Struggles for Good Governance and Livelihood Security:

A Study of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District

Mariska Lammers
Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been written without the cooperation and support of so many people to whom I am extremely grateful. It has been a long and challenging journey that started in June 2012 and that, after some interruptions, ends here.

Firstly, I would like to thank Dr. Dick Foeken, for his valuable recommendations, for sharing his knowledge and experience and for taking my ideas seriously. Dr. Sebastiaan Soeters for his practical advice before my departure, for putting me in touch with people and organisations in Ghana and for his straightforward and honest feedback on my work. Thank you both for being my supervisors.

Many thanks as well to Dr. Harry Wels and Professor Robert Ross, for chairing the seminars on proposal and thesis writing where they encouraged me to keep working and to keep challenging myself. To all the lecturers at the African Studies Centre, Wageningen University and elsewhere who, in one way or another, have helped shaping my thoughts. I thank my RESMAAS classmates, who were always there to cheer me up with their edgy humour at our beloved weekly get-togethers.

I am grateful to the Outbound Fund, Curatorenfonds and Lustra Fonds for the financial support which was highly appreciated. To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that gave me the opportunity to do an internship which opened many doors. I thank Hans Eenhoorn, for his inside stories about the Ghana School Feeding Programme and for his great hospitality.

There are numerous people and organisations in Ghana to whom I am grateful. Nashiru Sulemana for helping me get started with my work in Tamale. The people at the GSFP National Secretariat who were willing to answer my critical questions. The World Food Programme, SNV, SEND, Calid and Urbanet for taking the time to explain their organisations’ contribution to the programme. Thank you so much to the Ghana Education Service, specifically Mrs. Samata and all the Circuit Supervisors for helping me with my survey. Thank you for distributing and collecting the questionnaires and for taking me on bumpy rides on your motorbikes to visit schools: without your help I would never have been able to carry out the survey. I thank all the head teachers who took time to fill in the questionnaire and all the teachers I met on my fieldtrips for showing me around their school. Keep up the good work.

I would like to thank the chiefs and elders of Kotingli and Chanshegu, for allowing me to roam around freely in their villages. Thank you to the caterers and cooks, PTA chairmen and PTA members, farmers, traders and housewives, who were all willing to explain to me their ideas about school feeding and who took an interest in my research. Moreover, I want to thank my wonderful
host family in Tamale for welcoming me into their home with great hospitality and for letting me be part of their family’s traditions during my stay. Fatima, thank you for being my sister.

The following people deserve to be acknowledged separately for their support. Thank you Abdul-Rafik Issahaku, for your great humour, friendship and your tremendous help on our fieldtrips. Fati Tebuuaa, for your strength, good advice and for helping me navigate through Accra during my first weeks in Ghana. Ingrid, Selma, Astrid, Sophie, Evelien, Miriam and Ilse for always keeping in touch and for sharing the ideals that brought us together in Wageningen. Rens and Femke, for your loyal friendship over the years and for all the fun we have in Maastricht. Mubarik Ahmed, for your love, compassion and optimistic view of life.

Finally, I thank Jes, Frans and Piet for raising me with strong values and empathy for others and for supporting me no matter what.

Mariska Lammers, 11.12.13
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the sustainability of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District and to shed light on the complex interactions between international, national, regional, district and local actors. An additional objective was to study the situation ‘on the ground’ and to understand how school feeding benefits children and wider communities in their livelihood strategies. This study was based on five months of fieldwork in Ghana and additional data collection in the Netherlands and made use of both quantitative and qualitative methods and primary as well as secondary sources. The results of the study were that although it has a decentralised structure, the GSFP in Tamale Metropolitan District is in reality a top-down intervention with weak community participation. Also, the results revealed that school feeding indeed benefits children from poor households, both with regard to their educational as well as nutritional status. However, it does not directly benefit smallholder farmers because caterers buy the majority of foodstuffs at the central market. To add fresh produce to the school meals and to educate children about agriculture, school gardens are a promising possibility that should be further explored.
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<tr>
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<td>Association of Church Development Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>BECE</td>
<td>Basic Education Certificate Examination</td>
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<td>BMI</td>
<td>Body Mass Index</td>
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<td>CAAPD</td>
<td>Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<td>Calid</td>
<td>Centre for Active Learning and Integrated Development</td>
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<td>CGD</td>
<td>Centre for Global Development</td>
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<td>CRS</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
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<td>CSB</td>
<td>Corn Soy Blend</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>Civil Society Platform</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>District Assembly</td>
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<td>DGIS</td>
<td>Directeur-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking</td>
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<td>DIC</td>
<td>District Implementation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNC</td>
<td>Direction Nationale des Cantines Scolaires</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECASARD</td>
<td>Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
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<td>FBO</td>
<td>Farmer Based Organisation</td>
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<td>FFS</td>
<td>Farmer Field Schools</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GES</td>
<td>Ghana Education Services</td>
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<td>GLSS 5</td>
<td>Ghana Living Standards Survey Report of the Fifth Round</td>
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<td>GoG</td>
<td>Government of Ghana</td>
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<td>GSFP</td>
<td>Ghana School Feeding Programme</td>
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<td>HGSF</td>
<td>Home-grown School Feeding</td>
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<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Countries</td>
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<td>ICDS</td>
<td>Integrated Child Development Services</td>
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<td>IFPRI</td>
<td>International Food Policy Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minbuza</td>
<td>Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>MinEdu</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MinHealth</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<td>MNP</td>
<td>Micro Nutrient Powder</td>
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<td>MoFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Food and Agriculture</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>NDC</td>
<td>National Democratic Congress</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NPP</td>
<td>New Patriotic Party</td>
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<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<td>P4P</td>
<td>Purchase for Progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAA</td>
<td>Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCD</td>
<td>Partnership for Child Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Participatory Learning and Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNAE</td>
<td>Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
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<td>PW HC</td>
<td>PriceWaterHouseCoopers</td>
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<tr>
<td>RRA</td>
<td>Rapid Rural Appraisal</td>
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<td>SEND</td>
<td>Social Enterprise Development</td>
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<td>SENVINET</td>
<td>Schools Environmental Network</td>
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<td>SIC</td>
<td>School Implementation Committee</td>
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<td>SIGN</td>
<td>School-feeding Initiative Ghana Netherlands</td>
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<td>SNV</td>
<td>Netherlands Development Association</td>
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<td>TMA</td>
<td>Tamale Metropolitan Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Un Habitat</td>
<td>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</td>
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<td>Unicef</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>Urbanet</td>
<td>Urban Agriculture Network</td>
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<td>USDA</td>
<td>United States Department of Agriculture</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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Cover photo:
School children at Wurishie Darul Ish, Mariska Lammers 2.10.12
1. Introduction

1.1 Description of the context

The topic of this thesis is the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) in Tamale Metropolitan District. The basic concept of the GSFP is to provide children in public primary schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas of the country with one hot, nutritious meal per day, using locally-grown foodstuffs. ‘Providing a child with a daily nutritious meal at school is seen as a simple and effective way of improving not only school attendance and retention rates but also children’s nutritional status and health’ (Foeken et al., 2007, p. 1). The long-term goal is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security in Ghana by providing a market for farm output, leading to wealth creation at the rural household and community level. The programme started in 2005 and is founded on three key pillars:

- reducing hunger and malnutrition
- increasing school enrolment, attendance and retention
- boosting domestic food production (GoG, 2009)

The programme is part of the Ghanaian government’s efforts towards the realisation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)\(^1\) on hunger, poverty and primary education by the target date of 2015 (Ibid). In 2004, when the programme was about to commence, the most difficult challenges in Ghana were ‘halving hunger, achieving gender parity in primary schools, reducing under-five mortality and increasing primary school enrolment’ (UN, 2004, p. 20). According to the UN, 25% of under-five children were underweight and there was a 58% primary net enrolment rate, which implies that 42% of children of official primary school age were not partaking in primary education (Ibid).

The basic education system in Ghana consists of two elements: primary school (six years) and junior secondary school (three years), both of which are tuition free. On completing junior secondary school, pupils have to partake in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), and the results determine admission of pupils into senior secondary school (three years) (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Access to primary education has dramatically improved over the past years to a rate of 84% in 2010, whereas enrolment rates in junior and secondary schools are relatively lagging behind (MinEdu, 2010,

It should be noted, however, that increased enrolment rates may compromise the quality of education; literacy and numeracy tests revealed that nearly half (46%) of children who have completed public primary education scored 5 or less on a simple English test, ‘meaning they were barely literate and one-fifth (19%) scored 2 or less, i.e. the same as guessing, and so are illiterate’ (World Bank, 2004, p. 35).

Two policy initiatives by the Ghanaian government stand out in the recent attempt to achieve universal basic education: the first is education decentralization and management, and the second is the introduction of capitation grants (Akyeampong et al., 2007, p. 11). Despite the fact that basic education in Ghana is tuition free, costs for uniforms, stationary, books, transportation, feeding etcetera discourage some poor households from sending their children to school. Through the capitation grant policy, the Government of Ghana gives schools in deprived areas additional subsidies for school materials to support needy children (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 9). This intervention is mainly aimed at the three northern regions that continue to experience low levels of educational performance (Akyeampong et al., 2007). ‘For example, repetition rates in primary schools in the North are generally higher than the national average and the phenomenon of out of school children is particularly acute there’ (Ibid, p. 6).

Donor funding of education mainly goes to non-salary expenditures, such as infrastructure, furniture, textbooks, teacher accommodation and capacity building, as well as school uniforms etc. for pupils, especially girls, in deprived communities (Ibid). Ghana receives a total of €1,3 billion a year in Official Development Assistance (ODA). The largest contributions come from concessional multilateral loans from the World Bank’s International Development Association and from the African Development Bank Group through the African Development Fund. The Netherlands is the single most important bilateral donor and has given over €50 million of ODA every year during the past fourteen years. The Dutch Embassy in Accra was also heavily involved in the GSF between 2005 and 2011 through funding, technical assistance and by supporting NGOs and local governments. In the coming years, however, Dutch development assistance to Ghana will gradually decrease since the Dutch government believes that the country will be increasingly able to develop itself independently because of its rapid economic growth and because the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs will have to deal with €1 billion in cuts on development cooperation (Ibid). Since 2011, Ghana is officially a lower-middle income country with a GDP per capita of €1175.

Although the poverty incidence in Ghana has fallen from 52% in 1992 to 29% in 2006 (Ibid), there are large rural and regional differences in poverty. ‘In particular the northern parts of the

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2 http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD
3 http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/betrekkingen-met-nederland/ghana
country (Northern and Upper Regions) saw poverty worsening or stagnating. In these regions most farmers are dependent on food crop farming and agricultural and off-farm earnings appear to have stagnated or fallen in relative terms’ (Croppenstedt et al. 2003, p. 23). The underdevelopment of the Northern regions has often been blamed on the lack of investments by the colonial administration or on political dominance of the South in later periods (Soeters, 2012, p. 8). Klinken and Zan (2008, p. 4) take this line of argument, for instance, when they argue: ‘Northern citizens are discriminated against because they are not part of the political power base: with 38 out of the 101 opposition members of Parliament coming from the North and the overall majority of northern MPs being in the opposition (38 out of 49), the government is not inclined to give the North favourable treatment in the allocation of resources’. Moreover, northern Ghana has less favourable ecological conditions and a land-locked position with a poor infrastructure which severely limits economic opportunities (Ibid).

Nevertheless, one should be careful not to treat North Ghana as one homogeneous entity. Tamale is the regional capital of northern Ghana and exists today of around 400,000 inhabitants and ‘the city of Tamale should be seen as a driver of development in its own right and not as a by-product of development in general’ (Soeters, 2012, p. 7). This thesis focuses on Tamale Metropolitan District (see figure 1) which comprises of one major town, 17 semi urban settlements and 115 villages and which is located at the centre of the Northern Region (Yussif et al., 2011).

Figure 1: The districts of the Northern region of Ghana

Although Ghana is often called ‘West-Africa’s golden child’ and is renowned for its stable democracy, corruption remains a significant problem in the country (Chêne, 2010, p. 10). ‘The government has a strong anti-corruption legal framework in place, but faces challenges of enforcement’ (Ibid). Ghana was created as a parliamentary democracy at independence in 1957 and the 1992 constitution divides powers among a president, parliament, cabinet, council of state and an independent judiciary (Pryce and Oidtmann, 2013, p. 1). In the 1960s ‘the Ghanaian party landscape effectively turned into a two-party system, with the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) as the country’s predominant parties’ (Ibid). The NPP has positioned itself as the leading liberal-conservative party, while the NDC is a full member party of the Socialist International (Chronicle, 2012). Between 2001 and 2009, John Kufuor was the president of Ghana, representing the NPP. He was succeeded by John Atta Mills, who was running for president as a candidate of the NDC. In July 2012 Atta Mills passed away unexpectedly, after which vice-president John Dramani Mahama was sworn in as interim head of state, representing NDC. After winning the elections of December 2012, Mahama officially became president of Ghana and under his administration, the Ghana School Feeding Programme will be made into a national policy, whereas before it was a programme document. The 2014 Budget Statement of the Government of Ghana states that ‘(...) in developing a National School-feeding Policy, stakeholder consultations were held in the various regions and with NGOs and Parliament. (...) In 2014, the Policy will be launched for implementation and the food ration design tool will be applied to improve the nutritional intake of pupils.’ (GoG, 2013, p. 75).

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

When looking at GSFP evaluations, two aspects have been least successful in the programme’s implementation: effective management and active community participation. In 2008, the Dutch government withdrew support to the programme due to cases of corruption at the National Secretariat, i.e. the award of contracts to non-existent companies and the disappearance of funds allocated to programme managers (PWHC in Ernst & Young, 2012). Because of its middle-income status, Ghana is likely to receive less donor funding in the future and the programme’s transition from external support to national ownership will become an important issue and government leadership, at all levels, is therefore indispensible. Furthermore, since there is a lack of data on the workings of the GSFP at the district, school and community levels and because there is no proper monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the programme at the beneficiary level. ‘The success of school feeding is dependent on local community commitment and participation. (...) In the beginning the GSFP put limited effort in
informing and involving communities. Consequently, the programme, despite decentralised structures, was seen by many as a top-down intervention’ (Haverkort, 2011, p. 33).

The objective of this thesis is, therefore, to gain a better understanding of the institutional workings of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District and to investigate how school feeding benefits children and wider communities in their livelihood strategies. This brings me to this thesis’ main research question:

‘To what extent is the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District a sustainable social safety net?’

With sustainability is meant here how successfully the intervention can function in the long term, and whether it will continue to have positive effects over time especially if external assistance is withdrawn. The related sub-research questions structuring the analysis are as follows:

i) How is the GSFP organised in Tamale Metropolitan District?
ii) What is the political context in which the GSFP operates?
iii) How do local communities participate in the programme?
iv) Does school feeding provide an effective social safety net for children of poor households?
v) Does the programme stimulate local agricultural development?
vi) What is the practice and potential of school gardens to supplement school feeding?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis starts with discussing the theoretical framework in chapter two. Programme evaluation theories and the concepts of ‘good governance’ and ‘community participation’ are explained here. Also, the livelihood framework of Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) will be introduced with an emphasis on the core concept of ‘sustainability’ and an account of its different dimensions related to social safety nets. Chapter three contains a description of the methodology used during the five months of fieldwork that this thesis draws on. In chapter four I give an overview of existing literature on school-feeding programmes with the aim of comparing the GSFP to other school-feeding programmes. Chapter five highlights struggles of good governance and community participation in Tamale Metropolitan District and chapter six looks at how school feeding enters the lives of beneficiaries, seen through a livelihood lens. In the concluding chapter I aim to answer the main research question, give recommendations for improvement of the programme and make suggestions for future research.
2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides a theoretical and conceptual framework to analyse the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District. In the first section I describe the evaluation gap of development programmes and the importance of doing research at the beneficiary level. With regard to the programme’s implementation, I use ‘good governance’ theories that highlight the importance of the political context of development programmes and provide a framework to describe the relationship between state and society, with a focus on community participation. Considering results, the theoretical framework is aimed at the community level, in particular on the role of social safety nets for livelihood strategies of poor households. I use the livelihood approach to describe the benefits of school feeding and the relationship between the GSFP, local agriculture and school farming.

2.1 Evaluation of development programmes

In this thesis I will not ask ‘what works?’ or ‘does the Ghana School Feeding Programme work?’ but rather I will ask ‘What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?’ (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p. 1). This question has received considerable attention in development assistance over the past few years. The major reason is that people not working in development agencies believe that achievements of results have been poor, or at best not convincing. At the end of the twentieth century development assistance was about ‘thinking big’, for instance through structural adjustment programmes as a means for generating economic growth in developing countries (Vaessen, 2010, p. 8). Consequently, a lot of effort went into analyses at the macro-level, focussing on GDP growth. Gradually, the development paradigm shifted towards ‘thinking small’ as a result of growing pessimism about the effectiveness of these macro interventions. ‘Yet, the state of evidence on the effectiveness of concrete policy interventions (programmes, policies) was far from promising either’ (Ibid). In 2006, a paper published by the Centre for Global Development ‘When will we ever learn’ (CGD, 2006) describes the evaluation gap in development and states that too much of the evaluations focus on the implementation of policies and programmes instead of results.

The dominant theoretical model of planned interventions sees a rather linear relationship between policy, implementation and results. The result chain of the Ghana School Feeding Programme presented below is an illustration of how a step-by-step evolution is implied from inputs and activities to outputs and outcomes. ‘It establishes the causal logic from the initiation of the
programme, beginning with available resources, to the end, looking at long-term goals’ (Gerther et al., 2006, p. 25). The result chain has two main parts. Firstly, implementation: the planned work delivered by the project or programme through inputs and activities. This is the area that the implementation agency can directly monitor to measure the project’s performance. Secondly, results: intended results consist of the outputs, outcomes and final outcomes, which are not under the direct control of the project and are dependent on behavioural changes by beneficiaries. In other words, they depend on the interaction between the programme and the beneficiaries.

Figure 2: Result chain of the Ghana School Feeding Programme

As Long and Van der Ploeg (1989, p. 228) argue: this result chain is a gross ‘over-simplification of a much more complicated set of processes and it is vital to understand the processes by which interventions enter the life-worlds of the individuals and groups affected and thus become part of the social strategies they develop’. In short: the concept of an intervention or a programme needs

6 Adapted from Gether et al. (2011) and GoG (2006, 2009)
deconstructing so that we see it as an ongoing and socially-constructed process rather than the straightforward implementation of a plan. Moreover, ‘programmes cannot be fully isolated or kept constant: unanticipated events, political change, media coverage and so on make programmes permeable and flexible’ (Ibid).

2.2 Good governance and community participation

The recipient country’s capacity, ownership of and commitment to carry out development programmes are almost universally agreed to be indispensable for success. These three concepts are closely linked to another popular term in the current aid paradigm: governance. ‘Governance, and the commitment to governance, are now regarded as the central concepts which account for all, or almost all, of the performance of aid; both successes and failures’ (Riddell, 2007, p. 370). I argue that governance is a complex concept, which means different things to different people. For some, governance is concerned primarily with rules and institutions (Abbot and Snidal, 2000); for others, it is about the way in which policy is put into practice, and thus encompasses a broader area (Hyden and Court, 2002).

