School Feeding Program
Study Report

Timor-Leste

CARE International for the HATUTAN Education and Nutrition Program
With Assistance from Julie Imron

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## Acronyms

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>Dietary Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDS</td>
<td>Dietary Diversity Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNASE</td>
<td>Direção Nacional de Ação Social Escolar (National Directorate for School Social Actions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBC</td>
<td>Ensino Basico Central (Central School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBF</td>
<td>Ensino Basico Filial (Filial School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONECTIL</td>
<td>Conselho Nacional de Escola Catolica de Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste National Council of Catholic Schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPV</td>
<td>Cash Payment Voucher</td>
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<tr>
<td>FONGTIL</td>
<td>Forum Organizasaun Naun Governmental Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Non-Governmental Organization Forum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAT</td>
<td>Gabinete Apoio Técnico (Technical Support Office)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HATUTAN</td>
<td>Hahán ne’ebé Atu fó Tulun ho Nutrisaun no Edukasaun (Continue and Support Food for Nutrition and Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KONSANTIL</td>
<td>Consellu Nasionál Seguransa Alimentár Timor-Leste (National Food Security Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPME</td>
<td>Komisaun Programa Merenda Eskolar (School Feeding Program Committee)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAF</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEYS</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>Ministry of State Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDHJ</td>
<td>Provedoria Diretus Humanos no Justisa (Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Pré Eskolar (Preschool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDA</td>
<td>Recommended Dietary Allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFP</td>
<td>School Feeding Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Program</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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Executive Summary

The Government of Timor-Leste’s school feeding program provides a meal or snack to all students in preschools and basic education (Grades 1-9) throughout the country. In full implementation, this represents providing mostly cooked meals to about one quarter of the population. The nationwide School Feeding Program was established by the Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) in 2005 and has been through several phases of implementation. The Manual which has guided the program implementation since 2013 is in the process of being revised (end of 2019 to early 2020). To support the Timor-Leste government to review and improve the School Feeding Program (SFP), CARE International in Timor-Leste studied the program and commissioned this report with the objectives to review and assess how the program is being implemented as well as gather opinions and suggestions from various stakeholders on how to improve the program.

Methodology

The School Feeding Program (SFP) study’s objectives are (1) to conduct a review of the current program implementation, (2) to conduct a food consumption analysis of the current school meals delivered, (3) to gather opinions from various stakeholders on how SFP is implemented as well as recommendations on how to improve implementation.

Five quantitative and qualitative studies were used to conduct this study:

1. HATUTAN’s baseline survey with a sample of 189 basic education schools from nine municipalities;
2. A food storage and kitchen survey of all 435 basic education and preschools in four municipalities;
3. School feeding observation and interviews in a sample of 59 basic education schools and all preschools in four municipalities;
4. Interviews with 40 key informants at municipal level (from Municipal Education, Health services, Finance and Agriculture in four municipalities);
5. Interviews with 14 key informants at national level (from ministries, state institutions, NGOs and UN agencies).

Chronology of the School Feeding Program

The School Feeding Program (SFP) started in 2005, implemented by WFP in six municipalities. The other seven municipalities the government provided school feeding starting in 2008, merging the two programs in April 2009. From 2012, the GOTL assumed full responsibility of the SFP with rice and funding of $0.15 US per student per day per meal distributed to all basic education schools, including pre-secondary schools. In 2013, a Manual was produced and later the budget was increased to 25 cents per student per day. This Manual has guided implementation through school year 2019 and prioritizes the use of local

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1 School feeding recipients may include up to 323,846 students (EMIS 2018) out of a population of 1,183,643 (2015 census data).
products to support local economy. In 2015, the program was expanded to pre-schools and private schools and its implementation was decentralized to the municipal level in 2017.

The number of actual school feeding days has decreased since 2014 with about less than half of the planned days delivered even though funding was for a full year. In 2017, the number of days delivered dropped to about one-third of school days and reduced further in 2018 with the “one-twelfth” funding mechanism. In 2019, the program delivery improved but was funded for only about 43% of school days.

**Study Findings**

Findings relate to the observed and recounted delivery of school feeding and how well implementation complied with or deviated from the SFP Manual.

1. **Disparity in SFP implementation**

The SFP’s first objective is to “Improve nutrition conditions for school-aged children and decrease the number of dropouts.” To achieve this objective, the policy is for universal coverage of school feeding: reaching all registered preschool and basic education schools of the country for the approximately 190 effective school days per year.

In practice, there are important and recurring disparities in implementation of school feeding. Firstly, school feeding is almost non-existent during the first school trimester period due to late promulgation of State Budget. Secondly, school feeding often experiences interruptions during the school year because of delays in the reporting system. Finally, in fiscal year 2019, the SFP was not fully funded (100 days funded out of 196 effective days).

Disparities across municipalities and school types were also observed in 2019. The day of school feeding observation in June-July 2019, only one of the schools visited in Ainaro delivered meals (other schools were waiting for second tranche of funding) while all schools in Liquiça delivered a meal. Additionally, 68% of basic education schools delivered meals compared to 84% in preschools. Catholic schools did not receive school feeding funds at all in 2019.

2. **Acceptance of the program by beneficiaries**

Most of the key informants at municipal level highlighted the children’s and parents’ very high acceptance of the program, and described benefits as reduced absenteeism and increased attention of children during class. Though parents may lack ability to adequately monitor technical aspects of education quality, they immediately recognize the benefit of sending children to school if a meal will be served. School inspectors observed direct positive impact on enrolment rates but also deplored a negative impact when school feeding is inconsistent and interrupted. Parents gave similar feedback, stating that children would lack motivation to go to school on days meals are not served.

Direct observation of school feeding indicated that most to all students finished their food in 68% of basic education schools and 80% of preschools. This reflects hunger as well as possible appreciation for the meals provided. Finally, school meals also show an impact on health by positively impacting macronutrient and micronutrient intake leading to enhanced nutrition and health.  

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3. Food consumption analysis

Cooks’ exposure to the SFP Manual

Understanding the food consumption recommendations of the Manual is required for schools to cook nutritious meals. Yet, only 68% of basic education schools and 39% of preschools have a copy of the SFP Manual; and only 35% of basic education schools cooks and 25% of preschools cooks said they knew about the Manual. In schools where cooks have access to the Manual, more than 75% of school directors/ coordinators and cooks themselves believed cooks always follow the Manual’s instructions (as well as close to 70% of Parent-Teacher Association [PTA] members).

Food composition analysis

Findings from observation of 80 school meals served in June-July form the basis of this analysis.

The Manual recommends basic education (BE) schools to serve cooked meals, which was the case in 48% of the schools. Also, 76% of preschools served snacks in accordance with the Manual.

In terms of Dietary Diversity (DD), only 32% of BE schools and 8% of preschools reached the minimum requirement of four out of seven food categories consumed. In terms of meal composition, the Manual recommends using “2 vitamins + 1 protein + 1 carbohydrate” in each school meal. Only 35% of the basic education schools and 12% of preschools met this target.

Nutritional value of meals served during this period is low. This is partly due to no rice distributed to most schools outside of Dili and therefore schools either served a snack or purchased rice which reduced the money available for other foods.

Use of foods to avoid

The Manual mentions a number of less preferred foods or foods which should be avoided. Observation of school meals and of cooks’ receipts revealed the use of such foods in some schools: sausages, canned tuna, instant noodles and flavor enhancers. Consumption of milk is recommended in the Manual. Yet, schools use sweetened milk very frequently (condensed or powdered) which should be questioned given its low nutritional value. Some schools also distribute manufactured sweetened drinks as well.

Quantities served

The Manual does not provide guidance on the portion size for the server thus it becomes the discretion of the server to determine the portion. Quantities served were mostly enough to serve all students (reported and observed). Firstly, school directors/ coordinators said food is always enough in 84% of BE schools and 81% of preschools. Secondly, more than 90% of schools usually have leftovers (which are then brought home by cooks or school personnel, or consumed in schools by students or school personnel). School feeding observation indicated that in 13% of the schools observed, quantities served might have been insufficient or just enough.

Cooks prepare on average (1) too much food if they predict how many students they will have to serve (compared to using EMIS list) and (2) insufficient or just enough food if they do not measure/ weigh food.

Variety in the menu

Anecdotal feedback from various stakeholders revealed that menus are not always changed and students are sometimes bored with certain types of foods they are frequently served. That was for example the

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4 The foods to be avoided are better known by their brand names such as Delho, Super Mie, Masako and Mitsin.

5 The sweetened milk products better known by their brand names such as Enaak or Indomilk.
case with rice porridge (as per feedback from Audit Court), mung beans porridge (as per school management and cooks) and bread (as per observation).

**Quality of the rice distributed previous years**

The rice was mostly not distributed to schools outside of Dili in 2019\(^6\) and serious issues were exposed regarding the rice distributed the previous years. 38% of the BE schools’ cooks said they had sometimes (or all the time) received bad quality rice. The main reason for this was the lack of budget to transport rice from municipal warehouses to schools, resulting in large amounts of rice stored for long periods and getting spoiled.

**4. Food procurement**

**Use of School Feeding Program money for non-food items**

A significant amount of the SFP funding is used by schools for operational support of the SFP. That was the case for 71% of BE schools and 30% of preschools (PE). The most frequently purchased items are: firewood, soap, transport fees, compensation for helpers, drinking water. Also, cases of misuse of money to repair infrastructure were identified by the *Provedoria Direitus Humanos no Justisa* (PDHJ).

**Purchasing local products**

The Manual highly recommends to use local products to prepare school meals. Different information was collected as to how many schools actually buy local products. Self-reported information from head teachers, collected at the baseline, suggests that 39% of BE schools buy local products all the time, 53% sometimes and 7% never. Yet, follow up observations revealed that BE schools buy products from local farmers daily in 25% of schools, sometimes in 12% of schools and never in 63% of schools. Lastly, preschools reported buying products from local farmers daily in 6% of schools, sometimes in 17% of schools, and never in 77% of schools.

The main constraints schools face to buy local products are (1) the limited and seasonal local production, (2) the lack of linkage with farmers, (3) insufficient budget to cover higher prices of local products. Local initiatives to link farmer groups to schools are being piloted (KONSANTIL in Manatuto), but these remain rare.

Lastly, in 12% of BE schools, cooks reported also using products from school gardens.

**5. Governance: selection of cook**

**General overview of the PTA**

PTAs exist in 98% of BE schools and 81% of preschools. The frequency of PTA meetings remain quite low: in mid-2019, only 30% of BE PTAs and 64% of preschool PTAs had met at least once in the last 6 months. Yet, PTAs are recognized for their support in maintenance of infrastructure, which they often do together with community members (52% of BE schools and 32% of preschools).

**Involvement of PTAs in cook selection**

The Manual indicates the PTA to take a lead role in the selection of the cook. Yet, PTAs are involved in this process in only 50-70% of BE schools while it is the director/coordinator alone selecting the cook in about 20% of BE schools. In preschools, PTAs are involved in cook selection in 20-40% of the schools while in

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\(^6\) Some of the SFP rice was delivered to Aileu and Manufahe (source DNASE) but not in any of the municipalities directly observed.
about 70% of the schools, it is the Coordinator alone who selects the cook. Factors such as knowing about the Manual and having regular meetings positively influenced the proportion of PTAs involved in cook selection.

**Cooks' selection criteria and contracts**

Regarding selection criteria, schools always selected women individuals or groups as recommended in the Manual. Yet, cases of power abuse from school management to select family members were reported. As for contractual arrangements, 83% of cooks in BE schools and 70% in preschools reported having a contract.

**Cooks turn over**

Lastly, turn-over of cooks seems frequent: 41% of the BE schools’ cooks and 53% of preschools’ cooks had worked for the school for not more than 3 months. It is important for schools to be able to provide guidance and training to new cooks again frequently.

### 6. Management of SFP funding at school level

**Funding mechanism and management**

The Manual recommends cooks to handle and manage money by tranches of 1 month.

In BE schools, 94-98% of the cooks are handed SFP money but mostly for periods of 1 week (72%). Only 11% of the cooks who are holding SFP money actually manage money for periods of 1 month at a time. In preschools, fewer cooks are in charge of SFP money: in 10-25% of the schools, it is the Coordinator who holds and manages the school feeding fund.

Also, in 90% of BE schools and 55% of preschools, cooks are involved in decision making on where to buy foods. Yet, in 39% of BE schools and 58% of preschools, it was mostly school management making the decision on what foods to buy.

Lastly, different practices were observed as to how cooks are paid (salary). Some reported being paid non-standard amounts ($35, $115) instead of the standard rate of $50 or multiple of $50. Most cooks receive their salaries by the month while others received quarterly.

**Reporting of expenses**

The SFP Manual recommends cooks to prepare expenses report. In practice, this was the case in less than 15% of filial schools (EBF), less than 25% of central schools (EBC) and none of the preschools. EBF’s reports are mostly prepared by school Coordinators and sometimes GATs. EBC’s reports are mostly prepared by GATs. Finally preschool reports are mainly prepared by school Coordinators who then either send reports to Municipal Education or to a close-by EBC for administrative support.

Preparation of school clusters’ reports by GATs are sometimes organized differently with some GATs inviting EBF coordinators to the central school to prepare the reports collaboratively. Reports are then sent to SFP Coordinators for review. These latter often reported delays in submission of reports and incomplete reports which then delay the following transfer.

### 7. Monitoring of the SFP at school level

"Participation of the PTA in management and monitoring of the SFP is very important." (Section 1 of the Manual).

**Monitoring by PTAs**
Functional PTAs (i.e. having met at least once in the past 6 months) claim to be involved in monitoring of the SFP in 86% of BE schools and 89% of preschools. However, their level of involvement is variable according to schools. Various reasons were identified for their lack of involvement: lack of time, lack of incentive and weak mobilization of PTAs by school management. Indeed, only 47% of PTAs in BE schools and 44% in preschools are part of the school feeding committee called KPME\(^7\). And when they are part of the KPME, many do not participate in meetings with other KPME members. Also, many PTA members do not understand clearly their role in regards to the SFP (only 30% of BE PTAs and 25% of preschool PTAs had exposure to the SFP Manual).

**Monitoring by other stakeholders**

The Manual recommends that school management should also be in charge of supervising cooks and food supply. Their involvement was observed the day of school feeding observation.

SFP Coordinators are expected to monitor overall SFP implementation in the municipality and support preparation of monthly reports. This last point was verified during interviews.

Inspectors seem to have an active role in monitoring school feeding implementation in schools and had a good understanding of the main issues pertaining to the program.

DNASE is mainly monitoring school feeding via the SFP Coordinators. Management of data related to the program’s performance indicators still needs to be improved.

**8. Food storage, preparation and service observed practices**

**Food storage practices**

In 58% of the BE schools and 56% of the preschools visited, food was stored inside the school compound. This could either be the storage room (25% of all schools), the kitchen, an office/teacher’s room or a classroom. In other cases, food was stored outside the school compound, mainly in the cook’s house.

In terms of hygiene practices, improvements are urgently needed: 33% of the places used to store food were mostly clean to clean, about half were not so clean and about 10% dirty (16% in BE schools and 9% in preschools). Raising food off the floor was done in 72% of the cases (using pallets, shelves, furniture, etc.) while in 28%, food was on the ground.

**Food preparation practices**

Schools have a kitchen in about 90% of BE schools and 40% of preschools. When no kitchen is available, cooks usually cook in their own house.

83% of BE school cooks have helpers (2-3 women on average) versus 14% of preschools’ cooks only (1 helper). Two cases of under-aged labor and 7 cases of students helping in the kitchen were observed during school visits.

As for hygiene, water was available in the kitchen in 74% of BE schools and 77% of preschools only. As a result, only 55% of the kitchens used by BE cooks were “mostly clean to clean” – others were “not so clean”. In preschools, dirty kitchens were observed in 12% of the sample. Cooks said they used detergent to clean the kitchen daily in only 34% of BE schools and 62% of preschools. Lastly, during school feeding observation, cooks rarely washed hands in 38% of BE schools and 11% of preschools, and did not wash hands at all in 3% of BE schools and 45% of preschools.

\(^7\) KPME stands for Komisaun Programa Merenda Eskolár (School Feeding Program Committee).
**Food services observed practices**

In less than 10% of the schools, students eat in a canteen. Eating outside and under the veranda is the most frequent situation for BE schools (70%) while preschools students mostly eat in the classroom (81%).

Most schools serve meals during recess breaks but this sometimes overlaps with class time too (12% of BE schools had meals served during class and in 26% of BE schools, some students were still eating when class started). In less than 10% of the schools school meals are served after classes have finished.

During school observation, school feeding lasted more than 35 minutes in 38% of BE schools and 8% of preschools. Possible reasons for long school feeding sessions are having not enough spoons/plates and eating outside (compared to in a canteen).

About hygiene, students had water and a location to wash hands in only 50% of BE schools and half the schools did not have water for handwashing. Most of the water was provided in a bucket or other container (44%) with only a couple from functioning taps (6%). Only 18% of those providing water also had soap. The situation was better in preschools: 81% had water and a place to wash hands (again more from a container than tap) and 67% also had soap.

Lastly, during school feeding time, it is very common for other people (teachers, school management, cooks, etc.) to also eat the SFP meal: 73% of BE schools and 25% of preschools. In more than half of BE schools, food is actually brought to the teachers’ room for them to eat separately from students.

**9. Poor supporting school infrastructure**

**Kitchens:** 89% of BE schools and 38% of preschools have kitchens which are often in bad condition: some have no roof (10% in BE schools and 20% in preschools) and some no ventilation (about 20% in BE schools and 30% in preschools). Feedback from observers also indicated that some kitchens have no doors, damaged/leaking roofs, damaged bamboo or palm leaves walls and unpaved floors (dirt only).

**Cooking equipment:** Only 40% of BE schools’ cooks and 75% of preschools’ cooks indicated that they have sufficient equipment for cooking. Cooks sometimes reported that they use personal cooking material to prepare food. Nearly all schools use wood stoves and scales were available in only 56% of schools, although not all of them functional.

**Food storage facility:** Only 25% of schools have a storage room in the school (more frequent in EBCs). The size of the rooms used to store food in the schools was sufficient in 44% of BE schools (and smaller in other cases). Roofs, floors and walls are made of improved materials in 98%, 87% and 57% of the schools.

**School canteen:** Only 11% of BE schools and 7% of preschools have canteens.

**Plates and cutlery:** Overall, many schools are still lacking eating utensils: 25% of BE schools and 66% of preschools only have enough (as per cooks). In some schools, students are bringing their own plates/spoons from home. The lack of utensils has an impact on hygiene as students often use the same plates to eat.

**Water:** Access to water is very limited: only 62% of BE schools have water access in the school (71% in EBCs). In other cases, water is brought to kitchens from outside schools (mainly by cooks). Students bringing water to school happens in about 20% of the BE schools that have no water access (using 5L jerry cans). Concerns about child labor were raised by several stakeholders.

**Toilets and handwashing facilities:** Hand washing facilities are available in just 41% of BE schools and separate toilets for boys and girls in only 52%.
Recommendations

**Continue the nationwide school feeding program**

The school feeding program is immensely popular and has strong potential to improve school attendance, improve the attentiveness of students at school, support more vulnerable children and communities, model positive nutrition and hygiene practices and to stimulate the local economy. All respondents expressed a desire to continue the program and offered recommendations for improvements.

1. **How to improve the relevance of the SFP design**

- Establish funding mechanism to allow delivery of program in the first trimester and reduce gaps between funding tranches
- Funding level should be in line with market costs to purchase nutritious meal
- Provide cash allocation only and eliminate the rice distribution - more flexibility in menu to use locally produced rice or alternative carbohydrate source
- Update Manual guiding school feeding program and provide guidelines and training to all schools and cooks
- Change title to clarify a cooked meal not snack (DNASE recommends "Alimentasaun")

**Funding and reporting mechanism**

The most frequent recommendations were in regards to the late start of school feeding each year. The funding mechanism for the program is a political and technical decision which needs to be agreed between Ministries of Finance, Education and State Administration and possibly approved by parliament. The decision will need to balance public finance laws, adequate financial controls together with the desire and ability to deliver core government services and programs as per plan. Respondents provided their suggestions, whether feasible politically or financially, such as discussing State budget earlier, change the budget category of the program, not transfer funds though municipal administration or give management of the program to an independent institution.

Secondly, some recommended that the transfer of the next tranche be effected once 75% of the previous tranche funding has been acquitted, thus reducing the likelihood of interruptions in the provision of meals. Also, school administrators should be better guided to understand basic reporting requirements.

Lastly, it was recommended that the SFP fund tranches per quarter reflect the distribution of the school days in each quarter; as opposed to equal shares of 25% per quarter.⁸

**SFP budget and support package**

A wide range of stakeholders at school, municipal and national level expressed mixed views regarding budgeted amount for the program, in particular if the 25 cents allocated per student per meal is sufficient and proposed changes to the program’s budget is currently under review. The government could use market research data from the Cost of Diet Survey⁹ and other food price sources to establish the cost per meal.

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⁸ This would require the SFP funding not to be subject to public finance law which limits the amount of money transferrable per quarter to 25% of the total budget.
⁹ Cost of Diet is a globally recognized method used to estimate the amount, combination and cost of local foods required to provide a nutritious diet that meets the recommended daily intake of energy, protein, fats and micronutrients. Preliminary findings from the 2019 study in Timor-Leste recommend the average cost of food-only inputs at 49 cents (USD) per child per meal per day. The price range varied depending on the menu and regional market variation from lowest cost of nutritionally balanced meal at 19 cents up to the higher end of 79 cents.
student reflecting the actual average cost of a balanced meal inclusive of local protein-rich foods, vegetables and fruits; and take into consideration regional differences and remoteness of schools.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) officials at municipal and national level suggested ending rice distribution. If cash only is provided, then schools could purchase local rice or other local produce as carbohydrate source. Other recommendations were also made to support schools with operational costs such as transport or soap for example.

**Updating the Manual**

Revising the SFP Manual was recommended by stakeholders at all levels. Updates should include: (1) simplifications/shortening for better understanding, (2) dropping the use of the term “Merienda Eskolar”, and (3) updating the menus proposed (proposing a wider variety of options, including some with non-rice sources of carbohydrates, including meals covering a wider range of food groups for preschools, providing clearer recommendations on foods to avoid, especially for milk). More socialization on the Manual is also required, starting with ensuring all schools have a copy of the Manual.

2. **How to improve the program’s effectiveness**

- Allow for flexible menus to accommodate local foods based on seasonality, region and core nutritional guidance
- Clearly specify foods or products banned from use in the SFP and explain why (to promote healthier eating habits at home)
- Increase use of plant-based proteins
- Balance the portions of carbohydrates with the “vitamin foods” and “protein foods”
- Enforce hygiene practices of cooks (washing hands with soap, covering hair, washing food before serving or cooking) and hygiene standards in food storage and kitchens (regular cleaning with detergent, washing cooking utensils, prevent animals from entering kitchens)
- Serve correct measures portions and cook according to the actual number of students present to reduce wastage
- Actively involve parents in the planning, procurement, implementation and monitoring of the SFP
- Actively involve students in the SFP to learn about food, nutrition and hygiene to extend impact of the program into homes

**Objective 1: Improve nutrition condition for school-aged children and decrease the number of dropouts.**

- Improving nutrition condition of school aged children:

To serve healthy and nutritive meals, it is recommended for schools to: select foods from 4 of the 7 food categories for each meal (2 foods from the vitamin category, 1 protein [plant or animal protein] and 1 carbohydrate), adhere to the foods to avoid list. Focus needs to be placed on increased use of protein foods to create a more balanced meal carbohydrates/vitamin foods/protein foods. Measuring quantities of foods to prepare will help ensure enough food is available. Lastly, increased use of local nutritious foods is recommended, especially if these are pesticide free. These can be sourced locally from farmers.

Basic hygiene practices must be enforced as minimum standards: washing hands with soap, regularly cleaning kitchens and water containers, ensuring foods are stored in a hygienic environment.

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10 Effectiveness of the program is to what extent the SFP is reaching its’ objectives.
• Decrease the number of dropouts

The precondition to reduce the number of dropouts is that the SFP is fully funded and functioning throughout the school year. Parents and school personnel observe that frequent interruptions in the delivery of school meals during the year and the late start of the SFP each year has a significant impact on absenteeism. Having a daily school meal served in school is one of the key incentives for more vulnerable students to stay in school. The national level will need to fully fund the program and resolve access to funds in the first trimester (see above).

Schools can also improve delivery of the program through: improved and timely reporting mechanisms, improved management of SFP money, more control of possible misuse of SFP resources and better planning of the number of meals to prepare.

Objective 2: Encouraging children to participate in teaching-learning activities and to boost their interest to participate in class.

Similar to objective 1, the key recommendation is for schools to deliver nutritive meals for the entire number of school feeding days, provide the meal during the recess (not after class) and keep feeding period within the recess to not reduce class time.

Objective 3: Develop local economy.

It was recommended: (1) to build links between schools and farmer groups through PTAs, (2) improve coordination between MEYS and MAF and multiply initiatives as those of KONSANTIL and Mercy Corps which are linking schools to farmer groups, (3) that cooks value the use of regional products in the meals they prepare and (4) to reduce the use of imported products. A higher proportion of local fresh produce could be included in the school meal if government provides cash rather than cash plus imported rice. Cooks should avoid purchasing imported manufactured products, some of which is on the less preferred food list and contain sugar, palm oil, MSG and other chemical preservatives or flavoring.

Objective 4: Promote the participation of education administrators, school councils, school directors, and the APP in planning and implementation of education.

It is recommended for schools to better inform and involve parents in SFP implementation issues. More communication is needed between the different school level implementers. KPMEs should play a lead role in this process. School management needs to actively involve more parents, hold regular meetings with PTAs and ensure PTAs are systematically part of the KPME.

Objective 5: Sensitize the community to take ownership of School Feeding Program, to actively involve themselves in the program.

The SFP is highly valued by parents and offers an important opportunity for the school to collaborate with parents. The school personnel need to create a welcoming environment for parents monitoring the program. Parent involvement in SFP also provides a learning opportunity for positive health practices in nutrition and hygiene for parents to apply at home. PTAs are crucial to ensure there is a strong link between schools and the community. PTAs should thus be given enough room and importance in program implementation.

3. How to improve the program’s efficiency

✓ Strengthen financial reporting skills, supervision and increase receipt spot checks
✓ Reinforce the rules and criteria for selection of cooks

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11 See WFP quotes in sections 3.1. and 3.2. for results of international studies on the impact of SFP.
Financial efficiency

Firstly, more control of the use of SFP money is needed (spot-checks of receipts, control of possible fraud, avoiding use of SFP resources for non-students or other events). Secondly, increased accountability in regards to reporting is required for more transparency. Lastly, better management of SFP money could help schools deliver more feeding days during the year.

Efficiency of human means

Efficiency of cooks needs to be enhanced by (1) ensuring cooks are selected based on their skills (more transparency in selection of cooks), (2) ensuring adequate training and oversight of cooks, (3) contracting not more than the required number of cooks, (4) reducing turnover, and (5) controlling that substitution of cooks is professional.

Efficiency of PTAs need to be enhanced by (1) selecting PTA members who have more time to participate in school activities, live close to the school and who are truly selected by parents (not appointed by school personnel), (2) ensuring PTAs have more than one member and (3) ensuring PTAs understand their role and functions (coaching/training).

Lastly, combining efforts from the different municipal departments would help improve the program's impact on student's health and local economy.

Efficiency of physical means

A real lack of quality school infrastructure is undermining the efficiency of the program. Attention first needs to be paid to schools' access to water as this is a prerequisite for hygienic and healthy implementation of school feeding. Secondly, kitchens and food storages need to be built in some schools while in other schools, renovation of existing ones is required (repairing/building roofs, improving ventilation, adding doors, renovating damaged walls). Thirdly, some schools require additional cooking and eating utensils. Poor WASH facilities also need to be addressed. Finally, building canteens in schools with a high number of students would help reduce the time spent for school feeding.

To overcome this gap, it is recommended that MEYS collaborates with other ministries and institutions. Also, different levels of construction should be considered (from more affordable to higher levels). Finally, PTAs should be involved to support schools with simple maintenance as well as some more demanding construction work.

4. **How to ensure the program’s sustainability**

- Strengthen the participation of parents in the SFP through the PTA
- Provide regular training to all SFP implementers (cooks, school administrators and parents) in SFP procedures, nutrition and hygiene
- Strengthen the monitoring of SFP by PTA, supervisors and other actors
PTAs role in the program’s sustainability

PTAs can help solve key problems at school level (repair of basic infrastructure, linkage with farmers, access to water, etc.) and therefore, their involvement in the program needs to be enhanced to ensure sustainability. To achieve this, closer control of schools is needed to ensure that PTAs are systematically included as a member of the KPME and invited to KPME meetings. Raising awareness of the community about the role of PTAs can also help ensure parents more actively demand for schools to involve PTAs.

Capacity building of all SFP implementers

The last round of trainings on the SFP was conducted in 2015 and since then many school-level implementers have changed. Further trainings are required in the short run. For cooks, trainings should focus on preparation of nutritive meals, basic financial management and reporting as well as on hygiene practices. Training of PTAs is also recommended to enhance their understanding of PTAs role and responsibilities.

It is highly recommended that trainings be delivered at administrative post or school cluster level (most likely by Municipal Education and Health).

Monitoring of the SFP implementation

Monitoring of the SFP implementation is insufficient.

