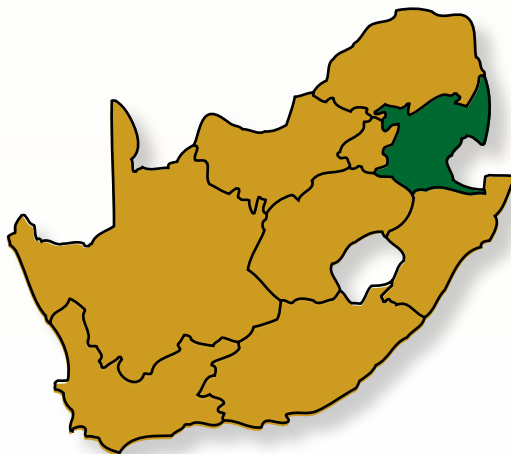


EVALUATION OF
THE SCHOOL
NUTRITION
PROGRAMME

*Provincial Report:
Mpumalanga*

May 2008



education

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Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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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 determine the extent to which the programme met the following objectives for the period 2004 to 2007:

- To contribute to enhanced learning capacity through school feeding.
- To generate food production and economic activities in school communities in order to improve household food security.
- To strengthen nutrition education for the school community.

The evaluation also assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of systems for implementing the programme. The programme was evaluated at provincial, district and school levels.

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 Mpumalanga 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”. 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 the 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 the setting up of food gardens or other food security initiatives.
- 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 managed to feed 492,687 learners in 2005/06, 495,000 in 2006/07 and created volunteer employment for 2,849 in 2005/06 and 2,848 in 2006/07.

The provincial NSNP Unit is located in the Strategic Planning Directorate at provincial level.

However, it is envisaged that the NSNP Unit will fall under the Curriculum Enrichment Directorate when the new organisational structure is implemented.

The province has four districts. Each NSNP Unit in the district is headed by a district coordinator at the level of a deputy chief educational specialist, with a team of six to eight 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 the principal 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
Grand Total	25,230,527	19,589,257	44,819,784	56	44	100	271	153	118

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 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 using the next school on the list of randomly selected schools.

Table 2: Sample schools

<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 Mpumalanga Department of Education, from province and district to schools. Although the circuit managers were not interviewed, the monitors from districts that provided the information indicated that circuit managers were well versed with the objectives, although they were not directly involved in ensuring the implementation thereof.

Managers interviewed indicated that objectives were met in the sense that most schools feed all target learners and on all required feeding days. There was consensus on all three levels, however, that the following limitations impacted on the programme's ability to optimally meet objectives:

- Infrequent deliveries of vegetables.
- Inadequate amount allocated per child per day and reports that quantities delivered were inadequate resulting in non-compliance with menu options.
- Non-compliance with feeding times.
- Sustaining and enhancing the development of food gardens at schools.
- Payments to service providers and helpers.

Most schools feed after 10h00 during the first school break. Timetables are set by the principals in consultation with the circuit managers. The lack of involvement of the circuit managers in enforcing the feeding time does contribute to the difficulties experienced by schools in complying with this requirement.

The number of feeding days has been set at 156 days annually per year for the last three years. Interviewees report that attendance has generally improved.

To date, 606 out of the 1,478 schools have food gardens which amounts to 41% of schools in the programme. These are being managed by teachers and learners. In these schools vegetables are used to supplement the food served to learners. In most schools, parents and the community are not involved in the NSNP, over and above services offered by food helpers.

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 being met in the sense that most target learners are fed on all required feeding days. Performance is, however, affected by sub-optimal compliance with regard to menu options and time; these are gaps that could be improved upon.

5 SYSTEMS

5.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

5.1.1 Findings

Current system

The Departmental Procurement Committee approves tenders for service providers to deliver food items to schools. Although the NSNP Unit prepares the specifications, they are not involved in the adjudication process, even as observers. The 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 individual schools, the number of targeted learners and the number of feeding days.

Claims and delivery notes are co-signed by principals and dedicated educators and submitted to the various district offices. The claims are verified against individual school budgets and forwarded to the provincial office. Supply Chain Management (SCM) receives, processes and captures VA2s on the Basic Accounting System (BAS) for order generation. Internal control verifies claims, payments are captured by accounts and the centralised creditors payment unit authorises, issues cheques and transfers payments into various creditors' accounts.

Budgeted and expenditure

The table below provides the actual expenditure as a percentage of budget on the NSNP for the 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 financial years.