I will make use of the definition of Hyden, Court and Mease (2004, p.16): ‘Governance is the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions’. Governance thus embraces government institutions but also informal, non-governmental institutions operating in the public sphere. However, in spite of the explosive growth of profit and non-profit groups in civil society, I argue that governments remain the primary agents. So what is good governance then? To answer that question, one has to be aware of what is meant with bad governance. As Weiss (2000, p. 801) writes: ‘The World Bank operationalised ‘bad governance’ as personalisation of power, lack of human rights, endemic corruption and un-elected and unaccountable governments. And so, ‘good governance must be the exact opposite’. To be more precise: ‘(...) good governance is more than multiparty elections, a judiciary and a parliament, which have been emphasised as the primary symbols of Western-style democracy. The list of other attributes, with the necessary resources and culture to accompany them, is formidable: universal protection of human rights; non-discriminatory laws; efficient, impartial and rapid judicial processes; transparent public agencies; accountability for decisions by public officials; devolution of resources and decision making to local levels from the capital; and meaningful participation by citizens in debating public policies and choices.’ (Ibid).

It is essential for donors to understand, or try to understand, the political context within which the aid provided is meant to work. For example, in the case of the GSFP, because of its
visibility, it was used for political purposes, there were severe cases of corruption and incompetent party members were appointed to positions in the programme.

When reading about governance in Africa, two characterizations of weak African states are frequently mentioned in the debate: neo-partrimonialism and clientelism. The former refers to ‘a system in which individual rulers, and often their relatives, hold disproportionate power’, whereas the latter highlights the ‘influence of patronage on the access to basic services and the use and allocation of state funds’ (Riddell, 2007, p. 375). This is a sensitive topic for donors because strong criticism on the recipient country’s governance system can be seen as interference in national affairs, or worse, as neo-imperialism. Yet, it is an important discussion because one of the prominent conclusions emerging from studies on weak clientelistic states is that aid can have the unintended effect of reinforcing governance problems such as patronage (Bräutigam and Knack, 2004). Thus, good governance has become a political and economic conditionality that is inseparable from debates about appropriate bilateral and multilateral development financing. All aid donors, both governmental and non-governmental, have an obligation to ensure that the funds they provide are used for the intended purposes, as efficiently and effectively as possible. Therefore, when a donor country gives financial aid, there will be conditions attached. This is still the case today, but it was extra obvious in the 1980s during the time of the structural adjustment loans given by the World Bank. Not only the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) added policy conditions but also most bilateral and multilateral donors, requiring recipients to be in compliance with the standards of the global financial institutions, particularly the IMF (Riddell, 2007, p. 236). ‘The core policy conditions were grounded in the free-market, neo-classical macroeconomic orthodoxy that became known as the Washington Consensus (Ibid). Financial and trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation were some of the measures promoted by First World countries (Williamson, 2004). The broad conclusion of studies undertaken about the effects of this donor conditionality was that it had a very limited effect on policy change and led to widening inequalities, barely benefiting poor people (Ferreira and Keely, 2000). Arguably, making markets ‘work’ by removing constraints will not help those who do not participate in market transactions (Riddell, 2007). I will come back to this in chapter 6.

‘Policy conditionality’ has been removed from the aid dictionary and structural adjustment programmes have made way for poverty reduction strategy papers as the formal instrument around which donors provide aid. In these papers, there is supposed to be more ownership of national policies as they are formulated by the recipient country itself. Also, the role of the state is perceived differently: whereas the early policies pushed to reduce state involvement in development programmes, the later policies give strong emphasis to the strengthening of state structures and
institutions, whose weakness was seen as a major obstacle to the implementation of, mostly economic, policies (Ibid). However, ‘the state changes over time, providing new threats and opportunities with regards to wealth and power’ (Bähre and Lecocq, 2007, p. 7). These internal power struggles may provide an obstacle to successful implementation of development programmes. Interdepartmental conflicts and a change of the ruling party after elections are examples of these internal power struggles in the case of the GSFP.

To describe the relationship between the state and society, I want to use Ferguson’s concept of the ‘vertical topography of power’ which describes the widely accepted idea that the state stands above regions, districts and communities and the nation-state in its turn is encompassed by the international community (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002). Ferguson and Gupta ask whether the state’s encompassing height is a matter of superior rank in a political hierarchy, a spatial scale, an abstraction or a generality of knowledge and interests and look at how state verticality is made effective through surveillance and regulation. They give the example of a welfare programme in India called the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme and show how certain people and populations are fixed in place, ‘made local’, whereas others ‘higher up’ are seen to be more mobile and more encompassing. Through surprise inspections by superior officers, the teachers in the ICDS programme are controlled while they cannot enter the space of the superior officer unannounced and are limited to a prescribed time each month. This ‘inequality of spaces’ is a ritual of control that creates and demonstrates hierarchy (Ibid). This illustrates that carrying out an evaluation is not a neutral activity and that it highlights power relations and claims to authority. I will elaborate on this in the Methodology chapter 3.

When talking about the nexus of development, power and the state, one cannot leave out James Scott’s influential work ‘Seeing Like a State’ (Scott, 1998) that studies large-scale initiated social engineering projects carried out by authoritarian regimes. ‘His analysis of development departs from a discursive view on power. At the same time, however, Scott reveals the inability of the state to control the outcome of development (...) (Bähre and Lecocq, 2007, p. 2). This inability can be linked to the lack of ‘legibility’: a practice that is focused on making the state’s subjects and domains more visible, and organised according to bureaucratic structures (Ibid). I argue that in the case of the Ghana School Feeding Programme, due to a lack of baseline data and evaluation structures, the state is unable to ‘read’ its population and is therefore limited in predicting possible effects of the programme.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Ghana School Feeding Programme is part of Ghana’s efforts towards the realisation of the UN Millennium Development Goals on hunger, poverty and primary education and is an initiative of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development
Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) (GoG, 2009). The Dutch government gave financial support for the first five years and later the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation became involved. I therefore argue that in analysing the GSFP one should include decisions and actions across the boundaries of nation states. Today, we live in a globalised world where political decisions and actions in one part can rapidly have effects in another part. ‘The idea of ‘global politics’ challenges the traditional distinctions between domestic/international, inside/outside, territorial/non-territorial politics, as embedded in conventional conceptions of ‘the political’ (Held et al., 2008, p. 50). This not only refers to formal institutions and organisations, such as the United Nations or state institutions, but also to non-governmental organisations and social movements that are active in the international arena. State officials are not the only actors that assert vertical superiority and claim to represent the interests of local people: in today’s global world many international civil society organizations contest state authority and argue that they represent the needs of communities. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) call this ‘transnational governmentality’, based on the idea of ‘governmentality’ introduced by Foucault (Foucault, 1991). ‘Foucault was interested in the mechanisms of government that are found within state institutions and outside them, mechanisms that in fact cut across domains that we would regard as separate: the state, civil society, the family, down to the intimate detail of what we regard as personal life’ (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002, p. 989). Transnational governmentality extends this definition to modes of government that are being set up on a global scale. ‘The outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs and other ostensibly non-state agencies, we argue, is a key feature not only of the operation of national states, but of an emerging system of transnational governmentality’ (Ibid, p. 990). Instead of assuming that these institutions of global governance are based at a superior level and encompass the national, regional and local, I want to rethink questions of space and scale in the case of the Ghana School Feeding Programme. Especially at the district level, the programme is characterised by an overflow of civil society organisations, both ‘international’ organisations such as the World Food Programme, SNV and Calid, as well as ‘local’ ones, for instance SEND and UrbaNet. The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly is the local representative of the national government in Tamale Metropolitan District but it cannot be opposed to civil society without difficulty since their functions overlap, as I will show in chapter 5. Thus, ‘it is necessary to treat state and non-state governmentality within a common frame, without making unwarranted assumptions about their spatial reach, vertical height, or relation to the local.’ (Ibid, p. 994).

In the GSFP, communities are expected to construct kitchens, storage rooms and sanitation facilities, provide water, firewood and charcoal and oversee implementation at a school level. Furthermore, communities are supposed to sell foodstuffs to the caterer and in the case of school gardens, programme designers expect community members to contribute to setting up and
maintaining these gardens. This means that GSFP practitioners, both governmental as well as non-governmental, have high expectations of local people and intense cooperation between practitioners and beneficiaries is needed. ‘Communities are direct beneficiaries of the Ghana School Feeding Programme: community participation, right from the beginning, ensures that the community’s needs and preferences can be taken into account and that programme design is in accordance with local knowledge and experiences’ (Haverkort, 2011, p. 33). This is in line with today’s perspectives on programme implementation: ‘In recent years there has been widespread adoption in the development aid industry of participatory approaches to development in an espoused attempt to enable those individuals and groups previously excluded by more top-down planning processes, and who are often marginalised by their separation and isolation from the production of knowledge and the formulation of policies and practices, to be included in decisions that affect their lives’ (Kothari and Cooke, 2001, p. 139). It is believed that those development interventions based on local knowledge and experience are more likely to be relevant, ‘home-grown’ and therefore sustainable.

Since the end of the 1980s, with the discrediting of development theory and its ‘grand narratives’ of modernisation and industrialisation, participatory methodologies have become central in the thinking and practice of development (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001). At the same time, it has to be said that there is no systematic ideology underlining this new development principle. ‘Rather it consists of a set of loosely connected ideas and approaches developed in response to what its proponents see as an older misguided orthodoxy of development’ (Ibid, p. 168). In the old grand narratives, development involves the ‘developing’ or ‘underdeveloped’ world becoming ‘modern’, i.e. like the West. In contrast, the new orthodoxy stresses the cultural diversity of societies and points out that the ‘Western way of life’ is not always desirable nor is it unavoidable. Robert Chambers is seen as the founding father of ‘Rapid Rural Appraisal’ (RRA), a method based on the ‘reversal of learning’. He suggests that development workers learn directly from rural, poor people, trying to understand their knowledge systems and obtain their technical knowledge. Furthermore, ‘one should try to experience the world as a poor and weak person in order to distinguish starting points for making their lives better’ (Chambers, 1983, p. 84). This participatory approach is thus not focused on changing large structures but beliefs that individuals can influence political, social and economic forces. By the mid-1990s the term RRA had been replaced with Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and there has been a flow of publications about participatory development, all sharing a common series of themes (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001, p. 170): ‘a stress on the ‘bottom-up’ rather than ‘top-down’ approaches, a stress on empowerment, a stress on the marginal, a distrust of the state and a celebration of ‘local’ or ‘indigenous’ knowledge’.

The critique on the practice of participatory approaches is twofold. On the one hand are those who claim that participatory approaches are often naive as they overstate the value of ‘local
knowledge’ and argue that in general the experts actually do know better. On the other hand there are the ‘progressives’ who claim that participatory development does not really lead to participation and empowerment because it does not address political issues and therefore reproduces dominant power structures. In the case of the latter argument, it is important to analyse local power structures which are created through social norms or customs. Kothari and Cooke (2001) state that within the participatory development discourse ‘local knowledge’ is seen as a fixed commodity that people intrinsically have and own. Instead, they argue that ‘knowledge is culturally, socially and politically produced and that one should explore the local and micro points of power besides the obvious ones at macro and central levels’ (Ibid, p. 140). Gender inequalities, for example, are often overlooked in participatory approaches. Even when the application of participatory methodologies is intended to minimize biases, women are often marginalized. They are excluded by factors like time and place of meeting, composition of groups, and conventions that only men speak in public (Guijt and Shah, 1998). I would therefore like to emphasise that local people are not a homogeneous category. The term ‘community’ hides many divisions and differences, such as gender, age, class, marital status and social group. Additionally, critics argue that participatory approaches can be used as a tool for development agencies to implement their projects more efficiently rather than seeking ‘real’ participation from beneficiaries. Thus, the risk of the participatory approach is that it shifts responsibility for the consequences of these projects away from the agencies and the development workers onto the participating people. ‘By disowning the process they initiate, development agencies set themselves up as only ‘facilitating’’ (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001, p. 180).

Nevertheless, despite all the critical points raised against participatory development, I believe that it is important to actively involve community members in the decision-making process and also in the implementation of a development programme. This promotes checks and balances and enhances transparency and accountability and also policy makers gain much needed insight in local circumstances so they can adjust the programme if necessary. I therefore argue that community participation should be actively encouraged in the Ghana School Feeding Programme, especially when the goal is to integrate local farmers in the programme.

### 2.3 Livelihoods and social safety nets

Let me recapture the basic concept of the GSFP: to provide children in public primary schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas of the country with one hot, nutritious meal per day, using locally-grown foodstuffs. The long-term goal is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security in Ghana by providing a market for farm output, leading to wealth creation at the rural household and community level (GoG, 2009). Poverty has been defined in various ways in different contexts and is
commonly seen as a lack of income or deprivation of consumption (Dhongde and Minoiu, 2010). Income poverty has been defined as household income below a certain percentage of the national average, which denies a household or an individual the opportunity to participate in mainstream society and afford the minimum standard of living (MacInnes et al., 2011). It prevents families from sending their children to school and denies these children nutritionally adequate food that they need to grow physically and mentally (IFPRI, n.d.; Kristjansson et al., 2009). The ‘chronic poor’ are those who experience severe lack of resources over extended periods of their lives or throughout their entire lives, while those who move in and out of poverty are described as ‘transient poor’ (Hulme and Shepherd in Rose and Dyer, 2008). Others may be regarded as victims of intergenerational poverty, where poor parental backgrounds prevent access to education and other opportunities (Essuman and Bosumtwi-Sam, 2013). Consumption is generally considered to be a better indicator than income because adjustments in the cost of living, value of home production or received goods can now be integrated in household consumption. However, income and consumption prove not to be the most accurate indicators of poverty: ‘it is difficult to estimate consumption in economies which are only partly monetised, in which households consume their own production, where household and business accounts are not separated and unsold goods consumed within the household, and in which many of the business activities of women and children are unreported’ (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002, p. 5).

To go beyond a purely financial perspective on poverty, we have to disentangle how households aim to secure their livelihoods. A livelihood can be defined as ‘the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living’ (Carney, 1998, p. 4). Rather than basing their livelihood strategy on a single business activity or full-time wage employment, most households in poor countries engage in multiple activities. Also, the concept of ‘strategy’ has the advantage of bringing back agency to poor people, as opposed to seeing them as passive victims. The livelihoods framework of Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) provides a solid basis for a livelihood analysis by identifying the main factors influencing livelihoods and the relationships between them. At the centre of the livelihood framework lie the assets, or strengths, on which people draw to build their livelihoods within a socio-economic and physical context. The description below in box 1 of the different assets is from Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002, p. 11) and I have adapted it by adding parts of the definition of assets given by Prain and Lee-Smith (2010, p. 15) to make the description more suitable for this study.
Box 1 Household livelihood assets

**Human capital**: The labour resources available to households, which have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The former refer to the number of labourers and time available to engage in income-earning activities. Qualitative aspects refer to the levels of education and skills and the health status of household members.

**Social and political capital**: The social resources (networks, membership of groups, relationships of trust and reciprocity, access to wider institutions of society) on which people draw in pursuit of livelihoods.

**Physical capital**: Physical or produced capital is the basic infrastructure (transport, shelter, energy, communications) and the production equipment and means which enable people to pursue their livelihoods.

**Financial capital**: The financial resources available to individuals, which provide them with different livelihood options. This includes income and savings and also formal and informal credit access.

**Natural capital**: The natural resource stocks from which resource flows useful to livelihoods are derived, including land, water and other environmental resources, especially common pool resources.

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**Figure 3 Sustainable livelihoods framework**

Sustainable livelihoods framework

Key

H = Human Capital
S = Social Capital
N = Natural Capital
P = Physical Capital
F = Financial Capital

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7 Adapted from Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002, p. 11) and Prain and Lee-Smith (2010, p. 15)

Central to the livelihoods approach is the recognition that those who are poor may not have cash or other savings but they do have other material or non-material assets which they can use to make a living. Which assets are relevant for livelihoods strategies depends on the context: in an urban setting access to money is essential for survival whereas in peri-urban or rural areas physical and natural capital is arguably more important. As can be seen in figure 3, the relationship between assets and livelihood strategies consists of transforming structures and processes that refer to public and private institutions, policies, laws, social norms, rules of the game and incentives (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Together with people’s asset status, they define which livelihood strategies can be used. Here, the emphasis lies on public institutions and policies that aim at increasing livelihood security. Three pathways of reaching this goal can be distinguished in the public policy domain: provisioning, protection and promotion (Carney et al., 1999). Provisioning refers to the direct provision of assistance to maintain nutritional levels and save lives in emergency situations; protection refers to preventing erosion of productive assets or assisting in their recovery; and promotion refers to long-term resilience building and addresses underlying causes of insecurity and poverty (Drinkwater and Rusinow, 1999).

Social safety nets, or ‘socioeconomic safety nets’, are transfer programmes seeking to prevent the poor or those vulnerable to shocks and poverty from falling below a certain poverty level (Grosh et al., 2008). School-feeding programmes, but also conditional cash transfers and social pension schemes, are considered social safety nets. These safety nets can be classified as ‘protection’ measures because they have a preventive character, as opposed to humanitarian aid (provisioning) or long-term development assistance (promotion). Grosh et al. (2008) distinguish four key issues in assessing the effectiveness of social safety nets for poor households. Firstly ‘adequacy’, i.e. do they provide a meaningful level of transfer to the population they are trying to assist? Secondly, ‘reaching the poor’, which refers to the effectiveness of the targeting system of the intervention. Thirdly, ‘cost-effectiveness’, specifically the non-transfer costs such as administrative costs compared with other safety net programmes. Lastly, ‘incentive compatibility and long-term benefits’ which means that social safety nets do not disrupt recipient’s household choices about time use and labour that lower their income but rather increase their independent welfare, also in the long term (Grosh et al. in Bundy et al., 2009).

This brings me to a core concept of the livelihood approach: ‘sustainability’ which is at the same time an extremely problematic concept because of the various dimensions: environmental, social, institutional and economic (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002). I argue that to most people, environmental sustainability is the central element of sustainability (Goodland, 1995). Problems may
arise in rural areas when short-term benefits are prioritised over a sustainable management of natural capital. This is, however, not the main concern of this thesis. Social sustainability refers to the minimisation of social exclusion and the maximisation of social equity, although it may easily come to mean ‘acceptable in the status quo’ whereas social change is needed to achieve lasting poverty reduction. Institutional sustainability touches upon issues of good governance and will be dealt with in chapter 5. It means that an organisation or programme continues to function over the long term and may include financial sustainability. Finally, there is the economic dimension of sustainability that aims at achieving and maintaining a base-line level of economic welfare. In this thesis I will use the definition of sustainability as applied to the livelihoods framework by Scoones in Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002, p. 18): ‘A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base’. Thus, the focus is here on livelihood security, i.e. the ability to recover from shocks and maintain assets. As such, it is a people-centred approach to reducing poverty. Because of the difficulties in defining sustainability, alternative terms are used here when appropriate, such as social inclusion, good governance and lasting poverty reduction.

As figure 3 shows, livelihood strategies depend on the vulnerability context (shocks, trends and seasonality). Carney (1998) suggests that it is necessary to analyse trends, such as demographic changes, shocks, such as potential conflicts, and culture as explanatory factors in understanding how people manage their livelihoods. This implies doing long-term research in a specific area to fully understand the context within which poor people live. Unfortunately, I do not have enough data to engage in such an analysis. I do, however, have information on the influence of seasonal changes on livelihood strategies of farmers in Tamale Metropolitan District as I describe in chapter 6.

