



Connecting Farmers to Home Grown School Feeding

Connecting Farmers to Home Grown School Feeding

SNV

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organisation. Founded in the Netherlands 50 years ago, we have built a long-term, local presence in 38 of the poorest countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our global team of local and international advisors works with local partners to equip communities, businesses and organisations with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to increase their incomes and gain access to basic services – empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and guide their own development.

This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Eliana Vera
SNV USA

Dick Commandeur
SNV USA

Katherine Casey
SNV USA

September, 2016

Final Lessons from the Procurement Governance for Home Grown School Feeding project



Acknowledgements

The results and lessons presented in this concluding learning document would not have been possible without the diligent work and participation of the SNV project teams over the duration of the project in Ghana (Joshua Aboah, Alimata Abu, Sylvester Ekpe, Mawuko Fumey, Ernestine Sanogo, and Fati Seidu), Kenya (Tito Arunga, Janny Goedkoop, Leah Njeri, Eliud Nkunjia, David Makongo, and Matthews Wanjala), and Mali (Hapsatou Deme, Fily Diallo, Simbo Keita, Alassane Konaté, and Satta Laouali), in addition to those in a global role (Wan Lee, Mohammed Lukumanu, Paige Ober, and Jose Tegels). We also gratefully acknowledge the important contributions made by the project partners, community leaders, interns, and technical support organisations and consultants whom the project came to rely on, especially the contributions of procurement experts Temidayo Akenroye, John Brooks and Joseph Omollo; value chain experts Woody Maijers and Vijayender Nalla; and social accountability experts Sue Sadler and Ian Thomson. Finally, for their steadfast support and guidance, special thanks go to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation programme leadership and officers Arlene Mitchell, Alesha Black, Madeleine Meek, and Kate Lawyer.



Pupils eating a school meal in Accra, Ghana.

Contents

05 *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

08 *CHAPTER 1*
Introduction

12 *CHAPTER 2*
Improving the Public
Procurement Process

22 *CHAPTER 3*
Enhancing Supply Chain
Governance

36 *CHAPTER 4*
Building Social Accountability

44 *CHAPTER 5*
Conclusions

48 *REFERENCES*

Abbreviations

HGSF	Home Grown School Feeding
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
PG-HGSF	Procurement Governance for Home Grown School Feeding
PO	Producer Organisation
SHF	Smallholder Farmers
VfM	Value for Money

Figures

13	Figure 1: Tensions in Public Procurement Models
23	Figure 2: Supply Chains for the School Model in Kenya and Mali and the Caterer Model in Ghana
25	Figure 3: Supply Chain Stakeholders for HGSF: Agriculture and Education

Tables

14	Table 1: Results of PG-HGSF Procedures, Tools and Methodologies
31	Table 2: Impact of PG-HGSF PO Strengthening Intervention Areas
38	Table 3: Information Collection Tools Proposed for School Management Committees in Mali

Introduction



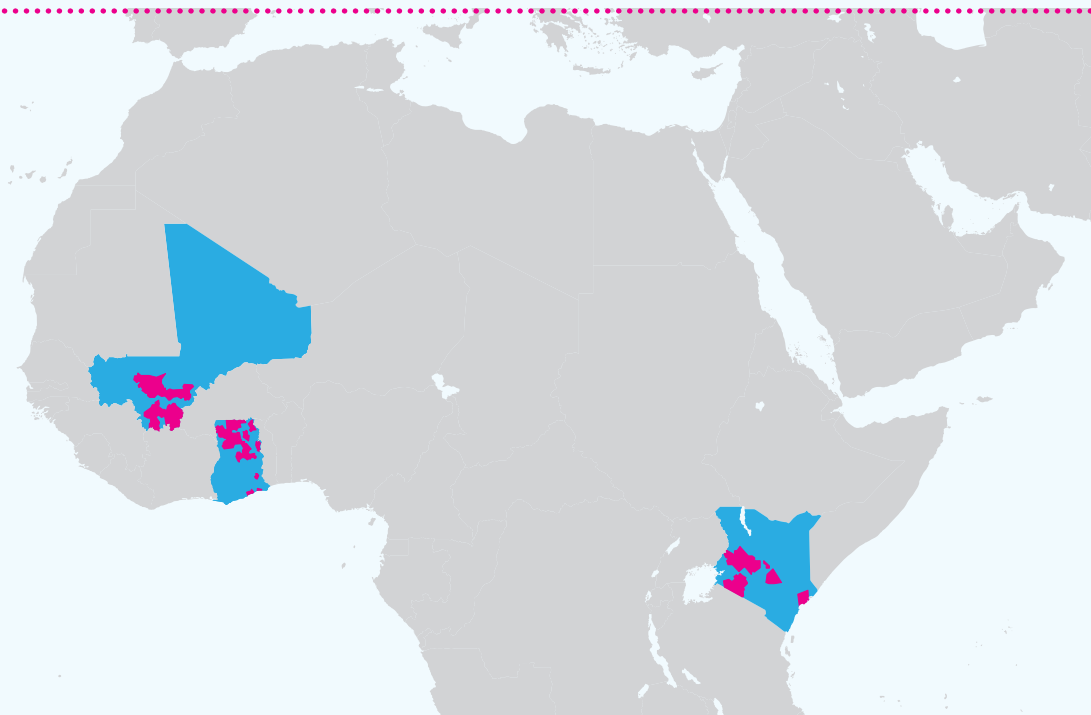
In March 2010, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation issued a call for concepts from a select group of international organisations to tackle issues of food procurement and smallholder farmer participation as suppliers to school feeding programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. Though the emerging Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programmes at the time had the potential to provide a market for local agricultural products and boost rural economies, the systems, standards, policies, and capacity around public procurement were ineffectual and worked against realizing that potential. The Foundation sought partners for finding ways to build greater transparency and accountability in procurement, distribution, and systems of recourse so that smallholder farmers and their families could effectively compete as school feeding programme suppliers and benefit from increased income and livelihood opportunities.

The project implemented by SNV in response to this challenge addressed the need for increased transparency and inclusion in the procurement systems, while at the same time acknowledging that smallholders need to strengthen their organisation, capacity, and consistency in the quality of their products if they are to have sustained participation as suppliers. The project also acknowledged the element of social accountability as an essential third requisite in ensuring transparency in the delivery of public services.

SNV's Procurement Governance for Home Grown School Feeding (PG-HGSF) project worked with the relatively new national school feeding programmes in Ghana, Kenya and Mali in a total of 50 selected districts. In each of these districts, the project undertook a set of integrated activities to involve stakeholders and identify obstacles to participation on both sides of the equation and, using a piloting approach, introduced ways to reduce or mitigate those barriers. A complementary set of activities addressing social accountability rounded out the interventions and introduced practical, participatory measures for communities and local authorities to ensure effective oversight of the programmes and increase transparency.



Project Geographic Areas



Defining the Problem

In establishing school feeding programmes, governments anticipate immediate impacts on school enrolment and attendance. Providing one meal a day is a powerful driver that brings low income children to school on a regular basis and leads to an increase in learning outcomes. School feeding programmes run for a fixed number of days per year and have a pre-determined food basket, representing an opportunity to benefit local smallholder farmers and producers by generating a structured and predictable demand for their products and thereby build the market and surrounding enabling systems. In enabling smallholder farmers to participate as suppliers to HGSF, the programmes can contribute to bringing local agriculture to the agenda of national economic development efforts.

In practice, however, the promise of the HGSF programme is difficult to deliver on. In Ghana, Kenya, and Mali, the procurement systems in place did not facilitate nor encourage smallholder involvement, despite the programmes' expressed intent, and smallholder farmers were not well prepared to compete effectively as suppliers even if given the opportunity to do so. An environment of distrust and uneven management of resources enveloped the programmes at the local level, leaving communities suspicious of those who were in charge and feeling distanced from decision-making. The net effect was that in the three countries in which the project operated, the participation of smallholder farmers as suppliers was negligible at best (Commandeur, 2012).

The Goal

The ultimate goal of the SNV PG-HGSF project was to generate an increase in the amount of smallholder farmer production purchased by school feeding programmes in Ghana, Kenya and Mali, a market that purchases US \$79 million in food annually (Casey and Commandeur, 2016). Related to this more quantifiable outcome was the expectation of positive effects on the incomes of farmer families, their modes of organisation and production, and their connection with the broader economy, private sector, and supporting institutions.

Additional outcomes beyond the project's main goals were more aspirational in nature. It was anticipated that the project, if successful in meeting the primary goals, would indirectly impact the following: the sustainability and scalability of HGSF; improved school feeding diet; increased income for smallholder farmers and access to other markets; new alliances formed by private sector, service providers, and smallholder farmers (SHFs) for other markets and products; and eventual replication of results in other countries and markets.

Coming to the end of five years of project implementation, we can say without reservation that it is indeed possible for smallholder farmers to sell to national school feeding programmes, which have important potential as emerging structured demand markets for local production. In the pilot districts of the three countries, the PG-HGSF project reports that more than 21,600 smallholder farmers (37% women) sold their products to school feeding, many for the first time, with an estimated value of US \$1.9 million in a three-year period. Furthermore, the project's capacity building efforts triggered producer organisations to start selling to other formal markets in addition to HGSF, leading to a combined sales of US \$3.8 million.

SNV’s Approach

These sales can be attributed to the project’s activities in the three countries, in which it applied an integrated approach to increase the amount of local food products purchased for school feeding through public procurement from smallholder farmers.

