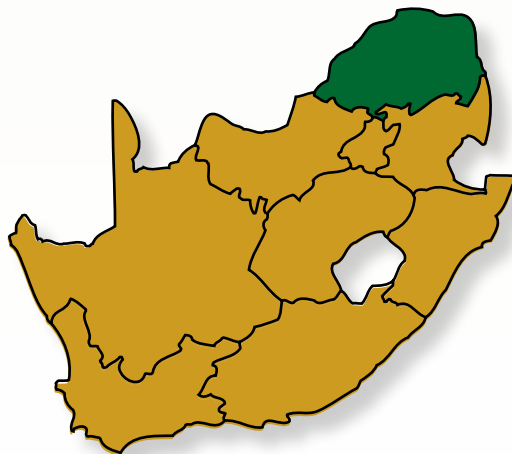


EVALUATION OF  
THE SCHOOL  
NUTRITION  
PROGRAMME

*Provincial Report:  
Limpopo*

May 2008



education

Department:  
Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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*Design and Production:* Handmade Communications

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

KPMG has been awarded the tender to evaluate the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in all nine provinces. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide the National Department of Education and UNICEF with a comprehensive provincial evaluation of the programme. The core requirements of the evaluation are to determine the extent to which the programme is meeting its objectives and to assess whether allocated resources are utilised effectively and efficiently. The programme was evaluated at provincial, district and school levels.

Limpopo is regarded as a rural province and the implementation of the NSNP by the Limpopo Department of Education since 2004 has been a major challenge considering the capacity constraints and the lack of basic infrastructure at many schools.

The purpose of this report is to determine the extent to which the policy imperatives as outlined in the *NSNP Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual* have been implemented. If not, why not; what challenges are the provincial department experiencing; and what possible solutions can be proposed to overcome these constraints in order to implement this important poverty alleviation strategy effectively.

# 2 BACKGROUND

The Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) was introduced in 1994 as one of the Presidential lead projects under the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Its aim was to enhance the educational experience of needy primary school learners through promoting punctual school attendance, alleviating short-term hunger, improving concentration and contributing to general health development. In its first ten years, the PSNP was jointly managed at the national level by the Department of Health and the Department of Education. The Department of Health was responsible for the nutritional and health aspects, and the Department of Education for the school and educational elements.

In September 2002, Cabinet resolved that school nutrition should be transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Education, which should assume full responsibility by April 2004. The decision was based on the consideration that school feeding should be housed in the Department of Education given the education outcomes of the intervention and the fact that it is implemented in schools, which are the functional responsibility of the Department of Education. An additional consideration was that it would facilitate the inclusion of school feeding into the broader context of education development, a prerequisite for successful and sustainable school-based programmes.

The NSNP has been under the management of the Department of Education in Limpopo for the last three years. The provincial Department of Education adopted the national guidelines for the implementation of the NSNP, popularly referred to as the “Blue Book”.

The three focus areas of the NSNP are providing meals at schools, facilitating food gardens or other food production projects in schools, and educating learners and the community at large about good nutrition.

Training for the implementation of these guidelines has been provided to the principals and/or teachers in all targeted schools at district level.

The provincial objectives have been clearly outlined in their business plans for 2005/6, 2006/7 and 2007/8 respectively. The 2007/8 business plan outlines the objectives of the NSNP as the following:

- To ensure adequate access to the NSNP at targeted schools.
- To ensure sustainability of the NSNP through setting up food gardens or other food security initiatives that are supported by partners and communities.
- To ensure strengthening of nutrition education at all schools, among parents and the community.
- To develop school feeding models that stimulate economic activity in poor communities.

The province has managed to feed 1,002,609 learners in 2005/06 and 102,508 in 2006/07, and it created volunteer employment for 11,778 food helpers. They are paid R300 per month for ten months of the year by the suppliers, who in turn are reimbursed by the department.

The provincial NSNP Unit is located in the Directorate for Acquisitions and Transware at the provincial level and is headed by Mr Thomas Maphwanya. The deputy manager’s post for NSNP has been vacant for almost a year.

The NSNP at provincial level is managed by two deputy managers, namely Ms Susan Phutuka (who is responsible for Mopani and Vhembe districts) and Ms Lily Kekana (who is responsible for Capricorn, Sekhukhune and Waterberg districts).

The province has five districts, as mentioned above. Each NSNP Unit in the district is headed by a district coordinator at the level of chief accounting clerk. They have recently appointed monitors for each of the circuits in their districts. There are 134 circuits comprising 2,622 schools participating in the NSNP.

Key challenges highlighted by the provincial Department of Health are the following:

- Insufficient funds for the programme.
- Lack of infrastructure for storing and preparation at many schools.
- Lack of support from educators as they see this as an “add-on” responsibility.
- Lack of involvement by the circuit managers.
- Lack of transport for monitors.

# 3 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was made up of three main components and included both qualitative and quantitative elements. First, key stakeholder interviews were carried out at provincial, district and school levels. Second, a school survey was carried out in a nationally representative sample of 271 schools. Third, 30 school visits were made across nine provinces. These components are discussed in more detail below.