Table 3: Actual expenditure as percentage of budgeted expenditure

<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	R70.235m	R70.235m	100%
2006/07	R84.549m	R83.149m	98.3%

Source: Mpumalanga Department of Education

There has been an under-expenditure in 2006/07 of R1.4m due to late submission of invoices by the suppliers. In 2005/06, an amount of R70.235m was allocated and all the funds allocated were spent. The increased budget from 2005/6 to 2006/7 is attributed to the increased number of target children fed. As indicated below, there has been no increase in cost per learner per day.

Cost per learner per day

The cost per learner per day is R1.10 which has not been increased since 2004/05, resulting in service providers reportedly being unable to supply fruit and vegetables consistently. Most service providers apparently deliver these once a month, and considering that no schools have cold storage facilities, the vegetables have to be used up in the first week of delivery. This also contributes to having to adjust the menu and causes difficulty in adhering to the set menu.

Reporting

The province experienced some delays in the submitting 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 Unit do have access to view and print reports from the 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 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 a deputy chief education specialist, who will be responsible for food production and the establishment of food gardens. It is envisaged that the person seconded to the province from the national department will be appointed to this post when his period of secondment expires.

At district level, there are monitors who report to the district manager responsible for the NSNP. The monitors are required to monitor 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 does compromise the effectiveness of the management in the programme.

Although the payments to suppliers are made from the Finance Section, it would be more practical to appoint one person either in the Finance Section or in the NSNP Unit, who is dedicated to the NSNP functions to ensure that payments are timeously made and that the documentation and processes to approve payments are adhered to. This would also assist with queries from suppliers and with payments to schools for the helpers.

5.1.2 Conclusion

It is concluded from information presented above, that systems for financial management are basically effective and efficient and that there is accountability at all levels, though monitoring could be improved on. There has been a good spending pattern over the last two years. There is concern that quantities supplied per school may not reflect value for money, as it is assumed that all children targeted were fed when in fact there are frequently children absent.

5.2 SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

5.2.1 Findings

The procurement model used in the province is the provincial tender system. The specifications for the tender are developed in the NSNP Unit with a strong focus on local empowerment and involvement. This is done in consultation with the bid section in the SCM unit. The tender specifications are sent to the Bid Specification Committee and after approval the document is sent to the Central Tender Office, who provide a tender number and advertise the tender. Tender applications are available from at least five centres in the province to ensure accessibility. The criteria for successful applicants are based on the ability of the service provider to undertake the task. Historically disadvantaged individuals from local communities are given preference in line with the Procurement Preference Policy.

The Evaluation Committee evaluates each of the applicants, based on a set of criteria. The NSNP Unit is not a participant in this committee and does not even have observer status. The short-listed service providers are then submitted to the Bid Committee where senior managers, such as the three deputy director generals, evaluate the tenders against a set of criteria.

Although the NSNP indicated a keenness to participate in the above process, their exclusion ensures that service providers are selected with a greater degree of fairness and transparency, as officials in the NSNP Unit would be interacting with service providers on a daily basis and therefore could become subjective in their support for service providers.

Service providers are responsible for supplying the schools with the food supplies based on a set menu, 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

By using the present procurement model, the province is required to monitor the service providers on the quality and quantity of the food items, as well as on the prescribed manner of packaging of the food items and the timeous supply thereof.

Payments are only made to the service providers provided the delivery notes have been authenticated by the teacher responsible for the NSNP and the principals at the respective schools.

The food handlers are paid an honorarium of R20 per feeding day by the school, and the invoice for the payment to food handlers is submitted to the district office which refers it to the provincial office for payment to the respective school.

Weaknesses

One of the key challenges with the system is the payment of the service providers. Service providers were not in a position to purchase supplies unless they receive timeous payments, although we were informed that no suppliers delayed or reneged on delivering their supplies timeously.

The district officials assist service providers by submitting their claims to the provincial financial section. The long chain to process payments effectively is inefficient because it is centrally managed. Payment functions have not been decentralised to the district office, which could reduce the turnaround time for the payment to suppliers.

Payments to schools for food handlers are also centrally managed and thus schools have to wait for payments made to food handlers from their own school resources. This is an additional burden for schools who have limited resources.

No problems were reported by any of the schools with regard to the quality of food items or expiry dates and labelling. However, during our visits to the three schools, it was evident that repackaging of food items was prevalent, with the possibility of incorrect weights and vegetables not being delivered weekly. No penalties or deductions were initiated for these shortcomings of suppliers.