Firstly, PTAs are recommended to conduct more school feeding observations as part of the KPME and as parents interested in their children’s welfare. Such monitoring visits should focus on: food quality, timing and duration of school feeding, hygienic practices of cooks and students, and possible use of students to help cooks in food preparation and service. Having a monitoring template could help PTAs record such information.

Secondly, monitoring by other actors is also required. In schools, directors/coordinators should also ensure cooks are complying with the Manual’s recommendations and give penalties if that is not the case. SFP Coordinators should better control how cooks are selected. Monitoring how money is spent should be done by GAT, SFP Coordinators and school inspectors.

Lastly, measuring the actual impact of the program will only be possible if DNASE or municipal officials collect, compile and publically report on program results such as the number of school feeding days delivered, among other indicators.
INTRODUCTION

The HATUTAN Program

The HATUTAN program (Hahán ne’ebé Atu fó Tulun ho Nutrisaun no Edukasaun) or “Food to Support Nutrition and Education” in English) is a five-year initiative to build a partnership between schools and their communities to improve literacy, learning, health and nutrition for children and adults in Timor-Leste. Working in partnership with the Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) and key development stakeholders, the HATUTAN program focuses on two strategic objectives: (1): Improved literacy of School-Aged Children, and (2): Increased Use of Health, Nutrition and Dietary Practices. The HATUTAN program is funded by the US Government through the Foreign Agricultural Service of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the McGovern Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the lead government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) partner, in collaboration with the Ministries of Health (MOH), State Administration (MSA) and Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF). The program is implemented by a consortium led by CARE International in Timor-Leste together with Mercy Corps and WaterAid. The program works in four municipalities namely: Ainaro, Ermera, Liquica and Manatuto. Support for the School Feeding Program will operate at the national and municipal level and in all the schools covered by the GOTL School Feeding Program in the four municipalities (estimated at 440 schools). The priority is to support the government SFP to fully operate in all basic education and preschools throughout the school year as per plan. As an interim measure, however, the program will import USDA provided food commodities of fortified rice, pinto beans and fortified vegetable oil to the estimated 90,000 preschool and primary-aged children in 440 schools in the first trimester of school years 2020-2022.

Background

Timor-Leste is a half island nation situated in Southeast Asia with a population of 1,183,643 (2015 census). The country is a former Portuguese colony and declared itself independent from Portugal on 28 November 1975, however Indonesian forces invaded shortly after and occupied the territory until a UN sponsored referendum in 1999. In May 2002, the newly independent nation faced a tremendous challenge to rebuild and reorient the education and health services in Asia’s poorest nation. Despite making significant progress on human development indicators over the past decade, Timor-Leste continues to face many of social and economic challenges.

The Constitution provides for universal, mandatory and free basic education to all citizens for grades 1-9. Public schools are available throughout the country using a school cluster system with a managing central school led by Director, Deputy Director and Technical Administrator which then oversees an average of six or so filial schools, led by Coordinators. Preschools, also managed by “Coordinators” with a gross enrolment rate of 21% of the children 3 to 5 years of age. Access to education with equal or even higher participation of girls has been a great success, however quality of education remains challenging. A school inspection service helps to ensure compliance with education policies and improve school quality through a network of School Inspectors. The school governance structure encourages parents to participate in schools through Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA). The Government of Timor-Leste (GOTL) has sought to increase student attendance and attentiveness through its national School Feeding Program.

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12 MEYS: (2019) Update to the National Education Strategic Plan 2020-2030.
13 See section 3.5.1 for more detail on PTAs.
School Feeding Program (SFP)

The Government of Timor-Leste’s school feeding program provides a meal\textsuperscript{14} to all students in preschools and basic education (Grades 1-9) throughout the country. In full implementation, this represents providing meals to about one quarter of the population.\textsuperscript{15} An effective and efficient SFP nationwide has long been a high priority for the Government of Timor-Leste. The SFP was first established in 2005 with several phases of implementation since then. Yet, no thorough evaluation of the program has been conducted to date.

A Manual to guide implementation at municipal and school level was prepared in 2013. In 2019, the Government of Timor-Leste undertook a process to make major revisions of the Manual guidelines. To support the Timor-Leste government to review and improve the SFP, CARE International in Timor-Leste, via the HATUTAN program, studied the program and commissioned the report of the School Feeding Program Study. The main objectives of the study are:

- To review how the SFP is being implemented at the school level;
- To conduct a food consumption analysis of the current school meals;
- To gather opinions from the beneficiaries, implementers and stakeholders regarding the functioning of the program;
- To gather suggestions for how to improve the SFP to better meet its objectives for policy-makers to consider.

Given the many variations in program implementation, this study is only a snapshot in time, mainly reflecting the program as it was implemented in 2019. Yet, the findings and recommendations provided in this report are likely to bring valuable information to support policy makers in their efforts to overcome some of the key challenges currently faced by the program.

\textsuperscript{14} The manual allows providing a light snack for preschool.

\textsuperscript{15} School feeding recipients may include up to 323,846 students (EMIS 2018) out of a population of 1,183,643 (2015 census data). Population projection for 2018 may be up to 1,321,929 (https://www.indexmundi.com/timor-leste/demographics_profile.html).
1. Methodology

1.1. Source of information used for the SFP study

The School Feeding Program Study is based on findings from 5 different quantitative and qualitative components:

1. **HATUTAN’s baseline survey** of which the main objective was to provide benchmarks against which the progress, performance and impact of the HATUTAN program could be measured during its implementation;

2. **A food storage and kitchen survey** of which the main objective was to provide the HATUTAN program and Ministry of Education officials with information on the availability and condition of kitchens and food storage facilities in all target schools;

3. **Observation visits to schools** which included interviews with school directors/coordinators, cooks\(^{16}\) and PTA members. Observation of school feeding was also conducted whenever possible during these visits;

4. **Interviews with key informants at Municipal level** (mainly government Municipal offices). The main objective was to collect feedback on constraints faced by the SFP and possible recommendations to overcome them. More specific questions on reporting and funding mechanisms of the SFP at school and municipal level were also asked.

5. **Interviews with key informants at National level** (government and non-governmental). The main objective of these interviews was to collect recommendations for policy makers on how to improve SFP implementation.

The findings of these different components were extracted and organized in a Thematic Analysis Table to form the outline of the SFP study report. The Thematic Analysis Table addressed the following key study questions:

- To what extent are the schools complying with the SFP Manual?
- What are the deviations from the SFP guidance and why are schools not complying with those aspects?
- What has been the exposure to training on the SFP guidance and on nutrition and hygiene?
- What are the conditions at the school to support the SFP (in terms of infrastructure.)?
- What are the food storage practices?
- What are the observed hygiene practices of the students and cooks around the SFP?
- What is the level of engagement from parents in the SFP?
- What is the opinion of the beneficiaries, implementer and stakeholders about the SFP?
- What suggestions or recommendations are there for policy-makers?

\(^{16}\) School cooks are referred to as “suppliers” (*fornesedor*) in the government School Feeding Manual. This report will use the term “cooks” to distinguish from other contractual suppliers.
1.2. Timing and samples of the different studies

Data from the different components used to prepare the SFP study report was collected at different points of time as represented in the following diagram. This is interesting as it allows to compare how schools implement school feeding at different moments during the school year.

**Figure 1. Timing of the various studies**

The baseline survey was conducted during the first school trimester or period (late February to early April). First trimester overlaps with the period of the year when most rural areas have to go through a hungry period as households run out of food stocks from the previous year but have not yet harvested the new crops. Staple crops are usually harvested in March-April.

The observation survey on the other hand was conducted in June and July, when local crops should be readily available and when school feeding should be operating. The sample sizes of the baseline, food storage and kitchen survey as well as of the observation survey are presented below.

**Table 1. Samples of the various surveys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline School survey</th>
<th>Food storage and Kitchen survey</th>
<th>Observation survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic/private</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The food storage and kitchen survey covered the largest sample as its objective was to provide information on the infrastructure for each preschool and basic education school in the four municipalities.

The baseline survey also has a large sample but did not include preschools and on average less schools per municipality than the other surveys. The disaggregation by municipality of the baseline results might therefore need to be interpreted with caution.

The observation survey covered different categories of respondents as well as school feeding in-situ observations. Enumerators first met school directors/coordinators and then asked their permission to interview the school cooks, PTA members and to conduct on-site observations of the school feeding process. As a result:

- In about two-thirds of the schools data collectors met the cook. In other cases, the school either did not have school feeding, or cooks were not available on that day.
- Only in about one-half of the schools data collectors met with a PTA member. In other schools, either there was no PTA, or the PTA was not functioning or PTA members were not easily available.
- Lastly in about two-thirds of the schools data collectors observed school feeding on that day. In most of the schools where that was not possible the school did not have school feeding that year or that the cook was not cooking on that day.

Given the small number of Catholic and private schools in the observation survey sample, the study report will not always present disaggregated data for these categories; but the averages for the surveyed basic education schools include these schools whenever they were surveyed.

Table 2 presents a summary of the stakeholder’s met during key informant interviews (KII).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preschools</th>
<th>Ainaro</th>
<th>Ermera</th>
<th>Liquica</th>
<th>Manatuto</th>
<th>Comparison municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Storage</strong></td>
<td>103</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchen</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>73</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*17 Aileu, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima and Manufahi.*
### Table 2. Stakeholders interviewed during KII's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Municipal level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Education Director</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFP Coordinator</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Agriculture Director</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Municipal Health Services</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director or Finance Officer at Municipal Administration and State</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent of School Inspection Services</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School inspectors</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAT Officials(^{18})</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries (MEYS, MSA, MOH, MAF)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other State institutions: Parliament, Provedor (Ombudsman), Audit Court</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Agencies (WFP, WHO, UNICEF)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs (Permatil and FONGTIL(^{19}))</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1.3. Methodology of the different studies

- **Baseline survey:**
  The HATUTAN baseline evaluation used a mixed-method quasi-experimental design, triangulating information from different sources and methods. Several instruments were used in this survey, but for the purpose of this SFP study, only results of the school survey and feedback collected during interviews and focus groups with parents and school personnel were used.

- **Food storage and kitchen survey:**
  Two data collectors covered all schools and collected data mainly based on the observation of kitchens and food storage facilities. Observations were recorded in a systematic manner with personal observations and photos.

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\(^{18}\) GAT stands for Office of Technical Assistance (Gabinete de Apoio Técnico) and is the administrator at the Basic Education Central School responsible for the managing the SFP budget and reporting.

\(^{19}\) Permatil is a national NGO promoting permaculture and FONGTIL is an umbrella organization of NGOs - Forum Organizasaun Naun Governmental Timor-Leste (Timor-Leste Non-Governmental Organization Forum).
• **Observation visits:**

The objective was to directly observe school feeding and to collect information on its implementation from the perspective of various informants to cross-check information. While direct observation has the advantage of observing actual rather than reported practices, it is possible that the presence of observers influenced or biased some of the school staff behaviors.

For this data collection, data collectors used questionnaires composed of open-ended and close-ended questions. Data was collected electronically with photos of the food served.

• **Key Informant Interviews at municipal and national level**

The HATUTAN program staff and MEYS officials from the School Feeding Department together identified the key informants to be interviewed at municipal and national level. Teams of government and HATUTAN staff conducted face-to-face interviews at municipal level and HATUTAN staff conducted the national level interviews. Some key stakeholders provided input via e-mail or letter. A limited number of key open-ended questions were asked, with a strong focus on gathering recommendations for the SFP’s policy makers.

**1.4. Analysis**

Findings and recommendations were extracted from each of these components and organized in a Thematic Analysis Table. The Thematic Analysis Table was reorganized several times in order to better reflect the critical issues raising from the different surveys and interview conducted.

Findings focused on key implementation areas of the SFP, looking at what are the recommendations in the Manual and whether schools deviated or not from these recommendations. Understanding why some schools are not complying with the SFP Manual was also discussed. This is important to better identify the roots of some of the key problems encountered by the SFP.

It should be noted that particular quantitative results could actually be sourced from different surveys. For example, the presence of food storage facilities at the school was asked in: (1) the Food storage and kitchen survey; (2) the observation survey; and (3) the baseline survey. For such data, results from the different sources could be validated or invalidated by triangulating information. In some cases, the results from only one of the available sources are presented in this report, with justification on why this source seemed to be the most reliable one. In other cases, results from different sources are presented side by side in order to give different perspective on the topic discussed.

The last section is a summary of the recommendations based on the data analysis or provided by the various stakeholders met at school, municipal and national level - whether they were beneficiaries, implementers or external stakeholders such as NGOs or UN agencies. Recommendations were structured around four key evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Julie Imron analysed the data collected through surveys and interviews and drafted the report with guidance and input from the HATUTAN Program staff.
2. Chronology of the School Feeding Program

The government school feeding program is designed to deliver meals to every student nationwide in pre-primary and basic education (primary and pre-secondary, Grades 1-9) in Timor-Leste over the full school calendar, excluding trimester breaks and exam periods, serving both public and private schools. The government provides imported rice equivalent up to 0.1 kg per meal per student and funds for schools to purchase other menu items locally at $0.25 per student per day per meal. The government provides funds as a subsidy for cooks to prepare a cooked meal at the school. The school feeding program is very popular with parents and educators, potentially providing meals for more than 300,000 students. The program, however, suffers from systemic deficiencies that result in schools experiencing frequent stoppages and inaccessibility of either funds or rice supplies or both. The program has been unable to operate during the first trimester of school January through March, due to delays in accessing the state budget funds. Timely and accurate reporting often delayed disbursements, creating further barriers to students receiving a school meal each day of class.

The World Food Program (WFP) supported school feeding from 2005 to 2011 in five to six municipalities, delivering food commodities (red kidney beans, rice and vegetable oil) directly to primary schools and encouraging local communities to supply additional foods to the program. In 2008, the government supported the other seven municipalities with the two programs merging in April 2009 to have a common approach nationwide. Both the government and WFP programs faced chronic underfunding with only about a third of the estimated needed budget. The government requested a common approach across WFP and government municipalities in April 2009 merging the two programs and then took over the full program from the WFP in August 2011.

From 2012 to the present, the GOTL has assumed full responsibility and control of the SFP, implementing a uniform program across all schools and expanding to pre-secondary providing rice and initial funding of $0.15 US per student per day per meal to the schools. In 2013, the budget increased from 15 to 25 cents per student per day and in 2014 from US $10 to US $22 million. Also in 2013, the MEYS produced a School Feeding Manual in Tetum which guides the program to date, prioritizing the use of locally procured fresh produce to diversify the meals with protein-rich foods such as legumes and eggs and to...
support local economy following a "home grown" school feeding approach\textsuperscript{29}. Distribution of imported rice, though, continued. The program is to serve as a model for children to learn about good health practices in nutrition and hygiene and achieve education benefits in improved attendance and attentiveness.

The school feeding manual outlines the responsibility of the school to form a school feeding committee made up of the school director or coordinator, GAT Official and PTA members and provides reporting formats and procedures. In 2015, the program was expanded to pre-schools\textsuperscript{30} and private schools. The program's implementation was decentralized to the municipal level in 2017\textsuperscript{31} with the MEYS to play a supportive role, however the capacity at the municipal level is a concern.

Despite fully funding the SFP for the estimated 190 effective school days in the state budget from 2014 up through 2017, schools provided meals on less than half of the planned days.\textsuperscript{32} In 2017 when the implementation was transferred to the municipal administrations, the days delivered dropped to about one-third of schools days, reducing further in 2018 when government used the “one-twelfth” funding mechanism in lieu of an approved state budget.\textsuperscript{33} In fiscal year 2019, the program was only partially funded by the state budget with the approved budget meeting only 43% of the full program.\textsuperscript{34} In 2019, planned school feeding days in basic education reduced from six to five days a week when the school schedule changed Saturdays from a full four-hour class day to extracurricular and sports activities for two hours only.

\textsuperscript{29} World Food Program, 2013, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{30} Preschools are indicated in the manual as receiving the full program however in practice preschools only received the budget of 25 cents per student per meal and not the ration of rice. Preschool classes are held Monday through Friday in two-hour class sessions with priority for 5 year olds but open to children 3 and 4 years old. Mothers often accompany their children to preschool and wait for the two hours, making them more readily available to assist teachers during meal time.
\textsuperscript{31} Decree Law No. 3/2016 March 16 defined the powers of the municipal administrations and transferred responsibility of implementation of particular programs including the school feeding program.
\textsuperscript{32} The government does not retain overall statistics of number of meals actually delivered per year per municipality however individual school records indicate school meals delivered for about 40-50% of the planned days. Up through 2016, the Ministry of Education could transfer unused school feeding program funds to other programs or purchases. Since transferring implementation to the municipal government, unused funds for school feeding are returned to the Ministry of Finance.
\textsuperscript{33} DNASE
\textsuperscript{34} According to the Ministry of State Administration (MSA), funding for the school feeding program in 2019 was about $5-6 million, not including rice. Funding requirements for the full number of planned days for all students should be at about $14 million US.
3. Study Findings

This chapter discusses the findings of the SFP study related to the observed delivery of school feeding with specific attention provided to certain key areas of the program implementation.

This chapter will also highlight to what extent actual implementation practices are complying with the SFP Manual and why deviations from the Manual occur. We note that the most significant deviations from the manual guidance for the school feeding program in 2019 begins with the government itself by not fully funding the program to meet needs for all school days planned and by not providing the rice ration. The lack of rice did not change the preschool routine but basic education school cooks had only the 25 cents per day per student to try to deliver a nutritionally balanced meal.

3.1. Disparity in SFP implementation

The most important finding of this study is the disparity in implementation of school feeding over the year, across municipalities and across school types.

3.1.1. Irregular implementation along the year

All schools implement school feeding for fewer days than planned over the January through November school year. Meals are not usually provided until the end of the first trimester period (about March or early April). Complete statistics are not available from DNASE from past years on the actual number of days per year school meals are served, however, schools, municipal authorities and DNASE officials indicate that meals have been provided generally between 30 – 60% of the planned school days.

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35 MEYS delivered rice to schools in Dili but not to the municipalities in the study.
36 The 2017 Provedor report (p. 30-31) indicated school feeding started in April in 2015, May in 2016 and in May or June in 2017.
37 Sources include school directors/coordinators; municipal officials; ministry officials and advisors.
Estimates vary from the low end of 9 days in one school year\textsuperscript{38} in 2018 in some municipalities to more optimistic estimates of two-thirds of the planned days\textsuperscript{39}.

A sample of four municipalities in 2019 are in the table below ranging from 27% up to 57% of the planned days.

\textbf{Table 3. Number of school feeding days delivered in 2019}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th># of school feeding provided during 1\textsuperscript{st} quarter</th>
<th># of school feeding provided during 2\textsuperscript{nd} quarter</th>
<th># of school feeding provided during 3\textsuperscript{rd} quarter</th>
<th>Total days school feeding provided in 2019</th>
<th>% among total planned days (i.e. 191 effective days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquica</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown here, in 2019, the number of school feeding days delivered in the four municipalities ranged from 27% to 57% of the total effective days. With most of the school feeding days happening during the second and third quarter only.

Schools are unable to provide meals in the first trimester mainly due to the delay in passing and promulgating the State budget. In 2019 for example, the promulgation of the State budget happened in early February.\textsuperscript{40} Additional time is then needed for the Municipal administration to make their requests and for the Ministry of Finance to transfer funds to municipalities. As a result, most schools could only implement about 10 days of school feeding at the end of Trimester 1 (last week of March and first of April). Municipalities that were late in sending their requests or planned only for the second trimester did not provide meals at all during the first trimester.

During HATUTAN's baseline survey in the first trimester of school year 2019, only 15% of the 189 schools surveyed served a meal on the day of data collection. Data collection lasted from February to April in 9 municipalities but enumerators could observe school feeding only during the last phase of data collection as schools received the fund transfer for school feeding at the end of March or beginning of April.

This situation is deplored by most stakeholders in municipalities and schools including parents. During the HATUTAN's baseline survey, school staff and officials indicated that the implementation of school feeding was particularly limited in 2018 by the political situation and early elections. Parents mentioned long interruptions in the provision of meals as a problem during focus groups and a sense of helplessness as they rely on central government for a solution.

The lack of regular implementation undercuts a significant intended impact for the program, which is to attract students to school at the start of the school year. Indeed, the beginning of the school year coincides

\textsuperscript{38} Records from EBF Vatuvou Liquica and data from Manatuto Municipal Education.

\textsuperscript{39} Discussion with advisor to DNASE in February 2018.

\textsuperscript{40} The budget law was published in the \textit{Jornal da Republica} as Law no. 2/2019 of 7 February.
with the rainy season, when walking to school is more difficult. Having a meal served at school at this time could provide the extra incentive for students to go to school.

This period also coincides with the hungry season when families are running out of staple food from the previous growing season but have still not yet harvested the new crops. Having a meal served at school during this period could partly compensate this shortage of food at home.

During the phase 3 data collection, cooks and school management also raised their concern about this situation:

“I want the SFP to be implemented the whole year as stopping this program has discouraged students to come to school.” [Cook, EBF, Ainaro]

“If possible, the SFP program should be implemented throughout the year and not only for 3 or 4 months. Otherwise it will contribute to students’ absenteeism” [Cook, private Basic Education school, Ainaro]

“The government needs to pay attention to the process of implementing the SFP to cut off along the way because it has an impact on student attendance at school. SFP must be implemented in accordance with the school year.” [School Coordinator, EBF, Liquica]

School feeding is also disrupted later in the year. Only 68% of basic education schools and 84% of preschools served a meal the day of the school feeding observation in June-July 2019. However, all of these schools (117 schools across 4 municipalities) said they had received SFP funding for this school year. Several reasons could explain these interruptions in delivering meals during the school year.

Firstly, the SFP budget was not fully funded in 2019, meaning that less effective days were covered each trimester. Interview with Municipal Finance indicated that budget was available for only 100 days of school feeding for the 2019 school year.

The shortfall in funding of the SFP contradicts the Objective 1 of the program which is to “Improve nutrition condition for school-aged children and decrease the number of dropouts.” (Section 2 of the Manual). Indeed, evidence of international experience has proven that daily provision of school meals in countries with low attendance and high dropout rates is a unique incentive for children to keep going to school, especially the most vulnerable students.

"School feeding programmes can help get children into school and help them stay there; studies have shown programmes can increase enrolment by an average of 9%.”

The Impact of School Feeding Programs, WFP, January 2019

As reflected by the quotes above, implementers of the program at school level indicated that irregular delivery of meals can in fact have a negative impact on attendance rates. Similar feedback was collected from beneficiaries during the baseline survey:

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41 Municipal Finance in Liquica.
42 https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102338/download/?_ga=2.94178975.364646061.1574682245-17830294.1552716857
“When there are school meals, the students attend regularly, but when they hear that there is no meal, they lack motivation to go to school.” [Father, Manatuto]

Secondly, in 2019, SFP funding could only be transferred by tranches of 25% of the total budget line per quarter. As this system does not coincide with the school calendar (the number of effective days in a trimester may be more than 25% of the total effective days) and the SFP was not fully funded, it results in a budgetary ceiling for the municipal administration and periods when schools run out of funds.

During KILs in September, the Municipal Education Directors explained that this finance rule affects the implementation of the program, especially for schools with a high number of students. Such schools are obliged to reduce the number of effective feeding days because the total budget allocated for the school is not matching the number of students they reported in their proposal. Superintendents reported that schools having 700-800 students had to request 39 days of school feeding instead of 50 days because there was not enough funding available for all their students. This was confirmed by school directors and coordinators during the observation survey: in eight schools transfer for the 2nd Trimester covered 49 days of school feeding instead of the 64 effective days.

Lastly, the delays in submitting the financial expenditure reports by schools resulted in delays to receive the next fund transfer, and, consequently, frequent interruptions in school feeding between 2 tranches of funding. This was also highlighted by most stakeholders at municipal level. Municipal Education Directors explained that submission of financial reports to the Municipal Education Department was late and this also affected the processing of the SFP budget for the next period. Municipal Finance staff as well as central school technical administrators also reported their concerns regarding late submissions of reports by schools. The central school technical administrators specified that it is difficult for rural filial schools to send their reports to central schools during the rainy season. When some filial schools are late to send their report, most central schools will delay submission of the report to the SFP Coordinator, consequently delaying fund transfer for all schools of the cluster.

Municipal Finance is now pushing for more flexibility in financial reporting: schools could provide only summary reports (without all receipts) and projections of funds to be used over the remaining time with requests for next tranche transfer before having delivered all feeding days of previous tranche. This would allow the processing of next tranche transfer before having fully acquitted the funds from the last tranche and therefore avoid interruptions in school feeding between 2 tranches. Completed reports with all receipts could be submitted slightly later. However, such practice is not widely spread yet.

“We suggested to the Manatuto Municipal Education to submit the reports to the Municipal Finance as quick as possible in order to accelerate the transfer process. For instance they can submit the report 15 days in advance.” [Municipal Administration Manatuto]

3.1.2. Irregular implementation across school types and across municipalities

The following table presents the proportion of schools visited during the observation survey in June and July: how many school directors/coordinators said the school has SFP operating in 2019 (confirmed receiving funds for school feeding) and how many had school feeding the day of the survey.

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43 Source: Interviews with school Coordinators in Manatuto.

44 Officials of the Technical Support Office in the Central schools – Gabinete de Apoio Técnico, commonly known as “GAT”.
Table 4. Proportion of schools having received SFP funding in 2019 and proportion of schools serving a meal the day of the survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of valid cases</th>
<th>% of schools having received funding for SFP this year</th>
<th># of valid cases</th>
<th>% of schools serving a meal the day of the survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschools</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquica</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government funding for school feeding was not provided to Catholic schools in 2018 and 2019 pending the submission of the 2017 report by the National Catholic School Council of Timor-Leste, known as CONECTIL. Several Catholic school Coordinators indicated that they had not received SFP funds but did not know the reason for this interruption. Many of them requested to be again included in the program as reflected in the following statement.

"Schools implemented SFP but since 2017, there is no SFP. The SFP has stopped for 3 years and there is no clear explanation why it has stopped. We accept SFP from CONECTIL, and the process from CONECTIL sometimes causes headaches." [Catholic preschool coordinator, Manatuto]

Another striking observation is that only one school in Ainaro was serving meals the day of the survey even though 68% of the schools surveyed in this municipality said they had SFP this year. Indeed, at the time of the survey, most schools in Ainaro had already run out of funds from the first tranche (which they had requested late March) and were waiting for the second tranche. The SFP Coordinator in Ainaro also indicated that there were delays to collect money from the bank.

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45 Only asked in schools having received SFP funding this year.
46 CONECTIL stands for the Conselho Nacional de Escola Católica de Timor-Leste.
47 The local bank in Ainaro has requested that only three schools collect money every week due to insufficient cash in the bank. A schedule was established with the names of the three central schools authorized to come withdraw money by week.
These disparities between municipalities are presented in the table above (section 3.1.1.): Ainaro delivered only 27% of the planned effective days and Manatuto delivered the highest proportion of days, i.e. 57% of total effective days.

In conclusion, most of the reasons why schools are not implementing school feeding all-year-long are linked to malfunctions and delays in the reporting and funding mechanism at all levels.

3.2. Acceptance of the program by beneficiaries

Overall, the SFP program should cover more than 300,000 students across the country, representing a quarter of the population.48

Most of the key informants at municipal level highlighted the very high acceptance of the program on the part of children and parents, which they perceive as resulting in reduced absenteeism and increased attention of children during class49. Among others, Municipal Education Directors noted that even under-school age children (less than 5 years old) attended school because they expected to be served a meal. They also mentioned that Municipal Education is struggling to raise parents' awareness on the importance of quality education, especially in rural areas. In mountainous areas for example, parents often send children to the market to sell goods instead of sending them to school. But parents may send their children to school if they know that a meal will be provided. Indeed, receiving a free meal is an incentive that has a direct and obvious impact on children. Parents should be one of the keys to ensure that the demand for regular school feeding remains high and constant.

Other key informants were also convinced of the SFP’s positive impact. Superintendents noted that SFP implementation has increased enrolment rates, but its inexistence also affects attendance rates. School inspectors stated that when school meals are provided, attendance rates increase significantly and school absenteeism reduces. Students’ participation in class is higher and students are more willing to learn. If school meals are no longer provided, students may still come to school but are less motivated to learn and less focused during learning times.

Even though the MEYS officials do not have quantitative data to support these observations, the impact of daily school feeding on attendance rates is proven at international level.

“45 studies of school meals programmes around the world revealed that children receiving a school meal during the entire school year attend school 4-7 days more than children who do not receive school meals”.

The Impact of School Feeding Programs, WFP, January 2019

Parents and other stakeholders interviewed during HATUTAN’s baseline survey strongly supported the program. They mentioned its several benefits in terms of motivating students, increasing attendance and attentiveness, and helping the most vulnerable students to stay in school.

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48 Timor-Leste population census of 2015 shows the total population of 1,183,643. EMIS data from 2018 indicates a total of 323,846 students potentially covered by the SFP (21,399 pre-school and 302,447 basic education students).

49 EMIS data does not track student absenteeism. Key informants did not offer any data to substantiate the claim, however the perception that more students attend school during school feeding was widely reported by parents, school personnel, cooks and government officials.
"For example, most children live far from school and they have to wake up very early, they just go to school without having eaten breakfast because they are afraid that they will arrive late. If there is a school feeding program, it helps the schoolchildren a lot, responding to their needs. If there is no school feeding program, the parents need to wake up very early to prepare some rice. If they have to cook early in the morning but there is no electricity, they have to cook the evening before." [Father, Ainaro]

"the program has a positive impact on the students as school children who skip their breakfast at home can have a meal at school." [FONGTIL]

According to parents interviewed during the HATUTAN’s baseline survey, 92% of school children had breakfast before leaving for school. However, qualitative feedback during focus groups and interviews with key informants suggests this is not always the case.