**Key stakeholder interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were carried out at provincial level with the programme manager, at district level with the nutrition coordinators and liaison officers, and at school level with principals and/or nutrition coordinators in schools. The main aim of these interviews was to get a sense of the programme achievements and challenges.

**School survey:** A nationally representative sample of schools was selected to form the basis of the school survey. The sample size of 271 schools is representative at a national level with a 90% confidence interval and 5% margin of error. The table below shows that the sample of 271 schools was distributed to each province according to population size (Stats SA, 2001). The school survey was based on data available in district offices responsible for monitoring the programme in schools.

**Table 1: Distribution of sample size**

<i>Province</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Urban (%)</i>	<i>Rural (%)</i>	<i>Total (%)</i>	<i>No of schools in categories</i>		
							<i>Total Schools</i>	<i>Urban Schools</i>	<i>Rural Schools</i>
Eastern Cape Total	2,451,452	3,985,315	6,436,767	38	62	14	39	15	24
Free State Total	2,016,016	690,764	2,706,780	74	26	6	16	12	4
Gauteng Total	8,723,381	456,684	9,180,065	95	5	20	56	53	3
KwaZulu-Natal Total	4,263,415	5,162,602	9,426,017	45	55	21	57	26	31
Mpumalanga Total	1,198,962	2,064,009	3,262,971	37	63	7	20	7	13
Northern Cape Total	689,971	210,239	900,210	77	23	2	5	4	1
Limpopo Total	540,295	4,561,262	5,101,557	11	89	11	31	3	28
North-West Total	1,285,806	1,995,278	3,281,084	39	61	7	20	8	12
Western Cape Total	4,061,229	463,104	4,524,333	90	10	10	27	24	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25,230,527</b>	<b>19,589,257</b>	<b>44,819,784</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>118</b>

As shown in the table above, the provincial sample (highlighted) was divided into rural and urban samples, proportionate to the overall rural and urban population of the province (Stats SA, 1996). Three districts were then selected per province (two in Northern Cape due to the small population) to participate in the evaluation, shown in Table 2.

The rural and urban school samples were then randomly selected from a Department of Education list per province which reflected urban and rural schools, from within the three districts selected. The

selection of districts was carried out with consideration given to the rural/urban divide, as well as time and cost constraints associated with school visits discussed below. Project deadlines and budget allowed a one week period for data collection per province which meant that travelling could not exceed one day per school visit. School lists provided by the Department of Education were used to randomly select the sample of schools from the three districts identified.

**School visits:** A total of 30 school visits were carried out in the nine provinces. It was decided that eight provinces should receive three school visits each and the Northern Cape, two visits. Two additional visits were carried out in the Western Cape and Gauteng because of their ability to accommodate these visits at the end of the school year. Schools to be visited were randomly selected from school lists, one per each of the three districts identified above. Schools selected that required more than a day's travel were replaced with the next school on the list of randomly selected schools.

**Table 2: List of districts and schools visited per province**

<i>Province</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>School visited</i>	<i>Rural/ Urban</i>
Eastern Cape	East London	Duncan Village	Makinana Primary	Urban
	King Williams Town	Pikoli Location; Peddie	Mbanyasza Primary	Rural
	Mthatha	Kwazidenge Village; Stutterheim	Isidenge/Thembelihle Primary	Rural
		Madwaleni; Mqanduli	Madwaleni Primary	Rural
Free State	Motheo	Bloemfontein	Maboloka Primary	Urban
	Lejweleputswa	Welkom	Matshediso Primary	Rural
	Xhariep	Jaegersfontein	Austinspost Primary	Rural
Gauteng	Tshwane North	Soshanguve	Shalom Primary	Urban
		Soshanguve	Entokozweni Primary	Urban
	Jo'burg South	Orange Farm	Rafelletse Primary	Rural
		Orange Farm	Laus Deos Primary	Rural
	Jo'burg North	Vlakfontein	Blair Athol Farm School	Rural
KwaZulu-Natal	Empangeni	KwaMthethwa	Thembalimbe Primary	Rural
	Ilembe	Ndwedwe	Qalimfundo Primary	Rural
	Umlazi	Durban	Avoca Primary	Urban
Mpumalanga	Gert Sibande	Highveld Ridge	Gweda Primary	Rural
	Nkangala	Delmas	Rietkol Primary	Rural
	Nkangala	Witbank	Edward Matyeka Primary	Urban
Northern Cape	Namaqua	Springbok	Carolusberg Primary	Urban
	Francis Baard	Rietrivier	Rietrivier Primary	Rural
Limpopo	Capricorn	Polokwane	Zone 8 Primary	Urban
	Capricorn	Polokwane	Bailafuri Primary	Rural
	Sekhukhune	Pokwane	Mogalatladi Primary	Rural
North-West	Klerksdorp	Mafikeng	Abontle	Urban
	Mmabatho	Mmabatho	Lokaleng Primary	Rural
	Lichtenburg	Biesiesvlei	Itekeng Primary	Rural
Western Cape	Metro South	Mitchells Plain	Cornflower Primary	Urban
	Metro South	Old Crossroads	Imbasa Primary	Urban
	Overberg	Stanford	Okkie Smuts	Urban
	West Coast/Winelands	Paarl	Joosteberg Farm School	Rural

The table above shows that a total of 18 rural and 12 urban schools were visited.