5.2.2 Conclusion

The present tendering system is functional in the sense that central coordination and accountability is basically in place. There are, however, challenges experienced in terms of delayed payment of both service providers and food handlers. Recommended improvements to the process in order to ensure transparency, efficiency and value for money are proposed in the Recommendations section.

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 Chief Directorate Systems and Planning at provincial level. It has a staff complement of:

- One assistant director (seconded from the National Department of Education to oversee the implementation of the sustainable food production programme)
- One chief education specialist
- Two deputy chief education specialists
- One senior administration officer
- One administration clerk

The Department of Education is reviewing its organisational structure and this unit is expected to be transferred to the Curriculum Enrichment Directorate. This will not impact negatively on the NSNP as the whole unit will remain intact, except the reporting lines will change.

District level

At district level (i.e. four districts) there were a total of 26 monitors, six in each of the three districts, namely Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Bushbuckridge. The Nkangala district has eight monitors. Each district has a regional or district coordinator who manages the monitors. Coordinators were responsible for administration (i.e. processing of claims), monitoring and conducting workshops for teachers and service providers. The district coordinators and the monitors work well as a team, sharing their experiences and reporting at their monthly meetings. Their commitment was refreshing.

There was general agreement that more monitors are required in all the districts as not all schools are visited on a monthly basis to monitor the programme.

School level

The school principal and one or more dedicated teachers are responsible for the implementation of the programme. This responsibility is 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.

The competencies required at provincial and district level are project and financial management, presentation skills, computer literacy and basic bookkeeping.

The province has a training and development programme in place which includes:

- Sustainable food production where school communities are targeted.
- Nutrition education for the educators responsible for the implementation of the NSNP and the monitors.
- Computer skills for the provincial and district officials in the NSNP Unit.
- Monitors are given training in understanding all of the relevant documents used to monitor the NSNP.

Conclusion

Overall, the NSNP is well structured. Although capacity to improve the level of monitoring of service providers could be improved.

5.3.2 Planning

Findings

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

To date, the provincial office has included the district coordinators and their monitors 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, The menu is agreed upon provincially, and the quantity of supplies is received from their respective service providers.

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 districts, coordinators or the monitors indicated any dissatisfaction with the planning process.

5.3.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Findings

Standardised reports with key performance indicators are used by the monitors at district level and at schools to record progress of the programme. Monitoring of the implementation of the programme at schools by district offices is reported to take place regularly, but the exact frequency of school visits could not be determined. Monthly progress meetings are held with the regional offices and district coordinators. Venues are rotated from one district to another.

On a quarterly basis, meetings are held with all the monitors and the province.

Monthly reports from schools are not always submitted timeously.

Dedicated educators at schools 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.

In most schools feeding is provided after 10h00.

Storage of food

In two of the schools visited, small quantities of food items are securely stored in a designated school room. One school stored the food items in the classroom. All were stored under hygienic conditions.

Preparation and serving of food

Of the three schools visited, one school prepared food in a classroom which is also used for teaching learners. The other two have designated kitchens. All were found to be hygienic.

All of the schools have gas stoves or electric stoves for cooking. Utensils used were found to be clean and all service providers wore aprons. In all the schools visited, the hygiene status of food preparation facilities appeared to be good.

The food helpers prepare all the meals as per the designated menu for the day.

Although feeding at one school started at 10h00, feeding in the other two schools only commenced at 10h30. The school questionnaires further confirmed that all the schools provided school meals after 10h00 only.

Quality and quantity

All food items observed had proper labelling and valid expiry dates, except for the fresh vegetables when available. No incidence of poor quality were reported by the schools.

The following table shows the menu served at schools visited.

Table 4: Menus served at schools

<i>School</i>	<i>Day of visit</i>	<i>Menu served</i>	<i>Portion size served</i>	<i>Required menu as per provincial guidelines</i>	<i>Portion size cooked required</i>
A	Tuesday	Maize rice	210g	Maize rice	1¾ cup
		Dried beans	210g	Pumpkin, carrot, butternut or sweet potato	40g
				Vegetable soup mix (soya and vegetables)	100g
B	Wednesday	Samp	270g	Samp	270g
		Dried beans	110g	Dried beans	100g
		Butternut	100g	Dehydrated vegetables	15g
C	Thursday	Maize rice	220g	Maize rice	1¾ cup
		Beans	180g	Pumpkin, carrot, butternut or sweet potato	40g
		Vegetable soup mix (soya and vegetables)	100g	Vegetable soup mix (soya and vegetables)	100g

Source: School visits and provincial menu options

At all schools visited, portion sizes were measured with a spoon. The first school did not comply with the prescribed menu as vegetables were not delivered by the service provider. Instead they provided dried beans. No soya or vegetable soup mix was provided. At the second school, they provided butternut instead of the dehydrated vegetables which is considered more nutritious than the minimum requirement. At the third school, they provided sugar beans instead of the fresh vegetables, i.e. pumpkin, carrots, butternut or sweet potato. The importance of general compliance with menu item combinations needs to be emphasised to both service providers and school nutrition coordinators, given that this can potentially impact on planned nutrient levels intended in particular menu item combinations.

