Evaluation of the School Nutrition Programme

National Report: South Africa

May 2008

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

This report presents a National summary of the findings and recommendations arising from the evaluation. The nine individual provincial reports are included as appendices to this report. The provincial reports have been reviewed and signed off by the respective NSNP management within each provincial Department.

Our evaluation took place between November 2007 and February 2008 and covered the financial years from 2004/05 to 2006/07. The assessments conducted focussed upon data assessments, interviews and site visits to schools in all provinces.

The project was commissioned by the National Department of Education and funded by UNICEF.
The Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) was introduced in 1994 as one of the Presidential lead projects under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). 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 10 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 important education outcomes of the intervention as well as 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 pre-requisite for successful and sustainable school-based Programmes.

The NSNP completed a cycle of three years under the management of Department of Education. The national guidelines (NSNP Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual, January 2004) were adopted by all provinces. Key elements of the guidelines included:

- An outline of provincial responsibilities in monitoring and implementing the NSNP;
- Minimum requirements regarding feeding days (156 days) and time (before 10h00),
- Establishing standard menu options including cooked and non-cooked options,
- Provision of the necessary utensils to schools for food preparation,
- Implementation of effective procurement strategies,
- Establishing proper business planning and financial management systems,
- Give preference to women’s community-based organizations as service providers,
- Facilitating the development of food gardens,
- Supporting nutrition education through the curricular activities in Life Orientation,
- Implementing a monitoring system to ensure regular feeding, food quality and safety as well as an appropriate information system.

The guidelines also stipulated that:

- Provinces may elect to supplement the NSNP conditional grant with funds from their budgets,
- Provinces must submit an annual business plan in order to access funds and fulfill all financial management requirements provided in the Public Financial Management Act.

According to the Terms of Reference for the Evaluation the objectives of the NSNP are:

- 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.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Evaluation Process
The evaluation process comprised 3 main components and included both qualitative and quantitative elements. The project brief and timeframes required a focused approach to ensure relevance and verification of assessment findings. Firstly, key stakeholder interviews were carried out at provincial, district and school levels. Secondly, a school survey was carried out in a nationally representative sample of 271 schools. Thirdly, 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. The main aim of these interviews was to get a clear insight into Programme achievements and challenges for the period under review.

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 of the Programme in schools.

Table 1: Distribution of sample size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Urban Schools</th>
<th>Rural Schools</th>
<th>Total Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape Total</td>
<td>2451452</td>
<td>398315</td>
<td>38.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-State Total</td>
<td>2016016</td>
<td>690764</td>
<td>74.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng Total</td>
<td>8723381</td>
<td>456684</td>
<td>95.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu Natal Total</td>
<td>4263415</td>
<td>5162602</td>
<td>45.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga Total</td>
<td>1198962</td>
<td>2064009</td>
<td>36.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape Total</td>
<td>689971</td>
<td>210239</td>
<td>76.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo Total</td>
<td>540295</td>
<td>4561262</td>
<td>10.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West Total</td>
<td>1285806</td>
<td>1995278</td>
<td>39.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape Total</td>
<td>4061229</td>
<td>463104</td>
<td>89.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>25230527</td>
<td>19589257</td>
<td>56.29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 the table below.

The rural and urban school samples were then randomly selected from a DOE 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 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 DOE 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

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

The table above shows that a total of eighteen rural and twelve urban schools were visited.

### 3.2 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 for the schools in their jurisdiction that are 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 specific areas were used in Gauteng.

The randomness of sampling was affected by time constraints. The sample of schools was randomly selected from within the 3 districts referred to above, to ensure that the travel time of one day was possible. Furthermore, schools identified for visits were also randomly selected – but within the three districts identified.

We would like to thank all provinces and schools in the way they supported us in completing the project.
4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: OVERARCHING CONCLUSIONS

Data from the school survey, related to the objectives, is presented in the Outcomes and Outputs section at the end of the report. Information from interviews with managers and nutrition coordinators at provincial, district and school levels as well as observations made during school visits, are presented together with the school survey data, in each of the provincial reports attached. Together, these sources of information were used to draw the conclusions regarding the extent to which the objectives of the Programme are being met, which are summarised below. In addition, we reviewed other reviews and reports about the Programme.

An overall summary is provided below. The remainder of this report and the individual provincial reports provide greater detail, clarity and insight. Significant variations between provinces do exist.

4.1 Contribute to enhanced learning capacity through school feeding

This evaluation concludes that despite operational constraints, most provinces demonstrated that they are reaching the majority of targeted learners, complying with the provincially required number of feeding days, and for the most part, complying with required menus. In all provinces at least 98% of schools in the survey sample were feeding all target learners and in seven provinces 100% of sample schools were feeding on all required feeding days (in Limpopo and Free State 99% of schools were feeding on all required days in 2006/7). In six provinces more than 90% of sample schools complied with menu options. Interviews with management and school visits supported these survey findings.

