



Logistics Review of the School Feeding Programme in Lesotho

Project Location:	Lesotho
Project Start Date:	August 1997
Project Duration:	One month

Introduction:

TNT United Kingdom Ltd (TNT) were requested by Transaid to provide a consultant to undertake a Logistics Review of the School Feeding Programme in Lesotho on behalf of Save the Children Fund (SCF).

The original goal of the School Feeding Programme was to provide a nutritious lunch to primary school children who may otherwise have to go the whole day without a proper meal. It was hoped that the provision of a school lunch would improve the nutritional status of the children, encourage school attendance, increase the children's concentration during school time and generally assist growth and development.

The overall objective of the project was agreed as follows:

- To analyse, review and evaluate the logistics operation of the School Feeding Programme supported by the World Food Programme (WFP) food commodities.

The terms of reference of the project were agreed as follows:

- Visit the Food Management Units (FMU) regional stores and sub-stores in Lesotho to assess-
 - Storage and throughput capacities of each store
 - Quality and conditions of each store
 - Quality and condition of the stocks including expiry dates
 - Quantity of damaged and/or destroyed stocks
 - Availability of transport resources
 - Proportion of non-operational transport resources
 - Utilisation of the transport resources
 - Operations during the key period of food distribution to the schools including the use of inter-store transfers
 - Warehouse and storage procedures
- Visit a sample of schools within the programme to assess-
 - Receipt and handling of the food
 - Storage of the food
 - Operational requirements
- Review the communication and liaison between the stores and headquarters with respect to-
 - Reporting of timely and accurate information to donors
 - Assessing if commodity requirements for each store are fulfilled

- Review communication and liaison between the FMU and donor community in order to assess incoming donations
- Assess the FMU reporting procedures required by donors and/or other government agencies
- Review the planning of the call forwarding of commodities via the WFP with respect to-
 - Appropriate timing
 - Positioning of the commodities once they arrive in the country
- Investigate the use of the computer system and whether it services the needs of the entire FMU operation
- Investigate whether the movement of commodities is tracked from source to destination

Methodology:

Prior to departure to Lesotho, a number of briefings took place to ensure that the project could proceed quickly and effectively on arrival in Lesotho. The objective and terms of reference for the project were identified and agreed.

On arrival in Lesotho, an initial meeting took place to review the objectives and terms of reference. Additional detailed information regarding the School Feeding Programme, organisations associated with the programme, key people involved and general information on Lesotho was provided. Subsequently, a number of further meetings took place with the key people involved with the School Feeding Programme in order to gain a greater understanding of the operation.

An extensive programme of site visits was undertaken which included trips to all of the regional FMU stores, the majority of the satellite FMU stores and a sample of the schools which had previously been or currently are in the School Feeding Programme.

In addition to the meetings and site visits, desktop work was undertaken using a MS Excel spreadsheet package to analyse the information provided by both the FMU and SCF.

In particular, analysis was undertaken to establish-

- A comparison between the current transport rates and the rates paid by SCF in 1994
- Throughputs and inter-store transfer volumes

Outcomes:

Following a range of meetings with the key people involved with the School Feeding Programme and an extensive programme of site visits, a number of key improvement issues were identified together with potential solutions. The site visits included some of the schools in the programme and the majority of the Food Management Unit stores.

Opportunities for improvement include the following-

- Downtime of the Food Management Unit fleet of vehicles due to time spent awaiting servicing or repairs
- Incorrect siting of the Food Management Unit fleet
- Too many full-time labourers based at the stores
- Inadequate computer system
- The high proportion of products which were past expiry dates both at the schools and the stores
- The planning of product requirements for each school session
- The frequency of deliveries to the schools

The key recommendations identified include-

- The utilisation of private contractors to undertake the vehicle maintenance
- The strategic location of the vehicle fleet at various locations around the country to reflect the workload and requirements
- A reduction in the level of full-time employees at the Food Management Units stores
- The extension of the computer system to the regional stores and at the headquarters of the Food Management Unit
- The introduction of procedures to monitor expiry dates and the transfer of product between aid programmes to reduce the level of product past its expiry date
- An increase in the frequency of deliveries to the larger schools from the present level of once per session to twice per session
- The extension of the distribution operation to schools which have been phased out of the programme albeit charging the schools the real cost of purchasing and distributing the food.

Conclusion:

The School Feeding Programme in Lesotho has the potential to be a highly beneficial scheme. It is always important for schemes such as this to be subject to reviews to ensure that it is working to its maximum potential. The logistics review of the School Feeding Programme was conducted carefully and thoroughly, managing to successfully identify a number of opportunities for improvement and key recommendations. If some or all of the recommendations proposed are implemented, it is believed that there will be a significant improvement in the quality of product and service delivered to the schools and will further enhance the benefits of the School Feeding Programme.

Tools Utilised: A Logistics Review of the School Feeding Programme in Lesotho on behalf of Save the Children, prepared by Nick Crighton

Partners: TNT United Kingdom Ltd, Save the Children Fund, World Food Programme, Food Management Unit (Lesotho Government).

About Transaid:

Transaid is an international UK development charity that aims to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods across Africa and the developing world through creating better transport. Transaid was founded by Save the Children and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. Our Patron is HRH The Princess Royal. Transaid specializes in the following:

- Building the capacity of public health authorities to provide effective, safe and cost efficient transport management systems to promote equitable access to primary health care services.
- Developing and improving logistics and supply chain systems to enhance the delivery of medicines, equipment and relief services to vulnerable communities.
- Promoting effective partnerships to support and enhance community participation in developing sustainable transport solutions in rural areas.
- Developing and delivering transport and logistics training and qualifications for public and private sector operators.

Transaid has the capacity and reach to lead projects throughout the developing world, but is equally capable of providing niche technical assistance to large scale health systems strengthening projects. Transaid maintains strong relationships with a number of leading international organizations including donor agencies such as DfID, DANIDA and USAID, and implementing organizations such as Health Partners International, Options Consulting, John Snow Inc. and Management Sciences for Health.

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