For each of the entry points, the project began with a search for information. It was clear at the outset that reliable data did not exist when it came to smallholder participation as suppliers and school feeding procurement and supply chains in general. It was also important to collect information on best practices and study the experiences of national school feeding programmes in other countries that had successfully met the goal of engaging smallholders as suppliers to ensure SNV’s interventions were built on prior experiences and addressed known gaps. Each barrier found by our teams was an opportunity to introduce pilot interventions to remove those obstacles to participation. At each point, and based on SNV long-standing practice, stakeholder meetings were held to discuss the information and produce joint plans of action reflecting the proposed interventions. While remaining flexible to be responsive to local situations, the project design did enable a three-country experience with comparable results.

Concentrating on the introduction of inclusive procurement practices, the procurement pilots were aimed at reducing perceived possible tensions between creating favourable conditions for a particular category of supplier and the need to uphold transparency. The supply chain strengthening pilots increased smallholder capacity to deliver, working with producer organisations and other actors to bring new skills, tools and connections. Finally, the introduction of social audits as new practices in social accountability engaged stakeholders in ensuring sustained and effective oversight of public investments.

The project leveraged existing resources and programmes of other civil society, private sector, and government actors. For example, extension services and other training conducted to increase production and quality, the existence of producer organisations, and an openness on the part financial institutions, procurement authorities, and legal environment were essential. This interaction with the development work of others is one of the success factors for the achievements of this project, while at the same time an important step to secure sustainability and scalability of the interventions introduced.

Document structure

Following the introduction are three chapters discussing the rationale behind each technical component and highlighting several of the project’s most successful interventions and overall achievements.

Chapter 2 describes the introduction of changes for the procurement side. The process looked for HGSF procurement and economic agents to become more accessible and supportive of smallholder participation in the school feeding programmes. This meant adjustments in procurement regulations, improving guidelines and procurement tools to become more inclusive, introducing improved monitoring mechanisms, and increasing the level of comfort for public officials to engage more openly and transparently with their communities. The project did this by modelling successful pro-smallholder procurement systems and ensuring that farmers in the pilot districts had access to them, and by generating sustained support for inclusive procurement by increasing policy makers’ and local procurement authorities’ knowledge and interaction with smallholder farmers.



Chapter 3 reflects on experiences with the farmer side, where it was necessary for them to become more market-oriented with regard to products, quality, quantity, and continuity. This meant that the project needed to introduce changes in attitude, organisation, capacity, and information in order for producer organisations to develop competitive proposals in response to tendering opportunities and deliver on these in a professional way. Interventions included facilitating matchmaking between procurers and suppliers, creating connections between school feeding and potential providers; and increasing private sector involvement in pro-smallholder strategies and involving service providers along the supply chain to HGSF, such as financial and non-financial institutions, to increasingly invest in the inclusion of smallholders.

In Chapter 4, the document addresses the changes needed to arrive at participatory governance of school feeding programmes on the part of local communities, and greater availability of information leading to stronger support for the programmes’ sustainability. To secure this, the project improved data and information flows to ensure that stakeholders learned new practices for pro-smallholder procurement governance at the local, regional, and national levels. Specifically, it built capacity in organizing and conducting social audits and creating the space for national policy dialogue to influence adoption and changes introduced by the project.

The project’s learning component provided a monitoring system for collecting data on results, documenting experiences during implementation, and disseminating the lessons through publications and events. This report reflects the lessons learned by the SNV team from the experience in implementing the PG-HGSF project over the course of five years. The report is compiled based on the project’s monitoring data, qualitative data from end-of project surveys with key stakeholders and project staff, and the documents produced through the project’s learning series. All documents in the project learning series are available through the project website, <http://www.snv.org/project/procurement-governance-home-grown-school-feeding>, and listed in the further reading section at the beginning of Chapters 2-4.

 *Sorghum became a local ingredient used in school meals in Mali.*

Improving the Public Procurement Process

2

Project Objective: Improve the HGSF procurement process and strengthen the capacity of all actors in order to ensure that smallholder farmers have access to HGSF programme structured market opportunities.

The project's baseline and supply chain analyses found that connecting smallholder farmers with school feeding was constrained by procurement (buyer) side challenges as well as supplier side challenges (see Chapter 3). The project identified the following challenges on the procurement side:

- Farmers do not receive information about procurement opportunities or tender announcements.
- The informal status of farmer organisations makes them ineligible as suppliers.
- The complexity of bidding procedures, proposals and other requirements are discouraging, especially for new suppliers.
- Required products, quantities, qualities, and timelines are not aligned with what local smallholder farmers can supply.
- The presence of a gender and cultural gap between public procurement officers and farmers.
- The expectation that suppliers can pre-finance delivery and accept late payments.



Further Reading: Improving the Public Procurement Process

[doc] Inclusive Procurement and Transparency: Connecting Smallholder Farmers to School Feeding (also in French)

[doc] Supplier Development for Inclusive School Feeding Procurement

[doc] Practicing Inclusive Food Procurement from Smallholder Farmers

[CASE] Ghana matchmaking events: Building links between farmers and school feeding caterers

[CASE] Knowing the source of the food: Matching smallholder farmers to the school meals market in Kenya

[CASE] Matchmaking Events Connect Farmers with the School Feeding Market in Mali (also in French)

[CASE] Improving procurement tools to facilitate smallholder farmer inclusion in Kenya

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

Text Box 1: Administrative adjustments piloted by the project

Surveying the market: local products, supply potential of smallholder farmers.

Holding information sessions.

Publicising bidding opportunities widely.

Ensuring that bid time, products, quality and/or quantity requirements suit the supplier community.

Aligning payment policies with supplier conditions

Holding debriefing sessions.

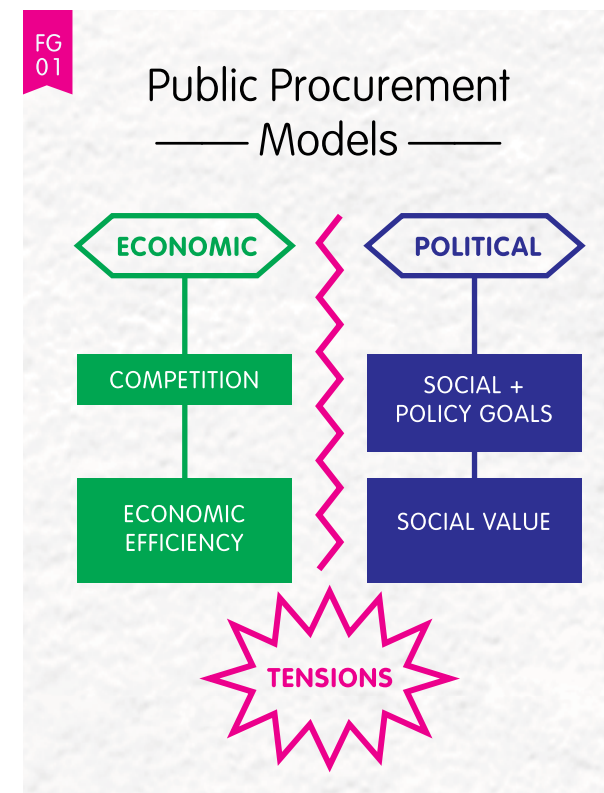
Establishing a forum for bidders to air grievances, against buyers for non-compliance with published purchasing policies.

The HGSF public procurement process refers to the actions of public sector actors to purchase food products (school model) or caterer services (caterer model) to provide the public service of school feeding. Embedded within HGSF procurement is a social value: the inclusion of SHFs as suppliers to school feeding to support domestic food security and to support the local agricultural economy. PG-HGSF sought to increase the number of SHF producers selling to school feeding in the project's pilot districts as well as the value of these sales. Intermediate results were the number of producer organisations (POs) participating in bids and being awarded contracts.

SNV introduced the term 'inclusive procurement', defining it as a deliberate way for governments to purchase goods or services from specific disfavoured or vulnerable supplier categories in order to advance social and economic development. Inclusive public procurement for the school feeding programmes is the effective balance of 'vertical' and 'horizontal' policies to achieve the best value from the school feeding supply community. In this instance, main vertical policy criteria are the price, delivery, and quality required to maintain integrity and to safeguard the expenditure of public funds; horizontal policies refer to the economic and social aspects of including SHFs as direct or indirect suppliers. For the school feeding programmes, the horizontal policies can be translated into a number of interrelated procedures and tools related with administrative adjustments (see Text Box 1), focused procurement (premiums and preferences) and supplier development (see Casey and Commandeur, 2016).

The project recognised a possible tension between procurement processes' prioritisation of transparency, accountability, and value for money (VfM) with the HGSF inclusive procurement objective of prioritizing purchases from targeted supplier groups (in this case, SHFs).

The project considered the two public procurement models as shown in Figure 1 (based on Trepte, 2004). The economic model on the left refers to the free market theory in which competition fuels the economy and produces economic efficiency. The political model on the right reflects how governments use procurement as a policy tool to achieve social or political goals. 'This quest by the



government to use the power of purchasing regulation to further social policies may sacrifice economic efficiency and alter competition, with the aim of adding Social Value’ (Halloran, 2016). However, VfM is a complex and value-driven concept that goes beyond economic efficiency as it encompasses not only the value to be achieved by meeting the purchaser’s functional need but also wider benefits to society. These wider benefits may be considered as providing higher value for taxpayers’ money, even though they might cost more; but they can lead to a tension between both models.

A conceptual exploration of inclusive procurement by the project (Brooks et al., 2014) suggested that school feeding in sub-Saharan countries can strike a synergy between both models, especially when inclusive procurement expands the supplier community and the process is done in a structured way and with the same access to information and opportunities for all:

‘It is clear that the appearance of SHFs/POs as potential suppliers for school feeding does not need to eliminate the participation of traders and, moreover, can increase competition and generate business agreement between POs and traders. A transparent procurement process that grants access to more SHFs/POs to bid for tendering opportunities will achieve competitiveness if equal access is granted to other suppliers.’ (Aboah et al., 2016).