During observation of school feeding in 34 basic education schools and 53 preschools in June-July 2019, most students consumed all or most of the food provided. This reflects hunger and potential appreciation of the meals they were served.

Table 5. Observation of students finishing meals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students eat all their food</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most students eat all their food</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many students eat all their food</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students eat all their food</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few students eat all their food</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, in more than 90% of basic education schools and 60% of preschools, most or all students finished their food. This was more often the case in urban schools: 80% vs. 69% in rural schools.

Foods that were the most frequently not finished by preschools students was bread (20 schools out of 53 observed) and drinks such as tea/milk (14 schools out of 53). In basic education schools, it was mainly rice (9 schools out of 34), vegetables (5 cases) and beans (3 cases).

Lastly, in a context such as Timor-Leste where 53% of boys and 47% of girls under five years of age are affected by stunting, it is important to highlight that the high acceptance of the program by parents and students also has a significant potential in reducing health problems. Through the SFP, all children can be reached, and more specifically the nutritionally vulnerable ones.

50 The words used in Tetum for all, most, many, some and few were: hotu, barak liu, barak, balun and uitoan.
51 Note that this information contradicts some anecdotal feedback from key informants, such as the Audit Court which suggested that students are bored of the food or food served in schools is unfamiliar. Observers have noted a different situation in Dili suggesting students are harder to please and more food is wasted.
52 WFP 2019 country brief.
General impact on health was also emphasised by MEYS Inspection Services, stating that the SFP helps students in their cognitive development, health and psychological state.

“A study conducted in Ghana showed that energy, nutrient and micronutrient intake were significantly higher and more adequate among children participating in a school feeding programme. Also, compared to the control group, anaemia prevalence was 10% lower.”

The Impact of School Feeding Programs, WFP, January 2019

3.3. Food consumption analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Types of meals:</td>
<td>1. Types of meals:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE: snack</td>
<td>PE: 76% snack / 24% cooked meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: cooked meal</td>
<td>BE: 48% cooked meal / 52% snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meal composition:</td>
<td>2. Meal composition:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 “vitamins” + 1 “protein” + carbohydrate</td>
<td>PE: 12% reach standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE: 35% reach standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Foods to avoid/less preferred foods:</td>
<td>3. Foods to avoid/less preferred foods:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sausage, flavor enhancers, instant noodles, canned fish, tomato sauce, etc.</td>
<td>Observed use of sausage, flavor enhancers, instant noodles, canned tuna.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chapter will discuss the food composition of school meals as observed in June and July 2019, and more specifically how closely meals comply with the recommendations of the Manual. For this reason, it is important to first understand how cooks and schools in general have had access to the SFP Manual as this is a prerequisite to follow its guidelines.

“SFP should follow the menus in the Manual. Cooks should have the capacity and should be aware of what is in the SFP Manual.” [National Director for Municipal Finance, MSA]

Another important factor is cooks’ and school staffs’ exposure to training on school feeding as these might have been delivered even if schools do not have a copy of the Manual. This will be discussed in Part 4.4.2.

3.3.1. Cooks exposure to the SFP Manual

During data collection in June-July 2019, several questions were asked in regards to cooks’ exposure to the Manual.

53 Note that Basic Education schools should have received both 25 cents per student per meal and rice however in 2019 the rice was not provided to schools outside of Dili.
a. Manual availability in schools

Firstly, as seen in the following table, an important proportion of schools do not have a copy of the Manual, especially in preschools (only 39% have a copy) and in filial schools (65%). Moreover, pictures of the Manual as proof were taken in only 37% of the basic education schools that said they had a Manual and in 70% of the preschools stating they had a Manual. This could mean that fewer schools actually hold a copy of the Manual for reference.

**Table 6. Proportion of school directors/coordinators stating the school has a copy of the Manual**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Basic Education</th>
<th>Preschools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is an edifying recommendation from a preschool coordinator who indicated the school does not have a copy of the Manual.

“*It is better for MEYS to come and see for themselves the feeding of children because until now, students are eating instant food and we do not understand whether this is good or not. I understand good food is local food from farmers.*” [Preschool coordinator, Manatuto]

Additionally, cooks themselves were asked if they knew about the Manual. As a result, only 35% of basic education schools cooks said they knew about the Manual (48% in central schools and 27% in filial schools) and 25% of preschools cooks said they knew either the Manual or the menu recommended in the Manual. Note that slightly more cooks from schools in urban areas knew about the Manual: 26% vs. 19% in rural areas. It is also important to note that even if the Manual is available, suppliers may not be able to access the information contained in it due to being illiterate or semi-illiterate. Overall, 45% of the women and 44% of the men age 15-49 in the poorest quintile never attended any form of education; illiteracy rates are as high as 48% among women in Ermera. This is a particular concern in poor and remote communities, where cooks may be among its poorest members.

In case they didn’t know about the Manual, cooks indicated who usually decided about the menu to follow. Answers are presented in the following table.

**Table 7. Who decides about the menu in case cooks do not know the Manual?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>PE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54 Demographic Health Survey 2016, p. 36-37.
There is a wide variety of situations regarding who is responsible to guide cooks. Also, in a significant proportion of schools, even though cooks had never seen the SFP Manual, they were still in charge of deciding what to cook.

Obviously, it is also possible that some cooks didn’t know about the Manual but received guidance from school management as to what types of foods are recommended in the Manual. Yet, schools (and cooks) lack of access to the Manual clearly undermines the potential for cooks to follow its recommendations.

Several stakeholders raised this issue. School inspectors explained that the reason why some filial schools do not follow the Manual is simply because they do not have the Manual and thus, only get information from GAT and the EBC director. Others suggested that limited use of the manual as a reference is due to lack of understanding (MOH) or lack of socialization on the Manual (Audit Court).

Nevertheless, 93% of the schools surveyed during the HATUTAN’s baseline survey reported having a menu for school feeding.

It is important to bear in mind that a significant proportion of schools change cooks regularly: 37% of basic education school directors/coordinators and 21% of preschools Coordinators interviewed in June-July said their current cooks have been cooking for the school for a month only. This means new cooks have to be briefed and coached again by school staff or PTAs to make sure they are aware of and comply with the basic recommendations for meal preparation. Some schools purposely rotate cooking responsibilities by trimester or month to give more women in the community the employment opportunity (DNASE).

b. Perception of whether cooks are complying with the Manual

Lastly, school directors/coordinators, cooks and PTA members were asked if they thought the cook always followed the Manual. Results are presented below.
Table 8. Proportion of cooks, school directors/coordinators and PTA members stating that cooks follow the Manual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>Preschools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases for directors/cooks<strong>55</strong></td>
<td>6/11</td>
<td>27/7</td>
<td>33/18</td>
<td>26/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always/most of the time</td>
<td>83%/91%</td>
<td>74%/71%</td>
<td>76%/83%</td>
<td>100%/94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>17%/9%</td>
<td>19%/29%</td>
<td>18%/17%</td>
<td>0%/6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of cases for PTAs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, nearly 80% of the school directors/coordinators and cooks said they followed the Manual in terms of food preparation. This proportion was higher among central and preschools (close to 90% or more). Yet, it is likely that responses were biased given the question directly intends to evaluate the quality of how the program is being implemented at school level. PTA members however were more moderated. A significant proportion among them didn’t know what to answer, most likely because they didn’t know what was recommended in the Manual**56** or have not observed any school feeding. Note that nearly all cooks in rural areas said they follow the Manual: 92% vs 62% in urban areas.

Later in this section we compare actual practices observed for cooks as compared to their awareness of the Manual and their perception on whether they are following the Manual’s recommendations. This will give some indication regarding the assumption that having access to the Manual improves cooks’ compliance to its recommendations.

3.3.2. Food composition analysis

Annex 1 of the SFP Manual is where all of the recommendations related to food composition of school meals are given. It contains a list of food items that are allowed in school meals, an example of a one-month menu for a preschool and a one-week menu for basic education schools, and lastly a table with quantities of foods per day.

Different methods will be used in this section to assess the food composition of school meals and how closely they comply with the Manual’s recommendations. Much of the analysis presented here is based on observation of school feeding in 31 basic education schools and 49 preschools in June-July**57**.

a. Types of meals

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**55** Question asked only to cooks and school directors/coordinators who previously said the school had a Manual or they knew about the Manual.

**56** Less than one-third of PTA members interviewed knew about the existence of the SFP Manual and therefore are less likely to know what the Manual recommends.

**57** Excluding Ainaro as none of the schools visited in Ainaro served a meal on the observation day.
We will first look at the types of meals served to students, whether they are light snacks as recommended for preschools or rice/porridge served with vegetables and/or a source of protein as recommended for basic education schools. The following were considered "light snacks": bread (paun) that is sometimes served with eggs or butter and fried sweet snacks (dosí) such as donuts or fried bananas served with tea or milk. Mung beans porridge cooked with milk was also included in this category.

Meals served in the 80 schools observed in June-July were categorized based on this distinction. Results are presented below.

Table 9. Proportion of basic education schools serving cooked meals and proportion of preschools serving snacks in June-July

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of total cases</th>
<th>Proportion of BE schools serving cooked meals</th>
<th>Proportion of preschools serving snacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(75% central / 44% filial)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquíca</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, in June-July, over half of the basic education schools (52%) did not serve a cooked meal but rather a snack purchased from outside school or mung bean porridge. Observation of kitchens this same day was also reflecting this as no fresh products were seen in 41% of the basic education schools and in 49% of the preschools.

Figure 3. Snack and mung bean porridge served in two preschools of Manatuto

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58 Out of 27 basic education schools and 45 preschools.
The high proportion of schools serving snacks rather than a cooked meal may be explained by the fact that no rice was distributed to schools this year. Thus, cooks opted for a simpler meal which they could afford with the allocated money.

“The distribution of rice from the national government to the municipalities and down to the school level is always late. The implementation of SFP in schools does not follow the menu because schools received only money but no rice. The Municipal Education requested local authorities, PTA and parents not to question when students do not eat meals recommended in the menu because rice is not supplied and each student is allocated only 25 cents per day.” [Municipal Education Director]

However, as shown above, even though none of the schools received rice this year, central schools and basic education schools like in Ermera for example, more frequently managed to prepare cooked meals than others. This could suggest that it is possible to prepare cooked meals without distributed rice, and that individuals may play a key role in determining what type of meals the school is able to provide.

Also, note the important disparity between rural and urban basic education schools: 60% of rural schools served a cooked meal compared to 38% in urban schools.

Lastly, the above results were crossed with cooks’ knowledge of the existence of the Manual and their perception of whether they comply or not with its recommendations. As a result:

- Basic Education schools: Among cooks who know about the Manual, less served cooked meals (33%) than among those who do not know about the Manual (55%). Thus, “knowing about the Manual” seems to be an insufficient reason to assume cooks in BE schools are complying with it. Also, the proportion of cooks who served cooked meals among those who indicated they always follow the Manual is only 38% (3 among 8 cases). The small size of the sample studied here doesn’t allow to make reliable conclusions in this regard.

- Preschools: Among cooks who know about the Manual, more served snacks (80%) than among those who do not know about the Manual (70%). This on the other hand seem to support the assumption that “knowing about the Manual” helps preschool cooks to comply better to its recommendations. Also, 90% of the cooks who believed they always comply with the Manual served snacks.

In conclusion, there seems to be significant differences between BE schools’ and preschools’ cooks as to how their knowledge of the Manual impacts on their compliance with its recommendations. This difference could be explained by the fact that guidance for preschools is much simpler to understand and put in practice than for BE schools. Especially in a context where no rice was distributed to schools.

b. Food groups served and Dietary Diversity Score

The composition of meals was observed during HATUTAN’s baseline survey and the observation data collection which was implemented a few months later. As these two surveys happened at different periods of the school year – end of Trimester 1 (March-April) and end of Trimester 2 (June-July), it is interesting to observe the evolution of school meal composition. Results are presented below. Note that the baseline survey did not include preschools and therefore, comparisons of food groups served during baseline survey observation should be done only with those served by basic education schools during the June-July observation.

**Table 10. Food groups served at different points of time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of foods</th>
<th>June-July</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food groups as per Dietary Diversity Score</th>
<th>March-April</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>PE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains, roots and tubers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice, maize, bread or foods prepared with rice, maize or wheat (as dosi)</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potato, taro, yellow sweet potato, cassava, sago</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legumes, beans, nuts and seeds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beans, peas, soybeans or peanuts[^9]</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A-rich vegetables and fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water spinach, spinach, lettuce, mustard, pumpkin leaves, cassava leaves</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pumpkin, carrot, purple sweet potato</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flesh and organ meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beef, pork, sheep, goat, chicken, duck</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fish (fresh or dry), shrimp or another seafood</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liver, kidney, heart, blood or other organ meats.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eggs</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fruits and vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cucumber, tomato, cabbage, eggplant, bananas</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy products[^*]</td>
<td>Milk and other milk products</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no striking differences between the meals served in March-April and June-July. While fresh dairy products are rarely available and expensive, sweetened condensed milk or sweetened milk products were served as part of school meals, especially in preschools 23% BE 51% PE and 40% total. These products however are not counted as “Dairy Products” in the chart above due to low nutritional value (mostly sugar and water).[^60]

Particular attention was paid to the frequency of animal-source proteins vs. plant-based proteins (mainly mung beans and red beans in the plates observed). This analysis was possible only for meals served during the observation visits (not baseline). Results are presented below. Note that the Manual includes milk as a source of protein, which is correct. However, there is no specification on the type of milk. Given it is very common practice for schools to use sweetened condensed milk or other sweetened milk products which have an overall low nutritional value, the following table presents the 2 types of results: including milk and excluding milk.

**Table 11. Animal sourced proteins vs. plant based proteins**

[^9]: Mainly red beans and mung beans in the June-July observation phase.
[^60]: Given the lack of fresh milk products available in Timor-Leste, most people in rural areas call the sweetened condensed milk or sweetened milk products as “milk” without distinction and likely without understanding the nutritional differences.
Firstly, a significant proportion of schools do not include any source of proteins in the meals (16% in basic education and 29% in preschools). Moreover, a significant proportion of this protein is sourced from sweetened milk only: in about 20% of basic education schools and 40% of preschools. Recommending the use of milk as a source of protein in school meals, without specification on the type of milk, is to be questioned\(^6\)\(^1\).

Secondly, the use of plant-based sources of proteins seems also quite low given it is likely to be more affordable than animal-based sources of proteins.

**Figure 4. (Right) Complete meal including plant-based protein in an EBF of Ermera**

Composition of school meals was then used to see how often meals are meeting the minimum requirement for dietary diversity (4 of the 7 food groups in the first column of the table). Results are presented in the following table.

**Table 12. School meals Dietary Diversity Score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of total cases</th>
<th>Basic Education schools</th>
<th>Preschools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including milk</td>
<td>Excluding milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal based</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant based</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No source of protein</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^6\) The only recommendation in the Manual related to the type of milk to use is in Annex 1: “Use only authorized milk and check always for expire date”. But it doesn’t say what is meant by “authorized milk”.

46
Average Diversity Scores are overall quite low (2.3 in basic education and 1.6 in preschools) and only about a fifth of basic education schools reach the minimum requirement of 4 food groups. Rural schools and some municipalities as Ermera and Manatuto managed to use a wider range of food groups. These are also the schools which served more cooked meals.

In preschools, only 7% of the preschools in Liquica did in fact reach this minimum requirement (these were 2 schools serving rice porridge with vegetables and some source of protein). Indeed, preschools are mainly serving light snacks which cover only a small range of food groups.

c. Meal composition

In this section, we will see how closely school meals observed in June-July are following the Manual’s recommendations regarding meal composition. For this, a simple scoring system was used to see how much the meals served to students complied with the Manual’s recommendations (Annex 1 of the Manual).

As seen below, the Manual recommends that school meals should be composed of at least 1 source of protein, 2 sources of vitamins and 1 source of carbohydrates. For each type of food, a list of preferred and less preferred items was established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Vitamins</th>
<th>Carbohydrates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 5. Manual’s recommendations on school meal composition*

These recommendations were used to establish a comparative score:
- 2 points for each food item from the preferred protein or vitamin lists
- 1 point for each food item from the less preferred protein or vitamin lists
- 1 point for carbohydrates
Using this simple scoring system, the average recommended score as per Manual is 7 (meal composed of 1 item from the preferred protein list, 2 from the preferred vitamin list and 1 carbohydrate).

Note that this score doesn’t take into consideration quantities served or the use of foods/ingredients which should be avoided according to the Manual. For example, the quantities of served vegetables often represented a very small proportion of the meal (a few slices of carrots or leaves of green mustard for example) but were still given a score of 2 as long as the vegetable could be observed on the plate.

Results are presented in below.

**Table 13. Manual comparative score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic Education schools</th>
<th></th>
<th>Preschools</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of total cases</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All schools</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in both central / filial)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(25% in central and 37% in filial)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average scores are all much under the recommended score of 7.**

What is striking is that about a third only of basic education schools and 12% of preschools actually reach the recommended score. Differences between municipalities and rural/urban areas follow the same scheme as for the DDS. Basic education schools in Ermera are those following most closely the Manual guidelines and those in Liquiça are deviating the most. Finally, rural basic education schools are much more often reaching the Manual’s recommended score: 53% vs. 19% in urban areas.

Here also, results obtained were crossed with cooks’ knowledge of the existence of the Manual and their perception of whether they comply or not with its recommendations. As a result, in Basic Education schools, the average comparative score was lower among cooks who said they knew about the Manual (3.9 vs 4.8 among those who didn’t know the Manual). This seems surprising. Yet, being able to serve a wider variety of foods can definitely be influenced by many factors independent from cooks’ knowledge of the Manual. Note that cooks who said they always follow the Manual served a wider range of foods (average score 4.1 vs. 2 among other cooks). The same trends were observed among preschool cooks.

d. **Feedback from various stakeholders/parties**

---

62 Some food items such as garlic or onion could have been used in cooked meals but not identified by pictures. But their additional nutritional value is also limited as most likely added in very small quantities.
Concerns regarding the nutritional value of the school meals were expressed by Municipal Health. According to their observation, the food served to students does not comply with average standards and some schools are reaching only 25% of the nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation standards.

Some parents raised similar concerns during the focus groups discussions facilitated during the HATUTAN’s baseline survey.

“We question the quality of the school meals, we see them preparing noodles and rice for lunch, sometimes egg and rice only. We see that this is not balanced for nutrition. We parents received information from the health staff that we should eat different types of food for good nutrition. They need to change the menu, it’s the same every day”. [Father, Ermera]

Finally, FONGTIL representative expressed concern about schools not following the recommended menu.

“The SFP is good, yet it fails in its implementation because the menu recommended in the Manual is never followed in schools.” [FONGTIL]

3.3.3. Foods to avoid

a. Foods to avoid as per Manual guidance

In Annex 1 of the Manual, a number of foods/ingredients are referred as to be avoided or as being less preferred: sausages, taste enhancers, monosodium glutamate (MSG), instant noodles, canned fish, canned tomato sauce, etc.

Observation of receipts/food inventories presented by 13 cooks, and of school meals served in 80 schools provided some feedback on actual practices of cooks in regards to the use of these foods (see following table). Yet, given most of this analysis is based on pictures of meals served, it was not possible to identify if taste enhancers (such as Masako, Roico, Sasa, etc.) or other ingredients such as tomato sauce were used for example. Thus, the proportions here under are likely underestimated.

Note that the Manual does not list condensed milk, sweetened powder milk or industrial drinks such as “Ale-Ale” as foods to be avoided. Yet, given the low nutritional value (and known negative impact) of such drinks on children’s health, they were also included in the following table.

| Table 14. Cooks’ practices in terms of purchasing and serving foods to avoid |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| # of cases                            | Basic Education schools           | Preschools                       |
|                                       | Purchasing foods to avoid         | Serving foods to avoid           | Purchasing foods to avoid       | Serving foods to avoid           |
|                                       | 9 receipts observed               | 31 school meals observed         | 4 receipts observed             | 49 school meals observed         |
| Flavor enhancers with MSG such as “Masako” or “Ajinomoto” | 44%                               |                                 | 75%                             |
| Instant noodles                       | 3%                                |                                 | 25%                             | 2%                              |
| Industrial sweet drinks (type “ale-ale”) | 50%                               |                                 | 10%                             |

63 Foods to avoid are listed at the end of the “Approved School Feeding Menu” for BE schools, Annex 1 of the Manual.

64 Less preferred food items are listed in the table “Food items that are allowed for School Feeding”, Annex 1 of the Manual.
Sweetened milk (condensed or powder) | 33% | 23% | 100% | 51%
“Deho” (canned tuna) | 3% |
Sausage | 6% |

Though these are anecdotal cases, the total sample on which they were observed was not very large. This means that using such food items/ingredients to be avoided is actually quite frequent overall. School directors/coordinators are most of the time well aware of such practices. Indeed, several of them mentioned that SFP money was used to buy condensed milk, “masako” or “Ale-Ale”. As a recommendation on how to improve the SFP, a preschool coordinator even declared:

“SFP funds should be increased because there is not enough money to buy ‘Indomie’” (instant noodles). [Preschool coordinator, Liquica]

Use of sweetened milk is very frequent, especially in preschools (Manual recommends milk consumption for most schools days in preschools). Powdered milk would be a decent option (lower sugar content) but it is not available in rural areas and overall is expensive.

Note that use of foods to avoid was also reported by national level stakeholders.

Lastly, there was no significant difference between the proportion of cooks using foods to avoid among cooks who previously said they knew about (and followed) the manual’s recommendations and those who didn’t know about the Manual. Yet, as mentioned above, the use of foods/ingredients to avoid is perhaps underestimated here.

![Figure 6. Instant noodles served in a preschool of Liquica (left) and sausage served in an EBC in Manatuto (right)](image)

b. Foods that people avoid (sacred or taboo) or provoke allergies

During the observation survey, school directors/coordinators, cooks and PTA members were asked if there were food items which were prohibited, taboo or cause allergic reactions in students. On average, about

---

65 The Audit Court mentioned that some schools in Dili prepare noodles, sausages, and canned fish for the students though this is not allowed in the SFP Manual. An interview with the PDHU indicated that some schools have served dog or horse meat while many schools regularly serve instant foods such as sausage and instant noodles.
20% of respondents said yes in basic education schools and 5% said yes in preschools. The most frequently mentioned foods were: eggs, frozen chicken ("ayam potong"), fish, instant noodles, goat meat and sausage. Note that some of these foods are also among the Manual’s less preferred food items such as instant noodles, sausage, canned fish.

About half of the schools said they still continue cooking these foods but, most likely, do not serve them to some students (especially in case of allergies). PTA members said that in 2 schools (Ermera and Ainaro), cooks apparently stopped serving some foods.

No case of food poisoning was reported by respondents.

### 3.3.4. Quantities served

The main guidance to schools is to serve 100g of rice per student per day. In practice, MEYS delivered rice based on 75g per student per day and most schools followed this lower standard. No strict guidance was given for other foods. Thus no quantitative comparison will be made here. However, feedback from school staff, parents and observations in schools will provide interesting feedback on whether quantities served are enough or not.

#### a. Perception of schools personnel, PTAs and observers about served quantities

In the observation survey, school directors/coordinators and cooks were asked: "What do you do when food is insufficient?" PTAs on the other hand were asked if they thought that food was sufficient. A summary of their answers is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases for directors/cooks</td>
<td>7/23</td>
<td>42/26</td>
<td>49/52</td>
<td>67/64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food is always enough</td>
<td>86-91%</td>
<td>83-88%</td>
<td>84-90%</td>
<td>81-85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare extra food</td>
<td>0-14%</td>
<td>12-14%</td>
<td>6-14%</td>
<td>5-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce portions</td>
<td>9-11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students don’t eat</td>
<td>0-4%</td>
<td>0-2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0-4%</td>
<td>0-2%</td>
<td>0-2%</td>
<td>0-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of cases for PTAs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes sufficient</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sufficient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The high majority of directors/coordinators and cooks said schools prepare enough food for all the students. And if that is not the case, the cook will prepare some more food to ensure all students are served equally (in less than 15% of the basic education schools).

PTA members had a slightly different opinion while they were generally very supportive as well. 29% of PTA members in preschools didn’t know what to answer (these were mainly schools where SFP was not running). Lastly, 3 PTA members (2 in Ainaro and 1 in Ermera) thought food was insufficient. It is very likely that PTA have a more objective view on this point as compared to school managers and cooks. The same observation was made during HATUTAN’s baseline survey where most parents also said the quantity of food was sufficient. Yet, during qualitative interviews, parents’ responses provided a different picture of the school feeding program. Evaluators therefore suspected responses to the closed questionnaire to be influenced by fear of criticizing schools, while more sensitive information could be collected during informal discussions.

No major issue was noted regarding quantities served during the observation of school feeding. All students were given similar portion sizes, including students with special needs (present in 5 filial schools out of 87 observed ones).

What seems more of an issue is the proportion of higher nutrient foods served (vegetables, fruits, proteins) as compared to rice and breads/dosis. These items are very often limited as seen in the figure below. During interview, PDHJ mentioned that some schools share an egg for 4 students.

b. Leftovers

Another indication that most schools actually serve enough quantity of food is the fact that there are very often leftovers at the end of service. Indeed, on the day of school feeding observation in June-July, 91% of basic education schools and 77% of preschools had leftovers.

Crossing information on observed leftovers at the end of school feeding and how much food students left on their plates provides some insights on whether food was indeed sufficient:

![Small portions of vegetables served in an EBF of Manatuto](image.png)

- The proportion of schools where all students had finished all their food (no leftover on the plate) was much higher in schools where no leftovers were observed at the end of school feeding: 73% vs. 39% in schools where there were leftovers. This may suggest that food was overall insufficient in schools where students finished their plates and no leftover was observed at the end of school.
feeding. This was the case in 13% of the 87 schools observed (i.e. 11 schools – mostly preschools). But it could also simply mean that quantities of food prepared in those schools were just right for the number of students that day.

- On the contrary, the proportion of schools where some students had not finished all their food was higher in schools where leftovers were observed at the end of school feeding: 61% vs. 27% in schools where there were no leftovers. It is likely that cooks had prepared too much food in these schools.

During interviews, directors/coordinators, cooks and PTA members were all asked what is usually done with leftovers but cooks were the only ones able to select more than one choice. Thus, their answers are likely to provide a better picture of the actual practices in schools. Their answers are presented below.

Table 16. What is done with leftovers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases for cooks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks take home</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students eat again</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers eat</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors/coordinator/teachers take home</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No leftover</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed animals</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students take home</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of cases of direct observation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks take home</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students eat again</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers/directors/ coordinators take home</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others take home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed animals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents take home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Firstly, note that less than 10% of the cooks said there are usually no leftovers.

When there are leftovers, the most common situation (by far) in basic-education schools is that cooks take the leftovers at home (83%). In pre-schools, it is more common for students and teachers to finish the leftovers at school (56% and 45% respectively). Other school personnel taking leftovers home was more frequent in preschools and EBFs (19% vs. 4% in EBCs).

Quite similar situations were observed during school visits. Yet less school personnel took food home in BE schools (3% during observation vs. 12% as reported by cooks), perhaps holding back because observers were present.

66 Proportion among schools where leftovers were observed.
A significant proportion of EBCs also feed animals with leftovers (26% vs. 4% in EBFs) but probably only foods that cannot be consumed anymore.

Lastly, note that if it is common for cooks and school personnel to bring leftovers home, students bringing food back home was mentioned in only one preschool.

c. **Cooks practices in terms of planning and measuring quantities of food to prepare**

Cooks and directors/coordinators were asked which basis they use to estimate the number of meals to be served each day. About 40% of the respondents said they plan quantities to cook according to the number of students registered in the EMIS list. Another 45% of the respondents said they use the presence list, which actually seems not feasible as the presence list could only be consulted after classes started, i.e. when cooking should have already started. The remaining respondents said they “predict/guess” the number of meals based on experience, a practice which might sometimes be a problem if only rough estimates are made.

To see if these practices have an influence on the accuracy of the quantities of foods prepared, the above information was triangulated with cooks’ answers regarding their perception on the quantities of food served and what is done when there are leftovers. As a result:

- Firstly, all the cooks who said they predict the number of meals to prepare based on experience also said food is always sufficient. Thus, according to cooks, predicting the number of meals to prepare (instead of using actual data on number of students) isn’t an issue as they are always able to serve enough food.
- Secondly, all the cooks saying they predict also said there are always leftovers. Which suggests that these cooks are in fact preparing more food than actually needed. Better practices in terms of planning the number of meals to prepare could perhaps help to cover a larger number of school feeding days.

Questions were then asked regarding whether cooks measure or weigh the food during meal preparation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17 Cooks’ weighing or measuring food during meal preparation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answers of cooks during interview:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes only measure/weigh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Observation of school feeding:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure/weigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About half of the cooks interviewed said they mainly measure food using either an empty can of condensed milk (to measure how much rice/beans to cook) or a plate/bowl/dipper (probably during service to give similar quantities to each student). This is much more than what was actually observed: only 21% of Basic Education school cooks and 34% of preschool cooks actually measure or weighed food. Cooks’ answers were most likely biased by fear of showing unprofessional practices.