Across the board all provinces have functional supply chain management systems in place that ensure that targeted schools are provided with food products. All provinces are prioritising quintile 1 and 2 (the poorest) schools for participation in the Programme and reaching targeted learners in these schools. Furthermore, despite operational challenges experienced by some provinces, all have established provincial menu options though full compliance remains a challenge for several provinces. Northern Cape and Western Cape performed particularly well on all of these indicators which may be related to effective supply chain management and systems in place for monitoring the Programme at district level. Overall, we are able to conclude that the Programme is making an important contribution to enhanced learning capacity.

It should be noted though, that various challenges do exist for most provinces and will need to be considered in order to make the Programme fully sustainable in the long term.

Challenges relate generally to poor compliance with the required 10h00 feeding time and, in some instances, to issues around the quality and quantity of food delivered by suppliers to schools. This in turn impacts on the ability of schools to comply with menu options. Eastern Cape, North West, Free State, Limpopo and Mpumalanga face challenges in this regard. It would appear that many key role players in several of the provinces are not sufficiently aware of the importance of early feeding to ensure optimal impact on learners’ active learning capacity. Also, current monitoring and communication with suppliers in many provinces is not yet sophisticated enough to identify and rectify underperformance of suppliers.
4.2 **Generate food production and economic activities in school communities in order to improve household food security**

It is evident from findings of the school survey, interviews at all levels as well as school visits that Programme outputs related to the establishment of food gardens, related economic activities and community participation are at an early stage of development. Only three provinces, Free State, Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal, had 50% of sample schools with active food gardens. This is not surprising given that Programme objectives directly related to the feeding of children have been prioritised over those with indirect impacts on learning – such as food production. There is, however, positive growth in the number of food gardens as well as the selling of produce. In both Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape the percentage of sample schools with food gardens increased from around 12% in 2004/5 to close to 45% in 2006/7. This reflects increased attention being given to this objective by provinces.

4.3 **Strengthen nutrition education for the school community**

Interviews, school visits and survey findings concur that the objective to strengthen nutrition education is being well met in all provinces through curricula activities as part of Life Skills at schools. It should be noted that although provincial reports show nutrition education well integrated into the curricula, subject material used at schools was not assessed.
The following are learning observations arising from the findings of this project. They should be considered as recommendations and issues for management consideration where appropriate and could provide useful checklist for managers to plan delivery and assess performance going forward.

5.1 Common Issues and Challenges

5.1.1 Introduction
We have provided below insight into common issues and challenges emerging from all provinces. Full provincial context is provided in the individual provincial reports and summaries but there are clear and common traits emerging from an overall national perspective.

5.1.2 Targeting
The efficiency and effectiveness of targeting of those schools that should be on the NSNP was viewed differently by provinces. In interviews, a number of provinces reported concern over inappropriate classification of schools through the current quintile system. This was borne out in several school visits where the classification of the school did not appear aligned with the poverty level of the community in which it is located. The system for classifying the poverty level of schools includes weighting the schools according to school related as well as community related criteria. Given the range of investment in schools in the last 10 years, there is concern that schools’ characteristics such as building materials, water and electricity, are no longer consistent with the poverty level of the children attending the school or, with the community in which some of the schools are located.

It is evident that the majority of provinces wish to target as many schools and learners and on as many days as possible. However when factoring in a financial perspective, most provinces can only achieve this aim if they keep the cost per learner per day low thus compromising on the quality and quantity of food items served to learners. The cost per learner per day varies in provinces from R1.00 in KwaZulu Natal to R1.39 in the Western Cape.

Learning Observation: There is a need to review the current quintile system to ensure consistency and accuracy in application. It would appear that community related criteria may provide a better indication of poverty level than school related criteria. Consideration however needs to be given to the now frequent phenomenon of transporting children in to more affluent communities from neighbouring poor communities – to ensure that these children are not excluded from the Programme.

5.1.3 Food Quality
Although the quality of food delivered to schools in most provinces was reported to be of an acceptable standard, schools in the Free State as well as the Eastern Cape reported poor quality maize meal, beans and stale bread. This raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of monitoring of suppliers’ compliance to tender specifications.
Learning Observation: Suppliers of food must be monitored closely through appropriate contract management processes. While appropriate monitoring systems and tools are in place at district level that succeed in identifying non-compliance of suppliers regarding food quality, the process of reporting incidents to province and application of appropriate remedial action is not implemented. Typically provinces have in place disciplinary procedures for non-compliance with tender specifications. Communication between district offices and province regarding non-compliance as well as follow up by province in simplifying, making accessible to districts and applying established disciplinary procedures needs to be improved.

5.1.4 Menu compliance
Although the school survey found that the majority of schools complied with the prescribed menus, our observations when visiting schools did not always support the survey results. For example, some schools were observed not serving the correct food items as per the provincially prescribed menus. Also, portion sizes weighed did not always comply with the requirements. The importance of compliance with menu items and combinations needs to be emphasised to both service providers and school nutrition coordinators, given that this can potentially impact on the planned nutrient levels intended.