To support the synergy between economic and political models within HGSP procurement, the project developed a series of procedures, tools, and methodologies to overcome the challenges on the procurement side and concretise inclusive procurement in Ghana, Kenya and Mali, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of PG-HGSP procedures, tools and methodologies

PROCEDURES	TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES	RESULT
Market Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Market Intelligence Survey Form/ Request Details FoodstuffsDatabase of POs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Procuring officers increase knowledge of local products and their prices as well as the existence and capacity of SHF and POs.
Definition of Menus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Localised menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">School feeding menus optimise use of local products according to seasonal availability.
Procurement Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food Procurement and Management Planning Form/Procurement Planning Template	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Procuring officers include local SHF produce in their procurement plans.Procuring officers make decisions for doing procurement differently to achieve HGSP objective of buying locally and from SHF.

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

PROCEDURES	TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES	RESULT
Tender Notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tender NoticeEvaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tender notices include clear criteria to select supplier, according to all objectives.Procurement needs are aligned with local SHF and PO supplier potential.
Dissemination of the Tender Notice		<ul style="list-style-type: none">SHF and POs, as well as traditional suppliers, are informed about tenders and requirements.
Matchmaking Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Matchmaking methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SHF, POs and other suppliers receive information on procurement notifications.All supply chain actors know about demand and offer of each other.Cultural gap between public procurement officers, traders, caterers and farmers, that prevents doing business, is reduced.
Supporting Suppliers in the Placing of Bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tender documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">POs overcome lack of experience with proposals and competitive bidding processes.
Evaluation of Bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bid evaluation report template	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Procuring officers select suppliers in a transparent way, following pro-smallholder criteria.
Signing of Formal Contract with Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contract templateLocal purchase order	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compliance requirements are made explicit in agreement signed between procuring entity and supplier, and form the basis for monitoring and evaluating the performance of suppliers.
Monitoring Supplier Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitoring checklist/Monitoring and Evaluation Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Compliance with contract requirements is monitored and data is generated as input for evaluation.
Evaluating Supplier Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitoring and Evaluation FrameworkCaterer Performance Appraisal Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Suppliers are evaluated in an objective way, including on their inclusion of local SHF produce.
Evaluating Procuring Entity Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AwardsSocial audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Results of all school feeding objectives are assessed.Procurement officers are motivated to improve and stimulate inclusion of SHF in the supply chain.

Two of the projects most impactful pro-smallholder farmer approaches were matchmaking and revising tender evaluation criteria. The following sections highlight how these approaches were organised and some key results.

Matchmaking

The project implemented a strategic procurement process, where the supply community was actively stimulated to come up with new solutions and pre-tender agreements with the aim of making SHFs part of the supply chain and prioritizing local food products. The most effective approach was the matchmaking event. Matchmaking was a form of competitive dialogue, or ‘a public-sector tendering option that allows for bidders to develop alternative proposals in response to a client’s outline requirements’ (European PPP Expertise Centre, 2010). For HGSF, the requirements refer to evidenced sourcing from SHFs. The matchmaking events facilitated the participation of a broad scope of actors including traditional HGSF suppliers, traders, and new suppliers – SHFs and POs – to ‘maintain competitive pressure’ (ibid).

For the caterer model in Ghana, the pro-smallholder innovation introduced by matchmaking was clearly visible in the establishment of inclusive business agreements between caterers and POs. For caterers contracted by the school feeding programmes, matchmaking facilitated ready access to suppliers with whom they could discuss and agree upon supply terms that were stipulated in their contracts, such as payment, quantity, and quality. The 43 matchmaking events in Ghana generated a total of 1,355 sales in the 20 project districts.

For the school model in Kenya and Mali, the main role of matchmaking events was to create awareness about opportunities among schools and POs, before the tendering started, resulting in mutual advantage: the schools gaining nearby suppliers with good quality produce and stimulating local economy, and the POs gaining a nearby market.

Over all, the project’s matchmaking events involved more than 6,000 HGSF buyers, suppliers, and other supply chain actors and resulted in US \$874,000 of income for participating farmers.

Text Box 2: Examples of performance-based criteria for SHF sourcing

Mali: origin of local products (weight of 64%)

Ghana: strategy to source from SHFs (weight of 25%)

Kenya: indication that commodities offered areas much as possible locally grown

(Aboah et al, 2016)

Tender Evaluation Criteria

Effective tender evaluation criteria must be realistic in relation with the capabilities of the supplier community and challenge this community to compete with the most convincing proposal to fulfil the needs of the school feeding programme.

To make the mandatory supplier criteria realistic for POs to comply with, a distinction was introduced between suppliers that are traders and suppliers that are POs. POs were exonerated from the requirements of having prior supply experience and a tax compliance certificate, as these are rarely held by POs becoming active in commercial transactions.

To challenge the supplier community, new performance-based evaluation criteria were established, requiring evidenced sourcing from SHF. These rateable criteria (see Text Box 2) aim to

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

improve competition and encourage suppliers to innovate, in order to accomplish desired objectives in their proposals regarding their own acquisition of the food products.

Achievements of the Project

The PG-HGSF project documented HGSF sales from 21,400 farmers at an amount of US \$1.9 million, proving that the proposed procurement procedures and tools are effective.

In its last year, school feeding authorities in all three countries invited the project to participate in and lead the revision of guidelines for procurement of products and services based on its proposals and experiences. The new versions of guidelines with specific inclusive (pro-smallholder) procurement elements can be considered an important and essential step toward sustainable implementation in the coming years. This was strengthened with training on the new guidelines and tools for a total of 2,300 people, including trainers and procuring officers (local education officers, teachers, and other procuring school committee members).

By the end of the project, various procedures and tools introduced by the project were in use. According to end-of-project survey data, the attitudes of key stakeholders towards inclusive procurement had shifted, suggesting that the project built capacity on inclusive procurement that will be sustained following the project’s closure. PG-HGSF activities will have a lasting impact on SHF inclusion in HGSF especially in these areas:

- The project promoted measures to recruit caterers through more open and wide publication of notifications that include clear requirements regarding SHF sourcing and participation of local leaders. This was found by stakeholders in Ghana to be fairer and more efficient, and led to a significantly higher number of caterers submitting application letters creating social awareness of the opportunity, and even leading to waiting lists for caterers.
- Caterer performance appraisal scorecards introduced by the project in Ghana are now used by head teachers on a weekly basis, by circuit officers in their regular controls, and on termly basis by education officers and District Implementation Committee members. The inclusion of the requirement for caterers to show evidence of SHF sourcing in this appraisal will continue, as all actors found the use of the scorecard transparent and well-structured, leading to less conflicts. Also, the fact that the appraisals led to higher quality caterer services is a stimulus for maintaining the practice.
- In Kenya, the POs that participated in biddings are continuing to do so in new opportunities, as they consider it an interesting market because of the good prices and fast payment. The experience these POs gained during PG-HGSF enables them to institute to new proposals and logistics practices. On the buyer side, schools learned how to reach out to local POs to obtain bids from them, to the satisfaction of everyone.
- In Kenya and Ghana, the county education officers in project areas are now used to the practice of including the sourcing of HGSF food products in their monitoring of schools.



Farmer, Issaka Zeinabu, working on her groundnut farm in Ghana.

Text Box 3: PG-HGSF definitions of SHFs



Smallholder farmer (man, woman and/or family) criteria:

- 1. A considerable part of the family income is generated by agriculture production
- 2. The labor used in rural activities is predominantly family based
- 3. The farm is directly managed by family members (man, woman)
- 4. If registered for business and sells in its own name, then must produce evidence of certification, etc. (same as 6, 7 and 8 below for POs)

The status of smallholder farmer will be evidenced by a written statement of the farmer (man, woman and/or family) regarding the compliance with the criteria.



Producer organisation criteria:

- 1. All members fall within the criteria of smallholder farmer
- 2. The organisation has at least 15 active members
- 3. The membership is voluntary
- 4. At least 70% of the members of the directory board are elected from among the members
- 5. The main commercial activity is directly related with the sale of their members' agricultural products
- 6. The organisation is registered with local and/or national authority as an official association, business or cooperative entity
- 7. The organisation must have a bank account

The status of the organisation will be confirmed by a legal statement of the directory board regarding the compliance with the criteria. This statement must be validated by the local Ministry of Agriculture or another relevant government authority.

Lessons Learned

- 1. *Working with HGSF officials at the local and national levels in a coordinated way is key.* The local level is most involved in daily implementation of HGSF and generates the evidence of what is happening on the ground. They understand the constraints for SHF inclusion as well as the results of new practices. The national level is where changes in regulation must happen for school feeding and public procurement, as it is where the funding for food procurement, training and implementation of monitoring and evaluation is allocated.
- 2. *Change in attitude is essential for change in practices.* Training and coaching of the actors, transparent monitoring and evaluation, as well rewarding good practice helped to convince all stakeholders that SHF inclusion in the supply chain for school feeding is possible and a benefit for everyone. Special attention must be given to the fact that school feeding procurement is often decentralised and conducted by staff with little procurement experience. Capacity is lacking to transform procurement from an administrative function to an instrument that effectively supports broader government objectives (a world-wide weakness, as noted in Beth, 2014); in the context of the project, even this administrative function is often improvised or informal. A support system for procuring entities taking into account the weaknesses and the particularities of inclusive procurement is necessary.
- 3. *Inclusive procurement, targeting a specific category of suppliers, requires a clear definition of the category (in this case of SHF and POs).* In the three countries SNV worked in this was generally overlooked, with the assumption of local agreement on who suppliers are, but this could lead to questioning or allegations from other suppliers. Taking into consideration the dimension of school feeding procurement and the situation of the SHF, this should be done in a realistic and cost-efficient way, where self-declaration of technical and financial ability (Telles, 2014) can be the basis. See Text Box 3 for the project's proposed definitions of SHFs and POs.
- 4. *Change on the procurement side must be combined with support for the supply chain actors.* This includes POs but also refers to caterers and traders who must demonstrate sourcing from POs or SHFs. Supply chain support can consist of financial services to facilitate transactions and investments, and non-financial services such as extension and technical assistance to enhance the activities and transactions of the actors, to make the supply chain governance more transparent, and to increase the availability of information along the supply chain.