Secondly, a significant proportion of cooks do not measure or weigh food at all (37% of BE school cooks). About two-third of the cooks saying they do not weigh or measure food, specified that this is because the foods they prepare do not need to be measured/weighed (snacks/bread that can easily be counted).

Lastly, less than 10% weighed the food with a scale (nearly none in preschools), even though according to the baseline, 56% of the schools have a scale.

No major difference was noted between filial and central schools. However, measuring food was more frequent in rural schools (67% vs. 48% in urban schools) while urban schools more often did not measure or weigh foods (46% vs 24% in rural schools). As mentioned earlier, urban schools more often served light meals.

Interestingly, directors/coordinators tended to more often say cooks weigh the food rather than measure it and less of them said measuring is not needed. They probably wanted to show schools were using more professional working practices than what is done in reality.

Finally, about 40% of PTA members said they weren’t sure whether the cook usually weighed or measured food which reveals the lack of monitoring of cooks during meal preparation.

As done earlier, information on cooks’ practices in terms of measuring or weighing food was triangulated with their perception on the quantities of food served and on what is done when there are leftovers. As a result:

- Firstly, the proportion of respondents saying there is always enough food is smaller among cooks who neither weigh nor measure food: 79% vs. 86% among those who say measuring is not needed and 89% among those who say they measure food. In other words, cooks who are not measuring/weighting food are more likely to prepare insufficient quantities of foods.
- Secondly, the proportion of respondents saying there are no leftovers is higher among cooks who neither weigh nor measure food: 14% vs. 3% among those who say measuring is not needed or who say they measure food. Given the first point here, this result is perhaps another indication that cooks who are not measuring/weighing food are more likely to prepare insufficient quantities of foods (and therefore have no leftovers).

### 3.3.5. Variety in the menu

While the Manual provides examples of weekly menus to be followed, it is highly recommended that cooks vary their menu weekly: “Try to as much as possible provide variations of meals” (Annex 1).

Anecdotal feedback from various stakeholders revealed that menus are not always changed and students are sometimes bored with the foods they are served. The Audit Court said cooks frequently prepare and serve rice porridge with vegetables (sasoro), making students bored of school meals.

Cooks and directors/coordinators were also asked if they was food that students did not like: 30% of Basic Education school respondents and 40 to 60% of preschool respondents said yes. When asked what foods students do not like, most answers were anecdotal. However, "milk and mung bean porridge" was
mentioned by some cooks and coordinators, mainly in preschools (64% of preschool cooks saying there are food which students don’t like). Anecdotally, an EBC cook in Ermera explained that to cope with the limited resources available (25 cents considered insufficient), the school prepares mung-bean every Friday. This suggests that one of the reasons why mung-bean porridge if often cooked is because it is a low-cost meal.

To a lesser extent, the following food items were also mentioned as less appreciated by students: banana/fried banana/bread (mainly in basic education schools) and cassava/sweet potato (in both basic education and preschools). Interestingly, all these food items are rather served as snack. This could reveal a tendency from schools to go for simpler-to-prepare meals, even if they are slightly less appreciated by students (at least very clearly for milk and mung bean porridge).

Lastly, during the observation of school meals in 87 schools, observers noted if the cooks provided a variety of foods (rice with vegetables and a protein source for example). Observers estimated this was the case in 35% of the basic education schools and 47% of the preschools. In 50% of the schools, observers said there was no variety of food within the meal.

In conclusion, continuous efforts are still required to provide more variety of foods in the meal.

3.3.6. Quality of the rice distributed

Lastly in this section, we will discuss issues related to the quality of the rice distributed. However, as no rice was distributed in 2019, the following information refers to previous years only (not direct observation).

A significant number of stakeholders at all levels observed that rice distributed in the past years was often of poor quality. Some respondents believed that the rice stays in warehouses for extended periods before arranging transport for distribution and therefore the quality has already severely deteriorated. Poor warehouse management practices and lack of fumigation may also negatively impact the quality of rice.

The following is a summary of responses collected from various stakeholders:

- Food distribution was running well from 2000 to 2006 when WFP was in charge of it. Starting from 2006, MEYS took over the food provision to schools but distribution was often late due to poor road conditions, especially in rural areas. (MEYS Inspection Services)
- It is difficult to monitor the implementation of the SFP because the supply of food is not made based on a fixed schedule and this resulted in large amount of spoiled rice. This creates problems for schools when inspections are conducted. (Superintendent)
- Some rice was mildewed and red beans hardened (remain hard even after being cooked). (Municipal Health Services)

When the question was asked to cooks, 38% of the 34 basic education school cooks who had received rice in the past said they have sometimes (or all the time) received bad quality rice. Such cases were mainly found in Ainaro and Ermera (9 and 4 cases respectively). Wherever the quality of the rice was bad, about a third of the cooks said they gave it to pigs (11 cases).

A number of stakeholders were also concerned about the low-grade of the imported rice, stating possible “contamination” of the rice67. Yet, they did not offer specific evidence for this and these concerns should therefore be treated with caution.

67 FONGTIL, Permatil and a Member of Parliament expressed opinions that imported rice may contain chemical elements.
Clearly, there might be a need to continue distribution of certain foods that are required for the SFP but difficult to access locally. Yet, if that is the case, it is vital to ensure that the foods distributed are quality products and that the transportation to schools has been anticipated.

3.4. Food Procurement

### SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE AND DEVIATIONS WITH SFP MANUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Use of SFP money for food and school feeding management | 1. Uses of SFP money besides for food:  
BE: 71% (mainly firewood, soap, transport, helper)  
PE: 30% (mainly: firewood, water, soap, transport)  
Cases of misuse identified for infrastructure repairs. |
| 2. Purchase local products as much as possible | 2. Purchase local products as much as possible  
Buying local products:  
BE: 39% daily, 53% sometimes, 7% never  
Buying from local farmer:  
BE: 25% daily, 12% sometimes, 63% never  
PE: 6% daily, 17% sometimes, 77% never |

In terms of procurement, the SFP Manual has established a “Negative list” (Annex 5) which states that SFP money cannot be used for (1) permanent material or equipment, (2) construction materials, (3) lending money, (4) something else that is not food directly to the students. The Manual explains (section 5.2), that the KPME should "ensure that the budget is only allocated to food and school feeding management".

Also, the SFP Manual insists on the fact that school feeding should use local products whenever possible: "Increasing the minimum value of nutrition at school by using local products and recipes" (Section 1), and "Local supplier group coordinate with the local farmers to identify local products to support the school feeding program" (Section 5.2).

Thus, in this section, we will discuss possible deviations in terms of what was purchased with the SFP money as well as school’s efforts to purchase local products. Lastly, data on school gardens will be presented as these are an interesting source of local products for schools, but still quite marginal.

3.4.1. Use of SFP money for non-food items

During observation visits to schools, both school management and cooks were asked: “What are the 25 cents used for?” Answers from school management and cooks were overall quite similar. Therefore, we will present only data from school management here as they are more likely to be aware of non-food purchases than cooks.

*Table 18. Use of the SFP money according to directors/coordinators*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy food</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy firewood</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy soap/detergent</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for transport</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay helpers</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport rice</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy drinking water</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy utensils</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy plates</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any item other than food/water</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, the SFP money is used for a wide variety of items besides food. Overall, 71% of basic education schools and 30% of preschools used the SFP money for something other than food.

Among Basic Education schools, it is more frequent to also use the SFP money to buy wood, soap, pay transport and helpers. Paying helpers was confirmed by cooks themselves: 65% of the cooks who had helpers said they usually (or sometimes only) pay these while 35% said helpers work for free. Interestingly, it was much more frequent for cooks to pay helpers in rural schools.

"Voluntary cooks also get some of the SFP money because they are not paid by the government. Actually students use less than 25 cents a day but this is normal because some of the money is allocated for the cooks who work voluntarily. Cooks even share the remaining rice among them."

[Municipal Education Director]

Other uses of the money in preschools were slightly different. From most to least frequent: buying firewood, drinking water, soap, transport (to market, not for rice). Interviews with preschool cooks indicated that helpers are less common and often working voluntarily.

Note that transporting rice is mainly handled by central schools that have to collect rice from municipal warehouses.

Feedback from PDHJ also indicated that some schools used part of the SFP money to repair school infrastructure (toilet, bathroom, and kitchen) and buy cooking utensils. Schools had not informed MEYS before doing such spending. Unauthorized use of SFP funds may occur, but not be reflected in the reports (DNASE).

Lastly, it was noted that cooks are sometimes asked to cook for specific events – none of which should be paid by the SFP fund. According to cooks, this happened in 19% of the 52 basic education schools surveyed and 14% of the 63 preschools surveyed. Such events can be receiving guests at school, teachers’ meetings, graduations, etc. It is important to ensure that the organization of such events in schools do not involve...
the use of resources that have been made available for school feeding only (cook, SFP fund and cooking equipment).

Clearly, more control of how money is spent and if it complies with the Manual’s regulations is needed.

3.4.2. Purchasing local products

a. Proportion of schools buying local products

   • Buying local products as per baseline data

During the baseline survey, schools were asked “Does the school buy local produce from farmers for the school feeding?” and if yes, “What types of produce does the school buy from farmers?”

As a result, among the 189 basic education schools surveyed, 7% said no, 53% sometimes, 39% all the time. The survey did not assess the frequency or seasonality of purchase of local produce, but observation of school feeding during baseline indicates that only up to 39% of the schools that served a meal had actually incorporated local produce other than maize.

The foods purchased locally were then listed (from most to least frequently mentioned):

- dark green vegetables (mustard) – 90%  
- carrot/pumpkin/sweet-potato – 73%  
- potato/cassava/taro – 70%  
- beans/nuts (mung bean/read beans) – 59%  
- meat – 57%  
- eggs – 46%  
- rice/maize/bread – 46%  
- cucumber/tomato/cabbage/eggplant – 42%

Note that not all of these are foods from local farms (bread, milk, condiment, tahu/tempe, coconut oil).

   • Buying from local farmers as per observation survey

During the observation survey, data on purchasing was collected in a different way. Respondents were asked “Where do schools buy food from?”, and for each source, “How often do you buy food from this source?” Possible sources were: local farmers, traditional market, kiosk, grocery stores, Dili. Given “local farmers” is the only source which ensures products are local, we will first look at these results.

The following table presents cooks’ answers regarding the frequency of buying from local farmers. Data in the last column (average frequency score) summarizes the different frequencies of purchasing products: 0 for “not buying from this source”, 1 for “buying sometimes only”, 2 for buying weekly, 3 for buying twice/three times a week, and 4 for buying daily. Higher scores indicate higher frequency of buying from this source.

---

68 Imported products also sold in traditional markets.
69 Directors/Coordinators as well as PTA members were asked the same question. Their answers are not represented here because directors/coordinators had very similar answers with a slightly smaller sample for Basic Education schools. PTA members were less informed about this than cooks.
Table 19. Proportion of schools purchasing from local farms, as per cooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>% buying daily</th>
<th>% buying less frequently&lt;sup&gt;70&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>% not buying</th>
<th>Average frequency score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results presented here are very different from those presented in the baseline with 63% of basic education schools never buying from local farms. Buying from local farms is significantly more frequent in rural areas, which makes sense as schools are closer to farmers. There are also significant differences between municipalities: Ainaro schools more often buy from local farmers while only about 15% of schools in Liquiça and Manatuto do.

In preschools, buying products from local farms is less frequent (only 6% buying daily and 17% buying “less frequently”). This is understandable given preschools’ specific menu (lighter meals/snacks).

- **Different sources of foods as per observation survey**

Local products could also be purchased from traditional markets and from Dili, but we do not know in which proportions. For a broader picture of the different sources of foods, we can look at the following table.

Table 20. Average frequency score of buying food from each source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>According to...</th>
<th>Directors/Coordinators</th>
<th>Cooks</th>
<th>PTA members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>56, 61, 56, 56, 62&lt;sup&gt;71&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>70</sup> “Less frequently” includes the follow answers: “2-3 times per week”, “weekly” and “sometimes”.

<sup>71</sup> Number of cases was different for each source because PTA members didn’t always know how often schools purchased from each source.
Answers from the different categories of respondents are overall quite comparable. The traditional market was the main source of foods (between 1 and 2 times a week), followed by kiosks (slightly less than one time per week). Buying from local farms comes in 3rd position with most schools buying from farms sometimes only (i.e. less than weekly). And buying from Dili was reported by only about 10% of the schools (in Liquiça mainly). Note that schools in Liquiça slightly more often tend to buy products from Dili as it is closer\(^{72}\).

Some municipal stakeholders commented on the fact that many schools buy food from grocery stores and kiosks:

“Sometimes cooks get food from the local farmers and local shops but the majority of the foods are purchased in Chinese shops in the municipality or (administrative) post.” [Municipal Education Director]

“Previously, most of the foods purchased (such as chicken, meat, fish, imported rice) were bought from local shops. But following the monitoring and observation by the health team, some schools have started using local foods including fish, Timorese chicken and local rice.” [Director of Municipal Health Services]

b. Difficulty to buy local products and initiatives to link schools to local production

The main constraints schools face to purchase local products is the limited and seasonal local production. School inspectors, explained: if some schools are not able to comply with the Manual, it is because cooks are not able to find the recommended foods in the market (e.g. fish, eggs, or meat). So schools sometimes use imported foods such as canned foods, because local foods are short in supply. Also, a Municipal Education Director explained that the soil condition in some areas is not suited to grow the food crops recommended in the SFP Manual.

Where there are local farmers producing vegetables, many schools lack coordination with them as expressed by school coordinators during the baseline survey.

“We don’t liaise with farmers; they don’t sell directly to the school. We buy directly from the market; we have no contact with farmers.” [Coordinator, male, Liquiça],

Most schools and municipal stakeholders indicated that because food produced by local farmers is insufficient, schools have to rely on markets which are often difficult to access and require walking long distances. A school administrator in Loes, Liquiça explained that accessing the market to buy fresh produce is very difficult for most cooks in rural/filial schools. They can only go once a week to the market.\(^{73}\)

\(^{72}\) Frequency scores for buying from Dili: 0.5 for schools in Liquica, 0.3 for Manatuto, and 0 in Ermera/Ainaro.

\(^{73}\) Rural market days may only occur once or twice in a week near to the school.
An MOH official explained that the vegetables and fruits bought by cooks are often not fresh when arriving at school because they have travelled long distances.

This was confirmed during observation of school meal preparation in June-July. Observers noted if the vegetables/fruits/meats in the kitchen looked fresh or not. As a result in 19% of the 16 basic education schools where this observation was conducted and 17% of the 23 preschools, observers found some or all of the products to be not so fresh.

Some school coordinators also expressed the fact that the money allocated isn’t enough to purchase local foods which are on average more expensive. Therefore, some schools are asking parents to contribute vegetables to the school meal. PTA members indicated that was the case in 2 preschools of Ermera. Also, some schools can only pay farmers a few days after vegetables are delivered to schools because of delay in fund transfers.74

Respondents gave examples of initiatives to increase school access to local foods. KONSANTIL for example is establishing farmer groups to supply schools. A pilot project in Manatuto is currently being implemented to supply Aiteas school with local products from cooperatives (including rice and sorghum). Municipal Education Director indicated that community and parents are involved in these farmer groups. A school inspector welcomed this initiative, explaining that isolated schools have difficulties buying local products, whereas in towns such as Manatuto and Natarbora, farmer groups contact schools to sell their products every time they harvest vegetables.

3.4.3. School gardens

School gardens are another possible source of locally produced food but currently have only a small impact on the SFP.

Some schools have established their own school garden to be used for learning purposes. However, the food produced can be sold to the school for school feeding, which can also be an interesting source of income to help sustain the garden. Yet, few schools have school gardens for now and their production is low level and not intended to supply the school feeding.75

Among the 49 basic education schools visited during the observation survey, 11 had a school garden (22%), mostly in Ermera (5 schools) and Ainaro (3 schools). Cooks used products from the school garden in only 6 schools (Ermera and Ainaro) - 12% of all BE schools surveyed and so a small impact on the SFP.

According to school management, in 3 of these schools, cooks had to pay for the vegetables (to students mainly), while in the 3 others, cooks took vegetables for free. Cooks also mentioned the existence of school gardens in 2 preschools (Ainaro and Ermera). Cooks in those preschools purchased products grown in the school garden to use for the SFP.

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74 Source: Municipal MAF. Fund transfers may refer to central school delivering funds to filial schools or cooks.
75 The main objective of the school garden is to serve as a creative learning environment or “learning laboratory” to get the students out of the classroom and doing hands-on activities.
3.5. Governance: selection of the cook

This is one of the key steps in implementation of the SFP in schools. Indeed, the cook is the main stakeholder in the process as schools are meant to play only an intermediary role between municipal administration and the cook. There is variety in how schools select and retain the cooks with some schools retaining the same cook for years while others apply a rotational system within the year, indicating that the position is coveted within the community where there are few paid jobs available for women.

Given PTAs are meant to play a key function in the selection of the cook, we will first go through a general overview of PTAs before to look more closely at their involvement in the selection of cooks.

3.5.1. General overview of PTAs

Data in this section was collected during the observation survey conducted in June-July which included interviews with 74 PTAs: 46 in basic education schools and 28 in preschools.

a. Existence and creation of PTAs in schools

According to the 148 interviewed school directors, there is a PTA in 98% of basic education schools and 81% of preschools. In Ainaro, only 36% of preschool coordinators said the school has a PTA.

High proportions of schools with PTAs were also reported by schools during the HATUTAN’s baseline survey. However, in nearly half of those, the PTA had only one member.

In basic education schools, PTAs have existed for a long time: 41% of the PTAs were created more than 10 years ago (before SFP started) and 41% between 5 to 10 years ago. PTAs in Ainaro were among the oldest ones (established in 2009 on average). On the other hand, PTAs in preschools are more recent with 61% created during the last 5 years.

b. Selection of PTA members

Clearly, as seen in in the following table, parents were the main persons to select who would become PTA members. This was the case for nearly all filial schools. In the 9 basic education schools where parents did not participate in the selection of PTA members (5 of them are central schools in Ermera), the person who

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76 Summary box, actual proportions of stakeholders selecting cooks: these are combined answers from PTA, school management and cook.
designated the PTA members was the EBC director. Similarly, in preschools: among the 8 schools where parents were not involved, 6 were in Ermera and decision was taken mainly by school management or teachers. This is obviously not appropriate as parents members are supposed to be selected independently from schools’ management.

**Table 21. Who selected you to become a PTA member?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director EBC</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In rural schools, the involvement of parents to select PTA members was more frequent than in urban schools: 89% vs. 67% in urban schools.

c. Activities of PTA members

The following table presents the activities of PTA members as reported by the PTAs themselves. The most common answer was "monitoring" which includes monitoring activities in general. Note that some PTA members specified they monitored students or teachers absence (13% and 4% of PTA in basic education schools). Other frequently mentioned activities were meetings and “signing documents”.

**Table 22. What are the activities conducted by the PTA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing documents</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance infrastructure</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activity</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor students absence</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA is inactive</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring teachers absence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PTA said they were inactive in 3 basic education schools and 1 preschool (Ainaro and Liquica). Again, it is PTAs in rural areas which were found to be the most active: more frequently involved in monitoring activities and meetings. This was also confirmed by school management. This suggests that the PTAs which were selected by parents themselves are more engaged in school activities than the others.

Interestingly, directors/coordinators had a slightly different opinion on the real activeness of PTAs, suggesting a higher proportion of them being inactive (10% in basic education schools and 30% in preschools).

As noted during HATUTAN’s baseline survey, one problem with the oversight of school feeding by the PTAs is the limited frequency in which PTAs meet. For this reason, the frequency of meetings was asked again in the observation survey.

\textit{Table 23. Frequency of meetings of PTAs.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No meetings at all</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 1st trimester</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 2nd trimester</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, as presented above, a significant proportion of PTAs never hold meetings, especially in filial schools (40%). And about one third had not met during the current school year. Note that the number of PTAs having meetings in basic education schools varied a lot according to locations: less frequent in Liquica (30% of interviewed PTAs) and more frequent in Ermera (79% of interviewed PTAs).

Considering the frequency of meetings as an indicator of PTA functionality, only 30% of the PTAs in basic schools and 64% of the PTAs in preschools could be considered as being functional.

PTAs in preschools more often reported having meetings. However, school coordinators mentioned that only 59% of PTAs in preschools are having regular meetings. The term “meeting” could perhaps sometimes be understood differently (informal discussion in front of the school for example).

Lastly, in order to assess the level of engagement of PTA members, they were asked: “What does the PTA do when the school has problems related to water, infrastructure, access, etc.?“ Results are presented below.

\textit{Table 24. What does the PTA do when there are problems related to infrastructure?}\textsuperscript{77}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{77} More than one answer possible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask contribution from community</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send a proposal to government/NGO/church</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wait for government to resolve</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We solve the problem ourselves</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do nothing</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52% of the PTA members interviewed in basic education schools said they request support from the community (more frequent in filial schools: 65% vs. 40% in central schools). A similar proportion (46%) expects support from the government (either by making a proposal or just waiting).

In fact, many PTAs do both: request support from community and from the government. This is understandable as the government needs to be held into account for school infrastructure. However, it is important for the school management and PTAs to take action as well in order to solve quickly problems which can be handled locally. Indeed, only 17% of the basic education school PTAs said they try to solve the problem on their own (but 57% in preschools).

3.5.2. Involvement of PTAs in selection of cooks

The Manual clearly explains that the KPME, and more specifically the PTAs, are the main decision makers regarding which cook to select: "Selection process of local vendors is led by PTA with the support of the director/coordinator." (Section 6) School management is requested to prepare a procurement plan and publicly announce it to the community. When three proposals/quotes are collected, the PTA with the school director/coordinator and GAT will decide who to select. However, as revealed during baseline focus groups, several PTAs seem to have very limited participation in overseeing this process. Parents expressed their frustration at the lack of information on SFP issues and SFP management in general.

During interviews, the enumerators asked the question “Who selected the cook?” to directors / coordinators and cooks and asked to PTA members if they participated in the selection of cooks.
**Figure 8. Who selected the cook?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic Education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>As per directors/coordinators (49 and 64 cases)</strong></td>
<td><img src="chart1" alt="Pie Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart2" alt="Pie Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As per cooks (54 and 62 cases)</td>
<td><img src="chart3" alt="Pie Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart4" alt="Pie Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As per PTA members (45 and 26 cases)</strong></td>
<td><img src="chart5" alt="Pie Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart6" alt="Pie Chart" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. **Schools where PTAs are involved**

Overall 60% of cooks and directors/coordinators said PTAs (or at least parents) were involved in the selection of basic education school cooks. This was the case for 25-30% of preschool cooks. Yet, PTA members actually said they were more often involved in the cook selection: 71% and 38% in basic education and preschools respectively.

When PTA is involved in the selection of Basic Education school cooks, decision is more often taken together with other KPME members. Whereas in preschools, it is more often the PTA alone, perhaps because KPME are less well-known in preschools.
b. Schools where PTAs and parents are not involved

As reported by school directors/coordinators and cooks, in about 40% of basic education schools and more than 70% of preschools, neither PTAs nor parents were involved in the selection of cooks. In most cases it was the director or coordinator alone taking the decision. This was especially true in filial schools: cooks said 31% of the filial school cooks were selected by the coordinator alone vs. 17% in central schools.

Other answers often referred to school personnel such as teachers or GAT alone or a combination of either teachers/school management/GAT. Local leaders were also mentioned twice as making this decision for the school. In a few cases, school inspector, students or community were also mentioned as involved in the selection of the cook.

Clearly, this is a violation of the Manual as parents were not part of the selection process. Proportions might be slightly lower though: 29% and 62% of PTA members interviewed in basic education and preschools said they had not been involved at all in the selection process.

Reasons often given by schools for not involving more PTAs in selection of cooks is the fact that some PTAs do not often come to school (are not active) and thus, schools were not able to involve them in this process. Anecdotal feedback suggests nepotism from the part of school personnel in the selection of the cook.

c. Possible factors influencing involvement of PTAs in the selection of the cooks

- Having access to the SFP Manual

Firstly, the fact that schools or SFP implementers have access to the Manual seems to influence how much PTAs are involved in the selection of cooks. Indeed:

- PTAs are more often involved in the selection of the cooks whenever schools have a copy of the Manual: 42% vs. 35% in schools where no Manual is available.
- Similarly, cooks said PTAs were more often involved in this selection process whenever cooks themselves knew about the Manual: 59% vs. 29% in schools where cooks said they didn’t know about the Manual.
- Lastly, PTAs are by far more involved in the selection of cooks in schools where PTAs themselves reported knowing about the Manual: 86% vs. 48% in schools where PTAs didn’t know about the Manual.

- Having a functional PTA

As expected, involvement of PTAs in the selection of the cook is more frequent in schools where PTAs are “functional”: 67% vs. 54% in schools where PTAs are not functional (data among 74 PTAs).

d. Differences by regions

There is a very important difference between rural and urban schools regarding parent’s involvement in the selection of cooks: parents are more frequently involved in rural areas.

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78 Source: school inspectors (see section 3.5.3).
79 As mentioned in part 3.5.1., “functional PTAs” are defined as PTAs having met at least once in the last 6 months.
There are also important differences between municipalities: Ermera and Liquiça were found to be more open to parents’ involvement according to school management and cooks. However, answers from PTAs in the 4 municipalities did not reflect this perception. More PTA members asserted PTA involvement in cook selection than confirmed by cooks. Cooks have changed since the start of the SFP so PTA members may recall being involved in previous cook selection. Also samples were not identical for each category of respondents which might explain some of these differences.

Table 25. Proportion of schools involving parents in the cook selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As per Directors/Coordinators</th>
<th>As per cooks</th>
<th>As per PTA members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.3. Selection criteria used to select cooks

The Manual recommends that three proposals should be collected by the KPME and that priority shall be given to women’s groups in the community such as mothers, women trained by government, women’s church groups, etc. (section 6.3). The Manual also recommends to select cooks working in groups (not individuals) and obviously cooks having cooking experience.

Clearly, the selected cooks are all women but feedback from various stakeholders suggests a lack of transparency in the selection process. Municipal Education Directors said schools sometimes do not follow the Manual because school management and PTA try to “minimize conflicts with the community” by providing equal working opportunities to several cooks living close to the school. The different cooks will take turn to prepare food.

School inspectors indicated that whenever PTAs are passive, teachers will appoint cooks from the community, likely people they know. This is clearly a deviation of the Manual which stipulates that the KPME is responsible to monitor the selection process: “Avoid selecting each other to form a cook group.” (Section 5.2).

Definitely having strong PTAs to control the selection process is crucial to ensure more transparency.

3.5.4. Cooks with a contract

80 The Secretary of State for Promotion of Equality (Secretariado de Estado para a Promoção de Igualidade – SEPI), provided business training to women’s groups in rural areas.
According to the Manual, one cook should be contracted per group of 300 students and this cook should be paid 50USD to prepare meals for these 300 students. Thus, a school with 500 students for example, should contract 2 cooks, each of them holding a valid contract and a salary of 50 USD per month.

When asked if they had a valid contract, 83% of Basic Education school cooks and 70% of preschool cooks said they had one. This means that quite a significant proportion of the cooks (17-30%) work without being provided with a valid contract, especially in preschools.

Table 26. Proportion of cooks having a valid contract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Proportion of cooks with a valid contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the above table, some municipalities are more efficient than others at this: in Liquiça, only 62% of all met cooks had valid contracts while this was the case for 92% of cooks in Ainaro.81

Also, it seems quite clear that preschools are less exigent for their cooks to have valid contracts. Indeed, answers from directors/coordinators and PTA members also revealed smaller proportions of preschool cooks with contracts: 64% according to preschool coordinators and 60% according to PTA members.

Note that 92% of Basic Education school directors/coordinators said their cooks have a valid contract – significantly more than what was reported by cooks themselves. It is likely that this was overestimated to show a better compliance with the Manual.

Another issue is that many schools work with more than one cook. Even though each of the cooks should cover 300 students and have a valid contract for this, in practice, some schools have more than 1 cook for 300 students. That is the case for a central school in Liquiça for example which has 2,073 students and

81 The proportion of cooks with contracts in Ainaro may be higher because enumerators interviewed cooks at home based on contact information from the school director/coordinator as there was almost no school feeding in Ainaro at the time of the interview. In other municipalities the enumerators interviewed the cooks preparing the meal on the observation day which may have included cooks who provide services on a rotational basis without a formal contract as some schools have more than one cook.
works with 14 cooks. However, only 7 of these cooks signed a contract as according to the Manual, 7 cooks should be able to cook for 2100 students.

The survey did not assess if each of the cooks working for a school had a valid contract or if only some of them signed a contract as it is the case in the example above. But this could be a source of conflict as all cooks might not receive the money they are entitled to if these contracts do not clearly stipulate the arrangement between the different cooks.

In basic education schools, 30 to 50% of the schools work with more than 1 cook\(^82\); but this occurred for less than 10% of preschools. In about half of the school where more than 1 cook works, cooks actually rotate among them. In such cases, the objective is definitely to share the benefits of this position among more community members.

### 3.5.5. Cooks turn over and replacement of cooks

Directors/Coordinators were asked how long had their current cooks been working for the school:

- **BE**: 41% said 1 to 3 month, 31% said a year or more, 29% said more than a year,
- **Preschool**: 53% said 1 to 3 months, 37% said a year or more, 11% said more than a year.

This reveals a quite important turnover in the cooks. The downside of this is that new cooks will need to be trained/coached again to ensure they are working according to SFP recommendations. It is very likely that most of the cooks that had participated in the trainings provided by DNASE in 2013-14 are not working in schools anymore now.