### 3.1 LIMITATIONS

The school survey used data available in district offices. Record keeping, particularly for 2004, was generally found to be poor. Many district offices across the country do not keep files on each school in their jurisdiction that is on the Nutrition Programme. This meant that in certain instances, district programme staff familiar with a school had to be interviewed in order to answer the questionnaire. In some instances, schools were contacted directly for information or submitted their records to the district office, in order for the school survey to be completed. Records kept by food and beverage interns responsible for monitoring schools in certain areas were used in Gauteng.

The randomness of sampling was constrained by time deadlines and budget. As highlighted above, three districts were selected per province first, based on travel time anticipated to reach district offices. To ensure completion of fieldwork within one week per province, this needed to be within one day. The sample of schools was then randomly selected from within the three districts. Furthermore, schools identified for visits were also randomly selected but from within the three districts identified.

# 4 OBJECTIVES

## 4.1 FINDINGS

There is a clear understanding of the objectives of the programme at all levels of the Department of Education, from provincial to district and schools. Although the circuit managers were not interviewed, the monitors from the districts had provided the information, indicating that circuit managers were well versed in the objectives, although they were not directly involved in ensuring their implementation.

There was consensus on all three levels that the objectives were, to some extent, being met but that there were limitations, some that can be resolved in the short term and others that would need more resources to overcome. The main challenges reported on all three levels were:

- The frequency of deliveries of vegetables.
- Non-compliance by suppliers.
- The inadequate amount allocated per child per day.
- Non-compliance with menu options.
- Non-compliance of feeding times.
- Lack of transport for monitors.
- Sustaining and enhancing the development of food gardens at schools.
- Delayed payments to helpers.

In addition, it was noted that most schools feed after 10h00 during the first school break, according to the timetable. Timetables are set by the principals in consultation with the circuit managers. The lack of involvement of the circuit managers does, therefore, contribute to the poor school performance on this indicator.

The number of feeding days has been 156 school days annually for the last three years. According to interviewees, attendance has generally improved.

The cost per learner per day is R1.10, which has not been increased since 2004/05. Service providers have also not been able to supply fruit and vegetables consistently. Most service providers deliver these once a month and considering that most schools do not have storage facilities, the vegetables have to be used up in the first week of delivery. This contributes to inconsistency in the menu and therefore difficulties in adhering to the set menu.

Many schools do not have preparation facilities. Cooking is done outside, irrespective of the weather conditions. Although the three schools visited did have cooking utensils, two of the schools had no storage facilities. Food supplies were stored at the residence of the food helper. This is not conducive to effective stock control. Supplies are not kept at these schools because of recurrent theft from the schools and lack of security fencing.

Payment to suppliers and helpers is a decentralised function undertaken by the finance section at district offices. This has been quite effective, except for ineffective monitoring of suppliers, leading to possible payments for food items not received by schools.

According to the latest list of schools with food gardens provided by the provincial coordinator for the implementation of food gardens, there are 751 schools with food gardens out of 2,720 schools,

which is about 28% of schools in the nutritional programme. The survey undertaken of 30 schools indicated that 22.6% of schools in 2006 had food gardens. These are being managed by the teachers and learners. In these schools, vegetables are used to supplement the food served to learners.

In most schools, the parents and the community are not involved in the development of food gardens. Community involvement is in the form of helpers who are from the local community and who have children at the school.

At one of the three schools visited, educators had expressed a clear resistance to undertake this programme because they felt it was not part of their job description and that the feeding time during break was encroaching on their time to have a break.

#### **4.2 CONCLUSION**

From interviews at provincial, district and school level, it was clear that the objectives of the programme were well understood by all parties concerned. Given the limitations stated above, it can be concluded that the objectives are to some extent being met, with some gaps that could be improved upon, especially with regard to monitoring of schools and service providers. Facilities for food preparation and storage, as well as fencing and security at schools, need upgrading.

There is a need to ensure that all educators, principals and circuit managers understand the value of this programme and participate without reservation. The provincial management will need to strategically elicit a “buy-in” from these key stakeholders.

# 5 SYSTEMS

## 5.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### 5.1.1 Findings

#### Current system

Food is delivered by service providers to schools according to enrolment figures given by the schools to the province. A delivery note is checked, signed and stamped by the principal and/or the educator working on the programme. The delivery note should not be signed when food products are not in good condition or the quantity does not tally with the delivery note. Payments are made for complete menus consumed by learners.

At the end of each month, the service provider prepares an invoice calculated as follows:

- Enrolment x tender price x feeding days.
- The invoice is submitted to the principal for checking, signing and stamping.
- The service provider takes the invoice with the stamped delivery notes to the circuit office where it is checked by the NSNP monitor, and the accounting clerk at the circuit writes out the requisition. The NSNP monitor forwards the claims to the district for payment.
- The procurement section at the district office captures the claims and prints a purchase order.
- The expenditure section captures and processes the claims and issues payment vouchers for each order.
- The senior manager at the district office approves the payment.