Learning Observation: More rigorous reviews of menu compliance are encouraged. Again while menu compliance is typically integrated into the monitoring tools as a key performance indicator, insufficient priority and follow-up is accorded to this aspect. Reasons for non-compliance need to be more clearly identified and recorded and routine communication of these to province needs to be improved. In several provinces improving on staff shortages at provincial and district level, as discussed in 5.1.6 below, will contribute substantially to improving the impact of monitoring systems on menu compliance.

5.1.5 Feeding time
The poor compliance with the required 10h00 feeding time observed during school visits may impact on active learning capacity and therefore undermines the overall performance of the Programme. There are several challenges in ensuring compliance. These include ignorance regarding the importance of early feeding, buy in from stakeholders, reluctance to change school timetables and the time taken to prepare the food, especially in schools with large numbers of learners. It should however be noted that despite the above challenges, schools in the Northern Cape comply 100% and compliance in KwaZulu Natal has improved to 80% in 2006/7.

Learning Observation: The importance of complying with the 10h00 feeding time needs to be reinforced at provincial, district and school levels. A key intervention recommended at provincial level for improving compliance is eliciting buy-in from Circuit Managers responsible for approving adjustments to school time tables. This collaboration should be reinforced at district and school level on an ongoing basis through routine district office monitoring of the Programme.

5.1.6 Lack of sufficient staff
The lack of sufficient staff reported in the Eastern Cape, Free State and Northern Cape and KwaZulu Natal is impacting on the effective and efficient implementation of the Programme. The human resources capacity is discussed in the individual provincial reports. Given the shift in vision for the Programme at national level from a temporary to a sustained long-term intervention, the appointment of permanent staff dedicated to the Programme is warranted.

Learning Observation: Human resource capacity directly impacts upon Programme delivery and management. The appointment of permanent staff dedicated to the Programme at provincial and
district level is, therefore, strongly recommended. Ideal numbers of staff at provincial level are difficult to recommend given the different supply chain management systems, numbers of suppliers and related work, per province. However, a minimum of one deputy director level manager is considered necessary for strategic level decision making as well as sufficient financial and clerical support to Programme management. At district level, the appointment of sufficient staff to ensure a minimum of one quarterly monitoring visit per school, using a comprehensive monitoring tool that meets national requirements, is recommended.

Internship programmes such as those initiated by Gauteng whereby Food and Beverage graduates from the Hotel School are appointed to the Programme on an honorarium basis for a one year period, have contributed to improved human resource capacity and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in district offices, although only in pockets across the province. It is, however, important that permanent Programme staff are in place before embarking on such a programme, to ensure interns are appropriately supported and supervised.

5.1.7 Food gardens
Findings of the school survey show that although most schools do not currently have food gardens, the percentage of schools that do have, has increased annually over the evaluation period in most provinces. This finding is supported by school visits as well as management interviews. Challenges mentioned by provinces in establishing and sustaining food gardens at schools are:
- Lack of basic resources, fencing, seed and garden implements
- Lack of support and commitment from School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and parents
- Lack of water, poor quality of soil
- Pests ranging from pigs and rats to snakes
- Theft and vandalism
- Unsustainability of established vegetable gardens

Learning Observation: Key success factors need to be identified to guide the process of making food gardens work. A key initiative from the NSNP office in DOE has been the provision of Assistant Director posts in each of provinces, to focus on this component. While a single post provides limited support provincially there is evidence from district interviews as well as school visits that where these facilitators are active, the number of schools with food gardens substantially increases. The appointment at district level of expertise to facilitate the development of food gardens is considered central to the process of raising the priority of this Programme objective. In addition, the provision of resources such as seed and gardening implements is necessary to support implementation.

5.1.1 Community participation
Challenges regarding community participation reported in management interviews and school visits across most provinces are that there is a resistance by communities to become more involved unless they are remunerated. In addition, the getting to and from a school is often cited as a concern. Despite the central role played by food handlers in Programme service delivery in terms of food preparation, ensuring hygienic conditions and monitoring quality of food products, they are currently paid a very small honorarium. This differs per province ranging from between R250 per month in the Western Cape to R500 per month in the Free State.

Learning Observation: Advocating for provincial support for the Programme by formalising the role of food handlers by creating jobs that pay a minimum wage is recommended as a key intervention in consolidating existing Programme achievements, ensuring sustainability and contributing to local economic development.
5.1.2 Poor record keeping
Record keeping at district level was generally found to be poor in all provinces. Where records were found, information relating to progress at schools was incomplete. Monitoring forms are frequently completed during school visits but not filed. Poor filing systems for information gathered frequently relate to a lack of systems for ongoing analysis of information and application of this to Programme development at provincial level. The reason for filing and storing information is therefore not immediately obvious to staff. Overall, poor record keeping reflects weakness in the monitoring and evaluation system.

