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EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 6

For consideration



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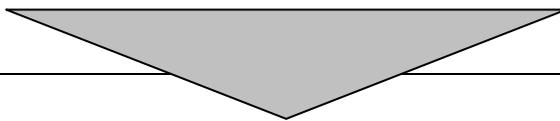
5 September 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF CAMEROON PROJECT 04387.1 (WIS no. 4387.01)

**School Feeding in Adamaoua, North,
Extreme North and Eastern Provinces**

Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

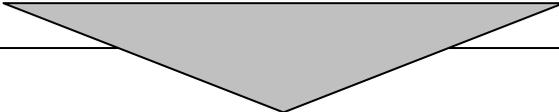
Director, Office of Evaluation (OEDE): Mr A. Wilkinson tel.: 066513-2029

Senior Evaluation Officer, OEDE: Ms S. Frueh tel.: 066513-2033

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Executive Summary

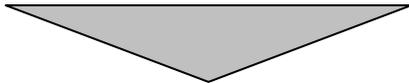


WFP has provided assistance to Cameroon's education sector since 1992. Project 04387.1 aims to raise the enrolment and attendance rates of children (especially young girls) in primary schools and to refocus the project on the rural areas of the four provinces where the enrolment rate is lower than the national average, i.e. Eastern, Adamaoua, North and Extreme North.

The project is in the process of achieving two of its three immediate objectives, namely: (i) to increase primary school attendance; and (ii) to improve the enrolment and attendance rates of girls in the beneficiary schools. The mission could not confirm if the project was able to realize its third objective: to improve students' capacity to acquire knowledge by providing them with supplementary balanced nutrition. The fact that the canteen meal is served at noon (almost at the end of the school day) leads one to believe that this objective will be difficult to measure. Children normally leave school only an hour or two after they have eaten, and most lessons take place before the meal.

The educational framework of the project is currently weak. The mission noted a considerable lack of scholastic equipment and teaching materials, as well as a shortage of teachers. These constraints currently limit the potential educational impact of WFP support.

Draft Decision



The Board notes the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.3/2001/6/4) and notes also the management action taken so far, as indicated in the associated information paper (WFP/EB.3/2001/INF/14). The Board encourages further action on these recommendations, taking into account considerations raised during the discussion.



INTRODUCTION

1. The evaluation mission of WFP project Cameroon 04387.1 took place 2–18 May 2001. The mission's principal objectives were to evaluate the project at mid-term, as requested by the WFP Executive Board, and to provide support for the preparation of the new Cameroon Country Programme.

PROJECT CAMEROON 04387.1

2. The project was approved by the Executive Board in May 1998 for a four-year period and began in October 1998. The total cost to WFP is US\$9.5 million (adjusted cost). WFP agreed to provide 18,223 tons of food commodities. An internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) rate of US\$57 per ton (average four-year figure) is included in the WFP project budget.
3. The summary of the project and the plan of operations provide for lunch for an annual average of 49,000 students and dry rations for an annual average of 16,000 girls in CE2 to CM2 classes (the final three years of primary school).
4. The overall objectives of the project are to contribute to the improvement and expansion of basic education for all and to reduce geographic and gender inequalities, while encouraging communities to participate actively in the management of the schools. There is a special focus on the poorest and most educationally disadvantaged populations of the country. The three specific immediate objectives are mentioned in the Executive Summary (above).

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT: PRIMARY EDUCATION

Financing

5. During the course of the past decade, regular public expenditure for primary education as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP) was marked by a sudden drop—on the order of 50 percent after 1993/1994, followed by a stabilization (of around 0.26 percent of the GDP) in the years that followed. Salary stagnation led to the mass exodus of teachers, resulting in a serious decline in teaching conditions, particularly in the WFP-supported provinces, which are the poorest in the country.
6. The economic crisis that has prevailed in Cameroon since the mid-1980s led the Government to enter into a number of different structural adjustment programmes with the Bretton Woods Institutions. Initially, these programmes resulted in the freezing of teacher recruitment at the primary-school level in the public schools, the shutting down of the general-education teacher training colleges and, in September 1993, a 60-percent reduction in salary expenditures. The portion of non-salary expenditures (equipment, textbooks, teaching materials, etc.) amounted to an average of only 5.9 percent of the national education budget in the period from 1993 to the present and proved to be insufficient to meet the needs of the numbers of students enrolled.
7. In 1997, the Cameroon authorities concluded a new agreement with the International Monetary Fund in the form of a reinforced structural adjustment facility in support of the



country's triennial economic and financial reform programme. That programme is intended to create the conditions for sustained economic growth and for the lasting recovery of the population's living conditions. It is within this framework that the Government began to develop an education strategy that aimed to ensure the provision of quantitatively and qualitatively adequate education services and to facilitate access to school for all children.