At one of the schools visited, we were informed that supplies had not been regularly received. We raised the concern with the relevant district office, and it appears that the principals and educators routinely sign off the invoices without questioning whether the supplies are actually received. This practice results in unnecessary expenditure and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

#### Budget and expenditure

There has been no over- or under-expenditure in 2005/6 and 2006/7. Information for 2004/05 was unavailable.

**Table 3: Actual expenditure as percentage of budget**

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>Budget allocation</i>	<i>Actual expenditure</i>	<i>Actual expenditure as % of budget allocation</i>
2004/05	No record	No record	No record
2005/06	R167.8m	R167.8m	100%
2006/07	R202m	R202m	100%

In 2005/06, an amount of R167,835m was allocated and all the funds allocated were spent. In 2006/07, an amount of R202,039m was allocated and all the funds allocated were spent. This reflects a stable spending pattern and good capacity in the province to implement the programme. In total, 7% of the annual budget is used for administration costs and 93% for direct feeding and honoraria paid to food helpers. This is considered to be an appropriate budget breakdown. However, as highlighted above, administrative systems need to be strengthened through training and skills development.

## **Reporting**

The province does have challenges related to submission of monthly and quarterly reports to the national body on time due to the late submission by schools and districts. The district and provincial officials in the NSNP Units do have access to view and print reports from the Basic Accounting System (BAS).

The delay in submitting reports from schools does have a knock-on effect and delays the completion of reports at all levels, although this is being addressed on a regular basis.

## **Management capacity**

All the officials and management in the NSNP Unit in the province have undergone specific training with regards to the programme, and this has helped to enhance the capacity to manage this programme. The only vacant post at the provincial office is for the head of this unit; presently the director for Acquisitions and Transware Management takes full responsibility for this programme.

At district level, many monitors were recently appointed and they report to the district coordinator responsible for the NSNP. The monitors have undergone training to monitor and evaluate the NSNP at school level. This oversight is somewhat compromised as the circuit managers who are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the educational programme of the schools in their circuits are not accountable or involved in ensuring that the NSNP is also a key objective of the department. This fragmentation does compromise the effectiveness in the management of the programme.

Payment to suppliers is effected from the finance section at district level which has been very effective and the number of complaints about late payments have been minimised. Queries are easily attended to as the NSNP Unit at the district level is responsible for processing the payments to suppliers.

### ***5.1.2 Conclusion***

There has been a consistently good and stable spending pattern since 2005. However, the payment to suppliers, despite the possibility of supplies not having been received, is a major concern. It could indicate that monitoring needs to be improved. Expenditure at some of these schools, where supplies did not ultimately reach the targeted children, is considered to be wasteful. Such suppliers should be “blacklisted”; otherwise there is indirect encouragement of such practices.

## **5.2 SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

### ***5.2.1 Findings***

The procurement model used in the province is the provincial tender system.

Recently, the unit visited both their KwaZulu-Natal and North West counterparts to observe and collect information on their procurement systems. In both provinces, the procurement strategy is to employ Local Women Organisations (LWOs) to provide the food items, and prepare and serve the food to the children. Due to limited time to advertise, register, train and place LWOs in the current financial year, the NSNP Unit in Limpopo is considering piloting this system in the next financial year, and in a limited number of circuits during 2008/9, i.e. one per district.

The present tender system functions in line with procurement procedures in all provinces. The specifications are prepared by the NSNP Unit in consultation with the Finance Unit, and they have a strong focus on local empowerment and involvement. Suppliers are appointed per circuit by the province. Specifications are then advertised by the Tender Committee. The tender is to appoint suppliers to supply and deliver a specified quantity and quality of food items as stipulated in the menu specifications. The supplier also acts as an agent to pay the voluntary workers per school on behalf of the department, for preparing and serving the meals at schools.

The department determines the number of food helpers per school and the responsibility to appoint them rests with the schools and the school governing body.

The Evaluation Committee evaluates each of the applicants, based on a set of criteria. The shortlist of service providers is then submitted to the Departmental Procurement Committee (Bid Committee) who evaluates the criteria, procedure and the recommended service providers. The Bid Committee then adjudicates and submits their recommendations to the head of department for approval. Recommendations include the name of the supplier, quantities of items to be supplied, frequency of deliveries and the amount allocated per supplier.

Once approved, the provincial NSNP Unit receives the list of approved suppliers and then informs the district NSNP Unit of the budget allocated for each supplier and confirms the budget allocated for each individual school, the number of targeted learners and the number of feeding days.

Service providers are responsible for supplying the schools with the food supplies based on a set menu and calculated on the number of children to be fed per school and the quantities to be supplied for the number of feeding days per month.

### **Strengths**

The current system works well in the following areas:

- The present system is transparent and the responsibilities of each of the committees in the adjudication process are clearly defined.
- According to the current procurement model, the province is required to monitor the service providers on the quality and quantity of the food items, as well as the prescribed manner of packaging of food items and their timeous supply. The budget allocated for each service provider is known in advance, which prevents over-expenditure.
- Payments are only made to the service providers provided the delivery notes have been authenticated by the teacher and principal responsible for the NSNP at the respective schools.
- The food handlers are paid an honorarium of R20 per feeding day by the service provider, and the invoice for reimbursement of this payment to food handlers is submitted to the district office.
- The decentralised payment system has improved payments to suppliers.