*Learning Observation:* Record keeping is a common challenge and often linked to human resource capacity availability. The establishment of simple manual filing systems are encouraged while access to computerized systems is developed. In addition, it is recommended that provincial programme offices monitor systems for record keeping in district offices and ensure analysis of data collected.

5.1.3 Support for orphans and vulnerable children
Systems to support orphans and vulnerable children such as those with disabilities or from single-parent households were found during school visits to be in place in most schools, though through a broader network than that offered by the Programme. Typically, a social worker based either in the school or community is responsible for arranging a grant for caregivers of these children. While formal programmes to support these children beyond the grant process were seldom in place, informal arrangements by teachers to provide clothing, school uniforms and food over and above that provided by the Programme were frequently reported during schools visits. All of the schools visited reported that they were aware of who these children were and ensured that they were included in the Nutrition Programme on a daily basis.

*Learning Observation:* While schools ensure that orphans and vulnerable children are included in the Nutrition Programme the multiple needs of these children extend beyond Programme objectives. However, increased prioritisation of the Programme objective related to food production and community participation has the potential to contribute to household food security for these children. The allocation of Programme resources for the development of school based projects that provide caretakers of orphans and vulnerable children with nutrition education as well as skills and support in developing food gardens and/or income generating activities is recommended.

5.2 Successful practices
During the course of the review, we observed a number of practices that contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme. We believe that it is important to share these practices between provinces.

5.2.1 Leadership in management and communication
A high level of ownership due to the extent of participative management was clearly evident in one of the provinces. In this province, district coordinators are actively involved in designing and implementing a range of systems for the Programme. It was also evident that the quality of leadership at provincial as well as district levels was outstanding. All managers interviewed were driven, passionate about the Programme and skilled at the jobs they are doing.

*Learning Observation:* Formal recognition of the Programme within Department of Education management structures is important. Active Department of Education management involvement is beneficial and provides better support to those individuals running the Programme.
5.2.2 Monitoring and evaluation

A formal system for monitoring and evaluating the Programme in one province was designed and implemented by the NSNP Programme manager, based on the national tool, together with nutrition coordinators in each district. Key performance indicators have been identified and performance against these is recorded on a tailor-made form during school visits and then reported on in monthly reports from district to province. There is a high degree of ownership of the tool among nutrition coordinators in the districts, all of whom highlighted their participation in the design.

Learning Observation: A strong district level monitoring and evaluation system to ensure optimal delivery of services is essential to the success of the Programme. As previously mentioned a minimum of one quarterly visit per school is necessary to adequately support, track and guide development of the Programme in schools.

5.2.3 Supply chain management

The tender system used in one province is well designed to ensure strong provincial coordination while supporting local economic development. The emphasis on using local service providers has contributed substantially to the empowerment and involvement of the community in the Programme. By using this procurement model, the province has succeeded, to a large extent, in steering clear of potential problems such as quality of food, payments of food handlers and the lack of sufficient storage facilities at schools. Small quantities of food supplies are bought from local shops at regular intervals, sometimes as often as once a week. As the service provider carries out the duties of food handlers, additional payments to food handlers by the province and the administrative burden associated with these payments, is avoided. The total contract amount per service provider for one school is negligible thereby reducing incentives for fraud with regard to the adjudicating process.

Learning Observation: A procurement system with strong provincial coordination that promotes community involvement in the delivery of services at schools increases the budgetary value of the Programme.

5.2.4 Human resources capacity

Several provinces succeeded in ensuring sufficient human resource capacity to implement the Programme. The areas where insufficient human resources impacted on the delivery of the Programme are the late payment of suppliers, delayed transfers of funds to schools, poor management of expenditure reports at schools and weak monitoring and evaluation systems.

Learning Observation: It is important that systems to deliver the Programme should be aligned to human resource availability and capacity. While a minimum of deputy director level management at provincial level is essential to guide strategic decision making, experience in most provinces shows that operational staff on the ground that work full time in monitoring the Programme, do not need to appointed against management posts. Appropriate support and supervision of these staff at district level is though important. Multi-disciplinary managers responsible for a range of Programmes such as HIV/AIDS, and special needs, as observed in Gauteng, Western Cape and Free State, is considered to be effective.

5.2.5 School principal commitment

A high level of involvement of the school principals not only in supervising the provision of quality food products but also in the establishment and sustaining of food gardens with community participation was observed at several schools. Whilst the vast majority of schools participating in the Programme have appointed an educator to play the role of nutrition coordinator to oversee the Programme, involvement
of principals varies significantly. Schools with principals who were actively involved stood out from the rest, particularly with regards to establishing food gardens and facilitating community participation. For most educators the implementation at school level is an add-on responsibility. Despite this, they still fulfil their duties with commendable commitment. These educators are playing an important role in ensuring that the objectives of the Programme are being met.