2.4 An integrated approach

This thesis aims to evaluate the Ghana School Feeding Programme on two aspects: implementation and results (see figure 2). With implementation is meant the planned work delivered by the programme through inputs and activities, while results refer to the outputs, outcomes and final outcomes, which are not under the direct control of the programme. Of course, the distinction between implementation and results is artificial as they influence each other and the interaction between policy makers and beneficiaries is an important theme in this respect.

Although a large number of civil society organisations is involved in the GSFP, and the Dutch government has had a significant influence on the implementation of the programme, the main actor responsible for the programme is the Ghanaian government. Good governance at the state level is thus indispensable for success as I will show in chapter 5, with ‘transparent public agencies;
accountability for decisions by public officials; devolution of resources and decision making to local levels from the capital; and meaningful participation by citizens in debating public policies and choices’ (Weiss, 2000, p. 801) as central indicators. The size and structure of the GSFP is such that the programme is vulnerable to political tensions and internal power struggles between departments and political parties. Another challenge is the low involvement and participation of local communities: the programme highly depends on their contributions to make it a success but they are not actively approached to contribute and expectations of local communities may be unrealistic.

To better understand how the programme enters the life-worlds of beneficiaries, I describe the context at the community level in chapter 6. How does the GSFP fit in livelihood strategies of peri-urban and rural households in Tamale Metropolitan District? To go beyond a purely financial perspective on poverty, I describe how households aim to secure their livelihoods by engaging in multiple activities and by using different assets that are available to them. School feeding as a social safety net is one of the transforming structures (see figure 3) which define the livelihood strategies that people use. To determine the effectiveness of this intervention I will look at the four key issues as proposed by Grosh et al. (2008) and additionally at the issue of sustainability, i.e. the ability to recover from shocks and maintain assets.
3. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used during the five months of fieldwork that this thesis draws on. In the first section the selection and sampling procedure of the different study sites and informants in Ghana and in the Netherlands are explained. Subsequently, the different data-gathering instruments and their advantages and disadvantages are described in detail in section 3.2. Section 3.3 specifies for each method how the data are analysed and concluding, section 3.4 highlights the strengths and limitations of the study.

3.1 Location of the study and sampling procedure

This thesis draws on five months of fieldwork in Ghana, where I divided my time between Accra, Tamale and two villages in the surroundings of Tamale. In Accra, I interviewed officials at the Ghana School Feeding Programme Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ministry of Education. The reason for choosing these informants is because I wanted to gain a detailed understanding of how programme practitioners perceive successes and problems, which stimulated my imagination in thinking through how the GSFP works (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Also, it allowed me establish useful contacts and gather information about whom I should talk to in Tamale Metropolitan District. It became clear to me that at the district level the Metropolitan Assembly played an important coordinating role and that is where I started my fieldwork in Tamale. The Ghana Education Service at the Metropolitan Assembly proved very helpful in assisting with my survey and fieldtrips to surrounding villages. Moreover, because of the large amount of NGOs involved in the programme, I conducted interviews with, amongst others, the World Food Programme, SEND and SNV to hear their perspective on governance issues, community participation and agricultural development. After analysing the results of the exploratory survey, I selected three schools for my case studies: Kotingli Presby, Chanshegu Presby and Wurishie Darul Ish. The first two were the only schools that indicated having an active school farm and that are located in rural areas around Tamale. This would provide me with the opportunity to study the link between the school-feeding programme and local agricultural development. Wurishie Darul Ish., on the other hand, was the last school in Tamale to join the programme and is located within town borders. This offers an interesting case in contrast with the other schools because of the more urban characteristics and because it can be seen how community participation is stimulated in the initial stages of the programme. Furthermore, my host family’s daughter Muzefa was one of the children
attending Wurishie Darul Ish. and this gave me insight in how school feeding works as a social safety net for families. After returning to the Netherlands, I had the opportunity to do an internship at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. The challenges in governing the GSFP remained an unsolved mystery because getting access to the highest level of policy makers in Accra was not possible. In my capacity as an intern, however, I could talk to Dutch officials who were involved in the programme when they were working at the Embassy of the Netherlands in Accra.

The sampling method I used while doing fieldwork can best be described as ‘snowball sampling’ or ‘purposive sampling’. At the different study sites I selected one or two key individuals and asked them to name others who would be likely candidates for my research. Often, I did not even have to ask, as informants would naturally give me contact information of people or organisations I should talk to. The advantage of this snowball sampling method is that it gives a perception of the social network behind the Ghana School Feeding Programme, of who people know and how they know each other. A disadvantage is that people who are better known have a better chance of being included in the sample, and people who may have an important role but who are less well-known do not (Bernard, 2002). To determine the selection of the villages for the case studies, I used purposive sampling which means that you ‘(...) decide the purpose you want an informant (or a community) to serve and you go out to find one’ (Ibid, p. 95). For example, my first interviews taught me that I had to find schools with an active parent-teacher association, something I had not considered before. Although the results of the survey already gave an indication of this variable, I made additional inquiries at the circuit supervisor of the Ghana Education Service before making this selection.

3.2 Data-gathering instruments

I have used a mixed research methodology to acquire data: both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied to get a more complete understanding of the situation. Following the theory on evaluating development programmes, I made the distinction between implementation and results and started with investigating the governance structures of the programme. By interviewing Ghanaian state and non-state policy makers who manage the programme at the national, regional and district level, I gained a better idea of the organisational structure as well as of the programme’s successes and challenges. The style of interviewing was semi-structured, meaning that I made use of a topic list (see Annex I) instead of fully formulated questions. The advantages of semi-structured interviewing are threefold: ‘1. the informant can express himself in his own terms, 2. the interviewer can follow up any leads that arise during the interview and 3. the data from the interviews is comparable because the same topics have been covered with each informant’ (Southwold, 2002, p.
9). I continued with these interviews until my data had reached a saturation point and I was no longer hearing any new information; this proved to be after interviewing eleven Ghanaian policy makers and practitioners. These interviews were not recorded as I felt that it would be too intrusive for the participants. Detailed notes were therefore taken and the full interviews were written later.

After conducting these interviews I had a better idea of the general implementation and results of the programme. However, data on the workings of the GSFP at the school level was missing and I therefore decided to carry out an exploratory survey in cooperation with the Ghana Education Service (GES) of Tamale Metropolitan District. All forty-seven head teachers of public primary schools in Tamale that participate in the GSFP were approached, of which forty-two filled in the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 89%. Because of limitations of human and financial resources it was impossible to question all forty-seven respondents personally. I therefore made use of self-administered questionnaires (see Annex II) which were distributed by Circuit Supervisors of the Ghana Education Service when carrying out their regular inspections. This gave me little control over how people interpreted questions because I could not explain what a particular item meant. On the other hand, this approach reduces the risk of interviewer bias. With interviewer bias is meant ‘a prejudice towards a predetermined response based on the structure, phrasing, or tenor of questions asked in the interviewing process’ (Bernard, 2002, p. 243). The survey consisted of both open and closed questions: the former when I was unable to predict the answer or when I wanted respondents to elaborate, the latter when the options were straightforward or of a quantitative nature.

Next, based on the results of the survey, I selected three schools for my case studies. A case study always refers to the observer’s data, i.e. the documentation of some event with the aim of drawing theoretical conclusions from it (Mitchell, 1983). The aim of the case studies was to answer the following sub-research questions: iii) How do local communities participate in the programme? iv) Does school feeding provide an effective social safety net for children of poor households? v) Does the programme stimulate local agricultural development? vi) What is the practice and potential of school gardens to supplement school feeding? Since these questions have an explanatory nature, the case study was the preferred research strategy. ‘This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence’ (Yin, 1984, p. 18).

After selecting the case study sites, I had to gain entrée into the community. My friend and research assistant/translator Adbul-Rafik Issahaku helped me with making introductions and explaining the purpose of my visit to the chiefs and the elders of the villages. Because the topic of my research is not sensitive, it was fairly easy to gain their approval and support. I then went on to carry out semi-structured interviews with the people involved in the GSFP at the school level (teachers, parents, farmers, caterers, school children) to get a deeper understanding of the motivations for wanting to participate in the programme and of the practical organisation of school feeding. I used
the topic list which can be found in Annex III but I also let the interviewees deviate from the topic list, since the main point of the exercise was to explore their perspectives. I continued with this exercise until my study had reached a saturation point which happened after fifteen interviews. These interviews were not recorded either, for the same reason as with the policy makers; I took detailed notes and transcribed later. However, I did not only use emic accounts because this would neglect the role of performance and practices. Rather than asking people what they feel and think about something I wanted to observe what people do and build hypotheses about underlying reasons. Thus, I invested my time and effort in participant observation. When going on fieldtrips to Kotingli, Chanshegu and Wurishi Darul Ish. conducted observations of the schools and their surroundings for brief periods, in order to set the context for the rest of my data. I made use of a checklist to structure my observations (see Annex IV) and to compare them to observations in the other case studies.

Besides these more structured observations where I related to the ‘subjects’ of study only as a researcher, I made observations while staying with my host family in the outskirts of Tamale for four months. Here, I was more or less integrated into family life and my role was more of a friend than of a neutral researcher. Nevertheless, when recording my field notes I regularly referred to my host family as an example of how school feeding serves as a social safety net and how it helps children, especially girls, to stay in school. Also, it gave me insight in how households in the peri-urban surroundings of Tamale aim to secure their livelihoods and how they perceive participation in school affairs. The difference between my field notes and other data is that my field notes record the observations and conversations not recorded in separate interviewing notes, and also include my provisional analysis. My field notes and field diary were not kept separate and thus my personal feelings and reactions are mixed with my notes which helped me to confront myself with my biases.

Finally, I conducted three in-depth interviews with two Dutch policy makers and Hans Eenhoorn, the initiator of the Ghana School Feeding Programme. In these interviews I focussed on the issue of governance and in specific on cooperation between the Ghanaian government and the Dutch Embassy. Also, I brought up other topics from the topic list (Annex I), like community participation and local agricultural development. However, these interviews mostly centred on institutional embedding and cooperation within the programme. I was specifically interested in why the Dutch government withheld financial support in 2008 and why it decided to withdraw completely after five years. This was a sensitive topic which stirred a lot of emotions and I usually brought up this question later in the interview when the interviewees were feeling more comfortable. The interviews lasted between one and two hours and I recorded them with a digital recorder.
3.3 Data analysis

This section specifies for each method how the collected data are analysed. The qualitative data of the semi-structured interviews and in-depth interviews has been transcribed and this thesis will feature direct quotes from these interviews. Several recurring themes in the interviews and observations are elaborated on in chapters five and six which deal with the implementation and results, respectively. Naturally, I link this empirical data to relevant literature as highlighted in the theoretical framework in addition to evaluations of the Ghana School Feeding Programme.

The data analysis focuses on three levels of aggregation: the national, district and community level. At the national level, I analyse the interaction between the Ghanaian government, the Dutch government and international NGOs and I describe the successes and challenges of governing a complex programme such as the GSFP. At the district level I present the results of the survey, show the importance of devolution of resources to local levels and argue that beneficiaries should be more involved in the decision-making process. At the community level this thesis aims at contextualising the Ghana School Feeding Programme and addressing ‘for whom’ and ‘in what circumstances’ the programme works. I do not deliver a pass/fail verdict on the programme but I distinguish the intended and unintended consequences of school feeding resulting from different mechanisms in different contexts (Pawson and Tilley, 1997, p. 1). Describing these outcome patterns is done by following the livelihood approach and thus entails an analysis of the vulnerability context, the livelihood assets, transforming structures and processes and livelihood strategies that result in different livelihood outcomes (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002). To contextualise the aggregated analysis, the next chapter offers a literature review of school-feeding programmes in general. The state of school feeding worldwide is explained, its objectives and practices in both the global North and the global South and an analysis of literature on home-grown school feeding and school farming is included.

3.4 Strengths and limitations of the study

This study is the first to include the perspectives of Dutch policy makers and the initiator of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in an analysis. Most literature on the topic deals with challenges in governance and mentions the role of the Dutch government but no scholars have conducted in-depth interviews with Dutch government officials. Furthermore, the study is innovative because it makes the connection between good governance, community participation, local agricultural development and school farming. Instead of treating them separately, I try to find cross-linkages between these themes, thereby challenging the usual procedure of an evaluation at either the implementation or the results level. Another strength of the thesis lies in the variety of data gathered:
both quantitative and qualitative, thereby making use of different instruments, ranging from a structured survey to anthropological observations. Although the data provides little basis for statistical generalisation, as I will explain shortly, it does support theoretical propositions and gives explanations to account for the findings. Although qualitative research is generally not concerned with the question of reliability, I have used methods such as observation and interviewing in a systematic manner, thereby making it possible to compare with similar studies. The validity of the study is argued to be high because in the analysis direct quotes and a coherent narrative of observations are included, making it possible for other scholars to confirm or weaken my findings.

On the other hand, the study has several weaknesses; some of which could have been prevented, others only became visible after looking back critically. Firstly, carrying out evaluative research is not a neutral activity, as mentioned in the previous chapter. It is part of surveillance and regulation activities that highlight power relations and claims to authority. For instance, the Circuit Supervisors of the Ghana Education Service who helped me with distributing my survey, work for the Ghanaian government and this may lead to a bias on the part of the respondents (in this case the head teachers). They might have felt obliged to fill in socially desirable answers, because their schools receive money from the government.

Also, there were some practical challenges in carrying out this research. Because I did not have any means of transportation, except for a bicycle, it was not possible to visit the villages of my case studies as often as I would have wanted since I was dependent on people who would take me there on a motorbike. Also, these visits would take a lot of time and energy which were both limited resources for me and my translator/research assistant. Secondly, because of the language barrier it was hard to communicate properly with the Dagbani speaking people in the villages, even with a translator. Some of the nuances and intonation in their answers was lost on me, which obviously affects the quality of the data. Lastly, looking back on my fieldwork, I believe it would have been better to start with the case studies, as these could have informed me in designing the questionnaire. Because I designed the questionnaire before talking to teachers, parents, farmers and caterers, I forgot to include several questions that would have been useful to ask to all GSFP schools in Tamale Metropolitan District, for instance about the origin of the foodstuffs used and the involvement of local farmers. The sample of forty-two head teachers filling out the questionnaire is not enough to make statistical generalisations about school feeding in the whole North of Ghana, where more than 484 schools participate in the programme. It is, however, enough to draw conclusions on the workings of the programme at the district, and arguably, the regional level.

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9 Interview WFP, 29.8.12
School feeding can be defined as the provision of food to school children. There are many types of programmes, but they can be classified into two main groups: 1) in-school feeding, where children are fed in school and 2) take-home rations, where families are given food if their children attend school (WFP, 2013, p. 3). In-school feeding can, in turn, be divided in two categories: 1) programmes that provide meals, and 2) programmes that provide high-energy biscuits or snacks (Bundy et al., 2009, p. 8). In some countries, in-school meals are combined with take-home rations for vulnerable students, for instance girls and children affected by HIV, to generate greater effects on school enrolment and retention rates and reduce gender or social gaps. In this chapter the emphasis is on in-school feeding since this is the most popular type of school feeding (WFP, 2013, p. 3) and the modality chosen in the Ghana School Feeding Programme. Additionally, school-feeding programmes may cover pre-primary-, primary- and secondary-school children but the emphasis here lies on primary schools.

Firstly, I present an overview of school-feeding programmes worldwide: their coverage, costs and targeting systems. Then, school feeding in upper-middle and high-income countries is elaborated on, with the examples of the United Kingdom and Brazil. I continue with school-feeding programmes in developing countries, describing the role of the World Food Programme and national governments and highlighting a change in food procurement systems. Sudan, Côte d’Ivoire and Kenya serve as examples of different systems of school feeding. The aim of this chapter is to show why school-feeding programmes are important, how they are organised in different countries and how there is a global trend of making these programmes more ‘home grown’ and ‘local’. The underlying question of this literature review is how to value these approaches and still come to new insights with regard to the Ghana School Feeding Programme. I attempt to answer this question in the concluding section.

4.1 Global coverage, costs and targeting

‘Almost every country in the world (...) seeks to feed its schoolchildren. Based on a sample of 169 countries, we estimate that at least 368 million children are fed daily when they are at school’ (WFP, 2013, p. 12) (see also figure 4). Given estimates of the per capita cost of school feeding, this translates into a annual investment of between €34 billion and €54 billion, with most of the money
coming from government budgets (Ibid). These numbers illustrate the almost universal recognition of the importance of school feeding.

**Figure 4 The state of school feeding worldwide**

Development assistance is a minor contributor to overall school-feeding costs, accounting for less than two percent of the total. In low-income countries, however, donor aid account for 83% of the resources allocated to school-feeding programmes (Ibid). Thus, in high and middle-income countries, programmes are almost entirely financed through internal revenues (taxes and other sources), while in low-income countries programmes heavily rely on donor support. The difference can partly be explained by the extent to which these programmes are integrated in national policy frameworks. When they are more established within institutions and regulatory structures, they are likely to be more independent of donor assistance. In high- and middle-income countries, for instance, strong tax mechanisms exist for recovering costs of feeding from better-off families, thereby enabling governments to use this income to support school feeding of children from poor backgrounds.

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10 WFP (2013, p. 11)
Globally, three targeting systems exist: universal, geographical and individual. Very few countries provide free school meals to all children, i.e. universal school feeding, with the exception of Finland and Sweden (Harper et al., 2008). In high- and middle-income countries, most programmes target children individually: children living in poor households or households that receive state support are eligible for free school meals, others have to pay (WFP, 2013). Although this highly increases the chance that the most vulnerable children benefit from the intervention and that it makes the programme more cost-efficient, it does raise questions about the stigmatising effects. Lastly, in lower-middle and low-income countries, 74% of school-feeding programmes are geographically targeted, mostly aimed at areas with high poverty rates or low enrolment rates in education (Ibid). Because all children in these areas receive free school meals, these programmes do not have the possibility to use money paid by better-off families to cover costs. However, in countries with high poverty rates where the poorest regions are targeted, most of the benefits will go to the poorest children anyway.

4.2 Upper-middle and high-income countries: dealing with child overweight and obesity

In high- and upper-middle-income countries (see box 2), generally all children have access to food through schools and the most vulnerable children are typically entitled to subsidised or free meals (WFP, 2013). According to the 2013 Children’s Food Trust Survey of the United Kingdom, there is renewed interest in school food in many high-income countries, partly because of the need to address problems of child overweight and obesity and the role that good food can play in improving health and educational outcomes (Harper et al., 2008).

Box 2 Income classification of countries

This chapter follows the World Bank classification of countries by income groups. For countries with a population of 30,000 or more, the 2011 US$ gross national income per capita is calculated and classified as follows: low income, $1.025 or less; lower-middle income, $1.026–4.035; upper-middle income, $4.036–12.475; and high income, $12.476 or more.

http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications
Since 2000, for example, all parts of the United Kingdom have launched initiatives to improve the quality of school food: Hungry for Success (Scotland); Appetite for Life (Wales); School Food: Top Marks (Northern Ireland); and the Children’s Food Trust (England). The latter was established in response to a series of television broadcasts in 2005 by the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver who was critical of the poor quality of school food in public schools. The findings of the Children’s Food Trust Survey show that the provision of healthy food can be both popular with pupils and financially viable: the overall take up of school lunches has risen in the past three years while the prices have been kept low despite food inflation (Nelson et al., 2013).

