.
- Kwame favours an MoU with SIGN, to describe the relations between SIGN and NS, roles and activities. SIGN will send a draft for comment, when the new coordinator is appointed.

3.4 CRS

Meeting with Vewonyi Adjavon, Ghana country representative, 26/5/'08.

In September the US in-kind support for CRS Ghana will stop, as a consequence of the US Government decision that Ghana is no longer eligible for in-kind food aid. This means that CRS has to stop its school feeding for 843 schools in the North. Discussions with GSFP and Ministry of LGRDE have not led to an agreement on a phase out-phase in strategy with GSFP.

CRS has identified 100 schools that are most urgent to help and is open to discuss how to deal with them.

CRS will remain active in 100 schools in N Ghana, mainly in the field of education.

3.5 IFDC

Meeting with Marjatta Eilitta, IFDC country director, 29/5/'08

IFDC very recently has started a pilot in 6 model communities in the North (travelling distance from Tamale), each connected to a GSFP/WFP school. This should be the start of a cooperation between farmers and schools on district level, in cooperation with the MOFA extension agent. We discussed the preferred option to cluster some schools in order to increase the demand to farmers.

Amadou al Hassan is now the IFDC contact person in Tamale.

Communication: probably schools should use a banner, saying " we buy from local farmers. This week we need ..."

Farmers representation: probably this should not be the first aim, because this makes it too formalistic, most parents in the North are farmers and in many places there is a farmer's coordinator already.

3.6 Minister and ACDEP

Hans Eenhoorn also met the minister of LGDRE H.E Adjei-Darko together with Levina Owusu, the principal planning officer and contact person of the GSFP at the ministry.

In Tamale Hans held a meeting with the Executive Director of ACDEP, Malex. He agreed that with the support of Agriterro and/or Agro-Eco, he was willing to advice the ACDEP/Savannah farmers to support smallholder farmers to do a pilot for providing food to a small number of schools as a case study.

4. NEW CONTACTS

4.1 Sectorgroup Agriculture

Meeting with Caroline Piquet (AFD, France), leaving as chair of the group by 1 June. Lothar Diehl (Germany) will be her successor.

International donor platform, based upon the Paris declaration on donor coordination. It has quarterly meetings with MOFA and MOFEP, to exchange information and coordinate actions, and an annual agric sector review.

This is part of the Multi Donor Budget Support system, consisting of 10-12 donor countries with World Bank and African Development Bank. This system has different sector groups.

The Sectorgroup Agriculture is very knowledgeable about the agricultural projects that are going on, has overview of the different policy lines in the field of food security and has very good contacts with MoFA.

The district directors of MoFA should have oversight of the running agric projects. The district agric staff is well educated and motivated, but lacks means of transport to do their job properly.

Farmer organizations (FBOs):

- AFD just started to support Nilifacu, an apex FBO for rice cultivation in the North.
- GRIB (Ghana Rice Board) has links with WFP to buy local rice according to WFP standards.

Programs:

- Several donors support since 2008 the District development fund, country-wide
- Japanese dev. org JAICA and AfDB work on rice in Kumasi area
- Northern rural growth program, funded by IFAD and AfDB, to support different value chains in the North.

Agreement:

We suggested to take part in the agriculture working group of GSFP stakeholders.

4.2 Plan Ghana

Meeting with Samuel Paulos (country director), Kofi Adade Debrah and Victor Antwi.

Plan Ghana has submitted a funding proposal to ASN Bank for an integrated school feeding and agriculture activity in Sissala district. This could be a pilot for further cooperation with GSFP. Based upon dams for rain harvesting, agriculture is improved (including cattle rearing and fisheries). Their products can be sold via Village Savings and Loans Associations (5,000 participants, mainly women) to the 30 schools in the district (12,000 pupils). If needed, a start can be made with a fewer number of schools included.

Budget: \$ 13.2M, based upon \$1,-/child/day. SIGN comment: this calculation is high compared to other school feeding plans such as GSFP (\$0.30/child/day).

Sustainability of the program: participants pay 10% contribution; the District Assembly is involved. SIGN received the Plan proposal documentation.

Plan Ghana in general:

- active in 229 villages in 5 regions
- 140 staff, of which 70% in the field
- good cooperation with District Assemblies and District Chief Executive
- took part in SNV inventory
- start radio program in the North, with education and information about market prices. 40% of broadcasting time will be dedicated to children.

Agreements

- SIGN will report this meeting to SNV Ghana, Plan NL and ASN Bank
- SIGN will advise SNV Tamale to invite Plan Ghana to the Fair
- Plan Ghana will introduce itself to the National Secretariat and SNV Tamale.

4.3 Fair trade organizations

Meeting with Hubert van de Broek (general manager of Volta Region Estate Limited) at 25 May.

VREL exports 5,000 ton fruit (mostly bananas, small amount of pineapple), of which 60% is organic certified and 100% is fair trade certified. 10-15% of the crop does not meet export standards and is sold locally.

The export to the Netherlands is mediated by Agrofair. VREL and Agrofair both have been founded by Solidaridad.