Learning Observation: The active involvement and commitment of school principals and educators is essential in ensuring that the Programme objectives are met. For this reason inclusion of these responsibilities in the job descriptions of both is recommended with monitoring of involvement by school governing boards. Involvement of Circuit Managers in taking these steps is encouraged with ongoing tracking by district level Programme staff.

5.2.6 Preparation of food at schools
The drive by the National Department of Education and provinces to ensure that food handlers receive training in food safety and preparation of food has clearly paid off at a large number of schools where the preparation and serving was observed. The basic conditions with regard to the preparation and serving of food at these schools were good. In the Louw, Bekker, and Wentzel-Viljoen evaluation (2001), it was reported that 56% of all volunteer workers received no training with regard to basic hygiene in preparation of food, how to prepare food (63%) or how to mix food items (64%).

Learning Observation: The focus on continued training of food handlers at school level is extremely important to ensure that food safety standards are complied with.
6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: LEADING AND ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES

The different systems i.e. Financial Management, Supply Chain Management and Administrative System were evaluated to ascertain whether allocated resources were utilised effectively and efficiently. It is important to note that no one system would be appropriate for each and every province because of every province’s unique circumstances. Each province must look at its own strengths and weaknesses, and design a system that best meets their capacity and operational processes. Leading and alternative practices in provinces are highlighted below.

6.1 Financial Management

Overall, based on management interviews in all provinces, it would appear that financial systems do have the expected checks and balances at all levels. There are however, variations in the way the systems are implemented and utilised which could lead to mismanagement. Given this project was not a financial audit, we have not attempted to evaluate such matters.

A key distinguishing feature in the type of financial system implemented in the provinces is the extent to which a central or decentralised payment function has been adopted. In eight of the nine provinces payments of suppliers are centralised at provincial level. The ability to use a decentralised approach effectively would appear to be directly linked to a Provinces’ ability to align People, Process and Systems. For example, the decentralisation of the payment function to district level in the Limpopo Province is reported to have significantly improved the financial system by reducing the turn around time of payments to suppliers. All other provinces opted for the centralisation of payment functions. The key issue arising from this is the lengthy and often unnecessarily cumbersome process where claims are verified at district level and then submitted to the provincial office for further verification and payments.

6.2 Supply Chain Management

The procurement models used in the provinces are either the formal provincial tender system or the decentralised school based system, frequently referred to as the quotation system.

**Tender system**

Provinces using the tender system appoint suppliers at a provincial level in line with relevant procurement procedures. Suppliers are awarded contracts to deliver services to a small or large cluster of schools and are paid by the provincial office.

The tender system used in KwaZulu Natal and the North West differs from the tender system in other provinces as it focuses strongly on community empowerment by appointing suppliers from the local community. Depending on the number of learners at the school and proximity of the schools to one another, more than one supplier may be chosen or one supplier may provide service to more than one school in the local area.
The main strengths of the provincial tender system are that less government resources are required to manage suppliers and administer claims, suppliers can offer better prices as a result of bulk buying and the tender price is fixed for a predetermined period.

One of the weaknesses of the tender system is that suppliers contracted on the tender system are very seldom from the local community and as clusters of schools are assigned to suppliers for the delivery of Programme services, only a few suppliers are benefiting economically from the Programme. Another disadvantage of assigning a large number of schools to suppliers is that suppliers need to have bridging funds available to ensure that services can be delivered before claims are submitted. The way in which the tender system is structured in the North West and KwaZulu Natal however, ensures that a large number of local suppliers receive economic benefit. Although the management of suppliers should require less resources and should be facilitated by the tender specifications with regard to food quality requirements, it is a concern that some schools reported the delivery of poor quality of food by suppliers on the tender system.

Decentralised procurement model

The procurement model in use in the Northern Cape is a decentralised school based system where schools receive funds directly transferred into their bank accounts, procure food directly from their own selection of suppliers by means of quotation requests and pay suppliers directly for services delivered.

The main advantages of the quotation system are that suppliers are from the local community and numerous suppliers receive economic benefit from the Programme. It was also reported that the locality of suppliers ensures that fresh produce can be delivered on a regular basis.

The quotation system requires substantial resources to manage suppliers and administrate claims. There is also an increased risk of fraud since advances are paid out to schools and there are typically time delays before the books are closed. In this regard it was reported that the current non-compliance to reporting (submission of claims) in the Northern Cape poses a serious risk to suspension of the Programme at certain schools.

From the above it can be concluded that the tender system is generally well designed to ensure strong provincial co-ordination and accountability at all levels. The school based quotation system, although having the advantages of supporting local communities, poses a risk in terms of accountability of schools. Based on economic scales, government resources required, quality control, control over the increase of prices and the limited risk of fraud, the tender system is currently preferred over the quotation system. From our observations, until capacity is sufficient to support the Programme at school level, any plan to decentralise should be carefully planned and implemented.