Brazil is a perfect example of an upper-middle income country that shows that it is possible to link food production and school meals. The PNAE, Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar, is the second largest school-feeding programme in the world and reaches 47 million students every year (WFP, 2013). One of the foundations of the Brazilian battle against hunger is the Food Acquisition Programme (Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos – PAA), an agricultural programme established to promote purchases of foodstuffs directly from family farmers for the government’s different food-based programmes. This programme helped create the link between small-scale farmers and school feeding in Brazil. Buying locally from family farms led to lower school meal costs and an increase in the availability and consumption of fruits and vegetables which benefits the rising number of overweight children in Brazil (Santos et al., 2007).

4.3 Lower-middle and low-income countries: from food aid to home-grown school feeding

In lower-middle and low-income countries, programmes are generally only available to some children in certain geographical areas: while 49% of schoolchildren receive free meals in middle and high-income countries, the figure for low-income countries is 18% (WFP, 2013, p. 15). Since 2000, at least eight low-income countries have initiated national school-feeding programmes and several countries have scaled up their programmes indicating an increased demand for this safety net (Ibid, p. 28). School meal programmes in developing countries generally aim at reducing hunger and malnutrition and increasing school enrolment, attendance rates and academic performances of children.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world’s largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger and the world largest provider of school meals. This United Nations organisation provides school meals in sixty countries reaching twenty-two million children each year and has been doing
this for over fifty years.\footnote{www.wfp.org/school-meals} Normally, the WFP handles the procurement and logistics of food and negotiates with governments to ensure that school feeding is complementary to basic education. However, the level of involvement of the government varies depending on the situation: in least-developed countries and fragile states the WFP takes the responsibility to fund and manage the programme. In more stable countries, when school feeding is a government priority, governments progressively fund and manage the programme themselves, phasing out external assistance (WFP, 2013, p. 80). As the government slowly takes on more financial and management responsibility, WFP’s role changes from buying and distributing food to providing policy advice and technical assistance. According to Bundy et al. (2009, p. 41) this transition from external support to national ownership generally requests five quality standards: ‘1) sound national policy frameworks, 2) stable and predictable funding, 3) sufficient institutional capacity for implementation and coordination, 4) sound design and implementation and 5) community participation.’ I will come back to this in the next chapter on good governance and community participation.

The WFP is thus the largest international supporter of school-feeding programmes in low-income countries, which raises questions about its methods of food procurement. Until 2002, the majority of the food used by the World Food Programme was not locally or domestically produced but instead imported from mostly the United States, such as its fortified corn-soy blend (Baah, 2007). Indeed, there was a time when the WFP was allowed to sell its imported foodstuffs on local markets to finance its programmes, thereby disturbing market prices.\footnote{Interview Hans Eenhoorn, 7.6.2013} But this mindset seems to have changed over the past decade: in 2003, the WFP launched a pilot Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) and Health Programme, designed to link school feeding to agricultural development (Bundy et al., 2009) and in 2008 the Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot started, increasing general food procurement from smallholder farmers. In 2008, the value of WFP food commodities procured in developing countries was €639 million (Bundy et al., 2009, p. 89). In 2012, WFP bought €770 million worth of food – more than 75% of this in developing countries.\footnote{http://www.wfp.org/purchase-progress/overview}

A country which is highly dependent on the WFP for its school meals is Sudan. In 2011 more than 1.6 million children received WFP meals (this includes South-Sudan, prior to its independence) (WFP, 2013, p. 87). Conflicts, large-scale population displacement and high levels of poverty make Sudan a complex environment for a school-feeding programme (Bundy et al., 2009). Some of the challenges of implementation include inaccessibility due to poor roads, lack of partners to manage the programme in remote areas, poor school infrastructure, limited community capacity and insecurity for staff and beneficiaries (Ibid). A 2007 evaluation found that in conflict areas, displaced
children are sooner attracted to school when there is school feeding, thus providing an important stabilising effect. Moreover, the school meals proved to have a positive effect on the psychosocial condition of children (WFP, 2007).

Over the last five years HGSF, essentially an attempt to actively and explicitly link agricultural development with school feeding, has received increasing attention from international agencies (Sanchez et al. 2005), policy makers, national governments, academics (Morgan et al. 2007) and practitioners (Espejo et al. 2009). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has funded or co-funded a large proportion of these activities, as well as related initiatives such as the WFP’s P4P programme. Local procurement is a means to achieve sustainable school feeding by making programmes more independent from donors and, at the same time, the purchasing power of the programme is a stimulus for the local agricultural economy (Bundy et al., 2009). ‘The rise of interest in HGSF in many ways parallels and even reflects the recent convergence in policy debates between agricultural and social protection policies, especially in Africa. This interlinking of ‘social’ and ‘economic’ policies for poor farmers was anticipated by earlier debates in the 1990s around ‘linking relief and development’ and ‘productivity-enhancing safety nets’ (Sumberg and Rabates-Wheeler, 2010, p. 1). The conventional view that agricultural policies promote growth in yields and incomes, while social protection stabilises yields and consumption when production fails, is being challenged by emerging evidence that both objectives can be achieved in a single instrument (Dorward et al. 2006; Sabates-Wheeler et al. 2009). Home-grown school feeding seeks to deliver on economic growth and social protection at the same time. As such it brings together very different agendas that are at times contradictory. As shown in chapter 6, these tensions show up at the procurement and production level in terms of for example trade-offs between profit for entrepreneurs and adequate provision of food for school children.

In the literature on HGSF there is no agreement regarding the scale at which this linkage between agricultural development and school feeding might take place: locally or domestically produced and the nature of the linkage mechanisms is seldom specified. There is, on the other hand, consensus about transforming the agricultural sector and the livelihoods of small-scale farmers through greater engagement with markets. For instance, Eenhoorn and Becx (2009, p. 3) state that ‘It is of great importance that we start concentrating on entrepreneurship by smallholders, as there are virtually no examples of mass poverty reduction that do not start with sharp rises in employment and self-employment due to higher productivity in small family farms.’ However, this transformation is presently constrained by the failure of input and output markets, poor infrastructure and governance systems and great difficulty of smallholder farmers in organizing themselves. But, by ‘structuring’ demand in ways that makes it easier, less risky and more profitable for small-scale farmers to engage
with markets, and by providing a range of complementary services, it is thought that school-feeding
programmes can be used to increase productivity and well-being of these farmers (Eenhoorn and
Becx, 2009; Sumberg and Rabates-Wheeler, 2010).

In Côte d’Ivoire, for instance, the government started its own school meal programme in
1999 called ‘One School, One Canteen’ which is very successful in linking up with local farmers. By
giving technical and financial support to smallholder farmers, who are mainly women, their
production has increased and they now have access to a reliable market for a fixed number of days a
year. The support includes providing seeds and tools, advice on how to establish cooperatives, and
training on farming, processing and marketing techniques as well as on health and sanitation (WFP,
2013). ‘In the 2008-2009 academic year, 265,000 schoolchildren in 2027 schools in Côte d’Ivoire
benefited from this programme. In addition, 961 production centres participated and sold 1270 tons
of food’ (DNC, 2010, p. 53).

Home-grown school feeding fits in the popular ‘localisation’ movement, a counter-force of
the globalisation movement that aims to localise economic activity to address issues such as
unemployment and inequality. Thinking along these lines is also central to the ‘food sovereignty’
agenda and its alternative vision for agriculture and rural development worldwide (Martinez-Torres
and Rosset 2010) as well as the ‘food democracy’ agenda that represents demands for ‘greater
access and collective benefit from the food system’ so that it provides ‘the means to eat adequately,
affordably, safely,humanely, and in ways one considers civil and culturally appropriate’ (Hassanein,
2008, p. 288). Public sector procurement can serve as a powerful tool to advance local development:
Tendler and Amorim (1996) describe this approach in terms of ‘demand-assisted growth’. ‘The
immense purchasing power of the state can be used in a pro-active, innovative manner to favour
different suppliers, regions and products – and ultimately transform outcomes – compared to more
standard ‘least cost’ or ‘value for money’ approaches’ (Sumberg and Rabates-Wheeler, 2010, p. 3).

It is important to keep in mind that while the localisation of food can be a promising
alternative to the current system, one should be careful not to equate localised scale relations with
democratically organised social relations. Advocates for food system localisation often associate it
with democratic relations, cooperation, decentralization, environmental and community
sustainability, embeddedness in local systems, family farms, and resistance to global corporate
capitalism (Johnston et al., 2009). ‘These themes are compatible with food democracy, but are
nevertheless susceptible to romanticized and unreflexive deployment’ (Johnston et al., 2009, p. 515).

Another system of food procurement for school feeding is what Kwaku Owosu Baah (2007) calls ‘the
school-based model’. In this system, all or part of the food items are procured at the school level and
prepared on site. There is no middleman and the school is responsible for what to buy, when to buy
and for the costs. A way for schools to independently set up their programmes is by producing part of the ingredients themselves, making the school meals affordable for the school and the parents so that they do not have to rely on the government or donors to such a large extent as in the above-mentioned models. Moreover, school farming reduces dependence on markets and imported products (Foeken et al., 2010b). ‘School farming is common all over Africa and has for a long time primarily been considered as an activity for educational and aesthetic purposes. Only recently has school farming in combination with school-feeding programmes been seen to have a great potential from a development point of view’ (Ibid, p. 1). However, ‘school farming is a highly neglected research topic’ (Ibid, p. 2) and the only studies that have been carried out in developing countries were done in Cagayan de Oro, the Philippines and Nakuru, Kenya. In the latter case it was shown that an average of about 1900 kg of crops per school was produced and most of it was destined for school-feeding programmes. The most frequently mentioned benefits of crop cultivation are its contribution to school feeding and the school saving money on food (Ibid). Foeken et al. (2007) describe that more than half of the schools in Nakuru are involved in crop cultivation (56%) and livestock keeping is also practiced, but to a lesser extent (16%). Teachers, pupils and school workers are responsible for the maintenance of the garden and crop cultivation is done for examination purposes as part of the agricultural classes. A local NGO called SENVINET (Schools Environmental Network) played an important role in the Nakuru case as it tried to raise environmental awareness among school children by assisting with organic farming, tree growing and flower gardening. Most of the produce from the gardens is used for the schools’ feeding programmes and a positive relationship between feeding and measurements of height and weight of children was found. With regard to school farming, Foeken et al. (2007, p. 38) thus conclude: ‘The ‘success stories’ show that schools in Nakuru can reach a high level of self-sufficiency for their feeding programmes, thus providing their pupils with at least a decent lunch and at the same time saving on the costs of the programme’.

Another example of a successful school farming initiative is the Gardens for Life project, active in Kenya, India, The Gambia and the United Kingdom. Gardens for Life is a network of schools that is involved in gardening and growing food. The project aims to help schools create gardens that allow them to explore the issues of food security, sustainable development and global citizenship. Gardens for Life provides support materials for schools who have either an established school garden or would like to start one. The materials include introductions to school gardening and international linking, case studies and lesson plans. In The Gambia, for instance, the project has supported a

school garden at Santayala School that now provides the children with a warm lunch made of fresh vegetables and produce from the garden.  

Nevertheless, the school garden approach raises some major concerns. Bundy et al. (2009, p. 48) argue that ‘expecting children and teachers to grow food on a large scale is possibly exploitative and an inappropriate use of the education system’. The practice can have serious negative effects on education when the work is done during school hours and the fear of child labour thus exists. Also, the level of production of any normal school garden will be insufficient to sustain an appropriate programme: emphasis is normally put on diversification of food crops, fruits, vegetables, and weather-resistant varieties of several grains and staples. School gardens, however, should not be expected to sustain the programme. Although school gardens are becoming more and more popular when done in conjunction with school feeding, these writers state: ‘much more convincing evidence is required before school gardens could be considered part of school-feeding operations, except perhaps for educational purposes’ (Ibid).

It should be noted that the question of leadership is important with regard to school farming: ‘School farming is usually the responsibility of one teacher. This means that the success of the school’s farming activities is not only dependent on factors such as land, water and support, but also on individual qualities like a teacher’s organisational skill, enthusiasm, dedication, etc. (…)’ (Foeken et al., 2007, p. 4). Community members are often expected to help with setting up and running the school garden. ‘School gardens are much more successful when the community is interested and involved. And it is a good idea to involve them right from the start in planning and discussing the garden (…). Above all, people should be able to see clearly that the garden is intended to benefit the children and the school as a whole: physically, educationally and psychologically’ (Muehlhoff, 2005, p. 10). Thus, again the issue of community participation comes to the fore which I will elaborate on in the next chapter.

4.4 Conclusion

The underlying question of this literature review was how to value existing approaches to school feeding and come to new insights with regard to the Ghana School Feeding Programme. A recurring theme in this overview is the transition from external support to national ownership of school feeding. What I missed in the literature was a detailed account of this transition; describing policy frameworks, funding, institutional capacity, design and implementation and community participation. Another theme in the literature was linking school feeding with local agricultural production; yet the

scale and linking mechanisms of home-grown school feeding are seldom specified. In the next two chapters I will give an in-depth description of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District; highlighting good governance and community participation as well as ‘local’ systems of food procurement and the practice and potential of school gardens.
5. Struggles for good governance and community participation

In this chapter, I first give a short history of the Ghana School Feeding Programme; from its initial idea to the current partnership with the World Food Programme, World Bank and Partnership for Child Development. Then, I describe the different roles and responsibilities of stakeholders at the national, regional and district levels. In section 5.3, several bottlenecks with regard to the programme’s governance are elaborated on, especially how bad governance at the state level negatively influences implementation at lower levels. Furthermore, the work of non-governmental organisations is highlighted, specifically how they aim to sensitise and mobilise community members to actively participate in the programme. In the last section I argue that strong community participation is indispensable for a proper working of the GSFP and in order to reach this goal more decentralisation of governance and financial and technical support of community members is needed.

5.1 The programme's history

School-feeding programmes have a long history in Ghana. Pupils of several Catholic primary and junior secondary schools were given take-home rations of food aid in the 1950s (Baah, 2007, p. 12). The objective was to improve the nutritional status of school children and increase school enrolment and retention. School feeding was in line with the government’s policy to accelerate the education and training of Ghanaians to fill job vacancies created by foreigners who had to leave the country after independence (Ibid). Over time, the World Food Programme and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) became the two leading agencies providing school feeding in the country, focusing on the North due to its high incidence of poverty and food insecurity (WFP, 2013, p. 79). The Ghana School Feeding Programme came at a time when the major partners who had been involved in school feeding in Ghana, most notably the WFP and CRS, phased out their interventions. ‘In designing the GSFP, lessons have been drawn from the experiences of these agencies and there are concrete measures to collaborate closely in building upon their work’ (GoG, 2006, p. 2).

An important actor of the GSFP was Hans Eenhoorn, former Senior Vice-President at Unilever. After his retirement, the United Nations asked Unilever if it was willing to join the UN Hunger Task Force, which was established by the UN Millennium Project in 2002 with a mandate to develop a strategy for halving world hunger by 2015 (Sanchez et al., 2005).
'There were five different groups: scientists, NGO representatives, the private sector of which I represented the food industry and large international organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, WFP, FAO, WHO. We came together first in 2002 and visited several places where chronic hunger was very visible. (...) I have seen terrible things on these fieldtrips: people literally dying of hunger in front of me. This was in Malawi. We went to places one would not visit normally. The idea was that we would find a common ground to explain these problems. So each specialist gave his/her perspective on the situation and brought up possible solutions.'

The main themes discussed in this forum were increasing smallholder productivity, improving nutrition for the chronically hungry and making markets work for the poor. Furthermore, these goals should be achieved in a sustainable way (Sanchez et al., 2005). One of the practical measures that the Task Force came up with was to link productivity increases with market access through home-grown school-feeding programmes: ‘(...) Then we thought: if you give money to schools and oblige them to use it to buy foodstuffs from their surroundings, and you make sure that children receive a proper meal every day, you will get a fourfold effect: 1. Children get healthier food 2. More children will go to school 3. They will be able to concentrate better 4. Local farmers will be stimulated to produce more to sell to the school.’

This idea was presented in different policy organs as it was seen as a promising initiative. The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), a technocratic body of the African Union, was interested in home-grown school feeding and thought it would fit in their Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3: Framework for African Food Security. Ghana became one of twelve countries in Africa (including Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Nigeria, Senegal, Angola and Zambia) selected by NEPAD to implement domestically-run school-feeding programmes on a pilot basis in 2005. Hans Eenhoorn was then asked to write a more elaborate plan based on a template (NEPAD, 2003). ‘From Unilever, a Ghanaian nutritionist from the Ghana Health Service was then assigned to me to help me with the nutritionist sections. Unilever had its nutritional centre for Africa in Ghana so this was a coincidence. I had never been to Ghana at that time. Then, after we finished writing the template, I thought ‘We now have to use it’. I became more and more enthusiastic. It turned out that the Ghana Health Service was working on a plan called ‘Imagine Ghana free of malnutrition’ in which it mentioned school feeding as one of the measures it would like to implement. Of course, there was no money for this, so I said ‘ok, I will come and visit you and we will talk about this.’

16 Interview Hans Eenhoorn 7.6.13
Hans Eenhoorn visited various local organisations in Ghana in 2004, in order to find out whether HGSF would be suitable for Ghana and if financial help from Europe would be necessary. The responses he received were overwhelmingly positive although the funding for the programme was experienced as insufficient, which made official development assistance thus indispensable.

‘After returning to the Netherlands I had to find a way of getting government support. (...) Because I had contacts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was introduced to the Directeur-Generaal International Samenwerking, Ron Keller. He thought it was a great story but said it was not possible to support the programme financially because it would involve dozens of millions. He said a major movement would have to come up. I then went to talk to every member of parliament involved in development issues. (...) After doing this, I returned to Ron Keller and discussed the next step. He agreed to introduce me to Minister van Ardenne (International Development Cooperation) and we had a click. She said she wanted to get involved and said that a Dutch delegation should go and talk to the Ghanaian government.’

In September 2004 a Dutch delegation went to Ghana to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding. This lasted for a week and the most important agreement was that the Netherlands would pay half of the costs for the procurement of foodstuffs. The Ghanaian government would pay the other half. Eventually, over the years, the Ghanaian government increased its payments. In the meantime, the SIGN foundation was established: School-feeding Initiative Ghana-Netherlands. Right at SIGNs establishment in 2006, the foundation declared to be operational for a maximum of five years. This was based on the conviction that this time period would be sufficient to determine whether the programme would develop into a success. ‘Once successful, the programme would not need the support of SIGN anymore but be either self-sustaining or entitled to continuous support of bilateral or multilateral parties’ (Haverkort, 2011, p. 12).

The programme’s partners provided support through funding, technical assistance and direct school feeding. From 2005 until 2011 the sources of funding per year were as follows:

1. Government of Ghana 23,766,281 euro (78.5%)
2. Government of the Netherlands 5,772,137 euro (19.1%)
3. World Food Programme 715,565 euro (2.4%)

(GoG, 2009, p. 23)

The Dutch government supported the programme in this time period, with a one-year break in 2008 when support was suspended because of financial irregularities and because the programme was being used for political purposes (see next section). In 2010, the World Food Programme, the World Bank and Partnership for Child Development (PCD) agreed to enter into a formal partnership with the GSFP. ‘PCD, with a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, supports governments in Sub-
Sahara Africa to make the transition from ODA-driven school-feeding programmes to national home-grown school-feeding programmes’ (Haverkort, 2011, p. 18). However, between August and December 2012 (my period of fieldwork) two interviewees declared that no official replacement of the Dutch support was found yet and that the Government of Ghana was still negotiating with PCD and the World Bank.  