In all three schools, the quantity of food provided to the children per day was correct. That is, it exceeded the recommended portion size. The delivery of fresh vegetables by the service providers was, however, said to be erratic and usually once a month. This is non-compliance on the part of the service providers. At one of the schools we noted that the vegetables were not labelled or packaged. The recipients at the school were informed of the weight on delivery but did not have scales to verify this. This practice is open to abuse and needs to be rectified.

At one of the schools visited, the stock levels in the storeroom were substantial. Concern could be raised as to why there were excessive stock levels at the end of the year. This could raise concerns of possible poor stock control, not feeding on days as recorded, or reduced quantities per portion.

Hygiene: hand washing

None of the toilet facilities at the schools were in close proximity to food storage or preparation of food. Toilets observed were generally clean, i.e. free of visible dirt, odour and flies.

Garbage disposal

At all three schools visited, garbage is kept in plastic bins. All bins had lids and there was no evidence of pests.

Conclusion

Overall, systems to monitor and evaluate the programme are in place though these could be refined for greater level of accountability, particularly those of service providers. Out of those schools visited, it would appear that the NSNP is largely implemented according to provincial requirements. More regular and detailed monitoring of schools and service providers, both by districts and internally to the school, could serve to improve the quality of food provided to learners.

5.3.4 Targeting

Findings

The province uses the current school funding norms resource targeting lists, which rank schools according to poverty levels and divides them into quintiles. quintile 1 and quintile 2 schools are targeted, as well as all schools previously targeted by the Department of Health, irrespective of the quintile designation of the school. All learners in grades 0 to grades 7 in targeted schools are targeted. The provincial targeting policy is followed in the districts as well as in the schools.

Interviewees on both the provincial and district levels indicated that the present targeting system based on the quintile designations is ineffective. The criteria and process of classifying schools do not facilitate the consistent and accurate classification of schools according to levels of poverty.

Interviewees on all three levels voiced very strong opposition to the possibility of introducing individual targeting in a school, as this might lead to stigmatisation and victimisation.

Conclusion

The province currently complies with the national targeting policy requirement that at least quintile 1 and 2 schools should be targeted, and districts as well as schools complied with the provincial targeting policy. However, current targeting systems used in the province do not succeed in reaching the poorest children in a consistent manner.

All learners in a targeted school should benefit from the programme as all learners broadly tend to come from the same disadvantaged communities.

5.3.5 Institutional arrangements

Findings

The NSNP, at provincial as well as district level, is located in the Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit. It is envisaged that the NSNP Unit will be located in the Curriculum Enrichment Directorate from early next year.

The NSNP Unit does participate at senior management level.

The district coordinators monitors have an effective working relationship both within the unit and the schools and also with their suppliers. The implementation of food gardens at schools is a critical objective that needs greater emphasis for implementation to ensure sustainability of the programme.

Given that the NSNP is an essential poverty alleviation intervention, circuit managers ideally need to be more involved in the NSNP and its objectives.

Conclusion

Overall, institutional arrangements are currently effective. The planned change is not expected to impact on the programme. The reason for the change requires further substantiation.

5.3.6 Communications

Findings

Monthly provincial meetings are held by the provincial NSNP Unit with district coordinators and quarterly meetings are held with all the monitors in the province.

The district coordinators hold monthly meetings with all their monitors.

Officials at district and educators at school level indicated that they received regular circulars on the implementation of the programme. Officials at district level, however, reported frustrations with responses from the provincial office when enquiries were made with regard to the payments of suppliers.

Meetings with service providers are held when they are appointed as service providers.

Conclusion

The communication between all the relevant role players in the implementation of the NSNP is considered to be effective.

6 OUTPUTS

6.1 FINDINGS

Percentage of schools with active food gardens

According to information provided by the NSNP Unit, 41% of schools have active vegetable gardens. This is substantiated by the survey findings presented in the table below. Interviewees at schools expressed a need for resources and technical support to increase the success of food production initiatives. Some of the educators indicated a need for an additional employee tasked with this and other responsibilities.