6.3 Human Resources

In addressing human resources requirements for the implementation of the Programme, provinces have adopted two different approaches. In some provinces permanent staff have been appointed for the Programme on a full time basis while other provinces appointed temporary staff including interns, contract workers or staff that are responsible for an number of different Programmes.

A study, Reviewing Ten Years of the School Nutrition Programme by Wildeman and Mbebetho (2005) provides background to the non-expansion of staff levels for the then RDP projects including the nutrition Programme. The post-1994 government had to address development and redistribution but at the same time deal with the public finance excesses of the previous government by prioritising expenditure away from consumption expenditure to development and capital expenditure. Thus, while Programmes
such as the nutrition Programme were established, provinces had to avoid an escalation of debt and further expansion burdens through non-expansion of staff levels for designated RDP projects. The study finds that the present conditional grant framework still does not conceptualise adequate staff as a necessary pre-condition for the effective and efficient implementation of grant funding. Concerns regarding the shortage of human resources to effectively implement and monitor the Programme were also recently raised at the Education Portfolio Committee meeting of 15 May 2007. This review highlights the same concerns.

It would appear that while permanent appointments of dedicated staff have a financial implication, there are benefits for Programme management. The need for sufficient human resources to implement the Programme effectively and efficiently will therefore not diminish and permanent solutions still have to be considered in many Provinces.

6.4 Programme Management
The programme management approaches followed in provinces are mainly either top down or bottom up approaches. It is evident that there is a high level of ownership of the Programme by all relevant stakeholders in those provinces where a participative, inclusive and transparent approach was followed in the planning, communication and decision making processes.

The lack of human resources capacity and the lengthy procedure from district to provincial level to process and pay claims are seen as impacting on Programme management. In the Western Cape, where sufficient permanent staff dedicated to the Programme were appointed, late payments to suppliers are the exception to the rule.
7 MAIN REPORT: KEY FINDINGS

A ‘snap shot’ view of how well provinces are meeting the Programme objectives and how efficient and effective their systems are, is provided below. A detailed review is provided in the Provincial reports.

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A summary of findings on each objective and system is presented below.

1. Enhance learning capacity
Despite challenges related to feeding time and menu compliance, provinces are meeting this objective relatively well.

2. Facilitate food production and related economic activities
These activities are still in the process of being developed and have not been considered a priority.
3. **Nutrition education**
Schools in all provinces have integrated nutrition education into their curricula, as part of the Life Skills Programme.

4. **Financial management system**
Although expected checks and balances are in place, the lack of sufficient human resources in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Free State and the Northern Cape is impacting on the effectiveness and efficiency of the financial management system. This results in late payments of suppliers and transfers to schools. In addition, the non-reporting of schools in the Northern Cape also impacts negatively on the Programme.

5. **Supply Management System**
While effective systems are in place in several provinces, the lack of human resources, vehicles for monitoring, poor quality of food delivered by suppliers and non-reporting by schools on the decentralised school based system, undermines the effectiveness of the Supply Management System in the Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape.

6. **Administrative Systems**

   **Human Resources**
   HR capacity varies between the provinces. Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Western Cape have sufficient capacity to meet current Programme priorities. There is, however, a lack of sufficient human resources in the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Northern Cape and KwaZulu Natal.

   **Planning**
   Planning processes are in place in all provinces but the inflexibility of budget to accommodate enrolment fluctuations and increases in food and transport costs is impacting on the effectiveness of the process in KwaZulu Natal and inputs from districts are not sufficiently informing the business plan process.

   **Monitoring and evaluation**
   While there are basic systems for monitoring and evaluation in all provinces, they vary in level of development. Monitoring of and communication with suppliers in many provinces is not yet sophisticated enough to identify and rectify underperformance. The lack of sufficient vehicles in Limpopo and the lack of human resources in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng undermine the effectiveness of the systems in the two provinces.

   **Targeting**
   There is good compliance with the national system for targeting poor learners in all of the provinces. However, the national system used to classify schools into quintiles, needs to be reviewed, since schools are not classified in a consistent and accurate manner. Current targeting methods in the KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, Western Cape and Eastern Cape are reportedly not always effective in ensuring that all deserving learners are fed. This is frequently related to the approach of targeting only a portion of primary schools learners within quintile 1 and 2 in schools.

   **Institutional arrangement**
   In general, the location of the Programme within the Department of Education in all provinces has enhanced the effective implementation of the Programme. Although there does appear to be insufficient integration of the Programme in district offices is the Eastern Cape and in some districts in the Western Cape and Gauteng.

   **Communication**
   Formal as well as informal communication in provinces generally appears to be good. Improvements in communication between province, districts, schools and suppliers, can however, be made in KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and the Northern Cape.
The following are highlighted as key risks to the effective implementation of the Programme:

8.1 **Timeous payments of suppliers and food handlers**
Staff capacity at provincial level in the Eastern Cape, North West, Northern Cape and KwaZulu Natal needs to be addressed as delays in payments and transfer of funds are impacting negatively on the Programme. Several incidents were reported where the Programme was interrupted due to late payments and transfers to schools.