8. Since the Government's educational objectives aim to improve student access to and retention in primary school and to increase students' ability to acquire knowledge by improving their nutrition, the WFP project is in harmony with the Cameroon Government's efforts in the education sector.

Teaching Staff

9. Three types of teachers currently provide primary education:
 - certified teachers belonging to the civil service system;
 - temporary contract instructors¹; and
 - "parents' teachers", directly recruited and paid by parents' associations.²
10. The distribution of the different teacher categories involved in primary education varies considerably from one school to the next. Nevertheless, the overall number of parents' teachers is clearly significant. For example, in February 2001 in the North Province, there were 763 certified teachers (38 percent) and 471 temporary instructors (23 percent), as compared with 780 parents' teachers (39 percent).
11. In 1995, the overall shortage in the primary teaching staff was estimated at 12,000 teachers. In 2000, in order to help reduce that number, the Government decided to integrate 1,700 temporary instructors into the ranks of the state-employed and to recruit 1,300 new teachers for the start of the 2000/2001 school year, and a further 1,800 in January 2001.
12. Combined with the inadequacy of the academic infrastructure, the current weaknesses in the teaching staff sector, from a quantitative as well as a qualitative perspective, pose a considerable risk to the quality of the schooling given and limit the potential educational impact of WFP support.

Number of Students

13. The number of students educated in primary schools since the beginning of the 1990s has experienced two contrasting evolutions, as indicated by the following gross enrolment rate (GER)³: a decline from the end of the 1980s (a GER of 95.6 percent in 1989/1990) until the middle of the 1990s (a GER of 72.9 percent in 1995/1996), or a drop of 22 points in seven years, and a progressive recovery during the years that followed (a GER of 81.8 percent in 1998/1999), or an increase of 9 points in three years.

¹ The teacher training colleges were reopened in 1995. The teachers trained there have no guarantee of finding work, but they can be recruited as temporary instructors under a two-year contract that is renewable one time only. The length of their training period varies from one to three years, depending on their academic preparation (primary school certificate, probationary, diploma).

² The "parents' teachers" have no professional training other than that received during teaching days set up by the district inspectorates.

³ The global lack of data with regard to the number of children attending school makes it impossible to calculate the net enrolment rate.



14. This latter trend increased dramatically at the start of the 2000/2001 school year, following the announcement made by the President of the Republic in February 2000 regarding the waiving of school fees (formerly 1,500 FCFA per student per year).
15. The difference in the gross enrolment rate among the various provinces is quite marked. In 1998/1999, three out of the ten provinces in Cameroon had a GER that was only slightly higher than 50 percent. It should be noted that this refers to three of the four provinces where the project was in operation (Adamaoua, 52.8 percent; North, 54.9 percent; and Extreme North, 51.9 percent). During that same year, the Eastern Province, the fourth province targeted by the project, was ranked sixth among the provinces, with a GER of 82.7 percent, slightly higher than the national average (81.8 percent).
16. Gender disparity is also considerably pronounced in the various provinces. With the exception of the coastal region, the provinces having the highest enrolment rate have a gender parity index that is close to 1 (i.e. an equal number of boys and girls). On the other hand, the parity index in the Adamaoua and North provinces is around 0.50, and is even lower in the Extreme North (0.49).
17. What emerges from this is that the choice of the three northern provinces as priority beneficiaries of WFP support, and the emphasis placed on the enrolment of girls, was fully justified given the scholastic situation in those provinces as compared with the national average. The choice of the Eastern Province seems more questionable. (It should be noted, however, that in the disadvantaged rural zones of the Eastern Province that are supported by the project, the school enrolment rates are well below the national average, especially for girls.)