In some of the schools visited, learners (specifically orphans and vulnerable children) were assisted by educators' own resources in terms of food support. No formal programme was in place in schools visited, however, to support orphans and vulnerable children other than referrals to the Department of Social Development.

The table below shows findings from the school survey on the percentage of schools in the Mpumalanga Province with food gardens active 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	10.0%	25.0%	65.0%
2005	40.0%	0.0%	60.0%
2006	45.0%	0.0%	55.0%

Source: School survey

It is evident from the above table that while most schools do not currently have food gardens, the percentage of schools that do, increased annually over the evaluation period. This is likely to be due to the increased emphasis on this programme objective in the province. The challenges around this objective are constrained by the following factors:

- Lack of garden implements and seed funding.
- Lack of appropriate fencing, leading to theft and vandalism.
- Lack of technical support.
- Lack of support from school governing bodies and parents.

The three schools visited in the province had food gardens, but they all appeared to have been inadequately maintained, as they were infrequently watered, there were weeds and there was a general lack of maintenance.

Percentage of schools with economic activity related to food gardens

Table 6 shows the percentage of schools with economic activity related to food gardens, according to findings from the school survey.

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%	5.0%	95.0%
2005	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
2006	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Source: School survey

It is evident from the above table that there are no economic activities related to food gardens at schools surveyed.

At all the schools visited, it was confirmed that no economic activity took place. To some extent this was understandable as the food gardens, although they existed at all three schools visited, were poorly maintained. This activity will require a great deal of coordination, support, time and understanding by all the stakeholders for it to be initiated at schools.

Percentage of schools where the community participates in the programme

Table 7 shows the percentage of schools with 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	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2005	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2006	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: School survey

It is evident from the above table that all schools over the whole evaluation period have had some form of community participation. This finding is based on the fact that all helpers are from the local community.

The three schools visited confirmed that the food helpers were members of local communities, and that they all had children at the schools. At one of the three schools there was broader community participation, as well as a local farmer who donates fresh vegetables on a monthly basis.

6.2 CONCLUSION

It is evident from findings presented above that the establishment of food gardens, related economic activities and community participation are still in early stages of development. This is understandable as the main objective of the programme, i.e. to enhance learning capacity, has been prioritised over the objectives to generate food production and economic activities at schools, and activities that support that objective receive the bulk of the allocated budget.

The lack of support from communities in food production at schools is not surprising, given the need to prioritise remunerated employment.

7 OUTCOMES

7.1 FINDINGS

Target children fed

The table below shows the percentage of schools in Mpumalanga that complied 100% or more with feeding target learners, the percentage of schools that complied between 90% and 100%, and those schools that complied 80% to 90% with reaching targeted learners 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	30.0%	5.0%	5.0%	60.0%
2005	70.0%	10.0%	0.0%	20.0%
2006	85.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0.0%

Source: School survey

The table above shows that there was a substantial annual increase in the percentage of schools that fed all target learners over the evaluation period, reaching 85% of schools in 2006. However, this is affected by the increased availability of records over the evaluation period. Lack of records for 2004 and 2005 would appear to undermine the number of schools feeding all target learners in these years. According to interviewees, the percentage of target children fed at schools did improve progressively, contributing to the primary objective of NSNP related to enhancing learning and feeding target learners. Interviews at school level also supported the notion that there have been improvements in the percentage of target learners fed.

Compliance with number of feeding days

The table below shows compliance levels of schools with required feeding days.

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	45.0%	10.0%	45.0%
2005	95.0%	5.0%	0.0%
2006	95.0%	5.0%	0.0%

Source: School survey

It is evident from the above table that 95% of schools fully complied with required feeding days in both 2005 and 2006. This achievement makes an important contribution to the performance of the province in its objective to contribute to increased learning capacity. The records of the schools visited clearly indicated that this objective was realised in the last three years.

Compliance with required menu options

Table 10 shows the percentage of schools that complied with provincially required menu options.

Table 10: Percentage of schools that complied with provincially required menu options

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Complies</i>	<i>No record</i>	<i>Does not comply</i>
2004	60.0%	35.0%	5.0%
2005	85.0%	5.0%	10.0%
2006	90.0%	0.0%	10.0%

It is evident from the table above that 10% of schools in both 2005 and 2006 did not comply with menu options. It was reported in interviews with school nutrition coordinators that some service providers were not delivering required quantities of food products and that repackaging made this difficult to monitor. This meant that stock could run out and menu options could not always be complied with.