Enhancing Supply Chain Governance

3

Text Box 4: Constraints for SHF to become reliable supply chain actors

Low productivity of farmers

Lack of information about and understanding of the market

Supply chain without quality management and control mechanisms, such as a quality-based price system

Access and high cost of credit facilities for farmers and POs

Poor road network in remote areas

(Maijers and Vijayender, 2014)

Project Objective: Enhance supply chain governance for HGSF programmes and introduce inclusive business practices as appropriate to meet these ends.

To effectively participate in the procurement process, it is not sufficient for smallholder farmers to know when opportunities arise and how to access them for participation as providers. They must also be able to overcome constraints (see Text Box 4) and the prevailing distrust in their ability to provide their products with consistency in terms of quality, quantity, and timeliness (Maijers and Vijayender, 2014).

Supply chains driven by buyers, as opposed to chains motivated by producers and their products, tend to have more sophisticated integration, coordination, and participation rules (ibid). The school feeding programmes, and public procurement in general, as buyer-driven supply chains, show

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

this relatively complex set of procedures and procurement requirements (Brooks et al., 2014). If SHFs want to meet these high buyer standards, there is a need for new forms of governance in the supply chain.

The typical supply chains for the school model in Kenya and Mali and the caterer model in Ghana are shown in Figure 2.

Inclusion of SHFs can take place at different stages of the chain, depending on the school feeding model, the capabilities of the farmers and their organisations, and the performance of the other chain actors. The farmers and their POs can provide food products directly to schools, but they can also sell their products to other private sector actors: traders and caterers, by way of business agreements. As primary producers of food products, SHFs may already be part of the supply chain if they sell their products to traders who supply HGSF programmes. But this participation is not visible as generally no data about trader sourcing exists. Due to this lack of data, these traders could be sourcing from agriculture enterprises from the same country or abroad, interfering with the HGSF agricultural development objective that refers to development of local and smallholder production. Even if local SHFs were included via traders, a lack of data prevents confirmation of verifiable improvement in income or any other change in production or organisation. The constraints that SHFs face in participating in school feeding supply chains in a visible way are listed in Text Box 5.

Text Box 5: Barriers for SHF participation in the HGSF supply chain

The inability of the farmers to obtain accurate and timely information regarding tenders issued by HGSF programmes in order to respond.

Difficulties in obtaining and qualifying for formal eligibility, because of informal status (as enterprise, at individual and organisation level) that would permit smallholder farmers to enter the market as sellers.

Lack of bidding experience which reduces their ability to compete effectively against commercial and larger scale producers.

The lack of adequate and sufficient infrastructure such as storage and processing facilities, that are necessary to meet HGSF programme requirements.

Cultural gap between public procurement officers and smallholders, especially women farmers, and the associated lack of trust.

Higher transaction costs.

The lack of liquidity on the part of smallholders and their organisations to pre-finance delivery, and lack of bank guarantees and credit for access to financial services.



Further Reading: Enhancing Supply Chain Governance

[doc] Challenges and Opportunities: Smallholders and School Feeding Initial Baseline report (also in French)

[doc] Analysis of Supply Chain Studies for Home Grown School Feeding (also in French)

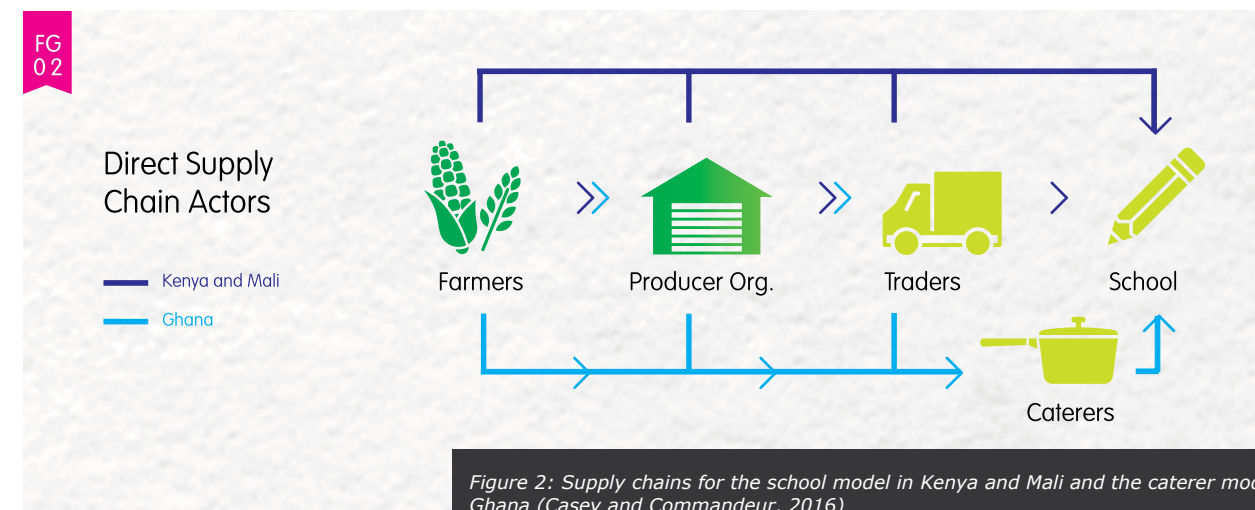
[doc] Producer Organisations: Going into Business with Formal Markets (also in French)

[doc] Structured Demand Markets and Smallholder Farmers: Access and Relevance (also in French)


[case] Linking school feeding caterers to finance: Loan opportunities enabling caterer purchases from smallholder farmers

[case] Grain Banks: Credit for Caterers Brings Farmers into the Market

[case] Goubkatimali: How school feeding improved agricultural production and farmer income in Ghana





 Penina Mwikali, owner of P.M Enterprises, a Home Grown School Feeding trader, in Mwingi, Kenya at an M-Pesa kiosk (a telephone enabled payment system).



Text Box 6: Conclusions from PG-HGSF Supply Chain Analyses

With a rare exception, SHF are not directly involved in the analysed HGSF supply chains.

Some farmers supply HGSFs indirectly via traders but are not aware of this.

Women have a role along the entire supply chain, especially at the school level as cooks and caterers.

The HGSF decision making chain is not organised with the objective to create an inclusive business model. Inadequate standards hamper SHF participation in the supply chains, including requirements before entering the HGSF as a supplier, menus that are not based on local products, a lack of transparency in the operational supply chain planning, and interrupted or delayed cash flow.

(Maijers and Vijayender, 2014)

Many other stakeholders play a role in the school feeding supply chain, as illustrated in Figure 3. The supply chain is covered by two institutional sectors that generally have little coordination and alignment: the agricultural sector (dark green in the figure) and the education sector (light green) (Maijers and Vijayender, 2014). Industry and trade may be a third sector that affects the intermediate stages, with private sector actors as traders and caterers.

In analysing HGSF supply chain to determine the constraints and the opportunities for SHF inclusion, the project involved all actors at the district level. Text Box 6 presents the main findings from the supply chain analyses for 20 districts in Ghana, 17 sub-counties in Kenya, and 31 communes in Mali where the project was implemented. Using these results, action plans were developed to guide the future activities of the project and other stakeholders. The main focus was on PO strengthening, with special attention to storage, market development (intelligence and relationship building), and linkage with financial services; these activities will be discussed in the next sections. An overall aim of the analyses and further development

Text Box 7: Characteristics of Producer Organisations

“The producer organisations (POs) are formal rural organisations whose members are smallholder farmers who organise themselves with the objective of improving farm income through improved production, marketing, and local processing activities.”

(Based on Rondot, 2001)

Typical activities of a PO can be organising farmers to receive external support, dissemination of market information to members, bulk purchase and distribution of inputs, aggregation and joint sale of farmer products, handling and storage, processing, transportation, mechanisation services for farmers, and support for farmers to access credits and loans.

Text Box 8: Some advantages for SHFs to join forces in a PO

Higher food-quality and safety standards can be better met if farmers make joint investments and are willing to exercise mutual control and ban free-rider behavior.

Compliance in terms of volume, price and quality to the agreement with the buyer and organising control at the PO level may provide important cost advantages to small producers who are able to reduce monitoring costs.

Bargaining power vis-à-vis input suppliers, traders and retailers can be more effective.

The organisation is the basis for gradually improving the share of the farmers in value-addition.

(Maijers et al, 2016)

was the collection of data, especially on commercial activities of the POs to school feeding, directly or via traders, and to other formal markets. The data were captured in the project monitoring system and formed an evidence basis for the various learning documents and case studies produced.

Producer Organisation strengthening

A main strategy of the project was to strengthen existing POs (see Text Box 7) to help their member smallholders with services to improve their production and post-harvest activities and their market access to become effective partners in the supply chain (Maijers et al., 2016). Economies of scale were seen as essential to facilitate market entry for smallholder farmers (see Text Box 8). Based on the particularities of the PO as business organisation and the value chain model of Michael Porter for manufacturing organisations, the project developed a competitive framework that resulted in the following five intervention areas for PO strengthening (Maijers et al., 2016):

1. *Manage supply risk*
The production of the member-suppliers should be improved in quantity and quality. Buying from non-member farmers in addition to delivery by members will give flexibility to aggregate the demand volumes. Taking ownership of the products by the PO, quality control and the availability of storage infrastructure will facilitate the role as supplier to market partners.
2. *Strengthen membership*
The benefits of membership, such as receiving support and information from their organisation, participation in decision making, should be clear for the farmers. At the same time, transparent rules and delivery agreements must be in place to motivate their commitment.
3. *Manage the PO as a company*
The PO, as agent between farmer and market, should be professionally organised and operated for a competitive performance on the primary activities balancing outsourcing and self-operating activities. This means adequate planning and administration operations have to be established; and board, staff, workers, and members need to be prepared.