5.2 The programme’s structure

According to the Government of Ghana, ‘in order to serve as a model for community-based development, the GSFP has in its design a decentralised structure’ (GoG, 2006, p. 2). As shown in figure 5, moving from national to school level should cause a gradual shift of focus from decision-making and coordination to implementation. ‘Every level therefore has to be accountable to the levels below it, and vice versa’ (Ibid).

The GSFP National Secretariat is responsible for coordinating and managing the programme at the national level in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, which has oversight responsibility. The tasks of the Secretariat include ensuring consistency in the national communication surrounding the programme, controlling whether districts select beneficiary schools based on the agreed criteria, providing nationwide audits, monitoring and evaluation and collaborating with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and other partners (GoG, 2006b). Furthermore, at the national level it is decided which regions and districts are eligible for school feeding and will thus receive the assigned funding.

At the regional level, the GSFP Regional Coordination Office is responsible for the coordination of the programme in the Northern Region. The office is supposed to monitor the National Secretariat, organises sensitisation workshops and trains caterers. As Inusah Mahama, GSFP Programme Officer, explains: ‘The District Implementation Committee (DIC) workshops are to inform the District Assemblies of their responsibilities and the School Implementation Committee (SIC) workshops are aimed at promoting social accountability. We want communities to see the programme as their own property, not that of the government. (...) Also, we train them to supervise food distribution so they will report mistakes of the caterer and keep an eye on the quality and quantity of the food. This increases the accountability of the DICs.’

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17 Interview Kingsley Young Opare, 7.8.12; Interview Inusah Mahama, 6.9.12 (see Annex V)
18 Interview Inusah Mahama, 6.9.12
National level
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Control of funds
- Targeting of regions and districts

Regional level
- Monitors the National Secretariat
- Organisation of sensitisation workshops for DICs and SICs
- Training of caterers

District level
- Selection schools and caterers
- Payment caterers
- Circuit Supervisors carry out control visits to schools

Community level
- Provision of basic infrastructure
- Procurement of foodstuffs
- Preparation of meals

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Figure 5 Structure GSFP in Tamale Metropolitan District

Adapted from GoG (2008)
Because of this decentralised structure the involvement of actors at the district level is key. The District Implementation Committee coordinates the programme and ‘(...) oversees the implementation and management of all components of the programme at the district level’ (GoG, 2006b, p. 20). The DIC at Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) consists of the TMA Chief Executive, Coordinating Director and Secretary, the Education Director, an Education Officer, the Director of Food and Agriculture and a Nutrition Officer and they meet three to four times a year.\textsuperscript{20} The District Chief Executive is officially in charge of the implementation of the programme at the district level.

Besides this coordinating Committee, the success of the programme highly depends on the commitment of the District Assembly (DA) which in the case of Tamale Metropolitan District is the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly. In the District Operations Manual (GoG, 2006b), nineteen different roles and responsibilities of the District Assemblies are described. I will mention some of them, which I found to be relevant for this thesis. Firstly, the DA has to designate a District Desk Officer to serve as a link between the National Secretariat, the Regional Office, the District Implementation Committee, the District Assembly and the different School Implementation Committees. This person is thus the first contact person of the Ghana School Feeding Programme at the district level. Furthermore, the DA is requested to open a special school-feeding bank account into which funds from the National Secretariat will be lodged. With this money the DA will then pay caterers, who were selected at the district level based on requirements set out under the programme. Potential caterers should be interviewed to ensure that they are capable of cooking food on a large-scale basis under hygienic conditions and that they have a basic understanding of the nutritional needs of children. The DA should also ensure that caterers procure as much as possible from local farmers and it should encourage Agriculture Extension Officers to assist farmers to produce for the GSFP. Lastly, the DA is required to collaborate with communities and schools to construct the basic infrastructure needed to implement the programme, such as kitchens, storage rooms and a canteen with seats and tables.

At the community level, the School Implementation Committee (SIC) consists of the President of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Head Teacher, the Chief and an Assembly Member who come together twice a term and in case of an emergency. The SIC is in charge of purchasing firewood, minor repairs, community mobilisation, monitoring the execution of food distribution at the school level and writing monthly reports to the District Assembly (Haverkort, 2008). In section 5.5, I elaborate on the involvement of the SIC and community members in the Ghana School Feeding Programme.

\textsuperscript{20} Interview Rumaisha Abubakari, 13.9.12
5.3 Struggles for good governance

Studying down the different levels of the programme, from the national to the local, I encountered several challenges in good governance. Let me first recapture the definition of good governance as described in the theoretical framework: ‘good governance is more than multiparty elections, a judiciary and a parliament (it is about) universal protection of human rights; non-discriminatory laws; efficient, impartial and rapid judicial processes; transparent public agencies; accountability for decisions by public officials; devolution of resources and decision making to local levels from the capital; and meaningful participation by citizens in debating public policies and choices’ (Weiss, 2000, p. 801).

At the national level, several governance-related obstacles hindered the effectiveness of the GSFP in the past. After two years of implementation, the GSFP proved to be vulnerable for fraud when in 2008 an audit, commissioned by the Dutch government and undertaken by the international accountancy firm PriceWaterHouseCoopers (PWHC), found that there was ‘widespread corruption’ at the National Secretariat. Among other things the report cites the award of contracts to non-existent companies and the disappearance of funds allocated to programme management (PWHC in Ernst & Young, 2012). To the dismay of the Dutch government and the SIGN foundation, the GSFP was strongly influenced by politics with the result that incapable party members were appointed at positions in the programme and a removal of all staff at the Secretariat took place after elections. Aid conditionality proved an effective instrument to influence the Government of Ghana, as Hans Eenhoorn recalls: ‘The first National Coordinator of the Secretariat of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) was corrupted and SIGN managed to replace him. He started the programme very well but after a while he used money for his family and friends. (...) His successor brought the programme to the next level, a great guy, but he was kicked out after elections when the National Democratic Congress (NDC) won and a feeble-minded illiterate became coordinator. (...) What a horrible guy, he had absolutely no idea what he was doing, he was an aggressive campaign leader from the North with only a primary education, a street fighter, and all of a sudden he was in charge of this programme. He got into a fight with everyone: the WFP and the Dutch Embassy. Then SIGN had to step in again to kick him out. This time we were helped by the traditional leaders of Ghana. (...) So we contacted these people with SIGN and told them that the programme was problematic and that the Dutch government would stop financial support. I was then introduced to the Chief of the House of Chiefs and he called a certain John. Half an hour later John Atta Mills (President of Ghana 2009-2012) calls back and says that he will make sure there will be a decent National Coordinator who can work together with the international organisations. That person is still in place.’
Besides bad leadership, the programme initially suffered from political targeting because of its visibility: ‘to increase school enrolment (the first GSFP goal), areas with a high percentage of children who never go to school would seem a crucial target. And to reduce hunger and malnutrition (the second goal), areas with the greatest food needs would seem a priority. However, as figure 6 indicates, a statistical analysis of these targets for GSFP schools shows the completely opposite picture: as poverty increases, GSFP support goes down’ (De Hauwere, 2009, p. 354). The same analysis showed a positive relationship with NPP support, which would seem to confirm political influence on the targeting system. Michiel Bierkens, former Head of Development Cooperation at the Dutch Embassy in Accra: ‘The research that was done about the roll-out of the programme showed that during NPP’s government, the schools participating were very different from the NDC time (....). The NPP has its base around Kumasi, whereas most NDC supporters are from the Volta region. (...) Also when looking at the roll-out in the poorest regions of Ghana, this was very disappointing. This was partly due to the political structure of the programme and thus the political influence on it. I found this one of the shortcomings of the GSFP.’

Figure 6 Poverty targeting by regions

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21 Interview Michiel Bierkens, 24.5.13
22 SNV (2008, p. 16)
It has been observed that ethnicity is a major factor in determining voting tendencies among Ghanaians: the NDC enjoys strong levels of support among ethnic Ewe, while the NPP enjoys strong levels of support among ethnic Ashante (Tonah, 2009). In 2010, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, with support from the World Bank (WB) and UNICEF, undertook a comparative study to evaluate the targeting systems of social safety net programmes in Ghana and came to a similar result: only 21% of the investment of the school-feeding programme was going to the poor (WFP, 2013). ‘Affluent regions of the country were getting the larger share of the programme, including Greater Accra and Ashanti, while the ones with the largest proportion of poor people were getting less, including the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions’ (Ibid, p. 79). Based on this evidence, the Government of Ghana decided that the programme should be re-targeted and asked the WB, WFP and PCD to support this effort. The WB and WFP collected statistical information about which regions and which schools should be receiving support and the PCD started a sensitisation programme to explain the reasons for re-targeting. As a result of these efforts, 70-80% of the investment in school feeding now goes to the poorest regions (Ibid). Although this is a promising initiative, it does not give information about how the programme is targeted at the district and school level. I argue that more disaggregated information should be made available to ensure that the programme indeed benefits the most vulnerable families.

Related to the availability of data is the lack of a proper monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system which leads to a slow recognition of possible failures (De Hauwere, 2009). As Lander van Ommen, Public Health Advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, states: ‘There was virtually no M&E system at the National Secretariat. At the Embassy, we pushed them to purchase the required statistics software but there were no qualified people to use it. This was very frustrating for us.’

During my fieldwork, the National Secretariat was starting with a baseline survey, after which impact evaluations and randomised control trials would be carried out. The previous baseline survey had no proper design, which is why it was difficult to measure the impact of the programme. Progress is thus made with regard to the legibility of the programme but it will take time before the Ghanaian government can indeed ‘control the outcome of development’ (Bähre and Lecocq, 2007, p.2).

At lower levels of implementation, different challenges arise. Firstly, as one can read in the District Operations Manual (GoG, 2006b, p. 2): ‘One of the major challenges since the introduction of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in October 2005 is the lack of information for key stakeholders regarding their role and responsibilities and how they relate to each other.’ One of the observations I made was that there is little to no cooperation between Tamale Metropolitan Assembly and the local employees of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. This is a reflection of

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23 Interview Lander van Ommen, 4.9.2013
24 Interview Inusah Mahama, 6.9.2012
the lack of cooperation at the national level: after visiting the respective ministries, Public Relations Officers told me that their ministries were not involved in the programme or they were not aware of any cooperation with the National Secretariat.\footnote{Visits in the week of 6.8.2012} Michiel Bierkens: ‘In its design the programme is multi-dimensional which calls for intensive cooperation and coordination at the state level between different ministries, which is not realistic, which is too ambitious. Ghanaian ministries have problems implementing their own programmes, let alone when they have to coordinate with other ministries.’ This lack of institutional cooperation at the state level thus results in apathy at the district levels, as local representatives will first look at their boss in Accra before taking action. The Ministry of Education, on the other hand, is more or less involved in the programme: I found that the Ghana Education Service at Tamale Metropolitan Assembly was aware of the programme’s objectives and the Circuit Supervisors paid attention to school feeding during their surveillance visits to public primary schools. As I will show in the next chapter, the lack of involvement of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in particular has a negative influence on the degree to which the foodstuffs used for school feeding are home grown. More involvement of local Agricultural Extension Officers would benefit the programme enormously.

Secondly, there are problems with the devolution of resources to the district levels. Several caterers told me that their payments were delayed and as a result they had to pre-finance the foodstuffs for several months, after which they received money for only twenty days of feeding.\footnote{Interview Fuseina Mohammed, 29.10.12; Interview Mrs. Ayishetu, 13.9.12} In an interview with Ernestine Sanago, Associate Advisor Procurement Governance for Home-Grown School Feeding at SNV, she explained that the problem lies at the Ministry of Finance: ‘SNV carried out a survey to find the cause of the delayed fund releases and found that the bottleneck is at the Ministry of Finance: they only pay as and when money is available from taxes. Since the Dutch government has withdrawn support, the payments have become more irregular. Thus, the problem does not lie at the district level or at the length of the administrative chain but at the state level.’\footnote{Interview Ernestine Sanogo, 4.10.12} The withdrawal of Dutch financial support also had a negative effect on the frequency of social accountability workshops organised by the Regional Coordination Office, as Inusah Mahama explains: ‘Since the Dutch government withdrew support the social accountability workshops have stopped. The withdrawal of the Dutch government had an enormous impact: there is not enough money to organise the workshop and we are unable to pay the districts.’ The last workshop was held in March 2012 whereas the aim is to organise one every term (three times a year). Fortunately, several non-governmental organisations have initiated sensitisation and capacity building-activities at the district and school level, as I describe in the next section.
5.4 Contributions of civil society organisations

Table 1 gives an overview of the main contributions to the Ghana School Feeding Programme by the most active partners in Tamale Metropolitan District. As becomes clear from this outline, most civil society organisations (CSOs) focus on capacity building and monitoring at the district and school levels. The World Food Programme, however, is directly involved in school feeding alongside the GSFP in the three northern regions, reducing costs of feeding with 30% (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 70).

Table 1 Main contributions by the most active partners in Tamale Metropolitan District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Technical support</th>
<th>School feeding</th>
<th>Capacity building and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of WFP meals in three northern regions for two days a week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEND, Social Enterprise Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participatory monitoring at district and school level. Hosts civil society platform on school feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNV, Netherlands Development Organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity building and monitoring at district and community level. Focus on home-grown school feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calid, Centre for Active Learning and Integrated Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity building at school level. Focus on Parent Teacher Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanet, Urban Agriculture Network</td>
<td>Supplying supplementary services and technical support for school gardens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The WFP has been involved in take home ration school feeding for girls in Upper Primary and Junior High Schools in the three northern regions since 1998. Together with the Ghana School Feeding Programme the WFP has jointly implemented in-school meals in North Ghana since 2006 with the WFP feeding for two days and the GSFP for three days. Although this is the official

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28 Interviews with the respective agencies

29 Interview Gyamila Wahabi Abdul-Razak, 29.8.12
agreement, in practice the two programmes overlap as I will show in the next chapter where the focus is on the implementation of the Ghana School Feeding Programme at the community level.

Several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Tamale have formed a coalition advocating active and effective community participation, support and ownership of school feeding called the ‘Civil Society Platform on School Feeding (CSP)’. The tasks of this platform are to source funding, sensitise communities and supply supplementary services such as improved cooking stoves, kitchens and water systems. The members of this platform are, amongst others, SEND, SNV, Calid, Ibis, New Energy, UrbaNet and Grameen Ghana, with SEND hosting the platform four times a year.30

SEND is an NGO that focuses on the government’s pro-poor policies and that wants to raise literacy and advocacy among the people that are targeted in these programmes. Mister Titus, Project Officer Advocacy Programme: ‘SEND is one of the government’s strategic partners and our work consists of independent monitoring of the implementation of the GSFP. SEND monitors the programme on all three objectives: 1. Enrolment 2. Retention and 3. Attendance, plus the effect of the programme on malnutrition, the general safety of food and the linking to local production. SEND evaluates on a monthly or bi-monthly basis and reports to the CSP. We involve both the School Implementation Committees and the local authorities to try to solve problems before reporting.’

SNV is involved in school feeding since 2008 and aims to increase communication between different stakeholders by organising social forums at both the district and the community level. Since 2011 the focus within the organisation has shifted from education and health to agriculture, renewable energy and governance (in line with the Dutch development agenda) and therefore the latest involvement of SNV is with the Home-Grown School-feeding Initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.31 I will elaborate on this initiative in the next chapter.

Calid’s contribution to the GSFP is indirect through its work to strengthen Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), which play a key role in the implementation of the programme at the school level. Mrs. Fowzia, Programme Officer: ‘CALID is trying to support and set up PTA networks where they are not strong. We organise trainings to increase their capacity, we check on PTA meetings and make sure the president changes regularly. (...) Parent Teacher Associations or School Implementation Committees are important because in many schools teachers do not show up or they do not work the way they should. Sometimes they sit under a tree for hours. This decreases the contact hours for the students. The community, therefore, needs to monitor what is going on in the school and with their children. Also, it is important that communities feel that the school belongs to them, even though the government built it. They should watch over the school to protect it against thieves for example. (...) Teachers come at their own time and they form an alliance with the head

30 Interview Mr. Titus, 28.8.12
31 Interview Ernestine Sanago, 4.10.12
teacher and sometimes with the circuit supervisor so there are no written reports of misbehaviour. If there is a strong PTA, teachers will be accountable to the community.’ As a result of Calid’s efforts, there is a Tamale Metro PTA network, which meets every term and has a representation in the Metro Education Office.

In the End of Programme Evaluation (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 70) the contribution of these civil society organisations is valued positively: ‘Capacity building support from SNV and piloting programmes with civil society organisations in Ghana have contributed to creating more awareness and grassroots participation in the programme. The advocacy support of organisations like SEND Foundation and SIGN have sustained the interest of multiple stakeholders on the programme for accountability and influence at the policy level.’ I believe that the lack of cooperation between different stakeholders and the bottlenecks in delegation of resources to the district level make the involvement of civil society organisations in Tamale Metropolitan District indispensable. Nevertheless, their participation raises some questions about governance and representation. Although most NGO officials speak of a cordial relationship with the National Secretariat, they strongly criticise the implementation of the programme at the district and community level. Moreover, both international (WFP, SNV) and local NGOs (SEND, Calid) contest state authority and aim to represent the needs of local communities. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) call this ‘transnational governmentality’, referring to forms of government that are being set up on a global scale. It is interesting to see that international organisations can be as ‘local’ as local organisations in their scope of work. Whereas the role of civil society is traditionally to bridge the gap between state and society, one could argue that NGO officials are not elected, unlike government officials, and it is therefore not clear whom they represent or why they have the legitimacy to question government’s actions. Furthermore, outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs could possibly discourage the Government of Ghana to provide those social services itself.

Although I find these points of critique important, I find it irrelevant whether either NGOs or government agencies sensitise community members and provide supplementary services to schools. Rather, I believe that civil society organisations are more suitable to fulfil these tasks than government agencies because they are not politically bound and can therefore less easily be accused of having a political agenda. My main point of critique on NGOs involved in the GSFP is the low frequency with which they visit beneficiary schools and communities. As I will show in section 6.4 on school farming, difficulties in communication between communities and NGOs may result in misunderstandings about who is responsible for which aspects of school feeding.
5.5 Community sensitisation, motivation and participation

Communities are required to contribute to the Ghana School Feeding Programme either in cash or in kind, for instance by putting up infrastructure and storage facilities, providing wood fuel, condiments and vegetables and helping with preparation and serving of meals (GoG, 2006). Strong community participation is thought to have a positive impact on sustainability of the programme: when people see school feeding as their own initiative, not that of the government, they will be likely to continue it when the programme is being phased out. The results of the survey (N=42) carried out in Tamale Metropolitan District show that community involvement mainly consisted of building the kitchen (36%), supervision of the meals (21%), provision of firewood (18%), cooking of the meals (17%) and arranging water (14%) and storage facilities (14%). Five of the respondents (12%) valued community contribution as non-existent (see figure 7). The selling of foodstuffs from community members to the caterer is only mentioned by three head teachers (7%). I will highlight the latter in section 6.3.