8.2 **Insufficient and ineffective monitoring**
Lack of sufficient resources appears to be the main reason for the reported insufficient monitoring. Monitoring and evaluation in the Eastern Cape are currently viewed to be insufficient which may be due to the limited availability of staff. Limpopo has sufficient staff but has a severe lack of vehicles to effectively monitor the Programme. The main concern is the efficiency of monitoring. Although monitoring is reported to take place on a regular basis in the Free State, schools visited complained of poor quality food delivered on a continuous basis.

8.3 **Poor service delivery by suppliers**
The poor quality of food delivered to schools in the Free State and Eastern Cape is not only undermining Programme delivery but also raises concerns that while current monitoring and communication systems with suppliers are in place, they may not be sophisticated enough to identify and rectify under-performance of suppliers.

8.4 **Non-reporting by schools**
Non-compliance with reporting requirements in the Northern Cape is seen as a serious risk. Non-reporting by schools may lead to disclaimers by the Auditor General and therefore a suspension of the Programme. The delays in receiving monthly expenditure reports from schools place tremendous pressure on district officials who have to travel to schools on a regular basis to ensure that all expenditures are appropriately supported. Furthermore, it becomes almost impossible for district offices to determine if schools are keeping within budgets when spending. As a result, there are many cases of over and under-expenditure.
9

MAIN REPORT:
OUTCOMES

9.1 Introduction
For the purposes of the evaluation, Outcomes were defined as Programme achievements that have a direct impact on learning. These include whether the targeted number of learners were reached by the Programme in the evaluation period, whether feeding took place on the minimum required number of days and at the required time. Given that these are key indicators of whether the objectives of the Programme are being met they were central to the school survey. The findings of the survey along with other sources of information on these indicators are reported below.

9.2 Findings

9.2.1 Targeted learners fed
The figure below shows the percentage of targeted learners that were reached by the Programme during the evaluation period:

Figure 1: % of schools feeding all targeted learners (excluding schools with no records)

It is evident from the above figure that in six of the nine provinces (Free State, KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo, North West, Western Cape and Northern Cape) all schools fed 100% and above of all targeted learners in 2005/06, with Gauteng 99.7% and Mpumalanga 99.4%. In 2006/07 schools in five provinces reached 100% of their targets and above (Gauteng, North West, Western Cape, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape. Free State reached 98.5%, KwaZulu Natal 99.9%, Limpopo 99.5% and Mpumalanga 98.9%. However, dilution of food portions where more than the targeted number of learners is fed is a concern.
9.2.2 Compliance with number of feeding days

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

Figure 2: % of schools complying with feeding days (excluding schools with no records)

The figure above shows that in 2005/06 and 2006/07 all provinces, except KwaZulu Natal (95.7% and 98.9% respectively) and Limpopo (98.3% and 99.5%) served food on 100% and above of the provincially targeted number of feeding days. All sample schools visited during the period of evaluation confirmed compliance with the provincially prescribed number of feeding days which supports the good results of the school survey.

9.2.3 Compliance with prescribed menus

The figure below shows the results of the school survey with regard to the percentage of schools complying with the prescribed menus:

Figure 3: % of schools complying with prescribed menu options (excluding schools with no records)

The figure above shows that in 2005/06 and 2006/07 all provinces, except KwaZulu Natal (95.7% and 98.9% respectively) and Limpopo (98.3% and 99.5%) served food on 100% and above of the provincially targeted number of feeding days. All sample schools visited during the period of evaluation confirmed compliance with the provincially prescribed number of feeding days which supports the good results of the school survey.
The figure above indicates that most provinces had good compliance with the prescribed menus with Gauteng and Northern Cape complying 100% in all three financial years. The lowest compliance levels were Limpopo (75%) in 2005/06 and North West (88.9%) in 2006/07. The good results in the Free State i.e. 92.9% in 2004/05 and 2005/06 and 93.8% in 2006/07 were however not supported by observations during school visits, where none of the sample schools complied with the menu options. No data was available for Limpopo and the Western Cape for 2004/05 and Eastern Cape for 2006/07. Difficulty complying with provincial menu options is frequently related to failure of suppliers to deliver required quality and quantity of food products.

9.2.4 Compliance with the required time of feeding

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

Figure 4: % of schools complying with required time of feeding (excluding schools with no records)

Source: School survey

It is evident from the above figure that only the Northern Cape complied 100% with the national objective that all learners should be fed before 10h00 in the three financial years though KwaZulu Natal also performed relatively well with 78.8% in 2005/06, 82.5% in 2006/07 and 80.7% in 2006/07. It would appear that more emphasis is placed on the importance of early feeding in these two provinces.