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

4. *Develop market and buyer relations*
Strong and longer-term relationships with different buyers are needed to become and reliable market partner. Market intelligence is important for taking commercial decision as PO as well as to transfer market signals to the members to influence their decisions on production and to define the conditions of supplying to the PO.
5. *Optimise the financial capacity of the PO*
Financial capacity should be based on a mixture of cash flow and investment sources including margins, loans, and late payment of members, backed up by a sound and transparent administration.

These five areas formed the basis and guided the discussion for the development of the business plan for each of the POs and for these business plans the school feeding market was used as initial target.

Within the scope of support offered by the project, the end-of project surveys identified the following activities as the most effective for strengthening PO access to HGSP and other formal markets:

- Business registration
- Matchmaking
- Basic equipment support, such as computer, scales, moisture meter and other simple warehouse items
- Hiring manager/administrator, the project paying 50% of initial salary costs
- Tied for 5th place: Business plan elaboration, connecting with finance provider, coaching of the PO by local consultants

Appreciation was expressed for the combination of the different project activities serving the specific needs of each PO and targeting a concrete market opportunity were critical factors of the project success.

In total, 85 first-level POs were trained on school feeding procurement procedures and opportunity. Other supply chain actors such as traders and caterers, also participated in these training events as much as possible, as they were a first opportunity for exploring collaboration with the POs. This led to 661 proposals for the sale of food products from POs to caterers and schools in the project areas.

Storage Improvement

Storage is a core activity for POs, as it deals with the aggregation and handling of products of individual smallholder farmers to achieve economies of scale and become the supply chain partner able to guarantee quantity, quality and timeliness to formal buyers. At the same time, the warehouse becomes the main infrastructure, the emblem of the PO and the motivation for SHFs to become serious members.

The presence of a real market opportunity also serves as motivation for storage enhancement, as documented in a study about the impact of the USDA Local and Regional Procurement programme in Guatemala and Burkina Faso (Harou, et al. 2013). The project focused on storage in several ways:

- Making it a core activity of PO business plans
- Supporting training and Warehouse Receipt certification in warehouse management



PROJECT RESULTS



Between 2011 and 2016 SNV piloted activities to link smallholder farmers to the school feeding market.

26,100 farmers sold USD \$3.5 million to school feeding and other structured demand markets.



EXPLICIT PROCUREMENT TOOLS for inclusive procurement, transparency and value for money.

2,300 school feeding procurement officers prepared for pro-smallholder procurement.

New procurement tools incorporated into national school feeding procurement guidelines.



MATCHMAKING between procuring entities, producer organisations and local private sector.

6,000 supply chain actors, more than 120 per district, involved in matchmaking events, resulting in USD 874,000 of income for participating farmers.



BUSINESS TRAINING for caterers in management, bookkeeping, and financial education.

1,910 caterers in Ghana trained in business skills and keeping records of their expenses, stocks, and purchases from smallholder farmers.



BANK LOANS for caterers so that government payment delays do not prevent purchases from farmers.

49 caterers linked to credit generating USD 113,500 in purchases from 1,500 farmers.



STRENGTHENING OF BUSINESS ORIENTATION of producer organisations to compete in school feeding and other formal markets.

1,540 farmer organisations, with total membership of 44,600 farmers, 38% women, engaged in school feeding supply chain strengthening activities.



LOCAL GRAIN BANKS to connect farmer production with school feeding suppliers

5 grain banks in Ghana connected 160 farmers to the school feeding market and moved from losses to net gains of up to USD 9,000 per grain bank.



MARKET INTELLIGENCE PLATFORMS to connect producer organisations to school feeding demand.

5,900 school feeding buyers and smallholder farmers registered on ICT platforms in Ghana and Kenya to exchange information on food demand and offer.



SOCIAL AUDITS to generate community support for local food in school feeding.

15,500 parents, teachers, government representatives, and farmers engaged in discussions on utilising government resources for school feeding and primary education.

“You mean the market for our food is right here with us? What a blessing.”

Farmer and Parent
Elgeyo Marakwet, Kenya

“From now on, no supplier will be approved by the city if he does not buy locally.”

Mayor M. Baba Traore
Siadougou, Mali

- Linking POs with financial support from banks and development programmes to facilitate funding for investment in warehouses
- 97 primary or secondary level POs developed business plans and increased their storage capacity as warehouse owners or renters.

Market Development

Through the business planning process, the project supported POs to develop market intelligence on HGSF and other formal markets. The project also completed a study about alternative structured demand markets, defined as markets created by public or non-profit entities that have a predictable and reliable demand for food products (Commandeur and Casey, 2016), to identify new market opportunities similar to school feeding for which the capacity building of POs is applicable as well.

The project helped the POs to connect with formal business partners, starting with traditional suppliers to school feeding (traders, caterers), but also with the processing industry, to establish inclusive business agreements. These kinds of agreements with POs became a condition or at least a competitive advantage in the tenders for school feeding, where the SHF sourcing became a rateable criterion for the evaluation of the bids, as explained in chapter 2.

The project engaged with existing market intelligence platforms, mFarms in Ghana and Cerealmart and Soko Pepe in Kenya, to register supply chain actors including farmers, POs, traders, caterers and the school feeding programme offices, with the aim of using these platforms to disseminate tenders and facilitate matchmaking between what SHFs and POs offer and caterer and trader demand for food products. 91 POs were registered in Kenya and a total of 4436 SHF (41% women) in all three countries. On the buyer side 1416 school feeding buyers and 25 private sector buyers were registered. In Ghana, voice features were added to the system to make it more accessible for illiterate farmers and caterers.

Linkage with Financial Services

The business plans of the POs, which started with the opportunity of the school feeding market, served as an investment proposal and collateral to access loans and investments from other development programmes, such as the ACWW (Associated Country Women of the World), Global Fund for Women and EDAIF (Export Development and Agriculture Investment Fund) in Ghana and Techfortrade, Uwezo Fund and Women Enterprise Fund in Kenya. It generated bankability on the part of the POs and trust on the part of the funders.

In Ghana two loan facilities were set up by the project, to encourage school feeding caterers to buy food products from SHF and POs:

- A guarantee fund was deposited in two local rural banks for loans to caterers, on the condition that the loans would be used to purchase SHF food products. The deposits helped to negotiate lower interest rates for the caterers, using the ensured repayment by the government HGSF programme as collateral (Sanogo and Lee, 2015).
- Five local community grain banks received a fund to purchase food products from local farmers and sell them on credit to school

caterers. The caterer’s loans were repaid directly to the grain banks, deducted from the reimbursement that the caterers received from the HGSF programme (Commandeur et al, 2016).

Achievements

The various activities to include SHF in supply chains for school feeding and other formal markets benefited 1,540 POs representing 44,600 farmer families and 1,965 caterers and traders, leading to a documented amount of US \$3.8 million in sales to all markets including school feeding, other structured demand, and commercial.

In the next table, we show concrete changes at the level of POs, compiled from the end-of project surveys, with impact on the situation of the member farmers:

Table 2: Impact of PG-HGSF PO Strengthening Intervention Areas

AREA OF INTERVENTION	CHANGES IN THE PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS
Manage Supply Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase of volume of products aggregated by the POs, partly based on increase in working capital from bank loans and member fees and partly on delayed payment mechanisms• Access to new production inputs (fertilisers, bags, seed)• Increased storage capacity and improved management• Quality control on buying from farmers and diversified pricing, leading to increased product quality
Strengthen Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formalisation of the relationship with members, because of capital investment in their organisation, commitment with buyers, delayed payment mechanism and credit for inputs• Investment of members in their organisations by normal fees and additional shares
Manage the PO as a Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hiring of professional staff, with own funds• Better handling of products, such as quality control, storage• Improved financial administration with use of computers• Business plans, used for operational strategies and access external funding• Access to support from other institutions• Storage facilities permit flexibility in delivery of produce according to buyer requirements
Develop Market and Buyer Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased number of public and private sector buyers, diversified market portfolio• Experience with market intelligence• Longer relationship with buyers
Optimise the Financial Capacity of the PO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to external loans and funds from banks and development programmes• Increase in assets, especially equipment and land (for warehouse infrastructure)

The various activities to include SHF in supply chains for school feeding and other formal markets benefited 1,540 POs representing 44,600 farmer families and 1,965 caterers and traders, leading to a documented amount of US \$3.8 million in sales.



Some of the changes observed, especially in the area of managing supply risks, such as 'increase of volume of products aggregated', 'access to new production inputs' and 'increased product quality' suggest direct benefits to the production conditions of member farmers as well.

The project brought farmers, POs, HGSF buyers, and supporting HGSF stakeholders of the supply chain together. At the end of the project, it was clear that this resulted in POs with clear business orientation and more permanent relationships with the other stakeholders. The following observations illustrate where the projects work enhancing supply chain governance will be sustained beyond the lifespan of the project.