Figure 7 Community participation in the GSFP

To get a better understanding of how the programme sensitises and motivates communities to participate, we should recognise the traditional governance system present in many villages in Ghana. The chief is generally the highest authority, supported by his vice and the council of elders (Yussif et al., 2011). The role of traditional leaders is to discuss issues, settle disputes, decide on land distribution and motivate community members to participate in development activities. In the

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32 Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12 (see Annex II)
modern political system a community is represented at the district level by an Assembly member who is supported by ten Unit Committee members, who are recruited from local communities. ‘The Assembly member channels and supports community proposals and needs to the District Assembly and works together with the traditional leaders and community members to implement development projects’ (Ibid, p. 31). Depending on who has the highest authority ‘the way the GSFP involves communities in the decision-making process is by informing the Chief or Assembly Member that the programme is coming to their area and that it is the obligation of the community to provide a kitchen. The GSFP then observes how this is going before the implementation of the programme starts. If the feeding starts before the kitchen is finished, community members will not be stimulated to continue the construction because they know that they are in.’

The School Implementation Committee (SIC) is in charge of the programme at the school level. In practice, the SIC is difficult to separate from the Parent Teacher Association since the Head Teacher, Chief and Assembly member delegate responsibilities to the parents and teachers. In most of the schools that I visited, teachers helped with handing out the food and played a leading role in the maintenance of the school garden as I will describe in the next chapter. However, it is a challenge to get parents actively involved in school affairs; Mr. Alhassan, PTA Chairman of Wurishie Darul and construction worker: ‘Most of the time I just take care of things myself and I don’t call the others because most people in the community don’t take school issues seriously. Most people are illiterates and do not see the importance of schooling. I have been to school so I know how important education is.’ Another explanation for low involvement of parents is that they do not want to volunteer if they believe that there is enough money to pay them. They see that the caterer and cooks get paid for their work so why should they be expected to help with, for instance, the serving of meals free of charge? ‘Communities think the GSFP is a business contract by the caterer and will not be inclined to contribute voluntarily’. According to Ernestine Sanogo, this is where more transparency and accountability is needed: ‘(…) if you show how the financial situation is at the district level, people will accept that there are limitations to the budget and they will accept their role more easily.’

Yet, in poor communities, like those targeted in the school-feeding programme, I argue that people’s priorities lie with securing their family’s livelihoods and it is not realistic to expect all community members to actively participate in school feeding without any reward. Also, I believe that only in better-off areas that are food secure, the Ghana School Feeding Programme can be expected to sustain without external support. As Bundy et al. (2009, p. 70) state: ‘it is important to find the right balance between programmes that count on community participation and ownership, a

33 Interview Inusah Mahama, 6.9.12
34 Interview Mr Alhassan, 29.10.12
35 Interview Mr Titus, 28.8.12
very positive factor in sustainability, and programmes that seek to be largely funded by communities’. Indeed, there is anecdotal evidence from many low-income countries that communities introduce fees or in-kind contributions to support such programmes as by doing so erect barriers to education, particularly for girls and the poor.

Nevertheless, in some cases communities themselves establish school-feeding programmes independent from formal structures. Chanshegu Presby Primary is an example of a school which has been involved in school feeding long before the GSFP was designed. The cooks, Mrs. Awabu and Mrs. Sadia, have prepared meals for the school children for over fifteen years. When the school-feeding programme came to their school in May 2012, they continued with the cooking but would now receive a monthly payment. Six months later they have only received two months of delayed payment. However, they have benefited from certain aspects of the programme such as the foodstuffs the caterer or the WFP brings and the tent and table that serve as a provisional kitchen, which was delivered by the caterer through the programme.  

Lastly, I argue that community participation in the GSFP has a strong gender dimension, as elaborated on in Guijt and Shah’s (1998) critique on participatory development in chapter 2. During my fieldtrips to schools I observed that in many cases it is women who are most involved in school-feeding affairs, yet they do not participate in decision-making processes concerning school affairs. In an interview with the caterer and cook at Wurishie Darul, I told them that the head teacher said that the community is not actively involved in school affairs and I asked their opinion. Mrs. Fuseina replied: ‘Because we are women there are some issues we don’t want to get involved in. People will call us hypocrites because it is the men who handle these issues. We don’t want to get into trouble. (...) The school does not pass information to the community. It is not that we do not want to help but the school does not inform us.’ They think the Assembly member could play an important role in informing the community about school affairs. Sometimes the school organises meetings only for men, so the women are not aware of what they talk about. They do not see this as a problem because they trust their husbands. ‘They would never make any bad decisions’.  

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District struggles with issues of governance. Because the Dutch government provided the programme with financial support between 2005 and 2011, it was able to correct several problems

36 Fieldtrip Chanshegu, 30.11.12
37 Interview Fuseina Mohammed and Zaharatu, 29.10.12
of leadership during that period. Since 2011, the Government of Ghana has started looking for other donors and is currently negotiating with the World Bank and PCD.

In its design, the GSFP has a decentralised structure with an important role for District Assemblies and District Implementation Committees but in practice the programme is highly centralised at the state level. In order to make the Ghana School Feeding Programme’s struggle for good governance a success, true decentralisation of resources is needed. Moreover, civil society organisations should continue to represent poor communities’ interests with more regular fieldtrips to listen to people’s experiences with school feeding and to look for points of improvement.

At the community level, strong involvement of parents with school-feeding affairs can have beneficial effects on the implementation and sustainability of the programme. Yet, I dispute the claim that the Ghana School Feeding Programme could be entirely sustained through communities without any external support. In poor areas that are targeted, there are high illiteracy rates that inhibit people to get involved in their children’s school affairs and voluntary work is not common nor desirable since there is enough funding available at higher levels of the programme to give people a modest reward for their work.
Cook at Kotingli Presby

Schoolchildren at Guunayili Primary
Kitchen at Wurishie Darul Ish.

Distribution of meals at Kpalsi Amezion Primary
School garden at Kotingli Presby

Kotingli village
6. Livelihoods, home-grown school feeding and school farming

After analysing governance structures behind the Ghana School Feeding Programme, in this chapter I aim to describe the situation ‘on the ground’. Firstly, I give a general overview of different livelihood strategies in Chanshegu, Kotingli and Wurishie where I conducted case studies during fieldwork. Then, I show how school feeding benefits children’s educational and nutritional status, although it is not the magic bullet for fighting illiteracy and malnutrition. In the following section I explain how the caterer system functions and what the practical challenges are in linking the programme with local agricultural development. Then, I highlight school farming as a promising additional source of school feeding, providing schools and communities work together for the children’s sake and are sufficiently supported by the local government and its development partners.

6.1 Livelihoods in Chanshegu, Kotingli and Wurishie

According to the Ghana Education Service, Tamale Metropolitan District has a total of 267 public primary schools of which 47 (18%) are part of the Ghana School Feeding Programme. The results of the survey show that in total 14,226 pupils are fed daily, with an average of 338 pupils per school. Pupils mostly come from the community in which the school is situated or its immediate surroundings. Of the fifty-nine communities distinguished in Tamale Metropolitan District, the majority of GSFP schools are located in the peri-urban or rural surroundings of Tamale. Twenty-five out of the forty-two respondents (59%) said that their school joined the programme in 2011 or 2012, which is relatively late and after the re-targeting initiative of the Ghanaian government (see section 5.3).

As I described in the Methodology chapter 3, after analysing the results of the exploratory survey I selected three schools for my case studies. Of these, Kotingli Presby and Chanshegu were the only schools that indicated having an active school farm and are located in rural areas around Tamale, while Wurishie Darul Ish. was the last school in Tamale to join the programme and is located within the town’s borders. In this section I will give a short description of the main characteristics of the communities in which these schools are situated, with an emphasis on how people aim to secure their livelihoods.

38 Interview Mrs. Samata, 10.9.2012
39 Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12
According to Yussif et al. (2011, p. 14) Chanshegu has a population of 733 people with 95 houses. Most people are subsistence farmers (43%), others are traders (30%), artisans (7%) or public servants (3%) and seventeen % of the population is unemployed. (Ibid, p. 17). A large proportion (72%) of the population lacks any formal education, whereas 24% has finished primary school (Ibid, p. 21). The options for people to make a living besides farming are rather limited due to the poor infrastructure in the rural areas, as Mrs. Sadia, a housewife from Chanshegu, explains: ‘We have to pay school fees and buy fabric to cover ourselves. But we cannot go anywhere to work, for example to do trading. We do not have transportation and the roads are too bad.’

Kotingli is in many ways comparable to Chanshegu: it is a village about two hours away from Tamale where most people are subsistence farmers and live in traditional mud-style houses. With subsistence farming is meant here people who predominantly farm for home consumption, as opposed to commercial farming that is focused on selling products on the market. This does not mean that subsistence farmers do not engage in market transactions, but their main objective is providing food for themselves and their families. ‘The majority of subsistence farmers uses their own and their family’s labour to pursue farming activities’ (Sumberg, 2006, p. 2). The main foodstuffs cultivated in both Chanshegu and Kotingli are yam, cassava, rice, cowpea, maize, millet, sorghum, soy beans and some vegetables such as pepper, onion, okra, tomatoes, bra (kenaf) and mango fruits. Cattle, goats and sheep are also raised for meat consumption and to a lesser extent for milk.

Food production in North Ghana is only possible between approximately June and October when it is the rainy season; the remaining seven months of the year people are dependent on irrigation or poly tanks or do not farm: ‘Our only natural source of water in the dry season is a small dam which we do not use for agriculture.’ Consequently, in Chanshegu and Kotingli some farmers are unemployed in the dry season, whereas those who own livestock are better off since they can use it for consumption or to generate income. Because of the recurring seasonal unemployment, an increasing number of people temporarily or permanently migrate to the centre of Tamale where they look for paid labour as traders or artisans (Yussif et al., 2011).

When looking at this description through the livelihood lens of Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002) I argue that in rural areas in Tamale Metropolitan District access to natural capital (land, water and other environmental resources), physical capital (transport and production equipment) and human capital (number of labourers, skills and health status) is essential for people’s livelihood strategies. Financial capital and social and political capital are less important for the day-to-day lives of subsistence farmers since they have little engagement with markets and wider institutions of

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40 Fieldtrip Chanshegu, 9.10.12  
41 Fieldtrip Kotingli, 13.9.12  
42 Interview Mohammed Zacharia, Chanshegu, 16.10.12
society. With regard to the vulnerability context, seasonal shocks have a large influence on livelihoods and may result in unemployment and food insecurity. Cattle proves to be an important asset for subsistence farmers to adapt to these vulnerable circumstances in the dry season.

The last case study was conducted in Wurishie, which was once a separate village but has now become a suburb of Tamale because of urban expansion. Tamale is the third largest city in Ghana with a population of around 400,000 people (Soeters, 2012, p. 4) and a growth rate of 3.5% (UNHabitat, 2009, p. 6). It attracts migrants from all over the Northern region resulting in a population density which is much higher compared to the rural areas. Because of rapid population growth and inadequate urban planning, several neighbourhoods in Tamale have slum characteristics: ‘they do not have sufficient water supply; they lack good roads; domestic toilet provision is low and residents either use the limited public toilets or defecate in the bush and open spaces’ (Ibid, p. 7). Waste management is also problematic in Tamale: 150 tonnes of solid waste are generated daily but the Assembly is only able to clear 7.5 tonnes a day (Ibid, p. 17).

Households in urban centres of Ghana earn their livelihoods mostly from wages and salaries (43%), followed by income from non-farm self-employment (31%) (GLSS 5, 2008, p. 108). Economic activities in urban Tamale vary widely but mostly revolve around informal and formal businesses trading everything from foodstuffs to motorbikes (UNHabitat, 2009). Tamale houses the biggest central market of the Northern region where people from all over North Ghana come to buy and sell products. Farming and livestock keeping do occur in urban Tamale, but are predominantly rural: in Ghana 85% of rural households is involved in these activities as opposed to 28% in urban areas (GLSS 5, 2008, p. 72).

Education is a vital asset if one wants to find a formal job in Tamale and employers often expect their workers to have a basic knowledge of English and mathematics. Educational facilities are widespread in Tamale: the city has three tertiary, six secondary and sixty-eight primary level institutions, as well as ten nursery schools. The total school participatory rate at the primary level is 84.7% (UNHabitat, 2009, p. 9). Nevertheless, illiteracy remains prevalent among poor households in the city. In urban Ghana 69% of adults can read and write in English or a local language but there are considerable differences between the sexes: whilst 79% of men are literate, the corresponding percentage for female adults is 59% (GLSS 5, 2008, p. 13).

Because people in cities are highly dependent on markets for their basic needs, access to financial capital is essential. The definition of financial capital in Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002, p. 11) is as follows: ‘the financial resources available to individuals, which provide them with different livelihood options. This includes income and savings and also formal and informal credit access’.

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43 Fieldtrip Wurishie, 2.10.12
44 Based on personal observations
mentioned before, the main source of income in urban areas outside Accra are wages and salaries with an average annual household income of 1,336 Ghana Cedis (592 US Dollars) (GLSS 5, 2008, p. 108). In order to start a business, access to savings or formal credit through a bank loan is key.

Social and political capital is the last asset that I argue to be indispensable for people’s livelihood strategies in urban Tamale. To be able to find a job, one has to have ‘access to certain networks, groups and wider institutions of society and engage in relationships of trust and reciprocity’ (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002, p. 11). Where people in the rural areas mostly rely on their families for their livelihoods, in a peri-urban and urban context people are to a large degree dependent on people outside their family and on public and private institutions for job opportunities.

6.2 Benefits of school feeding

In order to determine how the GSFP fits in livelihood strategies of poor households I will look at two aspects of effectiveness of social safety nets described by Grosh et al. (2008). Firstly ‘adequacy’, i.e. do they provide a meaningful level of transfer to the population they are trying to assist? Secondly, ‘incentive compatibility and long-term benefits’ which means that social safety nets do not disrupt the recipient’s households’ choices about time use and labour that lower their income but rather increase their independent welfare, also in the long term.

It is generally known that poverty has a big impact on access to education. Parents may not have enough money to send their children to school; although primary education in Ghana is free and compulsory, parents still have to pay for e.g. transportation, feeding, uniforms and books, which means that children from poor families may not go to school due to their disadvantaged economic position (Ernst & Young, 2012). Moreover, children are often obliged to contribute directly or indirectly to family income: directly through trading, offering labour on farms or taking care of livestock and indirectly through taking care of young siblings or performing household chores. Girls in particular are sometimes required to skip school in order to assist their mothers or babysit at home, look for shea nuts or firewood, carry water or work as head porters in urban markets (Casely-Hayford and Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2004).

In its programme design, the GSFP plans to increase enrolment in GSFP schools above the national baseline of 83%; improve attendance by 20%; and reduce drop-out rates by 20% (GoG 2006). Unfortunately, due to a lack of a proper monitoring and evaluation system, I do not have specified quantitative data on enrolment, attendance and retention rates in Tamale Metropolitan District. In Ghana as a whole, results differ: according to the Government of Ghana, after six months of implementation, the enrolment rate in primary schools increased with 20% as compared to 2.8% in the control group (GoG, 2006, p. 1). Equally, attendance was up by 40% compared to 9% in non-GSFP
schools in the same communities or districts (Ibid). On the other hand, the end of programme evaluation carried out by Ernst & Young (2012, p. 5), states: ‘there is statistically no difference in enrolment between GSFP and non-GSFP schools. Also the lack of a baseline makes it difficult to measure increases in net enrolment.’ Another reason for disappointing enrolment rates mentioned by the latter report is that when not all public primary schools in poor areas are covered by the programme, pupils will transfer from non-beneficiary to beneficiary schools. Therefore, in order to increase enrolment rates, total coverage should be attained (Ibid).

Despite these points of critique, all respondents of the survey qualified increased school enrolment and retention rates as the major benefits of the GSFP. Increasing attendance (29%) and raising performance of the pupils (17%) were also mentioned as gains. Three head teachers (5%) answered that the atmosphere in the school had improved because of the feeding. Also, during fieldtrips I gathered anecdotal evidence that school feeding is a way of reaching children who would otherwise not go to school. For instance, in Wurishie Darul, the PTA Chairman stated: ‘School feeding is helping parents and children. Children now eat in school and stay there to study. (...) Even parents who do not work or who don’t have money now send their children to school.’

A matter of concern, however, is that no steps have been taken to safeguard the quality of education in beneficiary schools. In principle it is positive when enrolment and attendance rates increase but if that means that there are not enough books available or that the teacher cannot handle the larger number of students, the quality of education may be deteriorating which may have a negative influence on retention rates (Ernst & Young, 2012). A study on the state of complementary services in the Ghana School Feeding Programme shares this concern and concludes that ‘about 70% of beneficiary schools did not have enough classrooms to shelter all classes. In addition, classroom overcrowding was found to be an issue, in some cases two or more classes shared one classroom’ (SEND, 2009, p. 5). Moreover, ‘inadequate furniture was a problem in about 61% of beneficiary schools; resulting in some pupils in the affected schools sitting on the floor to write, negatively affecting teaching and learning’ (Ibid).

Besides educational targets, school feeding also aims at reducing hunger and malnutrition. Overall, the number of under-nourished Ghanaians has fallen from 64% to 12% between 1980 and 2000, with ‘under-nourishment’ defined as the level of food intake below which dietary energy requirements are not met (Croppenstedt et al., 2003). However, as we have read in the previous section, livelihood strategies in rural Tamale are vulnerable to seasonal shocks in the dry season. This may cause price fluctuations of staple foods as well as temporal food insecurity resulting in survival strategies such as

45 Interview Mr. Alhassan, 2.10.12
out-migration to seek employment, sending children to stay with kin in times of stress, and gathering ‘famine’ foods (Ibid). Yet, food insecurity is not only a rural phenomenon: because urban households depend even more on purchased food, this makes them vulnerable to price changes and declining terms of trade (Devereux and Maxwell, 2001). Urban responses to food insecurity are, amongst others, increased production of own food, increased labour force participation and reduced food intake (Ibid).

In Tamale Metropolitan District, all pupils in beneficiary schools have access to school feeding, free of charge. Rice and beans are the main foodstuffs used (100%) with garri (grated cassava) (60%), maize (29%) and cowpeas (14%) following at a distance. As illustrated in figure 8, the main reasons for choosing these ingredients (N=17) are availability (53%), nutritional value (23%), simplicity of preparation (12%), affordability (6%) and taste of pupils (6%).

![Figure 8 Reasons for choosing ingredients of school meals (N=17)](image)

Two of the respondents (5%) mentioned Micro-Nutrient Powder (MNP) as an ingredient of the meals.\(^{47}\) This powder is provided by the World Food Programme to add nutritional value to the meals. During my fieldtrips I noticed that most cooks add palm oil and groundnut powder to the food whereas fresh fruits and vegetables are rarely used, except when schools have an active school garden (section 6.4).

As explained in the previous chapter, together with the Ghana School Feeding Programme, the WFP has jointly implemented in-school meals in North Ghana since 2006 with the WFP feeding

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\(^{46}\) Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12  
\(^{47}\) Ibid
WFP makes available quantities of rice, corn-soya blend (CSB), iodized salt and palm oil to the districts from Ghana Education Service’s central warehouse in Tamale. (...) the districts then distribute the food items each month to their beneficiary schools. (...) The GSFP, through the District Assembly, makes funds available for the schools to purchase condiments to complement the WFP food basket’ (Baah, 2007, p. 21). The GSFP works with a caterer model which means that caterers are hired at the district level and receive 0.40 Ghana Cedi (0.16 euro) per child per day to procure commodities for the children (GoG, 2006b). Caterers spend up to 75% of their budgets on four major foodstuffs: rice, maize, tomato paste and vegetable oil and they also oversee cooking and feeding which is done on-site at the school (USDA, 2009).