### **Weaknesses**

In terms of the tender specifications “suppliers can only claim for the full menu they have supplied and not the full contract amount if all the food items have not been supplied”. It is quite apparent that no deductions were made in this regard, which would imply that all service providers complied 100%. One of the schools visited indicated non-compliance regarding deliveries of food items. This means that a strong monitoring system is required to ensure compliance and application of reasonable and appropriate punitive measures for non-compliance.

In addition, it was evident that repackaging of food items was prevalent, with the possibility of incorrect weights and vegetables being delivered weekly. No penalties or deductions were initiated for the shortcomings of suppliers.

### **5.2.2 Conclusion**

Although the present tendering system is functional, the province is considering piloting a procurement strategy to employ LWOs to provide the food items and to prepare and serve the food to the children in the next financial year (2008/9). This will be piloted in five circuits, one in each district.

The current system, however, is experiencing challenges with monitoring of service providers at school and district levels due to non-delivery of food items by suppliers, as well as re-packaging of some of the food items.

## 5.3 ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

### 5.3.1 Human resources

#### *Findings*

**Provincial level:** The Subdirectorate of School Nutrition Feeding Scheme Services, which is responsible for the facilitation and coordination of the NSNP, is located in the Directorate for Acquisitions and Transware at provincial level.

The NSNP at provincial level is managed by two deputy managers, namely Ms Susan Phutuka (who is responsible for Mopani and Vhembe districts) and Ms Lily Kekana (who is responsible for Capricorn, Sekhukhune and Waterberg districts). An assistant director to oversee the implementation of the sustainable food production programme has been seconded from the National Department of Education. The provincial unit also has a state accountant and two accounting clerks.

**District level:** The province has five districts, as mentioned above. Each NSNP Unit in the district is headed by a district nutrition coordinator at the level of a chief accounting clerk, with three accounting clerks to deal with finances. These staff are appointed on contracts and work full-time on the NSNP. Many of the monitors have been appointed recently and there are a total of 134 in the whole province, with at least one per circuit.

A major constraint expressed by monitors was the lack of transport. Because these monitors are on short-term contracts, their access to state vehicles in terms of the transport policies, is limited. There was also general consensus that the monitors require more training.

**School level:** The school principal and one or more educators were responsible for the implementation of the programme. This responsibility was in addition to their normal functions at the school. Educators responsible for the programme, as well as service providers, received training through several workshops and sessions.

Educators understood the value of the programme but regarded the additional duties required by overseeing the programme as an additional burden. One educator at a school visited expressed the view that NSNP responsibilities were not discussed or negotiated with them or their labour unions.

The educators responsible for NSNP appear not to have time to ensure optimal implementation with regard to record keeping, controlling food items received, and then supervising the preparation of food. The administrative capacity at schools is a pivotal factor in improving controls.

Food handlers at the three schools visited displayed commitment and worked tirelessly. The honoraria paid to them has remained R20 per day for the last three years. Considering that they spend almost half the day at school, the remuneration in real terms is insufficient.

The provincial unit provides the following:

- Training in sustainable food production where school communities are targeted.
- Training in nutrition education for the educators and monitors responsible for the implementation of the NSNP.
- Training in computer skills for the provincial and district officials in the NSNP Unit.
- Training for all the monitors in understanding the relevant documents used to monitor the NSNP.

#### *Conclusion*

Overall, the NSNP is reasonably well managed. The effectiveness of current human resources is, however, severely limited by the lack of transport for monitors to visit their schools more regularly. They

also have insufficient skills to monitor the NSNP. The appointment of contract staff is a further problem in that it limits the sustainability of the programme because it increases staff turnover, and the loss of skills and investment in training; it also limits access to department resources such as transport.

### *5.3.2 Planning*

#### *Findings*

The provincial office is responsible for the compilation of the yearly business plan which includes outputs, activities, monitoring mechanisms and cash flows. At district level, coordinators in turn were responsible for weekly activity plans in line with the business plan.

The provincial office has to date included the district coordinators in the annual planning process and in developing the annual business plan.

Each district has identified the number of children targeted to be fed per school, and the menu, and the quantity of supplies to be received from their respective service provider is agreed upon at provincial level.

The business plan is therefore used by the districts as a management tool in order to meet all the objectives of the NSNP.

#### *Conclusion*

The planning process is inclusive, transparent and participative. None of the key informants expressed any dissatisfaction with the planning process.

### *5.3.3 Monitoring and evaluation*

#### *Findings*

According to interviews with key informants, standardised reports with key performance indicators were used by the monitors at both district level and at schools in order to record progress of the programme. Performance indicators include the quantity and quality of food, target learners fed, required vs. actual feeding days, hygiene conditions, the time of feeding and menu compliance.

**Provincial level:** The implementation of the programme is monitored by the provincial deputy directors responsible for the programme, through monthly progress meetings with district coordinators.

**District level:** District coordinators and monitors have direct exposure to programme implementation in schools. The frequency of the visits to schools by monitors is, however, limited because of the lack of availability of transport. Monthly meetings are held between the district coordinators and all the monitors of the respective districts.