- The school feeding market opportunity has been used to generate effective, commercial organisations of SHF, making this an essential first step for competitive inclusion in formal markets that offer them higher benefits.
- The POs that have their business plan have a strategic roadmap for the coming years, to attract funding from member farmers and external institutions and implement their operations.
- The POs that hired professional staff, with partial support of the project, in general expressed their decision to continue employing them and in some cases to hire additional staff, after having seen the impact on commercial activities in benefit of the PO itself and member farmers.
- POs continue to participate in school feeding tenders in Kenya and Mali, using the experience obtained with the project and with schools actively informing and involving them.
- The Warehouse Receipt Certification obtained by some POs in Kenya gives them access to supply to the World Food Programme and other structured demand markets.
- POs that built or increased storage space set up aggregation mechanisms for products from their member farmers, giving these members access to new higher value markets. This infrastructure and experience makes the role of the PO more

explicit and visible for the members leading to increased involvement and commercial activity, already apparent in new contributions and shares from the members and increased delivery of products. It also increases the awareness on the importance of good post-harvest practices.

- POs obtained loans from banks and with a good performance will keep this door open for the future in the interest of both parties.
- School feeding buyers have opened their eyes to the possibilities of local products as ingredients for the meals. These experiences were positively assessed during end-of project surveys, which is a good indication that the demand for local products will be maintained if not increased.
- The relations built between POs and formal buyers, if continued with transparency and clear agreements, will reduce transaction costs on both sides and incentivise the expansion of business exchanges.
- In general, POs became visible in the local market and among the support institutions, which will make it easier for them to access future sales and support opportunities. The project also showed a concrete way of getting farmer organisations beyond receivers of extension services towards real inclusion in markets, which made local Ministry of Agriculture offices aware of possibilities of improving and complementing their support to the farmers.
- Well performing POs with transparency and good commercial and financial results generate greater trust among farmer members and institutions, putting in place a cycle of ongoing progress.
- The government district Business Advisors in Ghana have the caterers in the picture for their support, but also for following up on the sourcing from POs/SHFs by the school feeding programme.
- In Ghana, the business relationships between caterers and POs established with the support of the project continued in the following school terms. The transaction costs of establishing a relationship do not need to be repeated, when the experience regarding supply compliance on the PO side and fair payment on the caterer side are mutually evaluated as positive.



*Onions for sale in
Laikipia, Kenya.*



 Local authority showing SNV staff members farm land in Salaga, Ghana.

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

- The rural and grain banks in Ghana continue to give loans to caterers with contract clauses that include the obligation of purchasing from SHF or POs, as well as documenting these transactions, after having repaid respectively the guarantee fund and loan to the project. In the case of the grain banks, after an evaluation of the initial results and the administrative capability, the loan was later converted into a donation for maintaining the same loan facility for the caterers.
- The market intelligence internet platforms were not very extensively used, but the cases where they were established, the experience was positive, leading to an “overwhelming” increase of bids from POs. An increased number of supply chain actors have been registered in Ghana and Kenya, and it can be foreseen that the importance of these platforms will increase based on the expansion of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) use and continuing positive experiences.

Lessons Learned

1. To achieve SHF/POs inclusion in markets, get results, and make non-financial support effective, external financial support by way of loans or strategic donations that enable them to invest in their operations and have working capital is very important.
2. Having an accessible market for PO products can serve as a guarantee for receiving other support from financial and non-financial institutions.
3. The support of any project to POs is most effective when internal leadership exists in the organisations. Identifying and strengthening this leadership must be part of the strategy.
4. Local authorities - government and traditional - can play an important role in building trust between farmers, POs and the buyers.
5. PO strengthening does not automatically generate an increase in the number of members, but rather, helps develop real commitment among members by demonstrating that the PO is capable of selling their products through the organisation. This, in turn, can motivate members to provide financial support by way of fees, shares, and agreement with postponed payment mechanisms.
6. Having success in one market, requiring a focused and flexible support, gives confidence to farmers and new markets, enabling expansion of the commercial portfolio at the initiative of the PO itself.
7. Introduction of ICTs such as market intelligence platforms to POs can be more effective if the buyer side, in this case schools, uses it for tendering and requires its use by the supplier community. This means it should be integral part of government policies and the local school teachers should be encouraged to apply the technologies, starting with having access to the equipment and internet.
8. The school feeding market alone is not as compelling a market for all POs, as it is small and has relatively high transaction costs. The school feeding market served as a first target for strengthening the POs that worked with PG-HGSF, but it soon became clear that this market is limited for POs as a means to invest in infrastructure, professional staff, etc. This was the motivation behind the project investigating alternative structured demand markets (Commandeur and Casey, 2016) to complement HGSE.

Building Social Accountability

4

Project Objective: Developing effective and participatory mechanisms for increased accountability by and for the programmes’ stakeholders.

National HGSF programmes cannot reach their full potential if issues of poor management and lack of transparency are not resolved. SNV saw the accountability of HGSF programmes key to their sustainability, particularly for their ability to deliver on the HGSF agricultural objective.

The project’s accountability component addressed the challenge of weak or informal management of school feeding programmes, low community engagement with HGSF, and challenges to establishing links between HGSF and the farmer community stemming from a lack of transparency, trust, and cooperation between suppliers and procuring entities.

The assumption behind the project’s social accountability component was that the provision of information and transparency would lead to citizen action and, in turn, official response (Joshi, 2013). In implementation, the project’s emphasis on establishing structures for transparency and accountability was woven throughout all three project components and included efforts from government representatives to integrate accountability into HGSF programmes at a structural level as well as activities to empower community members and potential HGSF suppliers. The actors that the project engaged to support accountability went beyond the community members and parents targeted in the proposal, to encompass a wide range of public, private and civil society actors, from

local governments and NGOs to representatives across multiple ministries and international organisations operating at the national level. Together, these stakeholders formed a network with the potential to sustain a focus on ensuring the accountable implementation of HGSF.

The project developed participatory mechanisms to increase accountability by and for the programmes’ stakeholders in three areas: improving information, social audits, and national learning events.

Improving Information

PG-HGSF sought to improve data collection and use it for monitoring and evaluating the financial and technical implementation of the HGSF programme, particularly with respect to the agricultural component and, in doing so, also more generally support the accountability of school feeding as a public service. The goal for this activity was to improve how HGSF data and information was organised and shared with stakeholders at all levels.

While all countries planned national school feeding databases, none established a functional monitoring system during the project implementation period. Adjusting to implementation realities, the project instead piloted data collection and reporting initiatives at the district level to provide stakeholders with data relevant to the HGSF agricultural component, with the possibility to inform the limited existing national databases. In all countries, this was accomplished by providing tools to the school management committees in preparation for social audits, commonly referred to as input tracking tools, to document HGSF planning, inventory, procurement, budgeting, and impact. Table 3 (on the following page) contains an overview of the information collection tools introduced in Mali.

While introduced to help the committees prepare for social audits, these tools also standardised data collection across intervention areas, provided structure to school management committees, and provided documentation for reporting on the community’s HGSF programme to local and national governments. They also built transparency and data monitoring into the HGSF programme at multiple levels. In Kenya, for example, existing capacity building support from Ministry of Education officials ensured a good understanding of the routinely reported HGSF data among staff, whereas the project’s data collection tools equipped school management committee members with the means to monitor their own programme, assess the quality of their implementation, and better coordinate with government requests for data.

While introduced to help the committees prepare for social audits, these [input tracking] tools also standardised data collection across intervention areas, provided structure to school management committees, and provided documentation for reporting on the community’s HGSF programme to local and national governments.



Further Reading: Enhancing Supply Chain Governance

[doc] Social Audits: Speaking Up for Home-Grown School Feeding (also in French)

[case] Turning Challenges into Change: How Social Audits are Improving School Feeding in Sissala East

[case] The market for our food is right here with us: A Case Study from Kenya on Social Audits for School Feeding

[case] Mobilising communities around school feeding: A public restitution in Dogoni, Mali (also in French)

[case] Accessing the Future: School Feeding Data Goes Online

Table 3: Information Collection Tools Proposed for School Management Committees in Mali

TOOL	OBJECTIVE
Annual Action Plan Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A table to help the committee set goals for the year related to: canteen infrastructure, committee management, equipment, food (including purchases from farmer organisations), public restitutions, number of beneficiaries, and number and types of meals.
Annual Budget Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A tool for estimating school feeding costs based on enrolment, plotting those costs against available funding sources, and budgeting for procuring food from local smallholder farmers and traders.
Supply Intake Registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A template for recording information about delivered supplies, including quantity, value and source.
Supply Output Registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A template for recording information about expended supplies, including quantity, value and beneficiaries. Includes fields for two signatures to authorise the expenditures.
Committee Meeting Notes Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A template to record committee meetings. Includes fields to track member participation, discussion topics, decisions, conclusions and next steps.
Annual Action Plan Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A table that compares the action plan goals with progress to date. Provides fields for observations on every issue.
Annual Budget Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A series of tables to compare the planned budget and expenditures to the actual funding available and realised expenditures.
Impact Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A tool to record the impact of school feeding on student performance. Records enrolment and dropout rates, attendance, graduation rates, gender balance, student health and nutrition, and smallholder farmer and community engagement.

In Kenya, PG-HGSF and aWhere piloted an online data management tool for schools in Laikipia County to test a more accessible and transparent approach to improve data collection, storage and retrieval. The pilot, implemented through two rounds of data collection in 2014 and 2015, collected information from all 278 public primary schools in the county; built the capacity of the county ICT office and Ministry of Education departments to collect and analyse data; and provided the governor with a centralised platform from which to base funding decisions. With more than 50 public employees participating in the pilot, the tool activated and empowered new actors to support government accountability in Laikipia County. The high quality of the data became a shared goal for all stakeholders involved to ensure the usability of the information and to

enable stakeholders to investigate issues with confidence. The accessibility of the data also supported an environment for accountability, with multiple actors engaging with the data, questioning results, and bringing concerns to the attention of officials with the capacity to address them (Casey and Reed, 2016).