Compliance with the required time of feeding

The table below provides the results of the school survey with regard to the percentage of schools complying with the prescribed time of feeding.

Table 11: Percentage of schools complying with required time of feeding

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Complies</i>	<i>No record</i>	<i>Does not comply</i>
2004	5.0%	25.0%	70.0%
2005	5.0%	0.0%	95.0%
2006	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

It is evident from the above table that none of the schools complied with the required time for feeding. This was supported by observations at all three schools visited where food was served between 10h00 and 11h00. They were not aware of the need to feed before 10h00.

The data and the visits to schools indicate that the background and importance of this objective may not be understood. The lack of the involvement of the circuit managers in the implementation of the NSNP could also be a factor. Feeding before the scheduled first break at schools could be perceived as disruptive.

7.2 CONCLUSION

The above findings show that important progress is being made regarding feeding all target children as well as feeding on all required feeding days. This indicates that the programme is contributing, to some extent, to enhanced learning capacity. However, most if not all schools, are not complying with the prescribed time of feeding which could have a negative impact on the ability of learners to concentrate from first thing in the morning. It is quite likely that all the role players, the provincial and district managers, circuit managers, principals and educators do not appreciate the need to implement this objective. Their “buy-in” is important in meeting this objective.

8 CONCLUSION

The NSNP, under the management of the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education, has evolved with positive results, though there are still operational and management challenges in the implementation of the programme. Generally, it can be concluded that the resources provided to Mpumalanga for the NSNP have largely been efficiently and effectively utilised.

Given the limitations including non-compliance with menu options, non-compliance of feeding times and late payments to service providers and helpers, it can be concluded that the objectives are generally being met, with some gaps that need to be improved upon.

Systems for financial management are effective and efficient and there is accountability at all levels. Although the present tendering system is functional, consideration must be given to improving the process in order to ensure transparency, efficiency and value for money. It can, however, be concluded that overall the NSNP is well managed.

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

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

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Outcomes

- The small percentage of children who are not fed at targeted schools should be included in the NSNP. According to provincial managers, additional resources required are estimated at 7% over the current budget allocated.
- The cost per learner per day, which has not been increased since the Department of Education took over the management of the NSNP, should be reviewed to ensure that service providers are able to comply with menu options and that the correct quantities and quality of food can be served to learners by schools.
- The importance of early feeding should be communicated to all relevant stakeholders and schools should also be instructed to change their timetables to ensure that feeding is completed by 10h00 in compliance with national guidelines.

Outputs

- Additional resources such as technical assistance, implements, seed funding, fencing, fertiliser and irrigation should be provided urgently to enhance the implementation of vegetable gardens in all the schools.

Targeting

- The implementation of the current lists which rank schools according to poverty levels needs to be reviewed to ensure that schools are consistently and accurately classified.

Monitoring and evaluation

- More frequent visits to schools need to be planned so that all schools receive a minimum of one visit per quarter.
- Given the distances required to monitor programme implementation in schools, more monitors should be appointed. This will ensure more accountability of service providers for the quality and quantity of food. School visits should be done both on an ad hoc basis as well as with notice. This will give monitors the ability to evaluate actual service delivery without schools preparing in advance for the visit.
- Schools should establish a basic stock management control system to prevent theft and increase accountability for stock. This will also enable closer monitoring of service providers.
- An efficient record keeping and filing system needs to be developed to manage information for the monitoring of the programme in schools at district level to ensure that information is readily available and accessible. This will enable the assessment of programme development over a period of time.
- The frequency and quality of fresh vegetables provided needs to be more closely monitored, as well as the weight of the vegetables as these are repackaged and schools do not have scales to verify the weight reflected on the delivery notes.

Supply chain management

- Efficiency of procedures for submission and verification of invoices, capturing and processing of payments to suppliers and food helpers should be decentralised to district offices. This will increase the speed of turnaround times for service provider payments.
- The adjudication process could be improved by appraising existing service providers using a set list of performance indicators. This could be useful information if service providers re-applied as service providers in the subsequent years.
- The NSNP Unit should at least have observer status at the bid and evaluation committees, so

that there is a greater degree of “buy-in” by those officials who are tasked to implement the programme.

- Quarterly meetings with suppliers will improve communication with them and may impact on the quality of service provided by them.

Financial management

- The NSNP Unit at the provincial office may need to have a person with accounting experience and qualifications to monitor and track payments and expenditure for this programme.

Institutional arrangements

- 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.