**School level:** Educators at schools responsible for the NSNP monitor the key performance indicators on a daily basis. The quality of the food, the number of meals served and the time of feeding are recorded on the daily delivery notes which are signed by the principal and educator. Monthly reports from schools to district offices are not being submitted timeously.

Invoices received by schools are also signed off by the principal and educator responsible for the programme at the school. As previously mentioned, invoices are signed off despite non-receipt of the recorded quantity of food items.

The records kept at schools were not filed in an orderly manner. Failure to do so is an indication of ineffective monitoring at the school. Hopefully this will improve with the recent appointment of more monitors.

In most schools, feeding started shortly after 10h00, during the first available break. This suggests that the requirement to feed before 10h00 is not appreciated by school management or by circuit managers, who have not been sufficiently involved in the programme and do not give priority to it in school visits.

### *School visits*

#### **Storage of food**

In two of the three schools visited, small quantities of food items were stored at the residence of the food helper. Only one school had some basic storing facilities. We were informed that most schools do not have storage facilities, and those that do are subjected to regular theft.

Despite having security gates and burglar-proofing around the windows, one of the schools visited had had a burglary. It is therefore understandable that the food supplies are considered to be safer at the residence of food helpers and educators, although this can make keeping stock difficult.

#### **Preparation and serving of food**

- None of the three schools visited had kitchens for the preparation of food. One school had a covered section, but all the cooking was done outside using firewood and large pots.
- The cooking utensils were clean and all service providers wore aprons.
- In all the schools visited the hygiene status of food preparation was reasonably good.
- The food helpers prepare all the meals as per the designated menu for the day, but in one school they only prepared what was available, due to non-delivery of food items.
- The portions given to the children exceeded the required portion as per the menu.
- Feeding at two schools visited was after 10h00. At one school it was after 11h00. The school survey confirmed that all the schools only provided school meals after 10h00.

#### **Quality and quantity of food**

Most of the food items stored had proper labelling and valid expiry dates. At one of the schools, it was noted that the food items were re-packaged and there was no label indicating weight, name of the product or name of manufacturer.

The following menus were served to the learners on the day of the school visits.

**Table 4: Menus served at schools**

<i>School</i>	<i>Menu served</i>
A	Maize rice
	Soya mince
B	Maize meal
	Soya mince
	Cabbage
C	Maize meal
	Soya mince
	Oranges

*Source: School visits*

Portion sizes were measured with a spoon. The first school did not comply with the prescribed menu, which requires that a nutritious drink is also given to the children. The second school did not comply as the beans on the provincial menu were not provided. The third school complied with the prescribed menu, despite the school having complained about non-compliance of suppliers with regard to fresh supplies of vegetables.

In all three schools, the quantity of food provided to the children per day exceeded the size required by the provincial body.

The quality of the food served was good. It tasted good and fresh, stock of food products was within expiry dates and it was free of any visible form of contamination.

### **Hygiene**

None of the toilet facilities at the schools were in close proximity to food storage or food preparation areas. Toilets observed were generally clean. However, at one school the number of toilets in proportion to the number of children was inadequate because recent storms had damaged the toilets and they were unusable. The provincial Department of Public Works is responsible for the renovation of these.

Although the supply of water at some of the schools is inadequate, water was provided in basins for children to wash their hands before eating.

### **Garbage disposal**

In all three schools visited, garbage was kept in plastic bins or in plastic bags. There was no visible dirt at any of the schools visited.

### ***Conclusion***

Overall, it is evident that a monitoring system is in place with appropriate key performance indicators that assist in assessing key areas of programme implementation. However, the human resource and transport issues identified earlier impact on effectiveness of the monitoring system as many schools only receive quarterly visits, although the target is monthly.

The quality and quantity of food served is generally compliant with national and provincial requirements, although compliance with menu options is not always good, due to service provider problems.

Key issues identified in schools and verified in interviews are:

- Infrastructure in schools for storage and food preparation is poor.
- Schools generally do not complete feeding before 10h00.
- The frequency and quality (including the weight) of fresh vegetables provided need to be closely monitored.
- Food has to be re-packaged by service providers because schools do not have scales to verify the weights reflected on the delivery notes. This non-compliance of service providers impacts on the non-compliance to prescribed menus by the schools.
- Suppliers to rural schools seem to be disadvantaged because of the distances to be travelled and the resultant additional cost of providing the food items. This impacts on the frequency of deliveries, especially of fresh vegetables.

### ***5.3.4 Targeting***

#### ***Findings***

The Limpopo Department of Education criteria for selecting and targeting learners are the following:

- State-funded primary schools catering for grade R to grade 7.
- Geographical location: rural schools, informal settlements and farm schools will be prioritised.
- Schools from quintiles 1 to 3 and all schools within identified nodal areas will participate in the programme.
- Type of learners, i.e. orphans and vulnerable children.

The provincial targeting policy was followed in all the districts as well as in the schools.

Interviewees on both the provincial and district levels were of the view that the present targeting system based on the quintile designations was insufficient. In fact, all the children in the targeted schools are given the choice to participate.