There was a drop in compliance in the Western Cape from 80% compliance in 2005/06 to 63% in 2006/07. Reasons for schools failing to comply with the prescribed time of feeding were generally related to the fact that the actual time of serving is determined by the school’s break time and that educators are reluctant to change the time tables. Poor record keeping is also evident where Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and the Western Cape could not provide relevant data for one or more financial years.

9.3 Conclusion

Assuming that reaching the targeted number of learners, complying with the provincially required number of feeding days and compliance with required serving times are accurate indicators that the Programme is contributing to enhanced learning, it may be concluded that provinces are performing relatively well. It is evident from the above analysis that the main area of weakness in Programme serv-
ice delivery is compliance with required feeding times. A large percentage of schools are not complying with the provincially prescribed time of feeding which impacts negatively on the effectiveness of the Programme. In addition, in some instances, issues with the quality of food delivered by suppliers to schools, also undermine overall performance of the Programme.

Recommendations to overcome these challenges as outlined in the report include increasing awareness at all levels of the importance of early feeding and eliciting buy-in from circuit managers to adjust school timetables in order to support early feeding. Interventions proposed to improve the quality of services delivered by suppliers include improving communication between district and provincial Programme offices and with suppliers. They also include supplier compliance and enforcing closer compliance with established tender disciplinary procedures in cases of severe or repeated non-compliance.
For the purposes of this evaluation Outputs of the Programme were defined as achievements of the Programme that impact indirectly on learning. Outcomes of the Programme, discussed in the previous section, were regarded as the achievements of the Programme that impact more directly on learning, namely the percentage of targeted learners fed and compliance with minimum feeding days. Outputs of the Programme were identified as:

- The presence of active food gardens in school,
- Economic activity related to food gardens and
- Community participation in the running of the Programme in the school.

Assessment of all of these achievements was included in the school survey, the findings of which are presented below, along with other sources of information:

10.1 Findings

10.1.1 Active food gardens

The figure below shows the percentage of schools with food gardens active during the evaluation period:

Figure 5: % of schools with active food gardens (excluding schools with no records)

It is evident from the above figure that although most schools do not currently have food gardens, the percentage of schools that do, has increased annually over the evaluation period in most provinces. This is likely to be due to the increased emphasis in the province on this Programme objective. High numbers of schools with food gardens reflected in the Western Cape in 2004 are due to the limited number of schools with records available for that year.
Challenges mentioned by provinces in establishing and sustaining food gardens at schools are:

- Lack of basic resources, fencing and garden implements
- Lack of support and commitments from School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and parents
- Lack of water
- Theft and vandalism
- Lack of sustainability of established vegetable gardens

10.1.1 **Schools with economic activity related to food gardens**

The figure below shows the percentage of schools with economic activity related to food gardens:

*Figure 6: % of schools with economic activity related to food gardens (excluding schools with no records)*

It is evident from the above figure that very little data is being kept by provinces regarding economic activity related to food gardens. Compared to the other provinces where very little economic activity related to food gardens existed, KwaZulu Natal did very well with an increase of 42.3% in 2004/05 to 58.9% in 2006/07. There is, however, a notable increase in economic activity in 2006/07 in other provinces with a reported 6.7% of schools with economic activity related to food gardens, 1.9% in Gauteng, 3.2% in Limpopo and 20% in the North West. This is probably related to the time required to set up food gardens successfully and the coordination necessary to facilitate community involvement and the selling of vegetables.

10.1.2 **Schools where community participates in the Programme**

The figure below shows the percentage of schools with community participation. Community participation, for purposes of the survey, was defined as the involvement of the local community in Programme activities, for no or minimal financial gain.
It is evident from the above table that the vast majority of schools over the whole evaluation period have had some form of community participation. This finding is based on the fact that most schools make use of food handlers or helpers from local communities to prepare and serve the food at schools. The apparent poor results in Limpopo are due merely to the fact that the province interpreted 'community participation' as excluding food handlers/Helpers.

10.2 Conclusion
As discussed earlier in the report, the above analysis shows that activities related to food production, income generation and community participation are not well advanced. Whilst many schools do not have active food gardens, there is some positive growth in the number of food gardens and the selling of produce. Compared to the performance in terms of the establishment of food gardens and related economic activities, community participation in the Programme fared well. This reflects the extensive involvement of food handlers in the food preparation process. There is still room for development of community participation in the Programme beyond this aspect.

Recommendations to improve performance of the Programme on this objective are proposed in the report. Based on the initial success of the limited number of Assistant Directors by national in the provinces to focus on the development of food production, further allocation of resources at district level is recommended. The appointment of skilled staff to support and facilitate school level food production activities is encouraged as well as the provision of seed and gardening implements.

In terms of community participation, advocating for provincial support for the Programme by formalising the role of food handlers by creating jobs that pay a minimum wage is recommended to ensure sustainability and contribute to local economic development.