Management Structure of the Project

18. In accordance with the plan of operations concluded between the Government and WFP, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is responsible for project execution and the technical monitoring of the project's achievements. A project management structure involving the creation of a central coordination unit and provincial coordination units (PCUs) has been put in place.
19. There are in fact parallel channels for the collection, transmission and analysis of data from the base up to the central level. In the first system, information follows the hierarchical route of MINEDUC; in the second, it is channelled at the provincial level through the Executive Secretariat of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/WFP Committee and is forwarded to the permanent FAO/WFP Secretariat in Yaounde.
20. The monitoring system implemented by MINEDUC has certain weaknesses that are tied to organizational choices, logistical constraints and staff performance:
 - At the provincial level, data is assembled and processed by the head of the post- and extracurricular activities service, the school canteens being considered extracurricular activities. The project's educational objectives should nevertheless have resulted in involving the provincial teaching inspector (coordinator of nursery and primary school teaching) in the monitoring of the project, since that official normally has an overview of all of the primary school data in the province as a part of his/her duties.
 - The inadequate logistical means available to the district inspectors (for pre-primary and primary education) and the departmental delegates of the national educational service have often been cited as a factor limiting monitoring possibilities and prejudicing proper data collection.



- MINEDUC's monitoring of the project appears uneven in the various WFP-supported provinces: In certain provinces (Adamaoua, Eastern), the data collected have proven fragmentary and even erroneous, putting into question the reliability of the analysis made and transmitted to the central level. It would thus appear necessary to increase the capacity of the staff concerned.

The Situation in the Schools Visited

📁 **Schools**

21. The mission was able to visit 20 (or 5 percent) of the 444 schools assisted by the project in the four provinces where WFP is intervening.

📁 **Infrastructure, Equipment and Supplies**

22. The "permanent" buildings are, in most cases, dilapidated and poorly maintained. In the North and Extreme North provinces, the mission noted that some level-one classes (SIL/CP, Language Initiation Section/Primary Cycle) were sometimes held in shelters that had been constructed using temporary material (branches for a roof, covered with foliage). In addition, the number of classrooms is insufficient for the constantly increasing number of pupils, and water supply can be a major problem in schools located in rural areas in the North and Extreme North provinces.
23. The number of desks is clearly insufficient in the majority of the schools visited, with the exception of those schools supported by technical and financial partners (UNICEF, Japan, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], etc.). Many classrooms do not have secure storage facilities for books and school equipment. The children in level one (SIL/CP), who make up the largest percentage of students, are often obliged to sit on the bare ground or on rocks, especially in the North and Extreme North. Blackboards are often the only teaching tool available to the teachers.
24. While the teachers usually have up-to-date manuals at their disposal, the students do not have a sufficient number of textbooks and often have only one writing slate, one piece of chalk, one exercise book and one pencil or pen with which to work.

📁 **Teaching staff**

25. The 20 schools visited had 80 teachers divided among the following categories:
 - certified instructors 25 (or 31 percent)
 - temporary contract instructors 16 (or 20 percent)
 - parents' teachers or "volunteers" 39 (or 49 percent)
26. The high percentage of unskilled "parents' teachers" could have a considerable effect on the quality of the education the students receive.

The Project's Impact on Schooling

27. The mission was unable to conduct an exhaustive statistical analysis of all the data relative to project execution. On the one hand, the numerical data provided by two of the four PCUs was either incomplete or erroneous. On the other hand, following an administrative reorganization of MINEDUC, the primary education directorate did not have a file that included all the statistical data that had been brought up to date for the



primary school level.⁴ These constraints limited the possibility of making a global comparison between WFP project beneficiary schools and all primary schools.

28. Based upon the data available, however, it is evident that the total number of students in attendance at the beneficiary schools increased considerably between the 1997/1998 academic year and the present. In the two northernmost provinces:
- the number of students in the North went from 12,459 in 1997/1998 to 22,929 in 2000/2001, an increase of 84 percent; and
 - the number of students in the Extreme North went from 13,802 in 1997/1998 to 44,055 in 2000/2001, an increase of 219 percent (more than three times the number of students).
29. The results obtained in the two other provinces were less dramatic:
- an increase of 15.73 percent in Adamaoua Province, where the number of students went from 9,774 in 1998/1999 to 11,311 in 1999/2000; and
 - an increase of 10.53 percent in a sampling of 29 percent of the beneficiary schools in the East, where the number of students went from 4,548 in 1998/1999 to 5,027 in 1999/2000.
30. In the two provinces where comparisons are possible, the data indicate a clear difference between the evolution of the number of enrolments at the WFP beneficiary schools and that at the other schools:

INCREASE IN ENROLMENT FROM 1997/1998 TO 2000/2001		
Province	Non-beneficiary schools (%)	Beneficiary schools (%)
North	75.59	84.04
Extreme North	111.65	219.19

31. The difference is even more evident with regard to the increase in the percentage of girls enrolled:

INCREASE IN ENROLMENT FROM 1997/1998 TO 2000/2001, BY GENDER				
Province	Non-beneficiary schools (%)		Beneficiary schools (%)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
North	70.60	85.14	74.0	113.10
Extreme North	96.21	147.67	184.28	312.27

32. Unfortunately, it was not possible to make any comparisons with regard to the other provinces because of statistical inconsistencies among the various sources. The mission's field visits nevertheless confirmed this general trend and have allowed the mission to

⁴ From now on, the Prospective and Documentary Research Directorate will be in charge of MINEDUC statistical data. This data was being collected during the present mission, and the results should be available by the end of 2001.



affirm that WFP assistance has had a very considerable impact on children's schooling, in particular that of girls, independently of the effects created by the recent abolition of school fees.

33. During the course of its field visits, the mission nevertheless noted that the attraction of the WFP beneficiary schools has some less desirable or unanticipated effects:
- sometimes students leave schools in which they are enrolled to attend nearby beneficiary schools;
 - certain directors of schools receiving food aid accept "free auditors" (unregistered young children) as beneficiaries at their school canteens. This has occurred in the case of children who are 4 to 5 years old, thus not yet of normal primary school age; and
 - an increase in the numbers of students in WFP-assisted schools, without a concomitant increase in the number of teachers, creates a serious challenge for teachers to maintain the quality both of their teaching and of the classroom learning environment.
34. The project has shown positive results with regard to school attendance, with rates generally higher than 95 percent for girls as well as for boys. A general comparison of the student drop-out rates between beneficiary and non-beneficiary schools was not possible given the current state of the statistics available. Nevertheless, comparisons made based on limited data samplings indicate that the rate was fairly low in the WFP beneficiary schools. It is difficult, at this point, to measure the effect of the distributions of dry rations to girls attending CE2, CM1 and CM2 classes, since these distributions did not begin until 1999/2000.
35. Trimester examination results indicate that the rates of scholastic success are constantly increasing in the beneficiary schools—for example, from 48 percent in 1997/1998 to 62 percent in 2000/2001 in the Extreme North. Nevertheless, these rates appear to be very uneven in the various provinces, and even in certain districts within the same province. In any case, the PCUs insist that scholastic performance is attributable to a number of different factors, notably the schools' facilities and the size and quality of the teaching staff.

School Canteen Management

36. The school canteens operate well in the establishments visited. Each is equipped with a kitchen built by the parents' association or by members of the village community and with a food-storage facility (either a structure specially built for that purpose or a room in the house of a member of the canteen management committee).

Role of the Parents' Association

37. The chairperson of the canteen management committee is generally the chair of the parents' association. She/he works in collaboration with the school principal. The parents' associations are requested to assist in: (i) the construction of the canteens; (ii) the remuneration of the volunteer (parents) teachers; (iii) the compensation of the volunteer cooks; and (iv) the repair or construction of school classrooms.
38. Parents' association annual fees range from 500 FCFA to 1,800 FCFA per student or per family. These fees vary based on the standard of living of the community in question. The mission found that the parents' associations generally received numerous requests for assistance and that despite school fees having been abolished by presidential decree, schools are not necessarily free of cost to parents. In fact, the abolition of official school



fees could lead, in time, to more unofficial demands for financing being placed on parents as schools struggle to replace the loss of income.

📌 *Parents' Support to the Canteens*

39. Parents' support varies depending upon the locality of the schools visited, the importance of the schools in the eyes of the communities, the dynamism of the parents' association chairpersons and of the school principals and the involvement and training of the traditional leaders. By and large, the mission noted that parents were active participants. However, most of the parents the mission met with were men, with the women generally attending to meal preparation at most of the schools.