Social Audits

PG-HGSF introduced social audits at the school, community, and district level. The audits were designed to involve all HGSF stakeholders in discussions on how public expenditures on school feeding are made, how public services are delivered, and to raise awareness of and commitment to HGSF’s agricultural objective. The goal for the project’s social audits was to present data on HGSF, enable individuals and communities to exercise their responsibility for holding decision makers accountable, improve the service delivery by public and private actors, enhance community involvement, and reduce the chance of corruption (see Text Box 9).

The project’s social audits strengthened existing school management committees, created methods for presenting HGSF information to the public, and established feedback loops to connect issues raised at the local level to national level stakeholders. Community score cards were used in Ghana and Kenya to rate performance at the school level; then, assisted by local facilitators, the results were presented to the community. Local community members – parents, teachers, caterers (Ghana), education officers, NGOs, producer organisations, and pupils – participated in generating action plans and reporting on progress. In Mali, SNV leveraged the existing structure of public restitutions, events where government officials are by law required to account for their performance and use of public funds, to increase community awareness and support for school feeding (Sadler and Thompson, 2016).

Text Box 9: Building Capacity for Citizen Action

An indirect result of the project’s social accountability work can be seen in Ganze, Kenya, where local traders and producer organisations filed a complaint when HGSF tendering did not take place in March 2015.

After an official used SMS to communicate that head teachers were expected procure goods from a specific trader, and 40 of 48 school sole-sourced their HGSF contracts with one trader instead of implementing a transparent procurement cycle. Knowledgeable about the HGSF market and public procurement process through project trainings and social accountability activities, the traders and producer organisations were empowered to report the compliance issue to regional education authorities, who launched an investigation.

During the audits, participants learned about the established or potential roles for all actors involved in school feeding, including parents of students and farmer organisations. The audits provided a forum for discussing how school feeding can support local economic development by linking schools to smallholder producer organisations, traders, and, in the case of Ghana, caterers who can document sourcing from smallholders. By triggering a discussion of school feeding issues, the audits fostered greater community support for, and oversight of, broader issues related to the management of schools, such as water availability and infrastructure, and teacher presence and performance. The audits supported better understanding of HGSF data among all school management committee members to ensure the successful implementation and accountability of their programmes. At the local level, the audits generated more interest in volunteering for the school meals committees and post-audit monitoring activities revealed that the quality of food from local farmers improved and there was more interest in purchasing local produce.

Over a period of three years (2013-2015), the project organised a total of 312 social audits that engaged 15,500 HGSF stakeholders and community members. At the community level, the intervention generated greater community engagement in school feeding, including increases in in-kind contributions (such as firewood to support for kitchen construction), participation in school management committees, and more effective monitoring at school level (Sadler and Thompson, 2016).

National Learning Events

The project organised annual learning events at the national level to bring all HGSF stakeholders together to discuss critical issues facing HGSF and to share evidence to inform policy change. At the events, a mix of HGSF buyers and suppliers from the local level joined government, NGO stakeholders and international partners, such as WFP and PCD, for candid discussions on challenges to the programme and recommendations for solutions. The national learning events also served as accountability forums, consolidating issues raised during the social audit process for discussion at the national level.

Learning events in 2013 and 2014 included discussions on how to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for HGSF, since the programmes in all countries were challenged by late or insufficient funds for food purchases. Stakeholders discussed the correlation between regular, predictable funding and the ability for procuring entities to conduct

complete, transparent procurement cycles that could support smallholder farmer participation. In Ghana, the discussion highlighted the effect of late government payments to caterers on the quality and quantity of food served to pupils and caterers ability to purchase goods from smallholder farmers for school feeding. By 2015, adjustments to national HGSF food procurement guidelines were central topics of discussion across all three countries. The results of new tools and methodologies for including smallholder farmers in HGSF procurement, piloted by PG-HGSF, were presented for discussion and validation. The learning events that took place during the last year of implementation included sessions to hand-over project tools and results to government counterparts in a position to sustain key activities.

The national learning events created value in connecting HGSF stakeholders, but also generated some concrete results. Perhaps most notably, the 2014 national learning event in Ghana led to a communique from key partners seeking an increase in the daily rate per meal. In early 2015, GSFP announced an increase from 50 pesewas (US \$0.12) to 80 pesewas (US \$0.20) per child per school day with effect from the third term of the 2014/15 academic year. Also in Ghana, the HGSF took ownership of the national learning events after the inaugural event in 2013 to provide a forum for all stakeholders to convene and discuss the



programme. Across all three countries, the events generated greater coordination among the ministries involved in school feeding, giving them a more active role, particularly to the Ministry of Agriculture, in the discussion on HGSF.

Achievements of the Project

- Through the project’s activities to improve information collection, PG-HGSF built the capacity of stakeholders at the school and community level, particularly school management committees, to collect data for better monitoring of their school feeding programmes. Whether connected to social audit forums, or just used to organise their committees, the improved capacity to track data on HGSF locally will enable more accurate reporting on the programme from the community level, better planning and management of HGSF finances, and more transparency from the school level up.
- The project’s social audits and learning events established feedback loops between school and local governments, as well as between local governments and national ministries, on the implementation of school feeding as a public service. Having established these feedback loops during the project implementation period will enable stronger communications between these stakeholders in the future and facilitate collaboration on HGSF programming and accountability.
- The national learning events engaged existing and new stakeholders in discussions on how to make school feeding more inclusive to smallholder farmers, and brought HGSF’s agricultural objective into discussion at a national level. The agricultural objective is now an accepted issue among national and local stakeholders and POs, as farmers and other actors have an active interest in continuing to supply to or engage with the programme.
- The national learning events put a spotlight on the funding of the HGSF programmes in each country, as something that governments must prioritise if they want to achieve the objectives of the programme. This level of awareness, within the government as well as more broadly within society, will lead to greater compliance with HGSF funding plans as well as increased scrutiny and awareness when funding is not dispersed on schedule, something already visible in the last year of the project.

 Stakeholders and project staff during the 2014 National Learning Event in Nairobi, Kenya.



A Platform for Dialogue:
School Feeding Forum
Washington D.C. April 2016

The project’s sole U.S. learning event brought together school feeding, public procurement and agricultural development stakeholders to share lessons from current development programmes related to inclusive public food procurement. The event generated dialogue between diverse stakeholders representing: academia, by involving professors and deans from George Washington University; procurement, through the World Bank’s public procurement team and the Open Contracting Partnership NGO; international school feeding stakeholders, including the Global Child Nutrition Foundation, WFP Center for Excellence Against Hunger in Brazil, FAO, IFPRI and the World Bank; and domestic agriculture and school feeding stakeholders, including USDA and the National Farm to School Network.

Lessons Learned

1. Ensure commitment from the top and involve multiple stakeholders in implementation. Information collection activities were strengthened by the involvement of a diverse group of stakeholders, from school management committees at the school level, to local government officials and ministry representatives at the regional and national levels. Together, these stakeholders successfully generated support for the project's pilots and facilitated data collection and use. In order to translate these pilots into nation-wide data collection initiatives, establishing a national level commitment will be necessary to: provide financial resources and oversight of new systems and processes, support ongoing capacity building of data collectors, guarantee that collection is demand-driven, and ensure nation-wide adoption of a new system.
2. Engage communities in data monitoring and use. Non-government participants, such as parents and other community members, have a strong interest in the success of HGSP and in its sustainability. Communities can be mobilised to monitor basic education services and serve as additional public accountability actors. As national databases are rolled out, it will be valuable to consider how to engage these non-governmental stakeholders in a discussion of the data, particularly when the public's access to computers and the Internet is limited.
3. Link audits on school feeding to established accountability forums. Attaching audits to established accountability mechanisms or processes will generate greater sustainability for participatory accountability processes. For example, modelling social audits on school feeding after the public restitution process in Mali created a base-level of comfort and understanding of the process from the outset, and provided a locally-relevant process for sustaining it. In Ghana, connecting district-level audit processes to town hall meetings would link them to established, organised forums between government and community representatives. Linking school feeding issues to these established accountability forums can continue building trust, increase compliance with local tax collection, and promote local economic development.
4. The project's activities to improve information as well as stakeholder engagement through social audits and national learning events reinforced each other and complemented the project's procurement and supply chain activities. Improved data collection provided an evidence base for social audits and national accountability forums, while the accountability events provided procuring entities and government officials with a platform for presenting data on the HGSP programme to improve trust between buyers and sellers, educate the community on HGSP as a public service, and enable communities to voice concerns directly to decision makers following a review of current data.



 Presentation during a social audit in Mali.

Conclusions

5

National school feeding programs in sub-Saharan Africa do represent a significant market for locally produced food. In the three project country programs alone, the value of the amount of food purchased is estimated at US \$79 million (Casey and Commandeur, 2016). Globally, US \$1.7 billion is invested in school feeding each year in low income countries (World Food Programme). In Sub-Saharan Africa, where it is known that nearly 80 percent of the food is produced through smallholder farming, the capacity for school feeding to serve as a driver of local economies is enormous. This project has demonstrated that practical measures can be taken easily to decrease the gap between the farmer and market, while building bridges that demystified a process that often discouraged producers and procurers from engaging with one another.