The advantage of a caterer system is that it minimises the workload of parents and teachers. On the other hand, because salaries for the caterers and paid cooks are deducted from the overall food budget that they receive, caterers are motivated to buy the least expensive food (USDA, 2009). Also, this system may jeopardise adequate provision of food for school children, as was the case in Wurishi Darul where the school had to install a teacher to supervise the feeding in order to make sure that the caterer would hand out a sufficient amount of food. In interviews with policy makers from the Ghanaian government and NGOs, the idea that caterers are private business people and will therefore act in their own economic interests was quite prevalent. However, this strongly contradicts with the impression I got from the three caterers I interviewed during fieldwork. Because the WFP foodstuffs and GSFP funds are often delayed, caterers use their own money or got a loan to buy foodstuffs: ‘I use my own money to buy the food. The agreement was that I would get paid but I have never seen any money. Also, they told us the WFP would bring foodstuffs but this has not yet happened. Still, I continue with my work because I consider the children as my own. When you raise children you need patience and endurance and it is the same in this case. I do not feel bad about using my own money. Even though it is difficult, I make sure to buy enough food for all children, including the teachers. I do it for the children and for God’s sake.’

Looking at its design, the GSFP aimed to feed 1,040 million children every school day by 2010 and to raise the Body Mass Index (BMI) of the target group to standard levels (19-25) (GoG, 2006). However, ‘at the end of 2010, the GSFP covered 1,741 schools feeding 697416 children, and thus had not achieved the targeted number of beneficiaries’ (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 56). The second objective however, has been achieved since ‘there are height and weight differences between GSFP and non-GSFP pupils’ (Ibid, p. 5). Despite the lack of baseline data, these writers conclude that there is a

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48 Interview Gyamila Wahabi Abdul-Razak, 29.8.12
49 Fieldtrip Wurishie 2.10.12
50 Interview Fuseina Mohammed, 2.10.12
‘marginal positive increase in average weight pupils in treatment schools by almost one kilogramme’ (Ibid, p. 57).

In Tamale Metropolitan District (N=42), thirteen respondents (31%) mentioned fighting malnourishment as a major benefit of the Ghana School Feeding Programme and anecdotal evidence from the case studies also suggests that school feeding indeed benefits the nutritional status of school children, especially for those for whom school meals are the main meal of the day. Also, improvements in health and sanitation facilities have been noted due to the programme: in GSFP schools there have been de-worming exercises and potable water, poly tanks and sanitation and toilet facilities have been put in place. Furthermore, the majority of cooks have received health certificates which benefits the nutritional value and preparation of meals (GoG, 2009). Still, I argue that the level of hygiene when preparing meals is questionable; in four out of the six schools I visited, there was no proper kitchen, which in some schools, such as Kpalsi Presbyterian forced the cooks to hand out meals on the ground. SEND shared this observation and stated that ‘about 61% of beneficiary schools did not have proper kitchen structures. This adversely affected the maintenance of hygienic environment for food preparation.’ (SEND, 2009, p. 5). In my opinion, because communities are supposed to construct kitchens without any support from the government or the school, they will often use cheap materials which are not sustainable causing the kitchen to collapse in the rainy season. In addition, the community may not have enough funds or the programme is implemented before the work is finished, with the result that cooks have to make use of a half-finished kitchen.

**6.3 Home-grown school feeding**

I argue that the Ghana School Feeding Programme benefits children in Tamale Metropolitan District, but does it also boost domestic food production and thereby benefit smallholder farmers? As elaborated in section 4.3, Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) is basically an attempt to actively and explicitly link agricultural development with school feeding. In its design, the Ghana School Feeding Programme aims at buying 80% of the foodstuffs from local sources (GoG, 2006, p. 5) and ‘the GSFP will, thus, contribute to enhanced agricultural production by assisting farmers increase productivity, lower post-harvest losses and improve national food security. This will be achieved by providing greater demand for food crops, efficient procurement and marketing practices and improved storage of food crops that are basic/central to the school-feeding programme’ (Ibid).
After three years of implementation, in Ghana as a whole, in more than 50% of the schools, less than 20% of the food was purchased locally (SNV, 2008) and thus ‘the agricultural component has been lacking or neglected’ (Ibid, p. 5). Similarly, in the survey in Tamale Metropolitan District, only three respondents said that community members sell foodstuffs to the caterer (7%)\(^{53}\) and caterers and cooks told me in interviews that they mostly buy food from the central market in Tamale, and not directly from farmers. Also the SIGN Foundation concludes in its end report that low participation of local farmers in the supply of food to the schools remains a major unresolved problem (Haverkort, 2011).

To explain why it is so difficult to make the connection between school feeding and smallholder agriculture, I want first to look at the demand side to try to understand the reasons behind the caterers’ decision not to buy directly from farmers. As described in the previous section, I disagree with the accusation that all caterers are business women who want to maximise profit hence going for the cheapest food, regardless of source. Rather, I would argue that because the flow of funding from the national to the district level is inconsistent and frequently delayed, this means that caterers mostly have to buy commodities with their own money or on credit. This does not only negatively affect pupils through the lower quality and quantity of the procured food but smallholder farmers as well, as they are prohibited from selling to the caterer, simply because farmers lack the financial means to obtain credit. In fact, ‘less than 10% of lending in Ghana is directed towards farmers’ (USDA, 2009, p. 12). Nevertheless, the observation that caterers rather buy from a central market does not mean that these foodstuffs are not from local sources: ‘food from the district-level market comes from a wide range of vendors, including smallholder farmers and national distributors’. (Ibid, p. 20). It does, however, mean that market women can indirectly benefit from the GSFP because they can add a premium on products that they buy from farmers and later sell (on credit) to caterers. Another reason why caterers prefer to go to the central market is practicality: if they have to buy directly from farmers, this would require them to travel from farm to farm to purchase whatever small quantities are available for sale. Neither time nor resources are adequate for such purchasing methods, especially if a caterer has to buy supplies for more schools. The establishment of farmer-based organisations that collectively sell products from smallholders would be a possible solution to this problem.

When looking at the supply side, there are other difficulties that exclude farmers from selling to caterers or schools. In 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture assessed local production for school feeding in Ghana and concluded that insufficient production, storage and processing capacity combined with the virtual non-existence of farmer-based organisations (FBOs)

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\(^{53}\) Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12
proved to be major difficulties in making the GSFP home grown (USDA, 2009). Although I do not have much data on the state of local agriculture in Tamale Metropolitan District, I do have anecdotal confirmation of the claim that local farmers do not produce enough to sell to caterers. For instance, Mr. Fuseni: ‘I farm enough to feed my family, I do not sell my produce.’ As I have explained in section 6.1, the main occupation in communities where GSFP schools are located is subsistence farming, i.e. farming to provide food for one’s own family as opposed to selling it on the market.

I believe that if the GSFP aims to link school feeding to local agriculture, it should actively support smallholder farmers in increasing their production or in forming farmer-based organisations. Active involvement of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and local Agricultural Extension Officers would benefit the programme enormously. But also NGOs and financial institutions can play an important role. For instance, ECASARD (Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development) and SNV started a two-year programme in 2011 in the Greater Accra Region where they organised farmers in commodity clusters that specialise in one product such as maize, vegetables, rice or cassava. ‘Commodity clusters are simple agricultural value chain clusters where all activities are undertaken to transform raw materials into a product that is sold and consumed’ (ECASARD and SNV, 2011, p. 6). ‘Farmers, caterers, financial institutions and agro input dealers were involved in the programme and the formation of these commodity clusters led to organisational capacity building, improved agricultural practices and financial brokerage for FBOs to receive credit’ (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 62). Lack of trust between stakeholders and lack of money on the side of farmers and caterers proved to be major challenges of the programme. Also, the experiment illustrates the importance of community sensitization: the various stakeholders needed to produce and process local foods for school feeding were, at best, little aware of the opportunities available by being involved with the GSFP. During fieldwork I found that often caterers are not members of the community for which they are procuring and many farmers are unaware of who the district-level caterer is. Because it is the District Assembly that selects and hires caterers, schools and communities do not have an influence on this process. I believe that it would be better to let the School Implementation Committee select caterers since this would increase visibility of school feeding in the community and perhaps also help in building trust between caterers and local farmers.

Another successful initiative related to home-grown school feeding is WFP’s Purchase-for-Progress (P4P) programme that was described in Chapter 4. In the Northern Region, for example, WFP buys rice from a farmer-based organisation at higher prices than those farmers would normally receive in local markets ‘due to the higher quality that resulted from a meticulous but time-intensive group-processing procedure. The local market, however, does not pay a premium price for higher

\[54\] Fieldtrip Kotingli, 13.9.12
quality rice, so group members typically processed rice on their own much more quickly and without paying attention to quality. Thus, the group members only came together for group processing of bulk orders where they could receive premium prices for higher quality rice’ (Salifu et al., 2012, p. 8).

6.4 Practice and potential of school farming

The above-mentioned processes lead me to the conclusion that smallholder farmers do not fully benefit from the Ghana School Feeding Programme because of challenges on both the demand and the supply side of the agricultural part of the programme. As described in section 4.3, an alternative for the caterer-model is the school-based model where all or part of the food items are cultivated on the school’s premises and the school is fully responsible for the feeding. School farming is thought to make school-feeding programmes affordable and reduce dependence on external assistance, markets and imported products (Foeken et al., 2010b). In the case of the Ghana School Feeding Programme, it was thought that school gardens (i) could produce a supplementary supply of food and increase the nutritional content of the GSFP meals and (ii) reduce the costs of school feeding (Dank et al., 2007, p. 22). Furthermore, ‘an important emphasis in the establishment of the school gardens will be to prepare school children in their study of agriculture and future appreciation of agriculture’ (GoG, 2006, p. 17). In the 2008 Annual Operating Plan one of the activities to boost domestic food production is to ‘facilitate the establishment and operation of school farms in selected schools in every region’ (GoG, 2009, p. 19). The resultant target in the programme’s design was that 40% of GSFP schools would have established school farms. Communities were expected to secure land in consultation with local chiefs and community leaders with input support from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. A farm manager and labourers were to be recruited from communities to plant crops based on the school menu.

In reality, only 2% of surveyed schools in the whole of Ghana had school farms (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 5) and also in Tamale Metropolitan District school farming seems to be an uncommon activity: only three of the forty-two responding schools (7%) are involved in crop cultivation and none in livestock keeping. The obstacles to farming mostly mentioned in the survey (see figure 9) are lack of land (55%) and disturbance by animals (21%). Low age of the children (10%), lack of community involvement (5%), no money for inputs (5%), water shortages in the dry season (5%) and fear of being accused of exploitation of children (3%) were also put forward as difficulties.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{55} Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12
Some of these reasons not to farm were confirmed during my visits to farming as well as non-farming schools; for instance the need to put up a fence: because cattle walks around freely it is necessary to put up a fence or hire a security man to prevent destruction of the crops. Schools often lack the resources to pay for these measures and this is especially a problem during the holiday season when there is nobody around to keep an eye on the land. Even at Kotingly Presbyterian, which has had an active school garden since 2010, this proved to be a major obstacle: Mrs. Ayishetu, school-feeding cook: ‘The school garden provided us with a lot of fresh products for the school meals such as bra, alefo, ajojo, green pepper, cabbage, onions and cowpeas. The crops grew very well and it was good for the children because the garden was used for their studies. This year the school does not farm, the community is tired of beating a dead horse. Every year during the holidays the animals destroy the crops. The children are supposed to watch over the farm but if one child does not show up, the rest also does not come. Children do not care about these things. We now use preserved vegetables which are not as healthy as the fresh ones.’

On the other hand, some reasons not to farm appeared to me as illogical, lack of land for instance. I observed that most school compounds have a large plot of land available that would be suitable for farming. After probing, however, I found that often the land that the school was built on does not belong to the school itself but to the chief of the village. It is not clear from the operational guidelines of the programme who is responsible for paying for the cost of the land and the hiring of

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56 Ibid
57 Interview Mrs. Ayishetu, 11.10.12
the farm managers and labourers. The management of schools, which falls under the Ministry of Education, has no budget for expenses of this nature. ‘The current institutional arrangements thus did not support this additional activity’ (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 62). I argue that this could be resolved by the involvement of NGOs who give farm labourers a modest reward for their work and who give technical support to schools. This was also the case in the pilot school gardens project of Urbanet and SNV. In 2010 these two CSOs partnered to support schools and communities in setting up school gardens to serve as learning centres for pupils and to provide the GSFP with additional food, particularly vegetables (Urbanet, 2012). The project was supported in 2011 by the WFP who gave foodstuffs to parents to motivate them to help in the garden. This proved to be successful: in Tamale Metropolitan District five schools participated and Chanshegu Presbyterian was one of them. In 2011, after several sensitization meetings, Urbanet provided the school with seedlings, insecticides and a fence and the farm was operational the whole year round, also during the holidays. Maize, beans, tomatoes and peppers were cultivated and provided a substantial and nutritious contribution to the feeding programme. Sometimes the school would also sell the foodstuffs to buy the food they needed for feeding.\footnote{Fieldtrip Chanshegu, 9.10.12}

After the pilot programme stopped, however, the intervention proved to be unsustainable, Mohammed Zacharia, farmer and PTA member at Chanshegu Presbyterian: ‘I was working in the garden, together with four other people. On specific days, so not every day, we would work there so it was not difficult to combine with my own farming work. The WFP gave us maize and oil after we harvested the crops. This only happened for one year and then they did not return. The agreement was that they would give us food and if later they do not give us, then we stop working. If they would have told us that the work we did was for our own community and that we should continue the project ourselves, we would have done so but that was not the initial agreement.’\footnote{Interview Mohammed Zacharia, 16.10.12} I found that people are willing to help voluntarily with short-term activities, for example putting up a fence or fixing the rainwater reservoir. But when they are expected to regularly donate their time and energy, it becomes problematic. Therefore, I argue, in line with section 5.5 on community participation, that it is not realistic to expect schools and communities to sustain school gardens without any external support.

Lastly, I did not gather evidence of exploitation of pupils, rather I found that children were very positive about the school garden: ‘We worked in the garden on Friday morning for one hour as part of Science class. We did the ploughing, weeding and sowing and I liked it a lot. Especially when we ate the vegetables that we grew in the garden’.\footnote{Interview Alhassan Hafis, Kotingly Presbyterian, 13.9.12}
6.5 Conclusion

Because of its educational and nutritional benefits, school feeding provides a meaningful safety net for children of poor households. It stimulates parents to send their children to school and it enhances children’s ability to concentrate on their studies instead of their stomachs. Still, it should be noted that school feeding is not the only way to increase educational achievement in Ghana and other government interventions such as free books, uniforms or capitation grants remain important instruments to support deprived families. The benefits of the GSFP for production and income of smallholder farmers are less convincing and a lot of work needs to be done to expand this feature of the programme. Promising initiatives by civil society organisations in linking school feeding with FBOs can be used as models for the GSFP Secretariat’s national strategy, keeping in mind that what works in one place, may not work in another. Setting up school farms is another way of increasing domestic food production. Letting schools provide an additional source of school feeding may seem contradictory with the objective of supporting smallholder farmers but school farming is not meant to sustain school feeding, rather it is a means to increase the quality of school meals and to make children familiar with agriculture.
7. Conclusions and recommendations

This final chapter shares general conclusions and recommendations following the study of the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District. I answer the main research question and sub-research questions\(^{61}\) as set out in the introduction and critically examine my findings in the light of the previous state of the discussed topics. Furthermore, I provide several suggestions for future research.

7.1 Conclusions and recommendations

The main research question of this thesis is ‘To what extent is the Ghana School Feeding Programme in Tamale Metropolitan District a sustainable social safety net?’ A recurring theme in the literature overview of school-feeding programmes (chapter 4) is the transition from external support to national ownership (Bundy et al., 2009, p. 41). Existing literature fails to give a detailed account of this transition, describing a specific programme over a longer period of time. In this study I have tried to do justice to the voices of a wide variety of people and organisations involved in the GSFP, from the multilateral to the local level.

The ambition of a home-grown school-feeding programme was first presented in the UN Hunger Task Force that aimed to develop a strategy for halving world hunger by 2015 (Sanchez et al., 2005). However, as can be read in the programme document (GoG, 2009), the Ghana School Feeding Programme does not only aim at reducing hunger and malnutrition, it also aspires to increase enrolment, attendance and retention and to boost domestic food production. As highlighted in chapter 2, the dominant theoretical model of development programmes is based on a linear relationship between policy, implementation and results. However, this is an ‘over-simplification of a much more complicated set of processes and it is vital to understand the processes by which interventions enter the life-worlds of the individuals and groups affected and thus become part of the social strategies they develop’ (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1989, p. 228). Instead of carrying out a thorough research to investigate the feasibility of implementing a home-grown school-feeding programme in Ghana, Hans Eenhoorn and the Dutch government presented it in several policy

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\(^{61}\) i) How is the GSFP organised in Tamale Metropolitan District?, ii) What is the political context in which the GSFP operates?, iii) How do local communities participate in the programme?, iv) Does school feeding provide an effective social safety net for children of poor households?, v) Does the programme stimulate local agricultural development?, vi) What is the practice and potential of school gardens to supplement school feeding?
organs as a quick-win intervention. ‘At the façade of the GSFP, there is a tendency to stimulate a positive atmosphere, which hardly takes account of the complexity of the programme or of poverty reduction in general. (...) the façade creates the impression that this is the ideal programme, just waiting to be implemented’ (De Hauwere, 2009, p. 352). Because of this hasty implementation, I argue that the context in which the programme is meant to work, was not sufficiently taken into account, consequently leading to disappointing results.

At the international level, the GSFP is supported by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), a technocratic body of the African Union (GoG, 2009). Furthermore, the Dutch government gave financial support for five years and a wide variety of multilateral and non-governmental organisations is involved. The GSFP can thus not exclusively be regarded as a development programme of the Government of Ghana, since mechanisms of government outside state institutions also have an influence. Ferguson and Gupta (2002, p. 989) call this ‘transnational governmentality’ and take a critical perspective on the outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs and other non-state agencies. In chapter 5 I have shown how the Ghana School Feeding Programme struggles with issues of governance, in particular with bad leadership and political expediency at the national level. Because of the interference of several institutions, such as the Dutch government and the Civil Society Platform on School Feeding, management problems at the National Secretariat could be corrected. I therefore argue that although transnational governmentality can have the dangerous effect of ‘delegitimizing and undermining state authority’ (Ibid), it can also improve state accountability.