📌 *Community Ownership of the Project*

40. It would seem premature to speak of "ownership." The discussions held by mission members with the different project participants made it clear that if WFP were to stop distributing foodstuffs it would be very difficult for the communities to take over the supply of foodstuffs for the canteens, although some parents said that they could cope with temporary interruptions in supply.

41. Certain communities have taken a number of initiatives that should be encouraged and replicated. These include:

- the creation of school gardens for supplementary foodstuffs, such as onions and tomatoes;
- the sale of products to fund school canteens;
- close collaboration among the various partners and in particular among traditional leaders; and
- adjustment of the food rations based on the availability of stocks.

The Project's Logistics System

42. The products imported by WFP arrive at the port of Douala. Foodstuffs destined for the three northern provinces are transported by a forwarding agent selected by WFP, via railroad, to the extended delivery point (EDP) at Ngaoundere in Adamaoua Province. There they are received at a 2,000-ton capacity warehouse that is well managed by the provincial FAO/WFP Management Committee. Part of the food is then transferred by lorry to the North and Extreme North Provinces, where there are two EDPs at Garoua and Maroua (each of them with an 800-ton storage capacity). As concerns the Eastern Province, the forwarding agent transports the WFP foodstuffs by lorry to the Bertoua EDP, where the FAO/WFP Management Committee takes charge of the secondary transport.

43. With regard to the three northern provinces, WFP currently pays for the transportation costs from the EDPs to the schools, contracting with private transport companies. The Government organizes, and takes charge of the cost of, the transport to the schools in the Eastern Province using three lorries contributed by WFP. This approach has been successful during the current school year (2000/2001) and has ensured a much higher level of delivery to targeted schools in the Eastern Province. The FAO/WFP Management Committee has also covered the management, storage and maintenance costs of the EDP warehouses in all four provinces.

44. The secondary transport costs in the three provinces covered by WFP are steadily increasing. This is owing to poor seasonal road conditions, a weak infrastructure in the



areas covered, an increase in relevant costs (fuel, maintenance, spare parts, etc.) and to the new policy of liberalization of the road-transport sector, which is subject to limited effective competition. Thus, WFP may face medium-term financing problems with regard to transport costs in the three northern provinces. It appears that, to ensure an effective timetable for food deliveries to the schools, WFP has become more involved in secondary transport in three of the four provinces than was foreseen in the Basic Documents.

45. The management of WFP foodstuffs in the schools visited was found to be fairly good, since the communities and people responsible have devoted the proper amount of attention to this task. Most of those in charge were able to provide the mission with the precise storage situation and the mission was able to examine the storage records, the monthly and quarterly canteen reports and the delivery invoices. Nevertheless, the mission noted a break in supplies in most of the schools visited, particularly at the beginning of the school year (September to October 2000) and in many cases in February 2001. This pipeline breakdown was caused by transport problems and by the non-availability, during several months, of certain food items, such as iodized salt.

WFP Food Delivery and Utilization Rates

46. Fairly significant delays in food delivery and distribution were registered during the first two years of the project, owing principally to some logistical problems at the provincial level. A number of target schools received little or no food deliveries at all during those first two years. The situation improved considerably during the project's third year, and currently food distributions take place on schedule at nearly 100 percent of the 444 selected schools. Partially as a result of these delays and other problems that occurred during the project's first two years, the utilization of WFP products did not reach the level foreseen in the Basic Documents. In fact, the utilization level as of 30 June 2001 is estimated at 9,449 tons (taking into account all products), or 52 percent of the total amount allocated to the project (and 70 percent of the utilization rate foreseen for this date).
47. The underutilization of foodstuffs is largely a result of the fact that the number of girls enrolled in the CE2, CM1 and CM2 classes was far lower than foreseen in the project's projections. For example, 6,764 girls are presently enrolled instead of the 16,500 foreseen for the third year of the project, or only 41 percent. In the Basic Documents, dry rations for girls represented 63 percent of the total amount of food products (11,520 tons of the 18,223 tons approved). On the other hand, the number of students using the school canteens is presently much higher than foreseen in the Basic Documents (around 92,000 instead of 50,000 for the third year of the project).
48. Nevertheless, given the underutilization of WFP products up until now, the mission foresees that the present project could be expanded for an additional year (until June 2003) by adding the 1,058 tons of cereals from the United States foreseen within the framework of the School Feeding Initiative. Some 290 tons of vegetable oil and 48 tons of iodized salt would also have to be added through a WFP budget revision. This calculation is based upon an assumption of 92,000 student beneficiaries of the school canteens in 2001/2002 and 2002/2003, 10,000 beneficiaries of dry rations in 2001/2002 and 12,000 beneficiaries of dry rations in 2002/2003.