Its sister organization ITFC is growing mainly mango's. it has a school program, led by Celeste de Bruno Austin, the wife of the general manager.

We discussed possible ways to support GSFP, e.g. by supplying bananas. As a child's lunch often consists of a banana and a handful of peanuts, banana is a recognized part of local food habits.

Being a Fair Trade producer VREL received in 2007 \$ 200,000 as a fair trade premium. It is up to the estate workers to decide how to spend it to collective goals. HvdB is willing to propose to spend a part of this amount to transport of bananas to schools to be part of school meals. Also the initial costs for a school to be able to take part in GSFP could be covered, if the workers agree.

VREL employs 600 workers; this means there are 1800 children at the 30 surrounding schools. Providing all these schools with a daily banana means 12,000 bananas a day. This is half of the non-exportable amount.

Banana prices per carton (20 kg):

- export: \$ 6
- local supermarkets: \$ 4.5
- local market: \$ 2, i.e. \$ 0.02/piece

In addition, Vd Broek proposed to discuss with the neighbouring Golden Exotics estate (owned by Dole), to join this initiative as an act of corporate social responsibility.

Agreements:

- Hubert will develop the proposal for banana supply to GSFP schools
- Hubert will explore possibilities for cooperation with Dole and ITFC
- Rutger will inform Solidaridad and Agrofair about the results of this meeting and discuss with them to become SIGN Platform member
- Rutger will inform Marius de Jong and SNV that Hubert is ready to advise on agricultural issues.
- Rutger will propose the TNO pineapple juice team to contact Hubert.

Meeting with Rob Moss (West African Fair Fruit Ltd) at 28 May.

WAFF has been established by Solidaridad in 2003 and recently changed into a Ltd.

It deals with certification of organic, fair trade, HACCP and CO2 auditing.

Marketing is the main problem among their client farmer organizations. What farmers really want is stable contracts.

Small farmers cooperatives in Eastern region (Adonteng and Fotobi) could possibly interested in contact with GSFP.

4.4 Food processing

SIGN Platform member Michel van Overbeek (Codrico) and Rutger visited the GAFCO miller and WFP to investigate opportunities for cooperation with Codrico in the field of extrusion technology and its application in the corn soy blend that WFP uses for its school feeding program. Michel will follow this up.

5. Institutional Cookstoves (Paul Wessels)

One of the SIGN activities is support for application of cookstoves to prepare school meals in a healthy, safe, environmentally conscious, cost effective, timely and practical way, whilst taking into account acceptability by cooks. This topic has been discussed with representatives of EnterpriseWorks (EW), New Energy (NE), SNV, GAIN, Dutch embassy and cooks of various schools around Tamale.

The original idea of the NS was to apply LPG burners in view of ecological advantage. High LPG prices and distribution restraints has limited the use of LPG burners. The majority of schools in rural areas are applying firewood for cooking. The associated health (poisonous smoke) and environmental impact (trees, CO₂) has to be diminished in view of sustainability.

5.1 Testing various Cookstoves

Following types of cookstoves are being applied, all based on firewood apart of the former:

- LPG burner
- Three stone stove
- Mudstove consisting of 3 stones integrated with an adobe structure
- Walewale Smokeless, a concrete dual stove integrated with chimney + kitchen cabin
- Gyapa stove (2 types, one with chimney), insulated barrel filled with refractory
- Rim stove consisting of a wheel frame

Efficiency of these stoves has recently been tested by UNDP. Results demonstrate the higher efficiency of LPG and Gyapa stoves, reducing fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions by a factor three. In actual practice, however, the cooks prefer Walewale Smokeless in view of the shorter cooking time. The longer time required with Gyapa stoves is caused by heating the refractory (which provides the high efficiency). Cooks confirm the reduced firewood requirements with Gyapa stoves, though this is not the responsibility of the cooks.

5.2 Site step: Other applications of institutional cookstoves

Application of adequate cookstoves is not limited to schools participating in GSFP. Other schools, e.g. secondary, would benefit as well. Another target group could be small-scale food processing requiring heat, e.g. sheabutter and gari production, parboiling rice, pito brewing, fish smoking, chop-bars, hospitals, etc. reducing cost and HSE impact.

5.3 Way forward

Stove modifications would be required to meet technical criteria as well acceptability by cooks. An option would be to reduce the cooking time of the Gyapa stoves by application of insulation on top of the refractory and discontinuation of air draft after cooking to keep refractory hot till next day. This needs to be tested by EW. The number of stoves required by GSFP /other schools and potentialities for small-scale enterprises need to be assessed in a market survey. Options for local production should be explored to minimise distribution costs and advance employment also in Northern regions. An action plan is being defined with EW, NE and SIGN as lead parties and SNV in a facilitating role.

Production cost of the Gyapa stove is 24 and 50 \$ per unit without and with chimney, respectively. Costs for project development, training, admin, monitoring, control, distribution, etc will add approx 50%.

Note: Section 3.6 Minister and ACDEP has been included upon recommendation of Hans Eenhoorn.