Valuable lessons were also learned along the way about some of the team's early assumptions. Yes, you CAN link smallholder farmers to the school feeding market in their localities. This project put in place successful interventions to remove barriers to that connection, and learned much in the process. This is a promising connection, as the national school feeding programs continue to mature and become more stable. However, through implementation the project quickly realised that HGSP is not the structured demand market as initially envisioned. It must be recognised that the region's school feeding programs remain a vulnerable line item in their national budgets, often subject to shifts in priorities when it comes to political, social and economic changes. Though acknowledged for their educational and health benefits to the children of poor families, school feeding – as this project experienced in its early years – is the first to be dropped when it comes to political upheaval (as in Mali in 2012), or peaceful administration change resulting in new or changes in priorities (Kenya in 2012), or even a perpetual attitude that budgetary shortfalls could always be covered by delaying payments (Ghana) or suspending such services temporarily. A more permanent and consistent allocation and use of resources to meet the expenditures of these valuable programs in terms of food purchases will reinforce their standing as structured demand markets. As a consequence, the actions, understandings, and tools put in place by this project can only grow in use as both suppliers and buyers engage in more permanent ways within a true structured demand market that makes consistent purchases in large volume.

One of the lasting effects of the project has been the impact upon smallholder farmer organisations. Whereas upon first contact these organisations were deemed to be quite loose and informal – groupings formed for the most part in response to agricultural extension initiatives and the availability of inputs such as fertiliser or seeds and not structured nor prepared to engage in commercial activity – their outlook as a result of engaging with this new market was transformed. From complying with formal registration

CONNECTING FARMERS TO HOME GROWN SCHOOL FEEDING

requirements, unifying to oversee product quality control and investing in storage infrastructure, and in recognizing the need for appropriate management, they saw the value of organizing to sell. The ability of smallholder organisations to successfully navigate the procurement process for school feeding opens the door for participation in other markets that purchase through tenders and in large volume, such as national food reserves, international relief, prison systems, hospitals, and the armed forces, among others. Diversifying in this way is healthy of the newly strengthened organisations.

Another lasting effect has been the innovations introduced by PG-HGSP on the concept of sustainable and inclusive public procurement, especially targeting smallholder farmers as potential suppliers. In identifying and piloting administrative adjustments, preferential treatments and supplier development that take into account the special situation and conditions of SHF and their organisations without threatening traditional procurement characteristics of value for money and fairness, SNV has made significant inroads in an area where it did not have expertise. The team engaged in a dynamic action-learning process with the support of procurement experts that yielded some of the more interesting and lasting contributions: The project's work on reform and revision of national procurement guidelines for school feeding; the development of specific new tools and processes aimed at engaging with smallholders as suppliers, and the training of procurement officers, all led to the recognition of SNV as a resource in the field, evidenced by their continued engagement in these processes. This expertise can be further developed and taken globally, wherever nascent public procurement is aiming to enhance local agricultural production.

Engaging civil society and empowering citizens to hold public officials accountable is required to strengthen the accountability of government-led education services. PG-HGSP piloted the use of social audits as a forum for parents to join teachers and local government in assessing the implementation of local school feeding in their community. By creating a forum engaging both public service providers and the communities they serve, the audits spread awareness of roles and responsibilities, support transparency in governance, and create partnerships for joint advocacy. Audits also served as an additional meeting point for farmers to interact with school feeding buyers, whether local or private sector, in discussions about their relationship. Transforming the social audits from a pilot activity to a sustained practice at the community and district level is a notion worth developing further. This will require continuing engagement if they are to take root. While they are not overly costly, they do require the commitment of authorities, or the continued support of external donors in the meantime.

Upon reflection, this project presented opportunities for further action and learning that we wish could have been expanded. In particular, the project offered an excellent opportunity for additional exploration on gender issues. The project successfully met a target of ensuring that 30% of the new sellers to school feeding were women, exceeding the target to 37%. This was a reasonable target considering that although a majority of smallholder farming is conducted by women, when it comes to producer organisation leadership, management, and participation, women's involvement falls dramatically, as these activities are considered to be more of a male concern. Working more intentionally to shift this attitude would have been a positive contribution. The gender dimension could have been further explored through the project as, in addition to farming activities, women's participation was clearly evident: as private sector caterers in Ghana, as Kenya school teachers (primarily women) responsible for directly procuring food in markets, and as local and regional officials in charge of procurement. Tracking this participation and



engaging in activities to increase participation of women can further contribute to our understanding about gender in development work.

The use of ICTs in generating and maintaining current market and supply information is worthy of continued attention and investment. When such practices to the school feeding market were introduced, using existing platforms, the reported results showed a remarkable increase in bids. Based on the expectation of the expansion of ICT use in Africa, it can be projected that this will have clear impact on supplier/buyer relationships in the future, especially at the local level. The PG-HGSF project only touched the surface of this effort. A more targeted strategy from the start would have had a significant impact on the number of farmers selling at the end.

Finally, on a more general note, this project has confirmed for us the importance of an integrated approach. What really matters in the end is the ability to produce concurrent yet related changes that lead to new behavior. A change in one actor alone is not sufficient, as we would have seen if only new or different procurement processes were put in place: a call for bids reaching out transparently to producer organisations, without the POs being prepared to respond effectively with sound proposals would not have generated the desired results. Similarly, actions to strengthen POs, motivating them to register formally, organise to bulk production, and invest in improved management would have fallen flat if no market were in sight. The third leg of this stool, and critical to this new relationship, is the ability to meet, discuss, and resolve differences through more transparent social accountability actions such as public restitution forums or social audits. The ability to draw on experience in each of these areas formed a cohesive strategy that made the difference for this project.



*School children at Wamale
Islamic Primary and
Kindergarten in Ghana.*

References



Aboah, J., Commandeur, D. and Casey, K. (2016). 'Practicing inclusive procurement from smallholder farmers'. SNV USA.

Beth, E. (2014). 'Transparency and integrity in public procurement: progress made in OECD countries in the last three years'. OECD.

Brooks, J., Commandeur, D. and Vera, E. (2014) 'Inclusive procurement and transparency. Connecting smallholder farmers to school feeding'. SNV USA.

Casey, K. and Commandeur, D. (2016). 'Supplier development for inclusive school feeding procurement'. SNV USA.

Casey, K. and Reed, H. (2016). 'Accessing the Future: School Feeding Data Goes Online'. SNV USA.

Commandeur, D. (2012). 'Challenges and Opportunities: Smallholders and School Feeding Initial Baseline Report'. SNV USA.

Commandeur, D., Casey, K. (2016). 'Structured demand markets and smallholder farmers: Relevance and access'. SNV USA.

Commandeur, D., Ekpe, S., Abu, A. (2016). 'Grain banks in Ghana: Credit for caterers brings farmers into the market'. SNV USA.

European PPP expertise Centre. (2010). 'Procurement of PPP and the use of Competitive Dialogue in Europe A review of public sector practices across the EU'.

Halloran, D. (2016). 'The Social Value in Social Clauses: Methods of Measuring and Evaluation in Social Procurement'. Paper for the International Public Procurement Conference.

Harou, A. P. et al. (2013). 'Tradeoffs or Synergies? Assessing Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement through Case Studies in Burkina Faso and Guatemala'. World Development. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2013.01.020>.

Joshi, A. (2013). 'Context Matters : A Causal Chain Approach to Unpacking Social Accountability Interventions'. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Institute of Development Studies.

Maijers, W. and Vijayender, N. (2014). 'Analysis of supply chain studies for Home Grown School Feeding'. SNV USA.

Maijers, W., Vijayender, N. and Commandeur, D. (2016). 'Producer Organisations: Going into Business with Formal Markets'. SNV USA.

Rondot, P. and Collion, M. H. (2001). 'Producer organizations their contribution to rural capacity building and poverty reduction'. Rural Development Department, World Bank.

Sadler, S. and Thompson, I. (2016). 'Social Audits: Speaking up for Home-Grown School Feeding'. SNV USA.

Sanogo, E., and Lee, W. (2015). 'Linking school feeding caterers to finance: loan opportunities enabling caterer purchases from smallholder farmers.' SNV USA.

Telles, P. (2014). 'Low value procurement and transparency: squaring circle.' Bangor University.

Trepte, P. (2004). Regulating Procurement: Understanding the Ends and Means of Public Procurement Regulation. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

World Food Programme. (2013). 'State of School Feeding Worldwide' WFP.



 A traditional cook stove used for school feeding in Ghana.

Procurement Governance for Home Grown School Feeding Project Learning Series

DOCUMENTS

Challenges and Opportunities: Smallholders and School Feeding Initial Baseline report

Analysis of Supply Chain Studies for Home Grown School Feeding

Inclusive Procurement and Transparency: Connecting Smallholder Farmers to School Feeding

Practicing Inclusive Food Procurement from Smallholder Farmers

Producer Organisations: Going into Business with Formal Markets

Social Audits: Speaking up for Home Grown School Feeding

Structured Demand Markets and Smallholder Farmers: Relevance and Access

Supplier Development for Inclusive School Feeding Procurement

CASES

Turning Challenges into Change: How Social Audits are Improving School Feeding in Sissala East

The market for our food is right here with us: A Case Study from Kenya on Social Audits for School Feeding

Mobilising communities around school feeding: A public restitution in Dogoni, Mali

Linking school feeding caterers to finance: Loan opportunities enabling caterer purchases from smallholder farmers

Ghana matchmaking events: Building links between farmers and school feeding caterers

Goubkatimali: How school feeding improved agricultural production and farmer income in Ghana

Knowing the source of the food: Matching smallholder farmers to the school meals market in Kenya

Matchmaking Events Connect Farmers with the School Feeding Market in Mali

Grain Banks in Ghana: Credit for Caterers Brings Farmers into the Market

Accessing the Future: School Feeding Data Goes Online

Improving Procurement Tools for Smallholder Farmer Inclusion in Kenya

Procurement Governance for Home Grown School Feeding
www.snv.org/project/procurement-governance-home-grown-school-feeding
www.snvusa.org

Contact

Eliana Vera, Project Manager
SNV USA
7500 Old Georgetown Road, Suite 901
Bethesda, MD 20814
evera@snvworld.org
301.913.2860