The Food Basket

49. The food basket comprises cereals (rice, maize flour), legumes (peas, beans), vitamin-A-enriched vegetable oil and iodized salt. As of today, rice (imported) represents 70 percent of the cereals delivered to the project, and maize flour (purchased locally) represents 30 percent. With regard to legumes, the figures indicate 94 percent for green and



yellow peas (imported) and 6 percent for beans (purchased locally). Vegetable oil is wholly imported, while iodized salt is purchased locally.

50. In spite of the fact that maize is a basic food product in a number of provinces, the use of maize flour creates certain problems for the school canteens because of the effort required to cook it. As for the legumes, it would be preferable to purchase beans (niebe or red kidney beans) in accordance with the availability of WFP funds and the supply of beans in the local or regional markets.

Impact on Women and Young Girls

51. The participation of women in school canteen management is structurally weak. In nearly all the schools visited, women were not part of the decision-making process and were relegated instead to carrying out secondary tasks, such as food preparation.
52. The project has already contributed to a significant increase in the number of girls at school (particularly in the two northernmost provinces), to a better balance between boys and girls attending school and to a stability of girls' attendance at schools. Girls also now have an increased importance in the community and in their families because of the dry take-home ration.
53. As mentioned above, however, the number of girls (in the last three years of primary school) who receive dry rations is far lower than that foreseen in the Basic Documents (6,764 at present, rather than 16,500). This is certainly the result of an overestimation made at the time the project was conceived.

Project Monitoring

54. In general, project monitoring was inadequate during the first two years. The evaluation mission was able to consult only a limited number of monitoring reports covering this period.
55. This was partly the result of a lack of funds to undertake a baseline study, a lack of personnel (two foreseen United Nations Volunteer posts were not filled) and a lack of direct support cost funds allocated to the project, owing to WFP global development resources constraints.
56. The situation improved considerably in regard to monitoring by the FAO/WFP Management Committee and WFP itself during the project's third year (2000/2001). This was owing in part to the recent provision of three four-wheel-drive vehicles to the FAO/WFP Management Committees in the northern provinces. As regards WFP, the increase in monitoring is the result of an allocation of funds within the framework of a Canadian grant ("Impact Grant").
57. The Garoua office (North Province) is responsible for daily project monitoring, the allotment of WFP foodstuffs to the schools (in close collaboration with counterparts) and the management of contracts for secondary transport to schools in the three northern provinces. For this, the sub-office uses a monitoring form during its visits to the schools. The form covers information regarding the functioning of the school canteen, the evolution of pedagogical indicators, food management, the number of girls who have received dry rations, the participation and contribution of the communities, the functioning of the canteen management committee and the presentation of monitoring reports. Generally, monitoring seems to have improved since the shift of the daily country office project implementation and monitoring functions to Garoua.



58. Nevertheless, the distances that must be covered in the interior of the four provinces, as well as those between the provinces, present problems in monitoring the project in all the schools. WFP staff manage to visit approximately one third of the schools a year. At the provincial level, the FAO/WFP Management Committee staff are able to visit the schools more regularly (particularly when foodstuffs are being delivered), but these visits are linked less to monitoring than to project management and logistics. As mentioned elsewhere, MINEDUC provincial staff carry out relatively few monitoring missions in the field, owing principally to the lack of transportation facilities.
59. In order to improve project monitoring, WFP should create a sub-office in the Eastern Province. This province is the farthest away from the WFP office at Garoua and it presents special monitoring problems. An international United Nations volunteer, with the support of a locally recruited monitoring assistant and a driver, could manage the sub-office. In addition, owing to the recent departure of the international programme representative (the head of the Garoua office), the Garoua office should be strengthened with the local recruitment of a monitoring assistant.