Also, note that in more than 80% of the cases, when the same cook has worked for the school for more than a year, the selection process is not repeated yearly. The school management keeps the same contract or prepares a new yearly contract with the same cook. As mentioned in the cook’s contract however, the school can terminate the contract if cooks do not perform according to SFP Manual\(^83\). The PTA can also call for a meeting to discuss issues related to the cook\(^84\). No such case was reported during interviews with schools though. Proper monitoring of cooks performance is to be questioned.

Another area needing attention is the replacement of cooks whenever they are sick. Indeed, 41% of preschool cooks and 25% of Basic Education school cooks said they do not have any replacement planned in such cases\(^85\). That was more frequent among cooks in Ermera for example (63% replaced when sick) while all cooks in Manatuto said they were usually replaced when sick. But a number of cooks also said that even if they are not replaced, the other cooks working in the school will be cooking in their place anyways.

Note that in most cases, substitution is unprofessional: mainly by family members which could sometimes include underage siblings or even daughters. In a way, cooking for schools is considered as a family business, especially given the fact that some cooks do not cook in the school but in private houses (sometimes in their own houses).

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\(^82\) 29% according to cooks and 49% according to school management.

\(^83\) Annex 4 of SFP Manual.

\(^84\) Section 5.2 of SFP Manual.

\(^85\) Calculated only among cooks who have already been sick – i.e. 80% of all cooks interviewed).
More precisely, in basic education schools, cooks were replaced by: siblings (47%), children (6%), other family members (21%), another cook or helper (22%). In preschools, replacement was ensured by: siblings (30%), children (19%), teachers (22%), other family members (7%), other cooks or helpers (11%).

3.6. Management of SFP funding at school level

3.6.1. Funding mechanism and management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  <strong>Who holds SFP money</strong></td>
<td>1.  <strong>Who holds SFP money</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks (fornesédőr)</td>
<td>BE: cooks in 94-98% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE: &gt; cooks in 75-90% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Coordinator in 10-25% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  <strong>Cook holding money for how long</strong></td>
<td>2.  <strong>Cook holding money for how long</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>BE: 77% weekly, 11% monthly, 9% per 2 weeks, 4% daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE: 72% weekly, 13% daily, 11% monthly, 4% per 2 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative diagram of how SFP funds are supposed to move vs. how they actually move.

In this section, we will discuss the usual channels followed by SFP money until it arrives in the hands of the cooks, how often cooks receive money, who decides how to use this money. We will also discuss issues regarding payment of cooks’ salaries.
PLANNED MOVEMENT IN SFP MANUAL

MoF

25% Annual Budget for each Quarterly Transfer

Municipal Finance

Quarterly transfers starting in January

Actual Movement

MoF

Municipal Finance

Quarterly transfers starting in March

Legend

Quarterly payments
Monthly payments
Weekly or 2 weeks payments

Cooks receive money from:
1 Main channel
2 Secondary channel

10-25% hold the money

Legend

EBF Coordinators collect money at EBC

2-12% hold the money
a. Who handles the SFP money at school level

In Chapter 7, the SFP Manual clearly details the funding mechanism for the SFP. SFP money is transferred quarterly by the Municipal Finance to preschools and central schools bank accounts. Either the GAT or school directors/coordinators then goes to withdraw the money to the bank using a Cash Payment Voucher (CPV) signed by 3 key persons (EBC director, Municipal Education Director and GAT). When received, money should be directly passed on to the cooks (including in filial schools) by tranches of 1 month. Remaining money is kept by GAT until all is transferred to cooks.

- Central to municipal level

In general, no deviation was noted at the Municipal level regarding how money is handled. Indeed, since the deconcentration, the system is very straightforward with MSA sending SFP funds quarterly to the Municipal Administration and the Municipal Administration transferring funds to the school bank accounts according to the number of students reported in each school. Municipal Administration or SFP Coordinators usually inform schools via phone calls after transfers are made to make sure schools withdraw money as soon as possible.

The main difference is in regards to the timing of the quarterly transfers which should start in January but instead start in March-April due to late promulgation of State budget. Also in practice, and because of late start of the program each year, transfers are not necessarily covering one full quarter. If only 10 days of school feeding can be funded in the first quarter for example, transfers will be made for 10 days of school feeding only. However, in Ainaro, Municipal Finance indicated that even though the budget was late, some schools still sent their requests for a full quarter and therefore were able to use the remaining money for school feeding during the second quarter. In conclusion, there seems to be a wide variety of situations.

Note that most GATs and SFP Coordinators confirmed the use of the CPV for schools to be able to withdraw money at the bank. The SFP Coordinator also indicated that the Municipal Education Director does not sign the CPVs until the SFP Coordinator has confirmed that the reports for the given school have been submitted.

- Municipal level to schools

More attention needs to be paid to the management of SFP fund at school level. The following figure presents the answers of directors/coordinators and cooks regarding who usually gives the SFP money to the cook.
In **basic education schools**, the answers from school management and cooks were quite coherent:

- About 50% of the cooks receive money from GAT directly – which is the normal procedure. That was mainly the case for all cooks in central schools and less than 50% of the cooks in filial schools.

- About 40% of filial schools cooks receive money from school coordinators which is not the preferred channel as GAT is supposed to be the main entity within the KPME holding SFP money. It is however not prohibited by the Manual\(^\text{86}\). The feedback from observation interviews suggests that this happens for filial schools which are far from the central school and for which it is harder for GAT members to meet with filial school cooks. In such situations, it is easier for the coordinator to come to and collect the SFP money from the GAT and then give it to the cooks. GAT members interviewed in Ermera, Líquíça and Manatuto indicated that they call filial the school coordinators to come to the central school to collect the money. In Raicala (Ermera), some PTA members also come with the coordinator to ensure that he/she collects the right amount of money\(^\text{87}\).

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\(^{86}\) Section 7.2 of the Manual: “GAT or Director of EPE will transfer the funds on monthly basis to the cook to implement school feeding program”. But in the annex 4: “... payment process doing by School Director / Coordinator to Local Cook...”.

\(^{87}\) Source: GAT Raicala, Ermera.
- According to cooks in central schools, it also happens that money is handed over to them by the EBC director, which is also not the preferred channel for SFP money transfers as it adds one more step and carrier in the handling of the money.

- Lastly, 6% of Basic Education school cooks (i.e. 12% of filial school: 2 in Ermera and 1 in Manatuto) indicated that they never handle the money. Such situation happens only in filial schools and is clearly a violation of the Manual. Some cooks complained about this situation:

  “If possible, the SFP money should be handed to cooks in order for us to make a budget for the food that we need to buy according to the menu” [EBF school cook in Manatuto].

Municipalities and schools have sometimes different habits in terms of who withdraws the money. It is always GAT withdrawing money but in some cases, the GAT may be accompanied by other people: for example by the EBC director and/or its deputy (Ermera), or by EBC director and EBF coordinators (Loes). In Loes, the GAT explained that after withdrawal, money is shared directly with all coordinators in order to accelerate implementation. On the other hand, GAT in Natarbora said they usually go alone to the bank.

In preschools, answers from cooks and Coordinators were not always similar:

- What is striking is the predominant role of coordinators in passing the money to the cooks (in more than 70% of preschools surveyed). Indeed, the Municipal Administration transfers directly the money to the preschool bank accounts and this money is then withdrawn by the coordinator. Preschool coordinators use CPV, same as EBCs, to be able to withdraw the money.

- Also, a much higher proportion of cooks (25% vs 10% according to coordinators) said they do not handle SFP money at all as both the money and the food procurement are managed by the coordinators. Cooks only have to prepare the food but do not manage the money. Such cases occurred mainly in Liquiça (8 preschools) and in Manatuto (6 preschools). Some coordinators indicated that they do not trust the cook for this and therefore prefer to handle the money by themselves.

  “The coordinator brings food from home and I cook it. I do not have to measure food as this is done by the Coordinator. I just need to clean the food and cook.” [Preschool cook, Manatuto]

- Lastly, according to coordinators mainly, a number of other stakeholders are also handling SFP money before giving it to the cook (EBC director, teachers, GAT). This represents between 5 to 17% of the preschools. However, such situations do not comply with the Manual and should be well ruled and controlled to avoid mishandling of the SFP money as it passes through more hands.

In conclusion, there is a wide variety of ways to handle money at school level, many of these deviating from the Manual’s indicated process. Most importantly, in 12% of filial schools and 25% of preschools, cooks reported not receiving money at all, which means a significant proportion of cooks are not familiar with managing school feeding money.

Also, for preschools who have their own bank account but no GAT and for filial schools which are sometimes far from the central school, it is important to establish a clear frame for handling the money in a transparent way. As seen earlier, some schools have already adopted good practices in this regard but they remain a minority.

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88 Municipalities such as Ermera and Manatuto noted that a nearby EBC may provide administrative support for preschools.
b. Frequency of handing SFP money to cook

While the Manual recommends to give money for 1 month to cooks (section 7.2.), DNASE recommended schools to provide cooks with money for a maximum of two weeks of school feeding. Some GAT officials preferred to make more frequent trips to the bank, as often as weekly in some cases, given the lack of safes or secure places to keep cash at the schools (DNASE). The following table summarizes answers from cooks regarding how often they receive SFP money.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every 2 weeks</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In practice most cooks receive money by the week (in 77% of basic education schools and 72% of preschools). Only 11% of basic education schools cooks (nearly all EBCs) and 11% of preschool cooks receive money for the month. During interviews, some GAT members indicated that some filial schools located far away from the central schools are unable to come to central schools weekly and therefore come to take money every two weeks instead.

Some cooks even reported receiving money on a daily basis (1 EBC, 1 EBF and 6 preschools). GAT in Loes actually indicated that in some filial schools, cooks are handed money for two days at a time. In more isolated schools where buying products from the market daily is difficult, school coordinators give money weekly to cooks so that they do not need to go to the market too often (less perishable foods such as eggs can be bought weekly for example).

Clearly, though the Manual recommends that cooks are given money for 1 month of school feeding at a time, most cooks are in fact not familiar with handling and managing money for more than a week.

c. Who decides where to purchase food and what to buy

Given the Manual recommends that SFP money is handled by cooks directly, it also suggests that cooks should be responsible for most of the decision making related to the use of this money. PTA and school management on the other hand, should ensure that the foods purchased by the cook comply with the Manual’s recommendations in regards to meal composition.

During observation visits to schools, school management, cooks and PTAs were asked who decides where to buy food and what to buy. Overall answers were quite similar. However, cooks could chose more than one answer while directors/coordinators and PTA members could select only 1 answer. As decision-

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89 As per the DNASE Director, DNASE staff provided this guidance orally in training sessions.
90 Number of cooks actually being handed SFP money.
making is probably more collective than individual (one person only buying but with approval from others), the following figure presents answers from cooks only.

- **Where to purchase food**

![Figure 10. Who decides where to purchase food?](image)

As shown here, cooks decided where to buy food in basic education schools, with some cases involving directors/coordinators. Decision making by school management was more frequent in filial schools (24% of filial schools vs. 9% of central schools). Decisions were sometimes taken together with cooks. In 10% of the basic education schools, cooks were not involved at all in decision making.

In preschools, cooks are far less involved in such decision making: in 45% of the preschools, cooks are not involved at all in decision making. This can be explained by the fact that most preschools do not actually cook meals but simply buy food ready made at a kiosk, which can easily be done by the school coordinator. Note that in half of the preschools where cooks are taking decisions, they take decisions alone. In other cases, cooks mainly take decisions together with the coordinator. It is slightly more frequent for the coordinators to be involved in decision making in rural schools compared to urban schools.

During HATUTAN’s baseline survey, it was also noted that coordinators were involved in overseeing the food purchases in some of the schools visited.

- **What foods to buy**

Respondents were also asked who was responsible for deciding what foods to purchase (see following figure). In more than 70% of the schools, it was the same person deciding where to purchase food. As shown in the following pie-charts, in schools where it was not the same person that was mainly because more directors/coordinators were making decisions on what to buy (and less cooks). This reflects an even smaller decision-making power of cooks in the management of the SFP activity.
d. Cooks' salaries

Among the 116 cooks interviewed, 5 preschool cooks and 3 BE schools cooks said that they do not receive a salary. Some of these specified they were volunteers. It is also possible that the person interviewed was actually not the main cook but a helper. Note that some preschools have not hired cooks but teachers and/or parents/volunteers prepare student’s food.

All the cooks who received a compensation received $50 except 4 cooks\textsuperscript{92}: thus, nearly all of the schools paying their cooks are complying with the Manual which stipulates that the standard rate is $50 per month or multiples of $50 by tranche of 300 students (Annex 4 of the Manual). Only a few cases stated a deviation from this norm.

In theory, cooks are supposed to be paid directly by the Municipal Administration. However, for practical reasons, it seems difficult for all school cooks to come to the Municipal town to receive their salaries. Therefore in practice, many cooks receive their salaries from GAT and school management.

- In basic education schools, cooks said they receive their salary from GAT (45% - mainly in central schools), Municipal Finance (23%), Coordinators (15% - filial schools), KPME (15%).

- In preschools, 48% of the cooks receive their salaries from Municipal Administration, 18% from Coordinators and 13% from GAT.

Note that there are different practices according to municipalities: in Manatuto preschool cooks nearly always receive their salaries from coordinators whereas in Liquiça, basic education schools cooks are nearly always paid by the Municipal Administration.

Lastly, cooks are supposed to receive their salary quarterly from Municipal Administration. But in practice, the frequency of paying cooks’ salaries varies according to schools. In basic education schools, 46% of the cooks received their salaries monthly, 31% quarterly and 13% every 2 months. In preschools, it is more

\textsuperscript{91} 111 cases.
\textsuperscript{92} Four cooks stated different amounts received: 1 received $35 (BE school), 2 received $100 (BE school) and 1 received $115 (preschool). The survey did not explore the differing amounts.
frequent for cooks to be paid quarterly (45%), then monthly (38%). Note that paying the cook monthly was generally more frequent in the urban areas.

Some cooks expressed their discontent about this the frequency of payment during interviews:

“I recommend the government to improve the payment system so that cooks can receive their payment monthly and not quarterly”. [Cook, preschool in Liquiça]

3.6.2. Reporting of expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooks</td>
<td>EBF: 77% Coordinators, 12% cooks, 8% GAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EBC: 76% GAT, 24% cooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE: 92% Coordinators, 2% GAT, 2% teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section we will discuss who is responsible for preparing the reports of expenses at school level as this is an important step in the management of SFP funding. We will discuss separately the reporting of filial and central schools as well as that of preschools.

Note that most of the quantitative data in this chapter are based on interviews with 110 cooks and 112 directors (both answered questions on who prepares reports and to whom reports are sent). In 88% of the schools surveyed, both cook and director could be interviewed, which should normally ensure that answers from cooks and directors are the same in at least 88% of the sample. Yet, as can be seen on the following charts,93 there are often differences between answers from school management and cooks (especially for filial schools and preschools).

The SFP Manual (section 7) recommends that cooks prepare simple expenditure reports monthly and pass it onto school management for validation. This should be the case in all types of schools: filial, central and preschools. The reports of school clusters are compiled by their respective GATs into single reports and then sent to SFP coordinators at Municipal level. Preschools however send their reports directly to SFP coordinators. Two types of reports are submitted by schools to Municipal Education: monthly summary reports and quarterly financial reports. Completeness of the financial reports is the main condition for schools to receive funding for the following tranche.

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93 Note that the left side of the chart is directly from the Manual when the Ministry of Education (MoE) was responsible for managing the funds. The observation and survey was since conducted after the responsibility for implementation was deconcentrated to the Municipal government.
Proportion of stakeholders preparing reports by type of school (EBF/EBC/PE)

Second most common destination for sending reports

Legend
- Main destination for sending reports
- Second most common destination for sending reports

PLANNED REPORTING IN SFP MANUAL

MoE

Education

Municipal Director

SFP Coordinator

Checks

MoF

Finance

Municipal Finance

Verifies & approves

ACTUAL REPORTING

EBF REPORTS

EBF REPORTS

EBF REPORTS

EBC REPORTS

EBC REPORTS

EBC REPORTS

PE REPORTS

PE REPORTS

PE REPORTS

Legend

Quarterly Reporting
Monthly Reporting
Weekly/monthly Reporting
a. Reporting at filial school level

What is striking in the following charts is that only 12% of filial school reports are prepared by cooks themselves (and only 2% according to Coordinators). In most cases, the coordinator is preparing the report which is a clear deviation from the Manual. Note that 52% of Coordinators indicated that GAT were in fact preparing the financial report of filial schools. This was frequent in the four municipalities surveyed.

In Manatuto and Ermera for example, it was mentioned that filial schools located close to GAT gave their receipts directly to GAT in central school and let GAT prepare the report for them. EBC managers explained that such arrangements are meant to support filial schools. However, such deviations from the Manual should be identified and controlled to ensure more transparency.

![Figure 12. Who prepares filial schools reports and receives them](chart)

Regarding who receives reports, in most cases, filial schools send their reports to central school GAT or directors. If it is the GAT preparing the filial school report, the compiled report is then sent to Municipal Education. Interestingly, 12% of the cooks didn't know where the financial reports are sent to (“Other”) - which confirms that many filial school cooks are not involved in report preparation at all.

Note that if the Manual recommends for cooks to prepare monthly reports, in practice many cooks prepared weekly expenditure reports as they receive money weekly most of the time.

b. Reporting at central school level

In central schools, most respondents agreed that GAT is the main entity preparing the financial report which is in line with the Manual. The fact that only few central school cooks prepared the financial report seems understandable given it is probably easier for them to give all their receipts to GAT who will compile these in a report. However, transparency needs also to be ensured in such cases as GAT is not the entity spending the fund and therefore should not be the one reporting on it.

---

94 Two in Manatuto and 1 in Ermera.
95 This may be due in part to higher levels of illiteracy among rural women.
96 Sending to directors was mentioned in Ermera only.
97 Three in Ermera, 1 in Liquica and 1 in Manatuto.
Note that in one school of Ermera, the director said he was preparing the report which he then gave to the GAT\(^{98}\). This is also a deviation from the Manual as school management is only supposed to be a “pass-through entity” and not a fund manager.

Lastly, cooks sometimes reported that GAT was sending reports directly to Municipal Finance whereas it should be first validated by Municipal Education\(^99\).

![Figure 13. Who prepares central schools reports and who receives them?](image)

In the four municipalities where GATs were interviewed, GATs explained that they usually first ask EBC directors to approve the report before having it signed by coordinators and/or cooks and/or PTA. Reports are then submitted to the Municipal Education.

Note that GATs in some municipalities have slightly different procedures. GAT in Aimarleu (Ainaro) for example said that they invite all filial school coordinators to come to the central school to prepare the report together. This is done every 10\(^{th}\) of the month to ensure that report is ready every 15\(^{th}\) of the month as requested by Municipal Education. The GAT in Manatuto however does not prepare the report together with all coordinators.

SFP Coordinators are then in charge of reviewing all central school reports coming in. Interviews with most SFP Coordinators revealed that reports are often incomplete and late, which will then delay the transfer of the next tranche by the Municipal Administration. Municipal Administration in Manatuto mentioned that when reports are late, they usually try to find a solution with the Municipal Education not to delay the SFP implementation further.

The SFP Coordinator in Ainaro for example said that when some reports are missing, he will send a letter to the schools and help them find a solution. The Manatuto SFP Coordinator also explained that it is often difficult for GAT to collect reports from filial schools, especially during the rainy season.

After having verified all reports, the SFP Coordinator submits the report first to the Municipal Education director for final review before delivering it to Municipal Administration.

c. Reporting at preschool level

\(^{98}\) 14% of the EBC Director in the figure is from this single answer in Ermera.

\(^{99}\) Two in Liquiça and 1 in Manatuto.
Lastly, in preschools, it is very clear that cooks have no hand in reporting. Cooks themselves stated it is mostly school coordinators who report expenses. As seen earlier, they are also the ones mostly deciding how to use the money. This is very clearly a violation of the Manual which some justify by lack of trust.

“I purchase food myself because I do not trust the cook to be able to manage money.” [Preschool Coordinator, Manatuto]

Anecdotally, a preschool coordinator in Ainaro explained that they received money from another preschool coordinator who also prepares the expenses report for them. Therefore adding one more person in the transfer of funds and reporting system.

After preparing reports, most coordinators submit the report to the Municipal Education, as per Manual recommendations. Coordinators in Ermera, however, mostly send their reports to EBC directors or GAT for administrative and logistic support. SFP Coordinator in Ainaro also indicated the preschool reports are often joined with central school reports where the central school submits the preschool’s report together with their own report. In Liquiça, it is a common procedure to directly send reports to the Municipal Administration instead of the Municipal Education.

d. Conclusion on reporting of expenses and feedback from municipal and national level stakeholders

These findings highlight an overall lack of accountability of cooks in regards to the use of the SFP money. This also means that cooks have very limited, or no skills and practice at all, to report expenses. Interestingly, cooks who reported having participated in trainings were more often in charge of report preparation for the SFP.

Some municipalities have adopted their own procedures. In Ermera for example, EBC directors play a major role in reporting of SFP expenses. In Liquiça, Municipal Education seems less involved in controlling the quality of the reports as schools often send reports directly to Municipal Finance.

“Municipalities have different conditions in regards to SFP implementation and the capacity of the cook to prepare reports is also different.” [National Director of Municipal Finance, MSA]

This lack of uniformity may undermine the overall efficiency of the program implementation, as controlling how expenses are made and reported becomes more complicated. SFP Coordinators check the completeness of the reports but spot checks of the receipts (to validate purchases and accuracy

100 This preschool may be in the process of registering as it does not yet have an assigned EMIS number.
of price) are very rare or non-existent. Yet, some school clusters (as that of Aimarleu above) have adopted interesting initiatives in terms of reporting.

Feedback from national level actors indicated possibilities of fraud or wastage happening at school level. The Audit Court observed that some schools do not deduct from their requests the students that have dropped out or are inactive since the beginning of the year. PDHJ suggested that some schools may manipulate the number of students reported in their funding requests and noted a case where the return of unspent money did not follow procedures.

Lastly, PDHJ reported problems regarding the filing or transfer of documents when directors/coordinators are replaced by new ones, impeding smooth continuity of the program.

### 3.7. Monitoring and Training of SFP at school level

#### SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE AND DEVIATIONS WITH SFP MANUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Existence of a PTA in each school</strong>&lt;br&gt;KPME</td>
<td>1. <strong>Existence of a PTA in each school KPME</strong>&lt;br&gt;BE: 98% have a PTA &amp; 47% of PTAs are part of KPME&lt;br&gt;PE: 81% have a PTA &amp; 44% of PTAs are part of KPME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>PTAs meet whenever required</strong></td>
<td>2. <strong>PTAs meet whenever required</strong>&lt;br&gt;BE: 30% met in 2019, 33% met in 2018, 37% never meet&lt;br&gt;PE: 64% met in 2019, 25% met in 2018, 11% never meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>PTA in charge of monitoring food supply and cook</strong></td>
<td>3. <strong>PTA in charge of monitoring food supply and cook</strong>&lt;br&gt;BE: 76%, among which 85% conducted at least 1 monitoring mission in the second trimester&lt;br&gt;PE: 79%, among which 86% conducted at least 1 monitoring mission in the second trimester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In its introduction, the SFP Manual clearly stipulates that the "participation of the PTA in management and monitoring of the SFP is very important". More specifically, PTAs are in charge of monitoring the cooks to ensure quality of food supply and compliance with the cook’s contract. School directors/coordinators are also supposed to conduct such monitoring (section 5.2).

On the other hand, GAT is meant to conduct monthly monitoring to all schools (including nearby preschools) to ensure the efficiency of financial expenditure (section 5.3).

At municipal level, the SFP coordinator is there to monitor schools in general and provide support, including for the preparation of monthly reports. School inspectors are also supposed to conduct regular monitoring and audit on the progress of program implementation (section 5.4.2).

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101 DNASE instructions (oral) to schools are to cook for the number of students used in the budget law calculations based on EMIS numbers from June the previous year plus a standard annual increase of 1.9%. Schools are not instructed to reduce the amount of food procured and cooked based on actual numbers of student attendance.
Lastly, DNASE with the help of the SFP Coordinator shall conduct quarterly monitoring of the program, especially of the quality of the food supply (section 5.4.1).

Therefore, in this chapter, we will first draw our attention to PTAs mainly to understand how much they are actually involved in the monitoring of SFP implementation. We will then discuss monitoring by other stakeholders (GAT, school director, SFP Coordinator and school inspectors) as recommended in the Manual.

3.7.1. PTA’s involvement in the monitoring of SFP implementation

Overall, the Municipal Education directors had a very clear understanding of what are supposed to be the PTA’s functions for the SFP in line with the SFP Manual. They explained that the role of PTAs is mainly to observe and monitor the daily availability of food, to understand why food is not supplied on some days, and to sign the SFP reports before submitting them to the municipality. Some also indicated that PTA members can carry out procurement activities for the cook and supervise students who are standing in queue to receive meals. If these procurement activities are from local farmers, then this also aligns with the Manual’s guidance\(^\text{102}\). Municipal Education officials indicated that PTAs in some schools are active while others must be invited by the school to participate in activities, including attending SFP meetings, resolving school problems like access to water, and repairing kitchen or other school infrastructures.

a. Frequency of monitoring during school feeding

In order to verify such information, PTA members were asked directly if they conducted monitoring activities for the SFP. Their answers are presented below, disaggregated by functional PTAs and non-functional PTAs\(^\text{103}\).

\[\text{Table 28. Do you monitor the SFP? Percentage of affirmative responses} \]

\[F=\text{functional (meeting at least once over last 6 months); NF=non-functional}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NF</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NF</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, about 80% of basic education and preschools PTAs said they do monitor the SFP. This proportion was significantly higher among functional PTAs: 86% and 89% in BE schools and preschools

\(^{102}\) “Local supplier group coordinate with the local farmers to identify local products to support the school feeding program.” (section 5.2 of the Manual).

\(^{103}\) Functional PTAs have met at least once in the last 6 months.
respectively vs. 71% and 60% if the PTA was not functional. Yet, it is interesting to note that more than half of the PTAs who rarely meet (i.e. “non-functional PTAs”) still claim to conduct SFP monitoring activities. In other words, meeting regularly doesn’t seem to be a condition for many PTA members to continue their activities.104

Significant differences exist between municipalities: all PTAs in Manatuto stated they monitor the implementation of SFP while only about 70% of the PTAs in Ermera did so. The overall difference between central and filial schools is rather small.

Usually, only 1 PTA member conducts monitoring of the SFP in basic education schools while 41% of the active PTAs in preschools can have up to 2-3 members monitoring the SFP. This is understandable since more parents accompany the preschool children to school and wait for them. More parents will then easily observe or even assist in school feeding.

When asked why they do not monitor the SFP, the PTA members of basic education schools explained that: (i) they are too busy (5 cases); (ii) they lack information (4 cases); or (iii) SFP isn’t running (2 cases). Similar reasons were given by PTA members of preschools.

Anecdotally, a preschool coordinator in Ermera explained that the school does not have a PTA and that it is the PTA of the EBF close-by which is supposed to monitor school feeding in the preschool. Yet, such monitoring never happens according to the preschool coordinator, most likely because PTA members do not have time to cover two schools or may not feel it to be their responsibility.

However, the frequency of monitoring visit still seems very low as revealed by the following table.

Table 29. How many monitoring visits did you conduct in the second trimester?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NF</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>NF</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

104 Monitoring activities may be overstated.
105 Includes only PTAs which members said they monitor the SFP.
Indeed, in basic education schools, 8-18% of PTAS actually did not do any observation of school feeding in the current trimester\textsuperscript{106} (mainly in Ainaro). Only 33-41% conducted more than 3 monitoring visits (mainly in Ermera and Liquiça).

As expected, PTAs not having monitored school feeding in the current trimester are more frequent among non-functional PTAs. Yet, for BE schools interestingly, it is among non-functional PTAs that monitoring visits are the most frequent (3 or more visits in the last trimester). Clearly, some PTA members remain active even if the PTA does not have regular meetings.

The low frequency of PTAs conducting monitoring visits was also reflected during the observation of school feeding in June-July: PTA members were monitoring school feeding in only 21% of basic education schools (only filial schools) and in 17% of preschools. This occurred in 8 schools of Manatuto, 6 in Liquiça and 2 in Ermera, which confirms that PTAs in Manatuto are more active in monitoring the SFP than those of other municipalities. In nearly all cases, 1 PTA member only was present and they were more often men than women: 5 women for 12 men.

Superintendents of the school inspection services expressed concern, explaining that PTAs do not carry out regular monitoring because they are volunteers, which means monitoring is carried out only when they have time. Also, community members are not well aware of the SFP and do not know how to support it.

Anecdotal feedback from some school inspectors suggests that some PTAs consider the SFP to be a responsibility of the government and therefore, are not willing to give their time.

b. Weak mobilization of PTAs by schools

The Manual clearly explains that "it is also the responsibility of the director of Basic School to hold meetings with PTA as required or when there are important issues to discuss." (Section 5.3.1.).

Yet, there is evidence that many schools fail to actively involve parents. In the HATUTAN’s baseline survey, when schools were asked who is responsible of overseeing school feeding, 59% answered "school staff only", 21% "PTA and school staff together", 10% "PTA only" and 10% "no oversight". Clearly, school management, and in a few cases teachers, are actually taking a lead role in SFP implementation.