The GSFP is now on the verge of becoming a national policy and is integrated in the 2014 National Budget (GoG, 2013). This is a positive development as it ensures ‘mainstreaming of the programme into the government machinery as part of the efforts at contributing to sustainability arrangements’ (Ernst & Young, 2012, p. 73). Nevertheless, before implementation, the programme could have benefitted from a thorough research into its political context. According to the literature, ‘Ghanaian political life is characterised by a deeply entrenched culture of patronage and clientelistic patterns of relations’ (Chêne, 2010, p. 3). Although a critical standpoint of the recipient country’s governance system is a sensitive matter, it is essential to avoid reinforcing governance problems such as clientelism by giving aid (Bräutigam and Knack, 2004). I argue that in the initial stages of the programme, it was not thought through well enough how to avoid problems of corruption and how to install necessary control mechanisms. Fortunately, because of the social accountability activities of the programme’s partners, the situation has greatly improved (Ernst & Young, 2012). Moreover, Ghana has a vibrant civil society and a free press that has the political space to publish, meet and campaign without major interference (Chêne, 2010) and it is key that these actors continue to play their watchdog roles.
Furthermore, problems with political targeting in the GSFP show that no sufficient attention was given to the North-South divide before implementation. ‘Affluent regions of the country were getting a larger share of the programme, including Greater Accra and Ashanti, while the ones with the largest proportion of poor people were getting less, including the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions’ (WFP, 2013, p. 79). The case of the GSFP is no exception, as similar problems occurred with the distribution of funds provided under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative: while the plan was that almost half of the funds would go to northern Ghana, in reality this was only 17% (Klinken and Zan, 2008, p. 5). ‘Political power is concentrated in the South of the country and there is a strong tendency to base policies on the interests of the South’ (De Hauwere, 2009, p. 355). However, also ‘by not discriminating between regions, national policies end up reinforcing existing regional disparities’ (Klinken and Zan, 2008, p. 7). Therefore, I applaud the re-targeting initiative of the Government of Ghana that has resulted in 70-80% of school-feeding funds currently going to the three poorest regions (WFP, 2013, p. 79). I hope that in the future, the Government of Ghana will continue this pro-poor approach because more equality between the North and the South is in the interest of Ghana as a whole.

Looking at the programme in Tamale Metropolitan District, in its design the GSFP has a decentralised structure with an important role for District Assemblies and District Implementation Committees. In practice, however, districts have limited financial and human resources to fulfil their mandate, resulting in delayed payment of caterers and little commitment to carry out the programme. This is partly due to a lack of information for key stakeholders regarding their roles and responsibilities (GoG, 2006b) but I argue that even the most committed individuals need adequate resources to fulfil their tasks. ‘In a programme founded on local ownership, they are the ones to make it work’ (De Hauwere, 2009, p. 355). Southern Ghana has an advantage in this respect because staff is available, infrastructure is in place and political interests are high, rather than in the North where many places are seen as ‘remote’ and difficult to work in (Klinken and Zan, 2008). Decentralisation of resources is an important aspect of good governance as the definition of Weiss (2000, p. 801) confirms: ‘good governance is more than multiparty elections, a judiciary and a parliament, (it is about) universal protection of human rights; non-discriminatory laws, efficient, impartial and rapid judicial processes; transparent public agencies; accountability for decisions by public officials; devolution of resources and decision making to local levels from the capital; and meaningful participation by citizens in debating public policies and choices’.

At the community level, GSFP practitioners expect local people to construct kitchens, storage rooms and sanitation facilities, provide water, firewood and charcoal and oversee implementation at the school level. Moreover, communities are supposed to sell foodstuffs to the caterer and help setting up and running school gardens to supplement school feeding (GoG, 2006). In literature on
development programmes, community participation is often mentioned as a way to include beneficiaries in decision-making processes and improve implementation and sustainability by making interventions more relevant and ‘home grown’ (Kothari and Cooke, 2001). I am very positive about the work of civil society organisations that actively sensitize and motivate communities to contribute to school feeding. ‘(...) Community participation, right from the beginning, ensures that the community’s needs and preferences can be taken into account and that programme design is in accordance with local knowledge and experiences’ (Haerkort, 2011, p. 33). Ideally, I would recommend to increase the responsibilities of the School Implementation Committees, by letting them choose caterers from their own community, making school-feeding activities more visible and attractive for local farmers. Furthermore, I would argue that parents should be educated about the amount and quality of food that their children should get, so they can monitor the caterers’ work.

However, I state that expectations of community members are to some extent unrealistic as is reflected in the results of the survey: in Tamale Metropolitan District the highest proportion of community participation is 36% for building a kitchen.62

Although I acknowledge that community members are to some extent responsible for the level of development in their own societies, I deem it important to be respectful of beneficiaries’ opinions and I argue that people do have other priorities than volunteering in development programmes, especially in poor areas with high illiteracy rates and limited infrastructure. The responsibility of the GSFP should not be shifted from the Government of Ghana and its partners onto beneficiaries by disowning the process they initiate, setting themselves up as merely ‘facilitating’ (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001, p. 180). Community participation on a voluntary basis is not an obligation, especially not when there is funding available at higher levels to give people a modest reward for their efforts. Moreover, I argue that involvement of community members in school-feeding affairs does not equate to political empowerment since political issues are not addressed and dominant power structures may even be reproduced. Women, for instance, are not included in decision-making processes regarding school-feeding affairs, despite their large involvement in school-feeding activities, and are, as in many other development programmes, excluded by factors like time and place of meeting, composition of groups, and conventions that only men speak in public (Guijt and Shah, 1998).

To contextualise the successes and challenges of the GSFP at the local level and to gain insight in behavioural changes of beneficiaries, in chapter 6 I have engaged in a livelihood analysis of the communities of Wurishie, Kotingli and Chanshegu. Instead of perceiving poverty as merely a lack of income or consumption, the livelihood approach has the advantage of respecting poor people’s

62 Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12
agency and recognizing that households engage in multiple activities to secure their means of living (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002). Subsistence farmers in Kotingli and Chanshegu, for instance, mainly draw on natural, physical and human capital for their livelihoods but may also temporarily migrate to urban areas to work as traders or artisans in times of seasonal unemployment (Yussif et al., 2011). On the other hand, financial, social and political capital are indispensable assets of urban dwellers in Wurishie, who are rather dependent on markets and institutions for their livelihoods. In both rural and urban areas, poverty is known to deny children nutritionally adequate food and to prevent families from sending their children to school (Kristjansson et al., 2009). Girls in particular are often required to skip school in order to assist in household chores or to contribute to family income (Casely-Hayford and Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2004).

Besides people’s asset status, public institutions and policies also determine which livelihood strategies can be used (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002). To determine the effectiveness of social safety nets for poor households, Grosh et al. (2008) distinguish four key issues, namely adequacy, reaching the poor, cost-effectiveness and long-term benefits. Evidence of this study suggests that school feeding in Tamale Metropolitan District indeed reduces hunger and malnutrition and increases enrolment, attendance and retention rates. It thus provides a meaningful level of transfer to the population it is trying to assist, i.e. children from poor backgrounds, their parents and public schools in deprived areas of the country. I have made several critical remarks though, about the effects of increased enrolment rates on the quality of education. Classroom overcrowding, inadequate furniture and a high pupil-teacher ratio are examples of daily problems in GSFP beneficiary schools (SEND, 2009) and more attention should be given to safeguard the quality of education in conjunction with interventions aimed at increasing access to schooling. Furthermore, the quality of the school meals is in some cases questionable, as caterers are motivated to use the least expensive food with little regard for nutritional value or adequate portions. This is an alarming observation, in particular for those children for whom school meals are the main meal of the day.

The third, and long-term, objective of the programme, i.e. boosting domestic food production, is the least successful aspect and only 7% of respondents (N=42) in Tamale Metropolitan District said that local farmers sell foodstuffs to the programme’s caterers.63 After three years of implementation, in Ghana as a whole, in more than 50% of the schools, less than 20% of the food was purchased locally and thus ‘the agricultural component has been lacking or neglected’ (SNV, 2008, p. 5). This can partly be explained by delayed flows of funding from the national to the district level, obligating caterers to buy foodstuffs with their own money or on credit and hereby stimulating them to go to the district-level market rather than to buy from local farmers (USDA, 2009). On the

63 Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12
supply side, insufficient production, storage and processing capacity combined with the virtual non-existence of FBOs are obstacles to making the GSFP more home grown (USDA, 2009). Yet, examples of school meal programmes in Côte d’Ivoire and Brazil show that local procurement is a way to achieve sustainable school feeding by making programmes less dependent on donors and by stimulating the local agricultural economy (Bundy et al., 2009). The long-term benefits and cost-effectiveness (Grosh et al., 2008) of school feeding could thus be improved by shoring up the agricultural aspect of the programme. If the GSFP wants to reach its long-term goal of poverty reduction and food security (GoG, 2006), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and its Agricultural Extension Officers should actively be involved to support local farmers with research, establishing farmer-based organisations and technical assistance.

Lastly, I have shown that setting up school farms can make the GSFP more home grown, has the potential to improve the nutritional value of school meals and can be an interesting educational activity (Baah, 2007). In Kenya, studies on school farming have proven that it can be a significant contribution to school-feeding programmes (Foeken et al., 2007). Moreover, the Gardens for Life project in Kenya, India, The Gambia and the United Kingdom successfully provides support to schools who have either an established school garden or would like to start one to explore the issues of food security, sustainable development and global citizenship. 64 Official support is essential for setting up and running school farms as the main challenge in Tamale Metropolitan District lies in a lack of resources for schools to pay for land, inputs and labour. 65 I recommend a new school garden project to be set up by Urbanet and SNV, based on lessons learnt in their pilot programme (Urbanet, 2012). It should be noted, however, that schools should not be expected to sustain the programme independently from formal structures, except perhaps in food-secure areas with high community involvement (Bundy et al., 2009).

Concluding, the GSFP in Tamale Metropolitan District is a programme with a lot of potential. However, because the WFP will slowly phase out assistance in the coming years and it is likely that overall donor support to Ghana will gradually diminish, a lot of work needs to be done to achieve full national ownership of the programme. Besides improving the planned work delivered by the programme through inputs and activities, more attention should be given to understanding outputs, outcomes and final outcomes which are not under the direct control of the GSFP and are dependent on behavioural changes by beneficiaries (Gerther et al., 2006). Hopefully the lessons learnt over the past nine years about the context in which the programme operates will continue to inform programme practitioners, because school feeding is an important safety net for many children in Ghana, especially in the North.

64 http://www.edenproject.com/gardens-for-life/index.php
65 Exploratory survey carried out in week of 10.9.12
7.2 Suggestions for future research

While writing this thesis, several ideas for follow-up research came up, of which I will mention those that I consider most pressing and interesting. Firstly, a nationwide baseline survey to provide a foundation for the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system should be the centrepiece of a new programme design. In addition to much needed quantitative data about educational and nutritional status of school children, I propose to collect both quantitative and qualitative information on domestic food production and food (in)security. To improve the linkage between the programme and local agriculture, an in-depth analysis should be made of the demand and supply situation for local feeding with specific identification of food surplus and food deficit areas and seasonal availability of food products.

Furthermore, I strongly recommend to pay more attention to the perspectives of beneficiaries in future studies, as this will provide insight in livelihood strategies of poor households, improving the information flow from the community level to the centre. Specific issues to be addressed are parents’ perceptions of school affairs and their children’s education as well as possible incentives for involvement in community development.

Lastly, I suggest to study the budgeting cycle of the programme, to improve the timing of payment to caterers and hereby to improve the quality and quantity of school meals. Also, the possibilities of a more diverse funding mechanism for the programme should be explored, including private sector investments, to ease the financial burden of the Government of Ghana.
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Annex I: Topic list interviews policy makers

1. Introduction
   - Name and function
   - Short description of organisation
   - Involvement of organisation in the Ghana School Feeding Programme

2. Objectives of the Ghana School Feeding Programme
   - Short-term objectives
   - Long-term objectives
   - Reasons behind these objectives

3. Governance issues
   - Collaboration with state and non-state actors
   - Flows of money and technical support
   - Monitoring and evaluation systems
   - Successes and challenges

4. Community participation
   - Role of parents, teachers and community members
   - Sensitisation and motivation

5. Local agricultural development
   - Productivity
   - Market access
   - Role of the caterer

6. School farming
   - Objectives
   - Sensitisation and motivation
   - Practice and potential
Survey school feeding and school farming in Tamale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where do most of the pupils in your school come from?</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Since when does your school participate in the Ghana School Feeding Programme?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How many pupils are being fed daily?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much do pupils pay for one meal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do all pupils have access to school feeding and if not, why not?</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What are the main foodstuffs used in the school meals and why?</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Who is in charge of the school feeding in your school?</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. In which ways does the local community contribute?</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. What are, in your opinion, the greatest benefits of school feeding?</td>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School farming

### 10. Does your school have a school farm? *(if not, continue with question 21)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes/no</th>
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</table>

### 11. In which of the following farming activities is your school involved? *(circle answer(s))*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Crop cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Livestock keeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Tree growing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 12. Where do the school farming activities take place?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>In school compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Outside school compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### 13. If in the school compound, how big is the plot? *(in m2)*

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### 14. In the last year, have you received extension services or official support and if yes, from whom?*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Answer:</th>
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### 15. What is the produce used for? *(circle answer(s))*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Sold to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Pupils take it home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Staff takes it home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Used for school feeding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 16. If part of the produce of the school farm is used for school feeding, which proportion of the ingredients would you estimate? *(circle answer(s))*

<p>| | |</p>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>5-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>20-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>40-60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>60-80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>80-100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 17. What are in your opinion the greatest benefits of school farming? *(circle answer(s))*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Provides a supplementary supply of food for school feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Increases the nutritional value of school meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Reduces the costs of school feeding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Provides an additional source of income for the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for agricultural training in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please elaborate on your answer(s):

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</table>

### 18. What challenges have you experienced with regard to the school farm and how did you deal with them?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer:</th>
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19. Who is in charge of the school farm?
   Answer:

20. What is the role of the following people on the school farm:
   a. Parents:
   b. Teachers:
   c. Pupils:
   d. Communities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-farming schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. What are the reasons for your school not to be involved in farming activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Are you planning on engaging in farming activities in the future? Why (not)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you very much for your time!

Please make sure you return this questionnaire to the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly, Educational Directorate or give it to your circuit supervisor.

For questions, call 0262097946
Annex III: Topic list interviews community members

1. Introduction
   - Name and occupation
   - Number of children in the school

2. Opinion about the Ghana School Feeding Programme
   - Positive remarks
   - Negative remarks

3. Governance issues
   - Awareness of organisations involved
   - Awareness of flows of money and technical support

4. Community participation
   - Role of parents, teachers and community members
   - Personal contribution to the programme
   - Sensitisation and motivation

5. Local agricultural development
   - Productivity
   - Market access
   - Role of the caterer

6. School farming
   - Objectives
   - Sensitisation and motivation
   - Practice and potential
Annex IV: Observation checklist fieldtrips

1. Surroundings
   - Rural/ peri-urban/urban
   - Accessibility by road
   - Housing

2. School facilities
   - Classrooms
   - Water and sanitation facilities

3. School feeding
   - Kitchen and cooking equipment
   - Foodstuffs
   - Storage room
   - Distribution and monitoring of the food
   - Involvement of community members

4. School farming
   - Available land
   - Types of vegetables
   - Fence
   - Involvement of community members
# Annex V: List of stakeholders interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Title of person interviewed</th>
<th>Name of person interviewed</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSFP National Secretariat</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Kingley Young Opare</td>
<td>7.8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSFP Regional Coordination Office</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Inusah Mahama</td>
<td>6.9.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Development Studies</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>Nashiru Sulemana</td>
<td>27.8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamale Metropolitan Assembly</td>
<td>GSFP Desk Officer</td>
<td>Rumaisha Abubakari</td>
<td>27.9.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana Education Service</td>
<td>Assistant Director of Supervision</td>
<td>Mrs. Samata</td>
<td>10.9.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEND</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Mr. Titus</td>
<td>28.8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanet</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Jibreel Mohammed Basit</td>
<td>3.10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Gyamila Wahabi Abdul-Razak</td>
<td>29.8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNV</td>
<td>Associate Advisor</td>
<td>Ernestine Sanogo</td>
<td>4.10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNV</td>
<td>Procurement Governance for Home-Grown School Feeding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calid</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
<td>Mrs. Fowzia</td>
<td>10.10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Former Head of Development Cooperation</td>
<td>Michiel Bierkens</td>
<td>24.5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>First Secretary Health Advisor</td>
<td>Marius de Jong</td>
<td>2.9.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Public Health Advisor</td>
<td>Lander van Ommen</td>
<td>4.9.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilever</td>
<td>Former Senior Vice-President</td>
<td>Hans Eenhoorn</td>
<td>7.6.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The basic concept of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) is to provide children in public primary schools and kindergartens in the poorest areas of the country with one hot, nutritious meal per day, using locally-grown foodstuffs. The long-term goal is to contribute to poverty reduction and food security in Ghana by providing a market for farm output. The objective of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the institutional workings of the GSFP in Tamale Metropolitan District and to investigate how school feeding benefits children and wider communities in their livelihood strategies. This study was based on five months of fieldwork in Ghana and additional data collection in the Netherlands and made use of both quantitative and qualitative methods and primary as well as secondary sources.

The dominant theoretical model of development programmes is based on a linear relationship between policy, implementation and results. However, this is an over-simplification of a much more complicated set of processes. Instead of carrying out a thorough research to investigate the feasibility of implementing a home-grown school-feeding programme in Ghana, the GSFP was presented in several policy organs as a quick-win intervention. Because of this hasty implementation, I argue that the context in which the programme is meant to work, was not sufficiently taken into account, consequently leading to disappointing results.

Firstly, this study shows how the GSFP struggles with issues of governance, in particular with bad leadership and political expedience at the national level. In 2008, the Dutch government withdrew support to the GSFP due to cases of corruption at the National Secretariat. Moreover, affluent regions in the South of the country were getting a larger share of the programme, while the ones with the largest proportion of poor people were getting less. For instance, in Tamale Metropolitan District, the GSFP has
in its design a decentralised structure with an important role for District Assemblies and District Implementation Committees. In practice, however, Tamale Metropolitan District has limited financial and human resources to fulfil its mandate, resulting in delayed payment of caterers and little commitment to carry out the programme. These challenges in programme management reflect the prevailing North-South divide and clientelistic patterns of relations in Ghana.

At the community level, GSFP practitioners expect local people to construct kitchens, storage rooms and sanitation facilities, provide water, firewood and charcoal and oversee implementation at the school level. Moreover, communities are supposed to sell foodstuffs to the caterer and help setting up and running school gardens to supplement school feeding. I state that expectations of community members are to some extent unrealistic as is reflected in the results of the survey: in Tamale Metropolitan District the highest proportion of community participation is 36% for building a kitchen. As came forward in interviews with community members, a major reason for low involvement in school feeding affairs is a lack of compensation for their work. Although community participation is essential for successful implementation, programme practitioners should not shift their responsibilities to community members by disowning the process they initiate.

With regard to livelihood strategies, anecdotal evidence of this study suggests that the GSFP in Tamale Metropolitan District indeed reduces hunger and malnutrition and increases enrolment, attendance and retention rates. I have made several critical remarks though, about the effects of increased enrolment rates on the quality of education and the quality of school meals. Furthermore, the long-term benefits and cost-effectiveness of school feeding could be improved by shoring up the agricultural aspect of the programme. If the GSFP wants to reach its goal of poverty reduction and food security, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture should actively be involved to support local farmers with research, establishing farmer-based organisations and technical assistance. Lastly, setting up school farms can make the GSFP more home-grown, has the potential to improve the nutritional value of school meals and can be an interesting educational activity.

Concluding, the GSFP in Tamale Metropolitan District is a programme with a lot of potential. Besides improving governance issues at the national and district levels, this study argues that more attention should be given to understanding the context at the local level, since this is where the programme enters the life-worlds of beneficiaries and can possibly has a positive impact on their livelihood strategies.