



ABOUT “LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE”

The UN World Food Programme has 45 years of experience in school feeding. This collection of good practices and lessons learned, *Learning from Experience*, has harvested existing knowledge on the topic, drawing from 134 evaluations, case studies, an ongoing consultation process and operational experience.

The study makes available institutional memory as a tool for practical use in the field. This work will serve as a guide and a building block for governments, WFP and NGO partners to design and implement high-quality, feasible, sustainable and cost-effective school feeding programmes.

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MALAWI LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR HANDOVER

COUNTRY OVERVIEW	
Children enrolled in primary school	2,934,000
Girls enrolled in primary school	50%
Out-of-school children	202,000
Gross enrolment ratio	119%
Survival rate to last grade	36%
Repeaters (all grades)	20.8%
WFP ASSISTANCE In 2008	
Children receiving school meals	642,000
Children receiving take-home rations	119,000
Children de-wormed	105,000
Food distributed (mt)	13,800
Assisted schools	689

OVERVIEW

In Malawi, food insecurity has a significant impact on education. A study commissioned by UNICEF in 2002¹ found that food insecurity impacted student absenteeism and drop-out rates (which range from 10.4 percent to 22.5 percent), particularly during the lean season.

¹ Malawi centre for Social Research, *Impact of food shortage on schooling*, 2002.

High school-related costs, such as uniforms and books are high for households that depend on the income of working children. Girls drop out owing to early marriage and pregnancy; attendance among children who are double orphans or who do not live with a surviving parent is 8 percent lower than among children living with both parents.

In December 2007 the president of Malawi issued a cabinet directive mandating the Ministry of Education to start implementing Universal School Meals in all primary schools across the country. WFP is strongly involved in programme design, to favour handover of programme.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKBOX	
Sound alignment with national policy framework	√√
Stable funding and budgeting	√√
Evidence-based programme design	√√√
Strong institutional and implementation arrangements	√√
Strong partnerships and inter-sector coordination	√√√
Strong community participation and ownership	

GOOD PRACTICES

School feeding in the policy framework

- **Ensuring alignment with national policies:** the School Health and Nutrition Strategy has been developed and establishes the framework for implementation of all school health and nutrition programmes in the country. The strategy is aligned to the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and the National Education Sector Plan; school feeding is one of the main strategies to increase access to primary education.

Partnerships

- **Partnering to improve food basket, deworming and local procurement:** WFP has partnered with GTZ for sustainable school nutrition programmes. GTZ has also promoted a low-input model using local resources rather than external inputs to increase productivity in community and school gardens. The Ministry of Health partners WFP for deworming activities in assisted schools.

Handover arrangements

- **Mapping efforts on school feeding and strengthening multi-sector coordination:** WFP and the World Bank supported the government of Malawi with a stocktaking exercise, a stakeholder workshop whose objective was to assess the state of school feeding in the country and to establish a baseline for future action. The final stakeholder workshop report highlighted strengths, weaknesses, potential synergies and gaps and made recommendations for improvement. Three major results from the workshop paved the way for future collaboration: i) the creation of a school feeding task force to move forward with the design of the national school feeding programme; ii) agreement on a draft action plan comprising

concrete milestones; iii) identification of the need to improve the knowledge base on school feeding.

- **Calculating the cost of school feeding:** acting upon a request from the Ministry of Education, WFP commissioned a cost estimation exercise for five different food basket options for the national school feeding programme. The study calculated the cost implications of distributing the different food commodities chosen by the government. The results of the study were presented to the Ministry of Education in March of 2009.

Targeting

- **Take-home rations to increase girls' and double orphans' attendance:** the programme provides a take-home ration of 12.5 kg of maize per month for girls and for double orphans who attend 80 percent of school days. These take-home rations have a substantial value transfer effects and encourage households to keep children in school particularly during the lean season. Results are encouraging: girls' enrolment increased by 37.7 percent.
- **Ensuring support to all schools during the lean season:** schools with good attendance rates, usually not in need of WFP assistance still require temporary support during the lean season because of sudden increases in school drop-out. WFP provides high-energy biscuits to community-based child-care centers and selected primary schools for one school term during the lean season. The districts selected for assistance are identified by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee.

Monitoring and evaluation

- **Providing means to school feeding coordinators:** the government employs District School Feeding Coordinators in all districts targeted, to work alongside WFP Food Monitors in the schools. The coordinators receive from WFP office computers and information technology trainings, a motorbike and partial (70 percent) reimbursement of fuel expenses. The Ministry of Education is responsible for paying the remaining 30 percent of the fuel requirements and motorbike maintenance.

LESSONS LEARNED

Targeting

- **Extending school feeding to preschool children during the lean season:** during the lean season, young children attending community-based child-care centers in proximity to primary schools assisted by WFP are withdrawn from preschool and enrolled prematurely in primary school in order to access food. This disturbs the normal learning process of primary school children and the underage pre-primary students. Extending school feeding to pre-schoolers, at a minimum during in the lean season would help address this problem.