In each school, a KPME is supposed to be established by the school director/coordinator and is meant to be the central entity managing the SFP at school level with the PTA being its main monitoring body. Interestingly, less than 50% of the PTAs members interviewed during the observation survey said the PTA was part of the KPME.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
& Basic education & Preschool \\
\hline
\# of cases & 45 & 27 \\
\hline
Ainaro & 77\% & 67\% \\
Ermera & 6\% & 62\% \\
Liquiça & 60\% & 11\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Is the PTA part of the KPME?}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{106} The question asked how many monitoring visits done in the current trimester referring to the second trimester starting in mid-April. Enumerators worked concurrently in all four municipalities.
There seems to be important differences according to municipalities: all BE schools’ PTAs in Manatuto said they were part of the KPME vs. 6% only in Ermera. This suggests that the Municipal Education offices are not all similarly active in making sure schools implement the SFP as specified in the Manual. Indeed, interviews with Municipal Education Directors revealed that they do not always understand clearly the KPME role. They are mainly familiar with PTAs.

No significant difference was observed between central and filial schools, and between rural and urban schools either.

PTA members who said the PTA was part of the KPME were then asked if they sometimes had meetings with other KPME members. Such meetings are also supposed to be initiated by the school management. Results are presented on the next page.

### Table 31. Does the PTA have meetings with other KPME members?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% among PTAs who said they are part of the KPME (21)</td>
<td>% among all PTAs interviewed (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67% of BE schools PTAs who are part of the KPME said they have meetings with other KPME members. This represents only 31% of all PTAs interviewed in basic education schools. Proportions were similarly low in preschools.

Here also, important differences exist between municipalities with Liquiça being the less active and Manatuto the most active. This was different in preschools: Manatuto and Liquica are not holding any KPME meetings with PTA at all.

Reasons given for not holding KPME meetings were: no time (6 cases, mainly in Liquica), KPME meeting will be held later (1 case in Liquiça), school management did not inform the PTA (1 case in Ainaro), there is no SFP (1 case in Manatuto).

Finally, it should be noted that even when the KPME holds meetings, these meetings are not always held on a yearly basis as recommended in the Manual. Among the 24 PTAs who said they have meetings with the KPME, 13 had meetings in 2019, 9 in 2018 and 2 in 2017. KPME in preschools more often had meetings in 2018.

c. PTAs’ lack of understanding of their role
As mentioned in the baseline survey report, the low involvement of PTAs in school feeding is evidenced by a lack of understanding of the role of PTAs in schools, as well as the limited opportunities for PTA meetings. Household surveys revealed that most caregivers did not have a clear understanding of PTAs nor their role in the school. Data collectors reported confusion from caregivers regarding the PTA questions. This may be a result of the lack of PTA meetings at the schools and the fact that nearly one half of the PTAs had only one member and are potentially not functional.

One possible reason is also the fact that PTAs still have very limited exposure to the SFP Manual. During the observation survey, PTA members were asked if they knew about the SFP Manual. Answers are presented below.

**Table 32. Do you know about the SFP Manual? (% answering yes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 30% of the PTA members in basic education schools knew about the SFP Manual. PTA members in central schools are definitely more aware of the SFP Manual than in filial schools. In preschools, a great disparity was observed between municipalities with only some PTAs in Liquiça knowing about the Manual.

There is also an important difference between rural and urban schools: 36% of urban PTAs knew about the Manual vs. 20% in rural schools.

Lastly, note that all 21 respondents who knew about the Manual said they believe the school follows the instructions in the Manual.

In conclusion, clearly more dissemination of the SFP Manual is needed for PTAs in general and more specifically in filial schools and rural schools.

### 3.7.2. Monitoring by other stakeholders

#### a. Monitoring by school management and teachers

As mentioned in the Manual, school directors/coordinators are also supposed to monitor cooks and the quality of meals served.

During observation of school feeding, school staff (directors/coordinators/teachers) were monitoring in 59% of the basic education schools and 65% of preschools (86 schools observed overall). This is quite a high proportion overall given it is unlikely that the school staff members monitor school feeding on a daily basis. Monitoring by school staff was more frequent in Liquiça. Yet, according to the
Manual, teachers are not expected to be involved in SFP in order for them to focus only on teaching activities.

Besides school staff, other stakeholders were also monitoring school feeding on the observation day: parents (in 6 schools of Liquiça mainly), two inspectors (Ermera and Liquiça), HATUTAN staff, and a community member.

However, it is possible that this situation is not representative of a standard school feeding day, as the schools were informed in advance that the HATUTAN team was coming to observe school feeding on that day.

b. Monitoring by GAT

No specific question was asked to GAT regarding possible monitoring visits to schools. GAT members mainly explained how they withdraw funds, distribute it among filial schools and prepare reports, but none mentioned any activities to control financial expenditures by cooks.

c. Monitoring by SFP Coordinators

No specific question was asked to SFP Coordinators about their monitoring activities/visits to the schools. During interviews, SFP Coordinators mainly explained their involvement in the preparation of monthly and quarterly reports. Some SFP Coordinators explained that when schools are not submitting reports on time or submit incomplete reports, they usually provide support to schools (Ainaro, Ermera) or extend the deadline for report submission (Manatuto).

According to MOH, there is still no effective supervision of school feeding from the municipal education and municipal health services.

d. Monitoring by inspectors

The discussion with the National Inspection Services confirmed the important role of inspectors in the monitoring of the SFP. Inspectors are in charge of:

- Monitoring school directors and more specifically how SFP money is used and how expenses are reported. The Municipal Administration in Ainaro confirmed that they often ask school inspectors to monitor SFP implementation after they send money to EBC;
- Observing in the kitchen if the quality of the rice was acceptable and utensils clean;
- Monitoring food preparation by cooks.

Interviews with inspectors and superintendents indicated a quite good overview of the program’s difficulties which seems to support the fact that inspectors are indeed conducting regular monitoring of the SFP in schools.

However, feedback from the PDHJ was far less positive, indicating that PDHJ observers did not see school inspectors monitoring the schools.\(^{107}\)

e. Monitoring by DNASE

\(^{107}\) PDHJ official also observed that school inspectors themselves may lack monitoring. Workload may have prevented the PDHJ observers from crossing with school inspectors as a single school inspector may be assigned to up to 30 schools to monitor with one inspector per administrative post.
MEYS indicated that it is the responsibility of DNASE to develop monitoring templates and to perform evaluation of the program based on performance indicators (chapter 8 of the Manual). However, updated data on these indicators could not be accessed for the use of this SFP report.

Monitoring by DNASE is mainly conducted via SFP Coordinators who confirmed that they are sending quarterly reports to update DNASE on program implementation.

3.7.3. Training

a. Exposure to training on SFP guidance, nutrition and hygiene

After launching the SFP Manual in 2013, DNASE delivered a first round of socialization for parents and local authorities followed by trainings about SFP implementation at the administrative post level. Trainings targeted school management and cooks. In 2015, DNASE delivered another round of trainings for directors and coordinators at the municipal level only, due to budget limitations. Directors and coordinators were then responsible to train cooks in their respective schools. Since then, no training specific on SFP implementation has been delivered (again due to budget limitation).

It is likely that since 2015, some school personnel and cooks have been replaced. The following table indicates the extent to which the current implementers of the SFP have been exposed to trainings.

Note that the questions referred to a training or a simple orientation about the SFP (for example the school coordinator giving guidance to the cook about the Manual’s menu).

| Table 33. Exposure to training/guidance on SFP of directors/coordinators and cooks |
|-------------------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| # of total cases | Basic Education schools | | Preschools |
| | Directors /Coordinators | Cooks | Coordinators | Cooks |
| All schools | 54% | 37% | 54% | 13% |
| Ainaro | 75% | 57% | 36% | 27% |
| Ermera | 50% | 30% | 47% | 21% |
| Liquiça | 70% | 50% | 62% | 0% |
| Manatuto | 13% | 0% | 60% | 20% |
| Rural | 50% | 42% | 63% | 4% |
| Urban | 58% | 32% | 49% | 17% |

Indicators for the SFP mentioned in the Manual include: increase enrolment rate; reduce child malnutrition cases; reduce student dropout rate; improve student’s academic performance; increase local economy capacity; promote socially marginalized group to obtain their right to education; expand and build the capacity of national and district education authorities in order to execute their roles and responsibilities in their areas; promote communities and parents’ participation in the development of education sector and support for School Feeding Program.

With limited space in the office, records of previous years are stored in the warehouse without always retaining an electronic summary of the data by year. Lack of budget has limited DNASE’s ability to fully monitor.
Only about half of the directors and coordinators and one-fourth of the cooks interviewed have been exposed to training/guidance on the SFP. This is clearly insufficient. In preschools, only 13% of the cooks have been trained/instructed.

Training of cooks was mainly related to cooking skills in general (56% of the 27 cooks trained), how to follow the SFP menu (41%), hygiene (3 cases only), PME in general (2 cases).

There seems to be disparities between municipalities with less exposure to training/guidance in Manatuto basic education schools for example (but not in preschools).

In urban schools, slightly more basic education directors/coordinators and preschool cooks have been exposed to training/guidance. While in rural schools, slightly more basic education cooks and preschool coordinators were exposed to training/guidance.

Note that most of the trainings delivered lasted 1 day or a few hours only.

- **Who delivered training/guidance and when**

Answers provided as for who provided trainings/guidance were not always clear (e.g. "Edukasaun" could mean Municipal Education, Basic Education Department or DNASE for example). The following table presents a summary of these answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 34. Who delivered training/guidance and when(^{110})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># of total cases</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who delivered the training:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNASE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEYS/&quot;Education&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School directors/coordinators/&quot;EBC&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO/UN (Mercy Corps, FAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (inspector, &quot;health&quot;, &quot;finance&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No info</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When was the training delivered:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before 2017</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{110}\) Multiple answers per respondent possible.
In basic education schools, training/guidance of school management and cooks was mainly delivered by MEYS (referred to as DNASE or MEYS or “Education”). 33% of the cooks were also trained by NGOs or UN agencies such as Mercy Corps and FAO.

According to this data, only 11% of the cooks in basic education schools received guidance from school management and 5% from GAT. This seems very low and perhaps doesn’t reflect the reality.

In preschools, coordinators either received training from MEYS or from basic education directors/coordinators (probably guidance rather than training).

Directors/Coordinators and cooks then told enumerators when they received such training/guidance. Answers given covered a wide range of years (down to 2003 for cooks). Training/guidance in preschools was overall fairly recent (in 2019 for about half of the coordinators). In basic education schools, half or more of the respondents said they received training/guidance more than 3 years ago. Clearly, a refresher training is recommended in basic education schools.

3.8. Food storage, preparation and service practices

In this chapter, we will discuss cooks’ practices in terms of how and where food is stored, prepared and served. We will also discuss food preparation and service habits, especially in terms of hygiene and compare this to the Manual’s guidance. Most of the information presented here was gathered during the “kitchen and food storage survey” (February-March, 435 schools) and during the observation of school feeding (June-July, 87 schools).

Note that no information on the quality of the infrastructure itself will be presented here as this will be done in section 3.9.

3.8.1. Food storage practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE AND DEVIATIONS WITH SFP MANUAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage free from insects, water, dust and animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Cleanliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: 33% mostly clean to clean, 51% not so clean, 16% dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE: 33% mostly clean to clean, 58% not so clean, 9% dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Food raised off the floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: 72% food raised, 28% food on floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Roof not leaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: 24% not leaking, 76% leaking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of food storage practices, the SFP Manual mainly focuses on hygiene: “Store only food in place that are secure from insects, water, dust and animals.” (Annex 1).

a. Where is food stored

Cooks and directors/coordinators were asked where the food was stored after purchase. Results are presented below. Note that directors/coordinators gave similar answers to cooks. For this reason, only answers of cooks are presented on the following page.

**Table 35. Where is food stored after purchase?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Filial</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook’s house</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School’s storage room</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School’s kitchen</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School’s office</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food is not stored</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/Coordinator’s house</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common location to store food is in the cooks’ house (35% of BE schools) followed by the school’s storage room (25% in BE schools). If no storage room is available in the school, food can also be stored in the school’s kitchen, office or classroom. It is likely that if schools had proper storage facilities, less food would be stored in the cook’s house.

Note that food is more often stored in the storage room in the central schools and urban schools (more central schools have such storage facilities). Whereas in filial schools and rural schools, food is more often stored in the kitchen’s school.

- **Storing inside school compound**

PTA members were asked if they thought the school had a storage room. Surprisingly, in basic education schools, a much higher proportion of schools was reported as having a storage room: 53% on average while the answers from cooks indicated only 23% of them were storing food in a storage. Higher proportions of schools with “storage within the school” were also reported in HATUTAN’s food storage survey (57% of basic education schools and 28% of preschool) and in the baseline survey (64% of all school had storage space).

This suggests that any room is considered a “storage space in the school” when it can be used to store food (not a room dedicated to storage only as specified in the previous table.

The proportion of cooks storing in the storage room of the school or at least, in the school compound, varies significantly according to municipalities. The following table presents cooks answers for storage
in the school by municipality (whether it is in a storage room only or in the school compound in general\textsuperscript{111}).

Table 36. Storing in a storage room or in school compound by municipality, as per cooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Basic education (52 cases)</th>
<th>Preschools (64 cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Storing in storage room</td>
<td>Storing in school compound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Storing in a storage room was more frequent in Liquiça for basic education and preschools. If not in the storage room, cooks often used the kitchen or school office.

In Manatuto, storing in the school compound is overall quite rare. Most cooks store food in their house or in the Coordinator's house for preschools.

In Ainaro, most Basic Education school cooks stored food in the schools kitchen while preschool cooks stored food outside school mainly.

Lastly in Ermera, cooks used as much as possible the space in the schools, whether that was a storage room, the kitchen, a classroom or school offices.

In conclusion, cooks have adopted different practices to cope with the actual lack of storage rooms in the schools. Some schools are trying to keep food within the school compound whereas others opt to store in a private house.

The observation survey conducted in more than 400 schools in February-March revealed that many schools also use the teacher's room, while others sometimes use the school library or even toilets (2 cases in Ermera, 1 in Ainaro and 1 in Liquiça) to store food.

“\textit{No storage in this school and what I observe is that they are using toilet as a temporary storage. Overall condition of the storage is bad and they use wood plank to raise the food up from the floor}”. [Observation from Data Collector in an EBF, Ermera]

- Storing outside school compound

The feedback collected during the food storage survey indicated that when food was stored outside the school compound, it could be stored in various places: the cooks' house mainly but also houses of school personnel or other community members living close to the school and the Village Office (Sede suco). Preschools also mentioned using food storage facilities of filial schools if they were located nearby.

\textsuperscript{111} For school compound, proportions of answers for storage room, kitchen, classroom and school office were added.
In most cases, houses are less than 15 minute walk away from the school but in extreme cases, food can be stored 30 minutes away from the school.

Clearly, storing in private houses is less preferable because it is less convenient to the school and less secure. There is greater opportunity for misuse or perception of misuse, which could lead to tensions in the community.

b. Hygiene practices

During the observation of more than 400 schools in February-March, data collectors took note on the cleanliness of the place used to store food (whether it was in a storage room or not). Results are presented below. The observation is subjective, based on common sense judgement of the observer, and that observation mostly occurred when school feeding was not active.

Table 37. Cleanliness of food storage by municipality (observation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Basic Education (344)</th>
<th>Preschool (89)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly clean to clean</td>
<td>Not so clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is definitely an issue with the cleanliness of the places used to store food in basic education schools: 51% were not so clean and 16% dirty.

The places used to store food in preschools were slightly cleaner: only 9% were categorized as "dirty".

Information regarding raising the food off the ground was also collected:

- **In basic education schools**, 52% used pallets (more frequent in central schools), 4% had shelves, 17% had other techniques (table, wood planks, etc.) and 28% didn't use anything (food stored directly on the floor).

- **In preschools**, 33% used pallets, 6% had shelves and others also used different solutions: table, wood planks, suitcase, bucket, etc. As preschools do not usually receive rice for the SFP and mainly serve light snacks, there is in fact rarely a need for long-term storage. A place to prepare the snack is often sufficient.

---

112 Data from baseline survey as food storage survey did not provide complete data on this.

113 Data from food storage survey.
Lastly, in most cases (85% in basic education schools and 91% in preschools), food is stored together with non-food items which can present risks of contamination in case other stored items contain chemical substances as detergent, sanitizers, etc.

*Figure 15. Food stored in a dirty environment in an EBC of Ermera*

### 3.8.2. Food preparation practices

#### SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE AND DEVIATIONS WITH SFP MANUAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Cooks wash hands before cooking</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Cooks wash hands before cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BE: 35% often wash hands but without soap, 62% wash hands rarely or sometimes only (without soap), 3% never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE: 39% often wash hands (incl. 9% with soap), 24% wash hands rarely or sometimes only (without soap), 45% never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Wash utensils</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Kitchen is clean</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of food preparation practices, the SFP Manual mainly focuses on hygiene: “local supplier (cook) wash hands before preparing meals and feeding the students.” (section 3). Also in the template of the cook’s agreement (annex 4): “The Local Cook has responsibility to offer a good service to all students, and washing the kitchen utensils before or after student eat the meal. And ensure the hygiene condition, clean up the kitchen and refectory if it is assisted.”

Therefore in this section, we will mainly discuss hygiene issues but also present briefly common food preparations practices in schools.

#### a. Where is food usually prepared

Firstly, the food storage and kitchen survey conducted in February-March indicated that not all schools have kitchens. In basic education schools, about 90% of the schools have a kitchen whereas only 40%
of preschools have a kitchen. Therefore, information in section 3.8.2 also includes food preparation practices when food is prepared outside the school.

![Example of Preschool kitchen in Liquica](image)

**Figure 16. Example of Preschool kitchen in Liquica**

When a kitchen is not available, cooks have to find alternative solutions. In most cases, cooks use their own kitchen to prepare school meals. They sometimes also use the kitchen of another school or of a school member (Coordinator, teacher), the village office (sede suco) or even a random room within the school.

“I suggest to construct our kitchen near by the school in order to facilitate us to cook for the students. This is because we cook at home, yet it is distant from the school. The food gets dirty when it is taken to the school.” [EBF cook, Manatuto]

“There is no kitchen and we are using the coordinator’s kitchen and my kitchen. Please pass our concern.” [Preschool cook, Ainaro]

“It is important to build a kitchen first before having school feeding program implemented as we are using one room/class as kitchen.” [EBF PTA member, Ermera]

**b. Number of workers in the kitchen and underage helpers**

The interviews with cooks indicated that 83% of Basic Education school cooks have helpers. This is more frequent in central schools (96% vs. 73% in filial schools). On average, cooks work with 2 to 3 helpers (more helpers in central schools). In preschools, only 14% of the cooks had helpers (mostly 1, rarely 2).

Note that nearly all helpers were female, which is in line with the Manual. Indeed, the Manual specifies that the selection of cooks (and therefore of their helpers) should give priority to women from the community. While the intention may be to increase the availability of jobs for women in rural areas, this reinforces traditional gender roles within the community (women cooking).

During observation in 87 schools serving food in June-July, the following number of cooks were observed in the kitchens:

- **Basic Education**: 2.6 cooks and helpers on average. The highest number of people working in kitchens (5 to 6 persons) were observed in filial schools with high number of students (from 400 to more than a thousand). Only 3 basic education schools had men assisting during meal preparation. There was on average slightly more people working in the kitchen in Ermera (2.8) as compared to Liquiça and Manatuto (2.3).
- **Preschool**: 1.3 cook/helper on average. The maximum number of people working in the kitchen was observed in Manatuto where 5 persons were preparing food for less than a hundred students. More importantly, in 2 preschools of Manatuto, underage assistants were working in the kitchen (2 girls and 1 boy). Also, in 7 basic education schools, students were helping the cook in the kitchen: 3 schools in Manatuto, 3 in Ermera, and 1 in Liquiça. On average, 3.1 students were helping in those kitchens (maximum 8 in Ermera) and all were girls except 2 boys in Liquiça. Students were mainly helping to wash dishes (5 schools), cooking/preparing vegetables (2 schools), collecting food from kiosk (1 school), and serving food (1 school). This is clearly a violation of the Manual and of human rights in general. As mentioned earlier, the cook's agreement clearly stipulates that the cooks are personally responsible to wash the dishes and utensils used for school feeding.

On a side note, school inspectors mentioned that parents also sometimes gave a hand to cooks to prepare food. Parents may be more likely to help in preschools when parents accompany and wait for their children during the 2 hour class period.

**c. Hygiene practices**

A significant proportion of schools do not have kitchens. This is a problem for hygiene as well because the cooks cannot prepare meals in the best conditions: sometimes using another room in the school or, when they cook outside the school, having to transport food to school after it is prepared. Also, if food is prepared outside the schools, there is less control by the school on the cooks’ hygiene practices during meal preparation and it may be harder for parents to monitor.

During the baseline survey, parents also expressed their concerns regarding hygiene, stating that the preparation methods were not always hygienic and could lead to illnesses. They were also worried about the quality of the rice, especially after it has been stored for a long time.

Most of the data from the following table was collected during the observation survey conducted in June-July. Note that only data from schools having school feeding the day of observation is used in this section.

- **Availability of water in the kitchens**

  **Table 38. Is there water for washing and cooking during meal preparation?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes - in a container</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – from a tap</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a tap but it’s not functional</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No water at all</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

114 Gendered roles predominate with the female students doing food preparation and washing while the 2 male students went to fetch food at the kiosk.

115 More than one answer possible.
As water does not arrive directly into the kitchens, in most cases the cooks use water which is stored in a bucket/basin. This definitely helps but is also not ideal if cooks do not use this limited amount of water in a proper way. As indicated by MOH, cooks use the same water to cook, clean, wash plates/spoons, etc. Such practices are not hygienic and can have a negative impact on children's health, for example hepatitis.

In urban schools however, more schools had functioning taps in the kitchen: 20% vs. 6% only in rural schools.

What is most striking is that a significant proportion of cooks prepare food without any water available at all in the kitchen: 29% in basic education schools and 24% in preschools.

In Manatuto and Liquica, 43% and 38% of the cooks respectively prepared meals without water at all.

If most schools have to use a container because kitchens do not have water facilities, it is crucial that water containers are clean, especially if water is stored longer than a day. Information on this is presented below.

**Table 39. Cleanliness of water containers where water is stored more than a day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water container cleaned daily and has a lid</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water seems clean but water container not often cleaned</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean water but no lid</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water looks a bit dirty</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water container not so clean</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here also, poor hygiene habits were observed, especially in basic education schools:

- In 24% of the kitchens observed, either the water or its container were dirty.

- In 42% of the kitchens observed, the water seemed clean but the conditions were not ideal as the container was not washed daily or had no lid.

- **Proportion of kitchens observed which were clean**

During the observation of schools in June-July, observers took note on the cleanliness of the kitchens (in some cases, this was not the school kitchen as schools did not have a kitchen). Results are presented below.

**Table 40. Cleanliness of kitchens by municipality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By municipality</th>
<th>Basic education (34)</th>
<th>Preschool (50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly clean to clean</td>
<td>Mostly clean to clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not so clean</td>
<td>Not so clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dirty</td>
<td>Dirty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only 56% of the kitchens used in basic education schools and 40% of those used in preschools were found to be clean or mostly clean. Clearly, more efforts are needed.

In Liquiça especially, 89% of the kitchens used in basic education schools were "not so clean" and 14% of those used in preschools were dirty. While in Ermera, 76% and 83% of the kitchens used in basic education and preschools respectively were "clean to mostly clean".

Clearly, having water available in the kitchen is necessary to have a clean kitchen:

- Among preschools, 43% of the kitchens where water was available were clean vs. 30% in kitchens which had no water.
- Among BE schools though, there was a higher proportion of cleaner kitchens among kitchens which had no water (75% vs. 48% among kitchens with water available). This is very surprising and seems to reflect mainly the situation observed in Liquica where most kitchens visited were not so clean, even though water was available in a container the day of the observation. Cooks are perhaps storing water in these containers for cooking mainly and not for cleaning the kitchen itself.

At one EBF school in Ermera a data collector observed in February (before school feeding started):

"The condition of the kitchen is not very clean because someone tied a pig inside."

Lastly, the use of detergent to clean the kitchen was asked of coordinators/directors during the food storage survey:

\[
\begin{array}{lcccc}
\text{Ermera} & 76\% & 24\% & 83\% & 17\% \\
\text{Liquiça} & 11\% & 89\% & 22\% & 64\% & 14\% \\
\text{Manatuto} & 62\% & 38\% & 40\% & 40\% & 20\% \\
\hline
\text{By water availability} & & & & \\
\text{Water available} & 48\% & 52\% & 43\% & 46\% & 11\% \\
\text{No water} & 75\% & 25\% & 30\% & 54\% & 15\% \\
\hline
\text{All} & 55\% & 45\% & 40\% & 48\% & 12\%
\end{array}
\]

\[
\text{Table 41. Frequency of using detergent to clean the kitchen} \\
\text{(reported by school administrators)}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In basic education schools, the most frequent response was to use detergent to clean the kitchen “sometimes”.

Detergent was used daily in only 34% of basic education schools and 62% of preschools. Nearly all school coordinators/directors in Liquiça reported using detergent daily which was very different from other municipalities where only about 20% of the basic education schools said they used detergent daily. This was not substantiated with direct observation in June-July, however, as kitchens in Liquiça scored poorly in cleanliness. In the baseline survey, the same question was asked and more respondents said they never use detergent to clean the kitchen (21% overall).

Clearly, the use of detergent to clean the kitchens is insufficient overall.

- **Cooks washing hands before meal preparation**

One of the key recommendations in the Manual was for cooks to wash their hands before preparing meal. This was observed in 87 schools overall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often wash hands and use soap</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash hands but don’t use soap</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some cooks only wash hands</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely wash hands</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not wash hands</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Washing hands with soap is also not a common practice among cooks. In more than 70% of the basic education schools, cooks either wash hands without soap or rarely wash hands. In 45% of preschools, cooks do not even wash hands at all. Again, even if no cooked meal is prepared, it is crucial for people preparing the snack to have their hands washed with soap prior to handling the food items.

The above data was crossed with observation on availability of water in the kitchen. As a result:

- The proportion of kitchens where cooks often washed hands (with or without soap) was higher in kitchens where water was available: 43% vs. 19% in kitchens where water was not available.
- The proportion of kitchens where only some cooks washed their hands or rarely washed their hands was, as expected, higher in kitchens where water was not available: 43% vs. 32% in kitchens where water was available. Same observation for kitchens where cooks were not washing hands at all (38% vs. 25% in kitchens with water available).

This shows two tendencies. Firstly, some cooks are well aware of the importance of washing hands before cooking and do it even though water is not available in the kitchen (washing hands outside the kitchen). Secondly, even though water is available in some kitchens, not all cooks will systematically wash their hands before cooking and few used soap. This could either reflect a lack of understanding of hygiene practices or simply a lack of care during cooking.
• **Other hygiene practices during meal preparation**

The following presents a range of other practices which were observed during school visits.

**Table 43. Hygiene practices during meal preparation (observed)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29 to 35&lt;sup&gt;116&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>34 to 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks wear head cover</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks wash food before cooking</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks chew betel nut</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks smoke</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan lids observed in the kitchen</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks put spoon used to taste food back in the pan&lt;sup&gt;117&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A trash bin is present in the kitchen</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals in the kitchen</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wet and dry foods are stored separately&lt;sup&gt;118&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children come in the kitchen</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Areas which still need attention are:

- Wearing head covers. This was more frequent in central.
- Allowing animals (mostly dogs) to enter the kitchen. In some cases, animals seen were pigs, chickens, cats<sup>119</sup>. This was more frequent in rural areas (51% vs. 35% in urban schools).
- Having a trash bin available in the kitchen.
- Limiting the coming in of students in the kitchen when cooks are preparing food.
- Not putting back a spoon used to taste food back in the pan.

Cooks usually washed food before cooking with the exceptions occurring in schools serving bread/dosi/fried banana, which is very understandable.

<sup>116</sup> Not all observations were made in all schools as not all schools served meals during the observation day.<br><sup>117</sup>% among all cases observed even though in many schools, cooks did not actually taste the food (served snacks).<br><sup>118</sup> Among 29 and 42 cases.<br><sup>119</sup>In 2 schools, rats were observed in the kitchen (Ermera and Liquica).
3.8.3. Food service practices

In terms of service, the SFP Manual mainly focuses on hygiene and timing:

- In Chapter 3: "Students are fed according to classes. Cook and teachers ensure that students wash their hands, with soap if possible, before having meals."

- In Chapter 3: "School feeding should be provided during morning breaks, and before entering classes or afternoon breaks. Time to receive meals should not exceed 30 minutes in order not to interrupt classes."

- In Annex 4, i.e. template of agreement with the cook: “The Local Cook has responsibility to offer a good service to all students.”

We will therefore present data on the timing of the service, hygiene practices but also information regarding who else in the school eats food prepared by cooks.

**a. Where are meals served**

As most schools do not have a canteen, schools most of the time serve meals on the veranda, outdoors or in classrooms. The following table refers to school observations conducted in June-July.

*Table 44. Where are meals served?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong># of cases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the veranda outside</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the classroom</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some in classroom, some outside</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the canteen</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eating in a canteen was observed only in 2 EBF schools in Ermera and 1 preschool in Liquica.