CONCLUSIONS

60. The mission noted that the project was in the process of fully achieving two of the three immediate objectives assigned to it:
- The existence of school canteens in the WFP beneficiary schools has contributed to increasing primary-school attendance in the four disadvantaged provinces.
 - WFP assistance has also helped increase girls' enrolment and attendance rates at schools to which, until recently and for diverse reasons, girls had little or no access.
61. It might therefore be concluded that the project has had a considerable impact on improving school access, particularly for girls.
62. It was not possible to verify whether the project was able to achieve its third objective: improving students' capacity to acquire knowledge by providing them with supplementary balanced nutrition. The fact that the canteen meal is served at noon (near the end of the school day) leads one to believe that it will be difficult to measure whether this objective has been achieved. Children normally leave school only an hour or two after they have eaten, and most lessons take place before the meal.
63. It is clear that certain measures should be taken in order to improve the execution of the project, which otherwise may fail to achieve its desired long-term impact.
64. It is crucial that the efforts of the beneficiary communities and those who have been empowered by the project be supplemented by MINEDUC's efforts, particularly with regard to the provision of educational services. The project's educational framework is currently weak. The mission noted a significant lack of scholastic equipment and teaching materials, and an insufficient number of teachers. The development of closer partnerships with other multilateral and bilateral agencies could help to make improvements in this respect, since the current inadequacy of school facilities, scholastic materials and teaching staff are all constraints limiting the potential educational impact of WFP support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

65. For the current project:



- MINEDUC should ensure that WFP assistance is made more effective by providing more active support to the beneficiary schools' educational framework. Failing this, the project risks not being able to achieve its principal objective, which is an educational one.
- In order to ensure proper monitoring of the project's implementation and measure its educational impact, MINEDUC must reinforce the capacities of its staff members who participate in project management, particularly with regard to statistical data collection and processing. Support for this might be sought from the different multilateral and bilateral technical and financial partners who are present in Cameroon and operate in this area.
- The project's central coordination unit and its provincial units must take steps to ensure that only the project's intended beneficiaries (schoolchildren aged 6 to 14) benefit from WFP food supplies provided by the school canteens.
- The central and provincial coordination units should ensure that school principals do not enrol children in the WFP beneficiary schools who could otherwise be enrolled in schools closer to their places of residence.
- The PCU should ensure active and sustained community participation in the management of the school canteens.
- As a result of the large increase in student enrolment in the beneficiary schools, a limit needs to be set for the number of students who may benefit from the canteen. Otherwise lack of food resources may become a problem in the medium term.
- It may prove necessary to concentrate the beneficiary schools geographically in order to reduce secondary transport costs and the migration of students from non-beneficiary schools.
- WFP and its counterparts should ensure that women become more active participants in the parents' associations and on the school canteen management committees.
- The WFP country office in Cameroon, in collaboration with the regional logistics adviser, should recalculate the ITSH matrix in order to make certain that WFP can stay within the limits of its ITSH-related budgetary commitments for the duration of the project. WFP should also assess the manner in which the Government is respecting its commitments in this regard.
- WFP should establish a sub-office at Bertoua in order to improve monitoring activities in the Eastern Province, some preparatory work having already been done in this regard. It would also be advisable to add another locally recruited assistant to the staff of the office at Garoua in order to strengthen monitoring activities in the three other provinces.
- The project's Basic Documents were created based on an assumption of 180 school days, when in reality the number of school days does not exceed 165. Consequently, future food assistance needs should be calculated based on a maximum of 165 school days per year.
- WFP should make certain that the useful "School Canteen Practical Management Guide" is distributed to all beneficiary schools, as several schools visited lacked this basic document.



66. For the future project (expansion within the framework of the future Country Programme)⁵:
- Priority should be given to the North and Extreme North provinces in view of their socio-economic and food security indicators, which are obviously more unfavourable. The low school attendance rate in Adamaoua Province (52.8 percent) justifies continued WFP assistance. In the context of the forthcoming Country Programme, however, WFP and the Government should redefine policies and strategies with regard to school feeding for rural primary schools in the Eastern Province.
 - Given the fact that dry rations serve as a form of revenue transfer (and do not have any specific nutritional objective), WFP could limit dry rations to 50 kg of cereals per eligible female student per school term.

⁵ The Country Strategy Outline (CSO) of May 2000 provides for the expansion of the project in the four provinces.



ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

EDP	Extended delivery point
GDP	Gross domestic product
GER	Gross enrolment rate
ITSH	Internal transport, storage and handling
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
PCU	Provincial coordination unit
SIL/CP	Language Initiation Section/Primary Cycle