### *Conclusion*

The province complied with the national targeting policy requirement that at least quintile 1 and 2 schools should be targeted. Districts as well as schools complied with the provincial targeting policy.

There was general consensus at all levels that all learners in a targeted school should benefit from the programme as it is difficult to feed some and not others. Circumstances change for many learners during the course of the month and even during the year.

## *5.3.5 Institutional arrangements*

### *Findings*

The NSNP is located in a Subdirectorate for PSNP under the Directorate for Acquisitions and Transware at provincial level.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, the institutional arrangements are sufficiently effective.

The programme will be enhanced if the effective implementation of the NSNP is included in the job description and performance agreement of all the circuit managers. This will ensure the sustainability of the project, as currently circuit managers do not have to account directly on the implementation of the NSNP.

## *5.3.6 Communications*

### *Findings*

- A departmental circular is sent to all schools participating in the NSNP with regard to the functioning of the NSNP Unit.
- Monthly provincial meetings are held by the provincial NSNP Unit with district coordinators, and district coordinators meet with district monitors monthly to evaluate progress and provide monthly reports.
- Officials at district level and educators at schools indicated that they received regular circulars on the implementation of the programme.
- One area of weakness is the performance of service providers and making sure that payment is actually linked to this. Communication between school level and districts needs improvement in this regard. Communication between province and service providers could also be improved, since this is where contracting takes place.

### *Conclusion*

The communication between all the relevant role players in the implementation of the NSNP is quite effective, despite some of the frustration expressed by the NSNP Unit. Communication with service providers regarding their performance needs to be improved. The exchange of information between schools, district and province in this regard also needs upgrading.

# 6 OUTPUTS

## 6.1 FINDINGS

### 6.1.1 Active food gardens

The table below shows the percentage of schools in Limpopo with active food gardens during the evaluation period.

**Table 5: Percentage of schools with active food gardens**

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Complies</i>	<i>No record</i>	<i>Does not comply</i>
2004	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2005	3.2%	0.0%	96.8%
2006	22.6%	0.0%	77.4%

As reflected above, the school survey found that 23% of schools in 2006 had food gardens. This is slightly less than the provincial estimate of 28%. According to the provincial coordinator for the implementation of food gardens, there are 751 schools with food gardens out of 2,720 schools in the NSNP.

Interviewees at schools requested more resources and technical support, especially implements, irrigation, fertiliser, fencing and seed funds. Some of the educators indicated a need for an additional employee tasked with this and other responsibilities.

### 6.1.2 Schools with economic activity related to food gardens

The table below shows the percentage of schools with economic activity related to food gardens.

**Table 6: Percentage of schools with economic activity related to food gardens**

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Complies</i>	<i>No record</i>	<i>Does not comply</i>
2004	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2005	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2006	3.2%	0.0%	96.8%

It is quite evident from the schools that participated in the survey, that very little economic activity takes place in relation to their food gardens. In total, 3.2% of schools in 2006 had some economic activity to sustain the NSNP at school level. The interviewees at the schools visited confirmed that the vegetable gardens provided supplementary vegetables for the children being fed, and that they were not growing vegetables for sale or any other economic activity.

### 6.1.3 Schools where community participates in the programme

Table 7 shows the percentage of schools with community participation. Community participation for purposes of this provincial evaluation is regarded to be family or community involvement in the NSNP, over and above helping with the preparation of food for which an honorarium is paid. Schools which only have volunteers assisting in this way were therefore recorded as having no community participation.

**Table 7: Percentage of schools with community participation**

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Complies</i>	<i>No record</i>	<i>Does not comply</i>
2004	0.0%	6.5%	93.5.0%
2005	6.5%	3.2%	90.3%
2006	16.1%	3.2%	80.6%

It is evident from the above table that few schools have community participation in the NSNP, over and above food helpers. Broader community participation is constrained by many socioeconomic factors such as unemployment, lack of transport, long distances from the school and lack of basic resources. This was confirmed by all the interviewees, educators and monitors at schools and district offices.

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

Socioeconomic conditions have direct impact on promoting effective community participation, which could enhance the establishment of food gardens and related economic activity, as well as in implementing other aspects of the NSNP.

Although there is progressive increase and commitment to providing technical support, the challenges around food gardens are constrained by the following factors:

- Lack of garden implements and seed funding.
- Lack of water supply and irrigation.
- Lack of appropriate fencing, leading to theft and vandalism.
- To some extent there is lack of commitment from educators to the principle that food gardens are a sustainable intervention for the NSNP. Some do not believe that they have a role in initiating and supporting this strategy.

# 7 OUTCOMES

## 7.1 FINDINGS

### 7.1.1 Targeted learners fed

The table below shows the percentage of targeted learners that were reached by the programme during the evaluation period.

**Table 8: Percentage of targeted learners fed**

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>100% and above</i>	<i>90% to 100%</i>	<i>80% to 90%</i>	<i>No record</i>
2004	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2005	41.9%	0.0%	0.0%	58.1%
2006	80.6%	6.51%	0.0%	12.9%

It is evident from the above table that feeding of all targeted learners is progressively getting better, though availability of records for 2005 was poor. The above results indicate that 81% of schools fed all targeted learners in 2006, and only 6.5% of schools fed less than 100% of children.