In basic education schools, eating outside was the most frequent situation. However, all central schools more often had a veranda where students could sit to eat. Very different practices were observed in preschools where students mostly eat in class.

b. Timing of school feeding

- **When do cooks prepare food**

It is important that cooking begins early enough to ensure food is ready for the recess, or if possible before class starts in order for students to start learning not being hungry.

During the observation survey, cooks indicated at what time they usually start cooking.

- 14% start cooking before 7am
- 79% start cooking between 7 and 9am
- 8% start cooking at 9am or later

Preschool cooks tend to start food preparation slightly later than BE schools cooks, which is understandable as preschools’ meals are easier to prepare.

After 9 am seems too late to be on time for the morning recess at about 10 am and after 7am is too late to be able to serve meal before school starts at 8 am.

Note that during the observation of school feeding in 87 schools, cooks often started cooking slightly later than what was indicated during the interview (about 85% starting cooking between 7 and 9am).

About 30% of the schools surveyed reported having 2 shifts (morning and afternoon). In such cases, about 60% of basic education school cooks usually prepared food separately, therefore ensuring that the students who are eating in the afternoon have a freshly cooked meal. However in about 85% of preschools, cooks mainly prepare food for both shifts in only one go (perhaps because shifts are only 2 hours and the food served are light meals which do not need much preparation).

- **When are students served**

During the school feeding observation, most schools served food during recess.

However, 2 basic education schools in Ermera and 4 preschools (Ermera, Liqüíça, Manatuto) served the meal after class and none before class. Also 4 basic education schools (Liqüíça, Manatuto) served the meal during learning time (2 had started service during recess). These are clearly deviations from the Manual as school feeding is not supposed to diminish learning time. Also serving a school meal after class is not appropriate as there will be no impact on the attention of students during learning time, and even reduced attention due to hungriness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During recess</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After class</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

120 Multiple choices question.
During class | 12%

Such deviations were also spotted in the baseline survey where children were reportedly spending less time in class due to the time needed to serve meals.

“Sometimes there is no time to feed the children. The break is supposed to take 30 minutes, but sometimes takes far longer. This was a challenge last year. I’ve spoken with the cook to start cooking before classes start. We need to follow the school hours.” [Coordinator, Liquiça]

FONGTIL expressed concern about the difficulty for cooks to prepare and serve meals on time.

“One cook prepares meals for 100 students. This impacts on students as they waste long periods of time just to wait for their food and this affects their normal class hours.” [FONGTIL]

**How long does school feeding last**

During school feeding observations, the service took on average 33 minutes in basic education schools and 22 minutes in preschools. However, as shown in the following table, a significant proportion of basic education schools take more than 35 minutes to serve meals: 38% in basic education schools and 8% in preschools. This was especially true for basic education schools in Manatuto. These are all deviations from the Manual which recommends not to go beyond 30 minutes, what is the average recess duration.

**Table 46. Proportion of schools where school feeding lasted more than 35 minutes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, in 26% of the basic education schools (4 schools in Liquiça and 5 in Manatuto), it was noted that students took some time from class to finish their food. In these schools, school feeding took on average 47 minutes.

Thus, it is likely that the proportion of basic education schools serving meals during class in the previous table (12%) is underestimated. Or that in some schools, service was done during recess but students were still eating when class started.

A number of reasons can explain why school feeding takes too much time in some schools:

- **Having enough spoons/plates:** If utensils are insufficient, students have to take turn to use plates and spoons. As a result, school feeding lasted more than 35 minutes in 42% of the schools where the number of plates/spoons was insufficient, compared to only 9% among schools where enough utensils were reported.

- **Schools having a canteen:** It took on average longer for cooks to finish service in schools where students ate outside than in schools which had canteens: 47% of the school feeding
observed in schools where students ate outside lasted more than 35 minutes, vs. 33% in schools where students ate in a canteen. This could be linked to the fact that service in a canteen is easier to organize for cooks. Students eating on a table in the canteen could finish faster than those holding their plates while eating somewhere in the school yard.

- **Organizing students to be served in line**: Students were not organized in queue to be served in more than half of the observed basic education schools and such schools had on average a longer service time than the others.

c. **Hygiene during school feeding**

As mentioned in the Manual, it is the responsibility of the cook and teachers to make sure students wash their hands before eating, and if possible with soap. As seen below, a significant proportion of schools still do not follow the Manual recommendations in this regard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 47. Is there a place for students to wash hands?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No water facility at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in a container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, from a tap</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50% of observed basic education schools did not have water at all for students to wash hands. In other schools, water used to wash hands was nearly always from a container. Only 2 EBC in Ermera had functioning taps.

In preschools, even though no tap was available in most schools, a much higher proportion of schools had water available in containers for students to wash hands. Yet, preschools in Ermera more often had no water available (50%).

Having soap available for students is a general responsibility of the school management. Nevertheless, only 18% of the observed 34 basic education schools had soap (i.e. 6 EBF). Note that even though soap was available in these 6 schools, students actually used it in only 4 schools. Clearly, teachers and cooks need to remind students to wash their hands before eating.

Having soap was much more frequent in preschools: 67% of the 52 schools. And in all but one of these schools, students used the soap. The smaller size of the preschools perhaps makes it easier for the teachers to control such things.

Note that soap was more often available in urban schools: 53% vs. 40% in rural schools.

d. **Other people eating school meal**

---

121 The observations did not distinguish if the schools organized the hand washing as per better hygiene practices, scooping the water out of the bucket over hands, or if children were using the unhygienic practice of dipping hands directly in the bucket.

122 The 2017 Provedor report (p. 3) found that nearly all BE schools did not have soap for students to wash hands.
It is a very common practice for other people to also eat food prepared by the cooks. According to cooks and school directors/coordinators, this is happening in about 75% of basic education schools and 25 to 50% of preschools. Interestingly, during school feeding observation, this was the case in only 56% of basic education schools and 19% of preschools – perhaps holding back when being observed.

Schools in different municipalities have different habits in this regard. A disaggregation by municipality is presented below, using the answers from the cooks, who are likely more knowledgeable about this.

Table 48. Are other people also eating the SFP meal? (reported by cooks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th>Preschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For basic education schools, Ainaro and Liquiça were the two municipalities where having other people eating the SFP meal was the most frequent. This was also the case with directors/coordinators data but not seen during observation.

The following chart presents data on who is reportedly eating the SFP meal. The proportions are based on answers from cooks. Answers from directors/coordinators were overall quite similar to those of cooks, besides for the proportion of cooks also eating the SFP meal (80-90%). It is likely that proportions for this category are underestimated.

Figure 17. Who else is eating the SFP meal? (reported by cooks)

---

123 25% according to cooks and 49% according to directors/coordinators.
124 Proportions among cooks saying other people also eat SFP meal.
What is remarkable is that in nearly all basic education schools, school personnel are also eating SFP meals, this was especially true in rural areas. Proportions were slightly lower in preschools though. The proportions of cooks eating the meal are definitely underestimated given cooks often take leftovers back home.

PTA members were reported to eat SFP meals in only 13% of basic education schools and 6% of preschools. A PTA member would have a reason to at least taste the food as they are responsible to monitor food quality. The lower percentage may be due to low presence of PTA members in general or a recognition that the meal is intended for students only.

Amazingly, on the days of school feeding observation, only one school director ate the SFP meal.

According to cooks, teachers nearly always eat separately from students. During the observation of school feeding, food was actually carried to the teachers’ room in 65% of basic education schools and 13% of preschools (more frequently in Liquiça and Manatuto). Most likely during normal days without observation, these proportions would be higher.

In 4 schools of Manatuto and 1 school in Ermera, food was actually brought to teachers before serving students. In about one third of the schools (34%), teachers were given a bigger portion (Manatuto and Ermera).

Clearly, such practices should be avoided, especially if this could save some SFP money to be able to cover a few more days of school feeding for students during the year. Note that such practices were observed more frequently in urban schools: 37% vs. 28% in rural schools.

### 3.9. Supporting school infrastructure and equipment

#### SUMMARY OF ACCESS TO IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Basic Education</th>
<th>Pre-school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen in school compound</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking equipment sufficient</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage room in school</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plates/cutlery sufficient</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to water in school</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate toilets for girls/boys</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand washing facility</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[125\] For access to water in schools, 76% in preschools include water brought for cooking from outside school.
The limited infrastructure available to support the school feeding program is striking in all surveyed municipalities. As highlighted by MOH, without adequate kitchens, food storage and water access, schools are facing major challenges to comply with the hygiene requirements of the Manual.

3.9.1. Kitchen

Note that in this section, all information provided on the condition of the kitchen infrastructure will refer only to school kitchens and not to the kitchens used outside the schools.

a. Having a kitchen in the school

Information on schools having a kitchen was collected during the food storage and kitchen survey, during the HATUTAN’s baseline survey and during the observation of schools in June-July. All three surveys gave similar proportions:

- Food storage and kitchen survey: 89% of Basic education and 38% of preschools had a kitchen,
- Baseline: confirmed 89% of the BE schools had a kitchen,
- Observation survey: 91% of Basic education and 49% of preschools had a kitchen.

Given that the food storage and kitchen survey had the largest sample size, we will mainly use this data in this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 49. Proportion of schools with a kitchen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, BE schools are much more often equipped with a kitchen than preschools (38% of preschools only). Surprisingly, rural schools more often had kitchens: 82% have a kitchen compared to 72% in urban schools.

No significant differences was observed between municipalities.
b. Condition of the kitchen

As expressed by school inspectors, school kitchens generally are in bad condition. Some schools have built small kitchens but they have deteriorated and are no longer safe for cooking and storing food. School inspectors observed that kitchens located close to the community are prone to theft.

During HATUTAN’s baseline survey, parents often described school infrastructure as poor, lacking facilities such as kitchens which are sometimes damaged by strong winds or missing fences resulting in animals entering the school compound and kitchen. The observation surveys collected systematic information on the kitchen roof and ventilation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 50. Proportion of kitchens with a roof and with ventilation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ainaro data not available as most schools did not have school feeding on day of observation

Not all school kitchens had a roof, especially in Manatuto. Proper ventilation of the kitchen was lacking in 16% of Basic Education school kitchens and 31% of preschool kitchens. This is important when cooking large quantities of food every day.

Other anecdotal information collected on the condition of the school kitchens noted by observers during the Food storage and kitchen survey are:

- Some kitchens without doors which causes problems in case food is stored there and also to prevent animals from coming in the kitchen.
- A significant proportion of kitchens observed to have leaking roofs
- Kitchen walls often damaged, made of bamboo or palm leaves and some kitchens without walls at all (cooking in an open space).
- Many kitchens with dirt floors or damaged tiles.
3.9.2. Cooking equipment

a. Specific equipment and source of cooking equipment

- **Stove:**

  Nearly all schools used wood for cooking. As a result, students (and/or their parents) often bring fire wood to the school. Depending on the respondents (whether the question was asked to school management, cooks or PTA), this was the case in 15 to 23% of the basic education schools: with up to 35% reported in filial schools, as compared to 14% only in central schools. Parents were also bringing wood to 14-21% of the surveyed preschools.

  Note that 7 preschools in Ermera were found to use electric stoves. Also, 6 schools in Liquíça and 6 in Manatuto used gas stoves. These were both Basic education and preschools that were mainly located in urban areas (there is a limited or no access to gas bottles in rural areas).

- **Weighing scale:**

  From the baseline survey: 56% of the BE schools had a weighing scale in the kitchen.

- **Equipment Source:**

  MEYS was the main source of cooking equipment: in 94% of basic education schools and 75% of preschools according to cooks. In 5 preschools of Liquíça and 1 primary school of Ermera, cooks said they used their own private cooking utensils to prepare school meals.

  Also, 6 schools reportedly used their own budget to buy some additional equipment (or to replace broken ones) and 2 preschools received donated equipment.\textsuperscript{126}

b. Sufficiency of cooking utensils

\textsuperscript{126} The concessional school budget guidance does not include kitchen equipment in the list of allowed purchases and the school feeding budget should be for food only.
As reported by school inspectors and MOH, schools have limited cooking utensils. School inspectors indicated that the cooking utensils provided by the government are used all year round and many are now broken. The main distribution of cooking equipment occurred in 2013 to BE schools but did not include preschools.\textsuperscript{127}

School management and cooks were asked if they thought their cooking equipment was sufficient. The directors/coordinators systematically reported lower proportions of sufficient utensils compared to cooks' responses. The table below uses answers from cooks, as they are the main users and perhaps more accurate.

\textit{Table 51. Proportion of schools having sufficient cooking utensils} (reported by cooks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Proportion of schools having sufficient equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, schools are clearly lacking cooking equipment, especially in basic education schools where the cooks are more often preparing cooked meals: 40% only have enough equipment vs. 75% in preschools. Yet, during the observation of school feeding, observers estimated that 70% of the 33 observed schools had enough utensils.

Surprisingly, the rural schools were not those the most lacking utensils: 64% had enough utensils vs. 56% in urban schools. But there is a lot of disparity between municipalities: Ainaro and Ermera are clearly left behind with only about 40% of the schools having enough utensils compared to about 80% of schools in Liquiça. The observation of school feeding also confirmed that more schools were lacking utensils in Ainaro and Ermera.

### 3.9.3. Food Storage facility

\textsuperscript{127} Interview with DNASE, MEYS. Preschools received cups, spoons and plates or bowls but not cooking pots or pans.
a. Having a storage room in the school

As mentioned in section 3.8.1, according to school cooks and school management, about 25% of basic education schools and preschools only have a storage room within the school. The following table presents the data disaggregated by location and type of school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 52. Proportion of schools with a storage room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having a food storage facility is more common in central schools and urban schools. Some significant disparities were also noted between municipalities: Liquiça is the municipality with the highest proportion of schools having a proper food storage (most of these are preschools), while only 1 central school in Ainaro and 2 preschools in Manatuto had a food storage room.

Most of these facilities were built by MEYS but PTAs indicated that the community had supported the building of some food storage facilities: 2 Catholic schools of Liquiça, and 3 public basic education schools in Ainaro and Ermera.

Note that it is likely that in these storage rooms, non-food items are also stored together with food. Indeed, in the Food storage and kitchen survey, observers noted that this was the case in 83% of the BE schools’ storage rooms and 86% of the preschools’ storage rooms.
Figure 19. Food stored with non-food items in storage rooms of an EBC in Manatuto (left) and an EBF of Liquica (right)

b. Size of the room used to store food

Information on the size of the storage room was not collected during the observation survey. The following table is therefore using data collected during the baseline survey but without distinction on whether it was an actual storage room in the school or another type of room in the school also used to store food (e.g. an office or a classroom).
Table 53. Is the room used to store food within schools big enough?\(^{128}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Having &quot;enough space&quot;</th>
<th>Have &quot;some space&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, only 44% of the surveyed schools had stored food in rooms which were big enough. 56% still need bigger facilities to store the food for school feeding.

There is no significant difference between central and filial schools. But the urban schools are on average better equipped: 64% have enough space to store food vs. 38% only in rural schools.

Differences between municipalities can also be noted with large storages in Manatuto and Ermera mainly. Food storage and kitchen survey also indicated smaller storage space in Ainaro.

c. Condition of the rooms used to store food

The following table presents construction materials used for BE school rooms in which food was stored (data sourced from the baseline survey).

Table 54. Condition of the room used to store food (basic education schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Improved floor material(^{129})</th>
<th>Improved wall material(^{130})</th>
<th>Improved roof material(^{131})</th>
<th>Roof not leaking</th>
<th>Ventilation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{128}\) Results for comparison municipalities are not included here and in the following table as disaggregation by rural/urban was not possible for these municipalities.

\(^{129}\) Cement or tiles.

\(^{130}\) Bricks or tiles.

\(^{131}\) Tin sheets.
Overall, 24% of the schools have leaking roofs, especially in the central and urban schools.

A school inspector expressed his concerns on the poor conditions of schools’ food storage facilities:

"Many schools have no proper space to store food. Many schools do not have a decent storage room so some schools use classrooms or office space to store food, kitchen utensils, and cutlery. Others have storage rooms but they are in bad condition. Meanwhile, in some schools teachers and parents have built temporary food storage rooms with zinc roofs, walls and a platform of palm branches. If the rice is stored in an improper facility for a long time, it will quickly rot due to humidity and cold weather." [School inspector]

d. Safety of the rooms used to store food

One last important point is the safety of the food storage facility. In 97% of the schools surveyed during the food storage survey, the door was simply locked. In schools where a security guard stays at the school at night (about 25% of the school), the security guard is also responsible for the safety of the food storage.

3.9.4. School canteen

Overall, less than 15% of the schools have a canteen. According to HATUTAN’s food storage and kitchen survey, canteens were less common in EBFs and preschools. Clearly, more canteens would be needed to ensure students can eat in hygienic and comfortable conditions instead of having to eat outside as it is the case in most filial schools on in classrooms as observed in most preschools. Also having school canteens helps to feed children quickly, reducing time taken from classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Proportion of schools with a canteen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9.5. Plates and cutlery for students

The following table presents the answers of cooks to the question: "Are there sufficient plates/spoons?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Proportion of schools having sufficient plates/cutlery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, a lot of schools still do not have the sufficient utensils for all students to eat at the same time. This is especially an issue in basic education schools where only 25% of the cooks said they had enough spoons/plates (and 19% only in filial schools).
“We have no spoons and most students eat using leaves and some bring their own spoon.” [Cook in EBC, Manatuto]

In fact, data from the food storage and kitchen survey conducted in more than 400 schools 14% of basic education school coordinators or directors and 22% of preschool coordinators reported not having any eating utensils.

In Liquiça however, most schools reported having enough utensils (confirmed in the food storage survey).

Note that during the observation of school feeding, a much higher proportion of preschools were found to have enough utensils (92%). This could be cooks under reporting the amount of utensils but is also influenced by the type of food served on the observation day. Light snacks (paun/dosi) may not require plates or spoons and observers might have concluded that spoons and plates were enough even though they might not be sufficient to serve a porridge.

The lack of plates and spoons has a significant impact on school feeding as in 62% of the 34 basic education schools observed in June-July, students shared the same plates and cups (after having washed them). Such practices definitely extend the time required to serve all students.

“When there are broken glasses or plates, then they will not be enough for all the children, so they have to wait for their friends.” [EBF coordinator]

It is also not hygienic as not all students wash the utensils before giving them to other students, and if they do, they probably do not clean them well given most schools have limited access to water and no soap. In Manatuto and Ainaro, it was reported that students bring their own plates and spoons, which is probably more hygienic than sharing school’s plates with other students.

3.9.6. Water

a. Access to clean water

This is one of the key constraints of school feeding. As noted by superintendents, support is sometimes provided to schools to renovate WASH facilities but proper hygiene can still not be guaranteed because schools face water shortage during the dry season which hampers efforts to implement SFP properly. MOH also mentioned that students and parents always complain about schools not having clean water, toilets or kitchens.

Data on access to water was collected in several surveys (baseline, food storage and kitchen survey, observation survey). Generally, the resulting proportions were quite coherent between the different surveys. We will therefore use the baseline survey as it differentiates water that was sourced from the school or from outside the school.

The following table differentiates schools that have access to improved clean water, i.e. water that is sourced within the school compound (water piped into school, borehole/well at school, etc.), and schools that have access to clean water for cooking, which includes schools where water is carried in from outside school to be used in the kitchen and for general hygiene facilities (washing hands, toilets).
Table 57. Proportion of BE schools having access to water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>% having improved water source</th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>% having clean water for cooking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 62% of the schools only have an improved water access but 69% have clean water for cooking (similar to what was presented in Table 36).

Central schools had better access to water than filial schools which is not the case for urban schools. Indeed, rural schools have slightly more often access to a spring within the school, while that option is not available in urban schools.

Also, schools in Ainaro are those lacking the most in access to improved water sources while schools in Ermera are the best equipped. In Ainaro, close to 13% of the schools' kitchens are using water brought from outside the school compound.

Preschools were observed as having a slightly better access to water as reported in section 3.8.2.c.

In conclusion, the limited access to water in many schools is definitely a challenge for the SFP. A school inspector expressed his concerns about this situation:

“Schools are often located far away from water sources. Sometimes cooks and students have to bring water from their homes. In other schools water must be bought from water sellers and then filled in their water tanks in order to prepare meals. In some schools, students cannot wash their hands because of no water”. [School inspector]

b. Who brings water to schools when there is no water

Cooks and PTA members were asked who usually brings water to school when a school has no water. Answers were quite different so both responses are presented below.

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132 Results for comparison municipalities are not included here as disaggregation by rural/urban was not possible for these municipalities.

133 Improved water source is achieved when the school has water access at the school, not bringing water from outside school compound.
Table 58. Who usually brings water to school if school has no water?\(^{134}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>Basic education</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Preschool</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As per cook</td>
<td>As per PTA</td>
<td></td>
<td>As per cook</td>
<td>As per PTA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both cooks and PTA members agreed that cooks were the ones most frequently bringing water, even though in significantly different proportions.

PTAs indicated that in a significant proportion of schools, community and parents are bringing water to school. While cooks did not mention parents at all. Note that community bringing water to schools was more frequent in rural schools.

Students were also reported as bringing water to schools, still more frequently in basic education schools (preschools students are unlikely to carry heavy weights on their own). When calculated among all schools, the proportion of students bringing water to school is 6-11%\(^{135}\) in basic education schools and 3% in preschools.

On the other hand, cooks, PTA and school management were also asked if students or parents/PTA are sometimes asked by the school to contribute water. Overall, between 2 to 10% of them said yes in basic education schools (only filial schools) and 5 to 11% said yes in preschools.

Even though the feedback from the different stakeholders is not all the same, we can estimate that students are bringing water to schools in about 10% of the schools, and that this is most likely in basic education schools. PTA members indicated that students usually bring 5L of water (a small jerry can). This raises the issue of child labor as carrying heavy weights on top of the school bag could be painful for these students.

This issue was also raised by Municipal MOH who indicated that it can have an impact on hygiene because students may get the water from unclean sources. FONGTIL called the use of child labor to carry water or fire wood to school as a violation of children’s rights.

DNASE has not commented on this practice to-date, leaving it for the schools to determine but noting it is usually only a few litres of water or pieces of wood are carried by the students. Interestingly a school Coordinator expressed his concern about forbidding this practice:

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\(^{134}\) Proportions calculated only among respondents who said school has no water sometimes and who knew who was usually brings water to school (so excluded PTA members who didn’t know).

\(^{135}\) 6% as per cooks and 11% as per PTA.
“Don’t cancel student contributions to bring firewood because the SFP money (25 cents) is not enough.” [EBF coordinator, Ermera]

3.9.7. Toilets and handwashing facilities

WASH facilities are also very limited in most schools which definitely impacts on the implementation of school feeding in terms of hygiene. The following table was extracted from the baseline survey data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of cases</th>
<th>% having handwashing facilities</th>
<th>% having at least one functional toilet</th>
<th>% having separate boys and girls toilet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ainaro</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermera</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquiça</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatuto</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 41% of the schools have a handwashing facility. As mentioned earlier, when there is no hand washing facility, some schools provide a bucket of water for students to rinse their hands before eating. Differences between central and filial schools or rural and urban schools are not significant. However, Liquiça and Ainaro schools were among the least equipped.

Functional toilets were available in only 71% of the schools and separate toilets for boys and girls available in only 52% of the schools. Central and urban schools were slightly better positioned in regards to having functional toilets within schools.

With regards to toilets, a school inspector said:

“Some schools have toilets while others don’t. And even though schools have toilets, students don’t use them because water is not available.” [School inspector]

Note that some Municipal Education Directors indicated that the Education Department had requested the contribution of parents to repair some school infrastructures. This is done with the intention that parents will feel that they are owners of the school. In Manatuto, PTA members mentioned:
“We try to solve problems ourselves. For example, we drilled a 15 meters deep borehole. We connected it to a pump and the water came out. But sometimes, the water no longer flows.”

[EBE PTA Member, Manatuto]

On the other hand, it is important that school administrators also do their part in daily maintenance and simple actions within their control such as ensuring that soap is available for children to wash hands or small-scale constructions.136

136 The Timor-Leste Government Guideline for School Health Implementation includes hygiene and sanitation options that are low cost and use little water such as “tippy-taps”. Pp. 27-29.
4. Recommendations

✓ Continue the nationwide school feeding program

The school feeding program, when fully operating, is immensely popular and has strong potential to improve school attendance, improve the attentiveness of students at school, support more vulnerable children and communities, model positive nutrition and hygiene practices and to stimulate the local economy by providing a regular market for local fresh produce. All respondents expressed a desire to continue the program and offered recommendations for improvements.

4.1. How to improve the relevance of the school feeding program design

RELEVANCE

Extent to which the design of the SFP is suited to reach the program’s objectives.

Here we will discuss the relevance of the school feeding program’s design, and more specifically the relevance of a number of key points of the program:

- Is the current amount of money allocated to school meals and other expenditures of the program appropriate? If not, what is recommended in terms of budget or support package in order to achieve the program’s objectives?
- Are the current funding and reporting mechanisms suitable for an efficient program implementation? If not, what is recommended to overcome the gaps in funding and reporting?
- Is the current content of the Manual appropriate to guide schools in implementation of the SFP? Are the food composition recommendations of the SFP Manual sufficient to achieve the program’s nutritional objectives? If not, what are suggestions to improve these recommendations?

Summary Recommendations - Relevance:

✓ Establish alternative funding mechanism to allow for delivery of program in the first trimester and reduce gaps between funding tranches
✓ Funding level per student / per meal / per day should be in line with market costs to purchase food required for a nutritious meal (averaging across regional variations)
✓ Include carbohydrate component in the cash allocation and eliminate the rice distribution to allow for flexibility in menu and greater use of local produce
✓ Update Manual guiding school feeding program and provide guidelines and training to all schools and cooks
✓ Change title of program to clarify that the program provides a cooked meal rather than light snack (DNASE recommends using “Alimentasaun” rather than “Merenda”)
4.1.1. SFP budget and support package

a. Recommendations regarding the amount allocated for school meals

A wide range of stakeholders at school, municipal and national level expressed mixed views regarding budgeted amount for the program, in particular if the 25 cents allocated per student per meal is sufficient and proposed changes to the program’s budget is currently under review. A majority of school level actors believed the 25 cents was sufficient together with the delivery of rice but also suggested increasing the cash allocation and eliminating the rice distribution. Ministry of Health officials and others expressed concern that the current school meals are not meeting nutritional standards especially for protein and that healthier inputs may cost more or are not available in local markets near rural schools. A separate market study using the Cost of Diet methodology was conducted to better identify the cost of a nutritious school meal based on locally available foods. Preliminary findings recommend the average cost of food only inputs at 49 cents per child per meal per day. The price range varied depending on the menu and regional market variation from lowest cost of nutritionally balanced meal at 19 cents up to the higher end of 79 cents.

Recommendation: Funding level per student / per meal / per day should be in line with market costs to purchase food required for a nutritious meal (averaging across regional variations). The government could use the data from the Cost of the Diet Survey and other food price sources to establish the cost per student reflecting the actual average cost of a balanced meal inclusive of local protein-rich foods, vegetables and fruits. The cost calculation should take into consideration regional differences as well as the additional costs incurred by remote schools if procuring food in markets located far from the school, due to the insufficient local production and/or local production prioritizing cash crops.

- Details on stakeholder opinions regarding cost per student

The following chart presents feedback from directors/coordinators and cooks.

![Chart showing percentage of feedback from directors/coordinators and cooks]

137 Interview with MSA indicated that government will propose an increase to 50 cents per student per day to cover all components including carbohydrate (no rice delivery) and incentive for cooks.

138 Cost of the Diet is a globally recognized method used to estimate the amount, combination and cost of local foods required to provide a nutritious diet that meets the recommended daily intake of energy, protein, fats and micronutrients. The methodology is comprised of a household survey, focus group discussions and a market survey.

139 The final report is expected in February-March 2020.
Figure 20. Proportion of Directors/Coordinators’ and cooks’ reporting that 25 cents is sufficient

Overall, about 75 to 89% of the respondents believed 25 cents was enough to supplement the rice ration.\footnote{Note that a rapid assessment done in March-April via phone calls with 77 directors gave different results: only 24% said 25 cents was enough. 38% suggested to increase the allocation per student to 50 cents and 28% requested the allocation to be increased to 30-40 cents.}

Respondents who said money wasn’t enough, explained what they did to overcome this situation. Among the most common answers:

- Basic education schools: try to better manage the money, inform central schools, request rice, just cook what is available.
- Preschools: buy less food, reduce quantities, coordinator adds his/her own money.

Some of these respondents recommended government increase the money allocated to students for school feeding up to 30 or 50 cents.

At municipal level, several key informants explained that 25 cents was not enough to comply with the menu recommended in the Manual:

- Municipal Education believe 25 cents is enough to cover only 50% of the menu recommended in the Manual. Especially for isolated schools who have to pay more to transport rice to the schools. Insufficient funds are also one of the reasons why schools use less local produce.
- Municipal Health services said the amount should be increased for schools to be able to afford enough nutritious and quality food.
- Municipal inspection services observed that schools were not able to offer quality meals daily (with meat for example) because the funds were insufficient. Thus, schools prepare whatever food that they can afford and which is available.

At the national level, some of the key informants interviewed expressed their concerns that 25 cents is insufficient to guarantee schools serve nutritious meals\footnote{Stated by MOH.}, especially in remote areas\footnote{Stated by the PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative and KONSANTIL focal point.}, and suggested the amount be raised to 50 cents per student per day\footnote{Stated by MOH and NGO Permatil.}. WHO suggested that the real cost for school feeding should be monitored regularly to confirm if the money allocated is sufficient or not.

b. Recommendations regarding rice distribution

Recommendation: Include carbohydrate component in the cash allocation and eliminate the rice distribution to allow for flexibility in menu and greater use of local produce.