While the survey indicates that 12.9% of the schools in the survey had no records for 2006, according to interviewees it is quite likely that most targeted learners were in fact fed. However, the capacity to keep good records and file the information is inadequate.

### 7.1.2 Compliance with number of feeding days

The table below presents the percentage of schools that complied with the provincial targets for feeding days for the evaluation period.

**Table 9: Percentage of schools complying with feeding days**

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>100% and above</i>	<i>90% to 100%</i>	<i>No record</i>
2004	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2005	38.7%	3.2%	58.1%
2006	90.3%	3.2%	6.5%

It is evident that in 2006, most schools (90.3%) complied with the required number of feeding days. In 2005, most schools with records available also complied. The plans in the school files clearly stated the intent to provide feeding on all 156 days. In addition, records of supplies received by the schools, to a large extent, substantiate that food items were supplied for at least 156 days of the year.

Based on the above, one can reasonably state that the province is making important strides towards meeting required feeding days.

### 7.1.3 Compliance with the required time of feeding

Table 10 provides the results of the school survey with regard to the percentage of schools complying with the prescribed time of feeding.

**Table 10: Percentage of schools complying with feeding before 10h00**

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Complies</i>	<i>No record</i>
2004	0.0%	100.0%
2005	0.0%	100.0%
2006	0.0%	100.0%

It is evident from the above table that the schools are not complying with the prescribed feeding time. This was further confirmed at the schools visited, as feeding takes place at the first break which is traditionally scheduled after 10h00. Principals, together with the circuit managers, agree on the scheduled times for breaks and on the timetable generally. It is likely that the background and importance of feeding before 10h00 may not be clearly understood by the principals and circuit managers.

## **7.2 CONCLUSION**

The above findings with regard to compliance with targeted number of children fed and the required number of feeding days, reflect that the programme is making an important contribution towards improving learning capacity in children, the primary objective of the programme.

According to the research, schools' inability to comply with feeding times does have a negative impact on the ability of children to concentrate from first thing in the morning. Therefore, it is important for all role players that the provincial and district managements, circuit managers, principals and educators appreciate the need to prioritise and monitor this goal. Their "buy-in" is central to improving the programme's contribution to improving learning capacity.



## CONCLUSION

The NSNP, under the management of the Limpopo Department of Education, has improved since taking over the programme in 2004, despite capacity constraints. There are several operational and management challenges that can be implemented to address the gaps and enhance the NSNP, as discussed in the recommendations below.

Generally, it can be concluded that the resources provided to the Limpopo province for the NSNP have been utilised reasonably and effectively. It is questionable as to whether value for money was received, as poor record keeping at districts and schools is a symptom of a lack of administrative capacity.

Performance of the programme related to the number of targeted learners fed and compliance with required feeding days is generally good in most schools in the province and reflects the important strides the programme has made in meeting the primary objective of the programme, i.e. to contribute to enhanced learning capacity. Feeding times, however, remain a challenge but can be achieved if all the role players are informed about the importance of this step. Circuit managers, in particular, need to be brought on board.

The implementation of vegetable gardens is improving slowly, but additional resources will be required to sustain and improve the performance of this objective.

# 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The cost per learner per day, which has not been increased since the Department of Education took over the management of the NSNP in 1994, should be reviewed to ensure that service providers are funded sufficiently to comply with provincial menu requirements. Sufficient stock for schools to serve correct quantities and quality of food to learners needs to be ensured. The honoraria paid to food helpers needs to be reviewed as well.
- The vacant post for the provincial director for special programmes should be filled as a matter of priority.

Monitoring of the NSNP could be improved by:

- Developing a stock control system which prevents losses related to approving payments to service providers for products not delivered. Procedures for verifying invoices against actual deliveries need to be put in place urgently. Principals and educators should be provided with additional training to improve the controls of food items received, stock control and filing. This will assist in informing the NSNP Unit at the district and provincial offices of suppliers that do not comply. The agreements between the department and suppliers are quite explicit in applying non-payment for non-compliance, which should be implemented.
- Appointing permanent staff who can develop skills and experience for the programme over time.
- Increasing the availability of vehicles for the monitors in district offices is critical.
- Developing skills of district programme staff to monitor programme implementation and service provider performance in schools.
- Holding quarterly meetings between suppliers and district offices will improve the quality of service provided by the suppliers.
- Availability of adequate infrastructure for food storage, preparation and cooking should become a minimum requirement included in the norms and standards for schools.
- The importance of early feeding should be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, schools should be instructed to change their timetables to ensure that feeding is completed by 10h00 in compliance with national guidelines. The importance thereof needs to be communicated to circuit managers in particular, and their “buy-in” elicited.
- Additional resources such as technical assistance, implements, seed funding, fencing, fertiliser and irrigation, are critically required to enhance the implementation of vegetable gardens in all the schools.
- To enhance both the latter recommendation and community participation, a broader, coherent and integrated strategy, aligned with other provincial and national departments, is required to address the socioeconomic constraints of poor communities and to encourage them to participate and prosper in the medium to long term.
- An efficient record-keeping system needs to be developed at schools and at district level to ensure that reports are readily available and accessible.