Various stakeholders commented on the rice distribution component. The following presents a summary of the opinions collected.

- Rice distribution is not necessary
Many advocated to stop rice distribution but increase allocation per meal so that schools have more budget to buy local products\(^{144}\).

When interviewed via telephone, 69% of the 77 EBC directors contacted also suggested ending rice distribution and raising the money allocated per student. Their reasons were that schools would be able to (1) manage the budget on their own, (2) buy more local products, and (3) prepare a wider variety of foods. Interestingly, directors who suggested keeping central government rice distribution were located closer to urban areas/municipality towns and thus, had less problems receiving the rice.

Indeed, one of the reasons given by some stakeholders to stop rice distribution was the money spent for transporting rice to schools. One sub-inspector believed that the transportation cost more than the money allocated per student. The director of Permatil highlighted that rice distribution to the municipalities is a burden for the government and that it is most likely low grade rice that is imported.

- **If rice distribution is to be continued, distribution should be timely**

On the other hand, a number of stakeholders recommended that rice should be distributed at the same time as funds are transferred to schools\(^{145}\). Indeed, the Audit Court explained that the central government was sending rice after the budget transfer, thus schools used part of the SFP money to buy rice to be able to start school feeding on time. They then had to use more SFP money to transport the rice from the municipality to the school when rice arrived at the municipal capital.

At the municipal level, superintendents and school inspectors indicated that better coordination between government department responsible for rice importation and the department responsible for its distribution is important for an effective implementation of the SFP.

Interviews with key stakeholders highlighted the importance of having sufficient budget for transportation of rice from central to municipal level but also from municipal to EBCs, EBFs and preschools.\(^{146}\) Lastly, if rice is imported, it is recommended to ensure that it is good quality rice.

### 4.1.2. Funding and reporting mechanism

A wide range of stakeholders noted systemic problems and malfunctions, at all levels, in the funding and reporting mechanisms of the SFP. School inspectors in particular called upon the government to improve this situation.

- **Avoiding gap at the beginning of the school year**

Every year, one third of the planned school feeding program is not executed because the schools do not receive the annual budget allocation until the end of the first trimester. The legal process for approval and promulgation of the State budget only allows SFP funds to reach the school level usually in March or during the second trimester of the school year.

MEYS stakeholders at all levels expressed their concerns regarding this situation. In schools, directors/coordinators and cooks were very concerned about this situation, explaining that delays at the start of each school year has an important impact on school attendance.

\(^{144}\) Suggested by MEYS inspection services, MEYS Director General for Policy, Planning and Partnership, Municipal Education Directors and FONGTIL.

\(^{145}\) Stated by Audit Court, school directors/coordinators, cooks, school inspectors and superintendent.

\(^{146}\) The 2017 Provedor report (p. 36) highlighted problems in rice delivery due to limited transport.
A number of recommendations were given to enable funding to be available the full school year:

- Government consider the SFP budget as a special fund and approve it before the new school year. (Municipal Education Director)
- If possible, discuss the SFP budget in the middle of the year to avoid financial problems during the first quarter. (Superintendent)
- The current system delays the budget transfer to schools. If the funds are channelled directly to the Education Department, everything can be done quickly. (School Inspector)
- An independent institution should be established to manage the SFP fund. This will guarantee efficiency and efficacy of SFP money expenditure. (FONGTIL)
- The PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative suggested the Municipal Administration could use the “one-twelfth” rule (known in Portuguese as “duodecimo” rule) for January and February (although none of the municipal administrations interviewed mentioned accessing funds through this system for school feeding).

b. Accelerating school reporting

The Municipal Administration in Manatuto recommends that Municipal Education submit summary reports before having delivered all feeding days of previous tranche. This would allow the processing of next tranche transfer before the schools run out of money and therefore avoid interruptions in school feeding between 2 tranches. If this practice is to be used, then a clear regulation should be established to give a legal framework to the practice. For example, the disbursement of the following tranche could be processed as soon as 75% of the previous tranche has been spent and related receipts submitted to Municipal Finance. The full reports with all receipts would follow after all the money from the previous tranche has been spent.

Municipal Administration in Ermera recommended that the finance officers meet directly with all school directors in order to explain clearly how reports need to be prepared. This would avoid errors in preparing reports. A preschool coordinator requested that preschools should get clear instructions from the financial administration team.

c. Recommendations regarding the public finance law

As mentioned earlier, the public finance law stipulates that quarterly transfers cannot exceed 25% of the annual budget. This law governs all spending but has caused a number of problems for the implementation of the SFP as schools were not able to request the needed funds each quarter. Several stakeholders recommended to find a solution to this problem as soon as possible:

- Increase the current budget cap and allow school feeding funds to exceed 25% of the annual budget in a quarter, otherwise it impacts effective days for schools with high number of students. (Municipal Education Director).
- This system shouldn’t be used anymore (superintendent).
- SFP should be moved to another budget category in order not to be subject to this rule anymore. (Municipal Administration in Manatuto and Ainaro).\(^\text{147}\)

\(^{147}\) Interview with MSA indicated government may fund the SFP budget under the public transfer category in order for unspent funds from one quarter to be able to roll over into the next quarter or fiscal year. This could help fill gaps in delivery of school feeding (if sufficient funds are available).
4.1.3. Updating the Manual

A wide range of stakeholders at school, municipal and national level expressed the need to update the SFP Manual which, according to school inspectors, is now outdated and no longer compatible with the situation in rural schools\textsuperscript{148}.

Municipal Education indicated that the Manual should be simplified and use easy to understand language. PDHJ recommends to update the Manual and strengthen areas where there are problems such as the selection of the cook and the reporting/funding mechanisms.

One recurrent point was the use of the term “Merenda Eskolar” which doesn’t reflect the intent of the program to provide a full meal with vegetables and proteins in basic education schools rather than a light snack. This was mentioned by MOH, a number of Municipal Education Directors and the Permatil Director\textsuperscript{149}.

Lastly, several stakeholders indicated that the updated Manual will have to be distributed to all schools (which is not currently the case) and that its content will need to be socialized at municipal and school level. This could be done in the form of trainings at school level or simple information meetings.

PDHJ also proposed that the MEYS facilitates a one-day workshop at national level to introduce the Manual to all relevant stakeholder, including to municipal representatives and parents so that people can understand the program.

4.2. How to improve the program’s effectiveness

**EFFECTIVENESS**

Extent to which the program is reaching its objectives.

Here we will discuss key suggestions to ensure the school feeding program is able to reach its 5 principal objectives.

\textsuperscript{148} Others supported updating the manual including the PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative, PDHJ, Municipal Education Directors and school directors/coordinates.

\textsuperscript{149} According to DNASE Director, a better term to avoid confusion would be “Alimentação Escolar”, which translates as “school feeding”, without implying just a light snack.
4.2.1. **Objective 1: Improve nutrition condition for school-aged children and decrease the number of dropouts.**

**a. Improving nutrition condition of school-aged children**

The inconsistent delivery of the school feeding program would make it difficult to attribute any change in student nutritional status to the SFP. Evidence of nutritional impact is all anecdotal. Some respondents believe the School Feeding Program has an important role to play in helping households to overcome food insecurity (MAF).

- **Serve healthy and nutritive meals**

Government should promote healthy diets with limits set for salt, sugar and fats. The use of whole grain, fruits and vegetables should be reinforced.

The following recommendations can also be made based on the food composition analysis of school meals presented in the study findings:

- Each meal should include four of the seven food categories more foods from the “vitamin” and “protein” list as per Manual’s table in annex 1.
- Adhere to the foods to avoid list in the Manual, and exclude use of sweetened condensed milk\(^{150}\) to protect the health of children.
- Increase the use of plant-based proteins which was limited during school feeding observation.

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\(^{150}\) Sweetened condensed milk are better known by their brand names such as “Enaok”. More education for cooks, parents and school personnel may be needed to identify what are nutritional dairy products and which high sugar products should be excluded from school feeding.
- Balance the portions of carbohydrates with the “vitamin foods” and “protein foods”. The servings observed showed a high volume of carbohydrate compared to the vitamin and protein foods.
- Allow for flexible menus to accommodate local foods based on seasonality and region.
- Future Manual revisions can consider both food based guidance (as with the current manual) and nutrient based guidance as well as recommended serving sizes.

A number of school directors/coordinators and cooks indicated that the example of a weekly menu recommended in the Manual should be updated/improved and propose more variations.\textsuperscript{151} Data indicates that certain types of meals (like mung bean porridge, sosoro\textsuperscript{152} and snacks such as fried banana or bread) included in the Manual’s sample menus are served too frequently and are perhaps disliked by students. A wider range of weekly menus could be proposed in the Manual to help schools diversify food. Choices of snacks for preschools should also cover a wider range of food groups as per Dietary Diversity Score categories.

If MEYS is not planning on distributing rice anymore, sample menus for basic education schools should include meals with other sources of carbohydrates such as locally produced maize, cassava, or sweet potatoes.

A significant proportion of schools still use foods/ingredients that are to be avoided as per Manual. This list needs to be easily identifiable in the Manual. It is currently split in between two different sections of Annex 1.\textsuperscript{153} Also, the Manual should provide clearer recommendations on the type of milk authorized (powdered milk brands with less sugar content for example) as preschools are mostly using sweetened condensed milk with low nutritional value.

WHO noted the potential impact of the program to overcome specific nutritional deficiencies and to support the more vulnerable regions, recommending that the government conduct health assessments in schools, establish and monitor national quality, safety and nutrition standards.

- **Hygiene**

School feeding observation revealed important gaps in cooks' hygienic practices. A number of very basic recommendations can be made here: ensure cooks systematically wash hands with soap before cooking (as well as students before eating) as well as wear head covers, more frequently clean kitchens with detergent, including containers used to store water in the kitchens, prevent animals from entering kitchens, etc. MOH also highlighted the importance of ensuring cooking utensils are clean.

Better hygiene practices in places where foods are stored are also required: regularly clean the storage rooms, systematically raise foods off the floor and ensure roofs are not leaking. Storing foods separately from non-food items is also preferable.

- **Ensure enough quantities are served**

The national sub-inspector advised to pay more attention to the quantities of foods to prepare.

The following recommendations can be made based on the study findings:

\textsuperscript{151} WHO indicated that they are developing sample menus based on standard Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) so that specific nutritional deficiencies can be alleviated through the appropriate selection of foods and portion sizes per age group.

\textsuperscript{152} Indicated by the Audit Court.

\textsuperscript{153} In the table of preferred and less preferred foods and in the final notes of the sample menu for BE schools.
- Ensure cooks know how to weigh or measure quantities of food to cook according to the number of students to serve\textsuperscript{154}. Simple and practical guidelines can be provided to help cooks in this regard (table with number of cans/kilograms/bundles of cereals/beans/vegetables needed to cook sample of standard meals for 100 students for example).
- Making sure all schools have a weighing scale\textsuperscript{155}.

- **Using nutritious local products**

As indicated by MOH, farmers’ products have a good nutritional potential and freshness and should be prioritized in schools. The Permatil Director insisted on the importance of using organic foods produced locally, as they are better for students’ health as well as for environment. MOH also insisted on the use of quality products that are free from chemicals.

*"We talk about health and nutrition, yet the reality is that the food we cook for children contains chemicals."* [Cook, EBF Liquiça]

Another way to add fresh produce is to develop more school gardens. Permatil mentioned one successful example in Atauro (suco Bicelli) and indicated that some schools have integrated school gardening in their program. However, he also expressed the lack of support from the government in this regard.\textsuperscript{156} According to WFP, school gardens should involve the community, parents and teachers to raise their attention on the importance of school gardens to support the SFP. The main purpose of a school garden, however, is as a practical laboratory for learning and not intended for production in volumes needed for SFP.

If school gardens represent interesting alternatives in some locations, data collected in Ainaro, Liquiça, Ermera and Manatuto did not reflect a wide spread use of school gardens, nor an extensive practice of using foods produced from these gardens for school feeding. Schools’ limited access to land and water are major challenges for sustaining school gardens.

- **Potential nutritional impact beyond schools**

Lastly, it was noted that the SFP program also has an impact beyond schools by building children’s knowledge and practices related to improved food choices and eating habits\textsuperscript{157}. The PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative believes that young generations should be involved in the program to learn about food and nutrition. They can then influence eating habits in their families and in the society later on.

b. **Decrease the number of dropouts**

Absenteeism in schools is overall very high, as observed during HATUTAN’s baseline survey (about 3 out of 10 students were absent on day of study). Dropout rates are also high (3% for grades 1 and 2).

\textsuperscript{154} About one-third of the cooks interviewed never weigh nor measure foods.

\textsuperscript{155} 44% of basic education schools do not have a weighing scale as per HATUTAN baseline survey.

\textsuperscript{156} DNASE started the school garden program in 2014 in 12 schools as a pilot with FAO assistance. DNASE distributed additional materials such as hoes, hoses, wheelbarrows in the same 12 pilot schools on 2019 but has not had the budget to provide training or materials to other schools. Some schools have initiated gardens using their own resources or with parent support. Limitations for some schools include lack of land or water source.

\textsuperscript{157} Stated by WHO.
The precondition to reduce absenteeism and dropouts is to ensure year-round implementation of the program, and therefore to ensure that enough budget is allocated for SFP implementation during a full year.

Indeed, as mentioned by many school-level implementers and parents, frequent interruptions in the delivery of school meals during the year and the late start of the SFP each year has a significant impact on absenteeism. Having a daily school meal served in school is one of the key incentives for more vulnerable students to stay in school\(^{158}\).

Yet, experience from previous years when school feeding was fully funded by the GOTL proved that schools are still facing significant challenges in delivering the expected number of school feeding days. A number of more specific recommendations can be made to address these challenges:

- **Avoiding funding gaps related to poor funding and reporting mechanisms** (recommendations discussed in section 4.1.2. above)
- **Improved management of SFP funding in schools**: The observation survey revealed that a significant proportion of schools use SFP money for non-food items such as buying firewood, soap, paying transport or helpers\(^{159}\). Even though these are mainly operational costs related to SFP implementation, it is important for relevant parties to better monitor the use of SFP money for non-food items to ensure that schools are making the most efficient use out of it.
- **Controlling misuse of SFP resources**: This should include spot-checks of receipts, control of possible frauds and of using SFP resources for school events. Sanctions should be taken if such cases are identified.
- **Better planning of number of meals to prepare**: Data revealed that a significant proportion of cooks usually prepare more food than required\(^{160}\). Additionally, quantities are most of the time enough to allow school personnel and cooks to eat school meals\(^{161}\). This waste of food that is not benefiting the students could be avoided by better planning the quantities to cook. The available funds could then cover a larger number of school feeding days. The data revealed that leftovers were more frequent among cooks who predict/guess how much meals they will have to prepare than among those who plan the number of meals to prepare based on actual presence list or EMIS list. It is therefore recommended to ensure that all cooks plan meals for the actual number of students present (for current day or day before). This will need active parent monitoring as the current system of preparing excess food may benefit cooks and school personnel.

4.2.2. **Objective 2: Encouraging children to participate in teaching-learning activities and to boost their interest to participate in class**

Qualitative feedback collected from parents showed that school feeding has an important impact on motivating students and increasing their attentiveness (baseline survey). Interviews conducted with teachers and coordinators indicated that many students struggle to pay attention in class and

\(^{158}\) See WFP quotes in sections 3.1. and 3.2. for results of international studies on the impact of SFP.

\(^{159}\) Reported in 71% of BE schools and 30% of preschools.

\(^{160}\) During school feeding observation, there were leftovers in 91% of BE schools and 77% of preschools.

\(^{161}\) According to cooks interviewed during the observation survey, non-students also eat school meals in 73% of BE schools and 25% of preschools.
participate in activities. Some students were described as ‘unable to get the information’ or ‘unable to focus attention’ on what is being taught. Both parents and teachers described how short-term hunger affects students’ ability to pay attention to content and to engage in class.

“Sometimes they are hungry, when it’s time for the break they don’t have time to rest. They don’t want to study; they don’t want to listen to the class.” [Mother, Ermera]

Quantitative data proving the impact of school feeding on students’ participation in class is not available in Timor-Leste. Yet, there is international evidence that school feeding is one of the few education interventions that show positive impact in learning and participation in class.

“A study by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the World Bank in Sub-Saharan Africa, found school feeding to be an impactful intervention for boosting student learning; particularly in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Senegal.”

The Impact of School Feeding Programs, WFP, January 2019

Thus, the main recommendation to achieve objective 2 of the SFP is to ensure a school meal is delivered daily in all schools of the country (see recommendations in section 4.2.1. above). Also important is to serve the meal within the recess period rather than after school so students get the benefit during the learning process.¹⁶²

4.2.3. Objective 3: Develop local economy

a. Enhanced coordination between ministries to increase local production

One of the main reasons why schools are not using high proportions of local products is firstly because local production is limited and seasonal.

Municipal Agriculture Directors insisted on the importance of better coordination and cooperation between MEYS and MAF to support implementation of the SFP, and a specific budget for MAF to be able to support the SFP.

In the same line, FONGTIL recommended that MAF, MEYS and MOH better coordinate in order to maximize local production and facilitate linkage with schools. Yet, MEYS should play a lead role in this process, providing clear orientation to other ministries on what is needed.

“MAF should promote family agriculture in order to encourage family members to cultivate local foods. MEYS should also socialize foods that are needed for the SFP. For instance, the agricultural census is really helpful to identify what are the local foods in each territory.” [FONGTIL]

b. Link schools with local farmers

Few schools get regular supplies from local farmers or farmer groups. Municipal Education Directors suggested that MEYS conducts an intensive campaign on the involvement of farmer groups or cooperatives in the SFP.

A number of partnerships between schools and farmers have already been established by Municipal Agriculture. Such initiatives should be strengthened and multiplied. For example:

¹⁶² Meal service needs to be quick and efficient to not encroach on class time.
- In Ainaro, several schools will be supplied in fish by local farmers (support from Mercy Corps and the World Bank). Municipal Agriculture indicated that they would be ready to help other schools with seeds and training if requested.
- In Manatuto, Municipal Agriculture and Education offices are working together on a pilot program to link vegetable farmer groups to schools. This initiative was also highlighted by the school inspector of Natarbora.

Note that the Manual recommends PTAs to help identify local producers able to supply schools regularly. No data was collected in this regard but such practices are definitely to be promoted as PTAs are schools main linkages with the community.

c. **Cooks need to value regional products in the meals they prepare**

Sub-inspectors recommended that schools use products from their regions. For example, in Maubisse, schools can use red beans and potatoes while in Ermera, cassava leaves are more common. In the same line, the PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative suggested to do research to identify the agricultural potentials of villages and the surrounding areas.

As indicated by the Director of Permatil, it is important to teach children to embrace local foods. For instance, the menu could include a meal based on maize once a week. If cooks use more local foods, students will value these more.

d. **Reduce the use of imported products**

A higher proportion of local fresh produce could be included in the school meal if government provides cash rather than cash plus imported rice. WFP advocates for a stronger “home-grown” approach to school feeding. Cooks should avoid purchasing imported manufactured products, some of which is on the less preferred food list and contain sugar, palm oil, MSG and other chemical preservatives or flavoring.

It is unlikely that the SFP could rely exclusively on locally produced foods, as suggested by respondents, especially in the short term. Nonetheless, there is certainly potential for increasing the proportion of schools purchasing food from local producers.

**4.2.4. Objective 4: Promote the participation of education administrators, school councils, school directors, and the PTA in planning and implementation of education**

Firstly, schools need to better involve PTAs. Indeed, as revealed during the baseline survey, parents voiced frustration over limited awareness of issues pertaining to the feeding program and requested to be better informed. Among other things, PTAs can play a role in maintaining and improving infrastructure that is key for implementation of the SFP.

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163 WFP has provided support for expanding home-grown options such as: developing guidelines for a pilot program in Oe-cusse to use 50 cents to purchase all food and inputs combined with mobilizing farmers groups to increase production and working with Timor Global to provide nutritive local foods such as corn, rice, vegetable, cassavas, etc.
School inspection superintendents also highlighted the need for more communication and information sharing between school management and parents on the implementation of the SFP:

“For now, parents consider the SFP as a ‘government thing’ and do not want to get involved.” [Superintendent]

Key informants at the national level noted the need to better involve the community, in particular parents. This is important in order for the SFP to be able to deliver nutritious meals to students (MEYS).

As revealed in the data, school management needs to actively involve more PTA members and ensure PTAs are systematically part of the KPME. It is also recommended that school directors/coordinators take a lead role in calling for meetings with KPME members, including PTAs who are less likely to participate without an official invitation.

It is also the responsibility of SFP Coordinators at the municipal level to monitor that schools function as per Manual’s recommendations.

### 4.2.5. Objective 5: Sensitize the community to take ownership of School Feeding Program, to actively involve themselves in the program

PDHJ recommended holding regular meetings with the community so that they can share their opinion on issues related to the SFP.

Interviews with PTA members also suggested that community members are eager to provide their support:

“The community has plans to re-build the kitchen.” [PTA in a preschool of Ermera]

“We often ask the community, volunteers and teachers to help us bring water”. [PTA in a preschool, Ermera]

“We recommend to have a meeting with the community to discuss about the problems we face.” [PTA in a basic education school, Ermera]

The SFP is highly valued by parents and offers an important opportunity for the school to collaborate with parents. The school personnel need to create a welcoming environment for parents monitoring the program. Parent involvement in SFP also provides a learning opportunity for positive health practices in nutrition and hygiene for parents to apply at home.

In conclusion, PTAs are crucial to ensure there is a strong link between schools and the community. With a strong PTA, it is very likely that the community will support the SFP. Thus, PTAs should be given enough space and importance in schools.
4.3. How to improve the program’s efficiency

**EFFICIENCY**

Measures cost effectiveness of the program in relation to human resources, physical means and financial means.

Here we will discuss key suggestions to ensure SFP implementation will be efficient in terms of financial means, human means and physical means.

**Summary Recommendations - Efficiency:**

- Strengthen financial reporting skills, supervision on the proper use of funds and increase receipt spot checks
- Reinforce the rules and criteria for selection of cooks
- Encourage parents to actively participate in PTAs and ensure school administrators are welcoming to PTA involvement in school management, programs and activities
- Encourage parents to participate and regularly monitor the SFP and collaborate with the school to improve infrastructure
- Improve coordination between MEYS, MOH and municipal authorities regarding SFP training, implementation and monitoring at the school level
- Work through KONSANTIL at municipal level to improve links between farmers’ groups, agricultural cooperatives, MAF extension agents and the school as a purchaser of local fresh produce
- Invest in school infrastructure for water, toilets/sanitation, kitchens, food storage and student canteens
- Identify and provide funding for schools to regularly replace cooking utensils, plates and cutlery

### 4.3.1. Financial efficiency\(^{164}\)

- **Controlling the use of SFP money**

The observation survey indicated that schools have adopted a wide variety of ways to handle money, many of these deviating from the Manual’s guidance. In some schools for example, it is the school personnel who buys food and cooks only prepared meals. If some of these deviations may be understood (EBFs being far from EBCs and therefore cooks not being able to collect money directly for example) it is still recommended to establish a clear frame for handling the money in a transparent way.

Moreover, suspicion of fraud was mentioned several times which highlights the need for more spot checks of receipts by Municipal Education or Municipal Finance.

\(^{164}\) Note that some of the recommendations in this section were already discussed on part 4.2.1.
“Money for SFP is insufficient because we receive only a small amount of money from the school principal. If possible, cooks should receive money through GAT instead.” [Cook of a private BE school, Ainaro]

PDHJ indicated that strong actions should be taken against those who misuse SFP funding. He recommends schools to use the allocation for meals to buy food only and not to pay expenses related to cooks for example helpers, etc. Similarly, the Audit Court recommends that if fraud is identified, the responsible persons should reimburse the corresponding amount of money.

The SFP study also pointed out that SFP money is used for a wide range of school feeding operational costs, it is important for SFP Coordinators to actively control these non-food expenses as it may happen that not all are directly related to school feeding. DNASE officials suggested that some non-food purchases may not always be accurately listed in the financial reports. For example, the survey revealed that cooks are sometimes asked to cook for specific events not related to school feeding. It is important to ensure that the organization of such events in schools does not involve the use of resources that have been made available for school feeding only (cook, SFP fund and cooking equipment).

- **Increased accountability**

  Increased accountability is required to ensure more transparency in the reporting of expenses. Indeed, reports are very often not prepared by the persons spending the money (the cook) which complicates the control of how expenses are made and reported.

  Note that school inspectors recommended GATs to regularly visit filial schools needing support in reporting. This is already a recommendation of the Manual but it is unclear if such practices are frequent.

- **Better management of the money**

  As noted in section 4.2.1., it is important for schools to better manage how money is spent by better planning and measuring quantities to cook. Improving such practices will help avoid food waste (leftovers and feeding non-students) but also ensure the right quantities are served.

- **Recommendations regarding salary of cooks**

  Given the large number of assistants working with cooks in the BE schools, it may be useful to re-examine the workload and determine a fair compensation. Cooks currently receive additional benefits from the amount of food left-over. However if the SFP design improves efficiency by cooking for actual number of students then the amount of food leftover may be reduced. About 14% of the cooks interviewed requested that their salaries should be increased. This was also mentioned by a few school directors/coordinators (6 among 148 interviewed).

  Lastly 4 cooks (among 116 interviewed) recommended that cooks should be paid on a monthly basis (not quarterly). Payment of cooks was often late.

- **Recommendations regarding other costs**

  School level implementers recommended that government support specific operational costs such as transport, buying detergents/soap, extra money to pay helpers. Transportation for example is a more critical issue for filial and rural schools.

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165 The Civil Service Commission and Anti-Corruption Commission have also acknowledged that there are cases under investigation or disciplinary procedures related to misuse of SFP funds.
4.3.2. Human means

This report underlines the importance of two key functions at school level: cooks and PTAs. School management and teachers are mainly a pass-through for the program to reach students.

a. Cooks

- **Ensure cooks are selected based on their cooking and management skills**

The selection of cooks in some schools lacks transparency. To improve this situation, schools should follow the Manual’s rules: to collect at least 3 proposals from groups of cooks; apply the Manual’s selection criteria; and let PTAs take a lead role in the decision-making process. It is therefore crucial for schools to have strong PTAs.

Survey findings revealed that having access to the Manual influences how much schools involve the PTA in the selection of the cook, a key step of SFP implementation. It is again recommended to socialize the Manual and make its content readily accessible and understandable for all SFP implementers, including parents.

- **Ensure adequate training and oversight of cooks**

More specific suggestions for training of cooks will be discussed in part 4.4.2.

- **Work with only recommended number of cooks**

MOH recommended that only one cook is responsible for managing and providing food for students to ensure consistency in the quality of service to students. On the other hand, FONGTIL stated that cooks should never be working alone but rather in groups in order to share responsibilities and have enough workforce. This is already happening in most schools.

Lastly, data shows that there is a lot of turnover of cooks, probably linked to the fact that schools try to provide this position to as many persons as possible in the community. Some schools for example work with more cooks than recommended in the Manual.

In conclusion, it is important to control that schools follow the Manual’s rules in terms of how many cooks/groups of cooks need to be recruited (1 cook/group of cooks per 300 students) or how many assistants a cook or group would engage. This should ensure there are enough persons to be able to complete the work but also that not too many cooks (or helpers) are unnecessarily involved. This would also avoid potential problems related to cooks working without holding a contract because the school is working with more cooks than authorized in the Manual.

- **Professional substitution**

MOH indicated that substitution of cooks can have an impact on the quality of service to students. This was reflected in the survey data with cooks stating that substitution when they are sick is often non-professional (family). While it is important for schools to agree with cooks on how they can be substituted during their absence, more control on who is replacing them is needed to ensure consistency in the quality of meals provided to students.

b. PTAs

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166 Manual recommends to give priority to women’s groups in the community such as mothers, women trained by government, women groups from church, etc.
School directors/coordinators often deplored the low involvement of PTAs in school feeding, explaining that PTA members are often too busy to get involved in school activities or simply not interested. Parents in the baseline survey commented that they did not understand well the role of the PTA and that school directors were not always welcoming of their involvement. A number of recommendations can be drawn from the study findings to increase PTAs’ efficiency:

- Ensure that PTA members are selected by parents as data showed that PTAs selected by parents were more active than those appointed by school personnel. School personnel were found to be more involved in the selection of PTA members in EBCs and urban areas.
- Whenever possible, parents should select people who are more available to be involved in the school activities.167
- PTAs should have more than one member as it is unlikely that single member-PTAs can efficiently be involved in the SFP and other school activities as well.
- Ensuring PTAs and school personnel understand the role and functions of PTA members by providing coaching and training. For example, many PTAs do not conduct regular PTA meetings.

**c. Make use of enhanced inter-ministerial coordination**

Lastly, several actors at school, municipal and national level insisted on the importance of better coordination between ministries and departments in order to increase the program’s efficiency. MEYS is still viewed as the owner of the SFP, despite deconcentration efforts, but MEYS requires contribution from MAF, MOH and MSA to ensure that the program is implemented properly. Some of the recommendations from various stakeholders are:

- More regular coordination should happen with the Municipal Health to discuss routine monitoring of health, hygiene and nutrition issues. However, limited human resources in municipalities is a major constraint. *(Municipal Education Directors)*
- Strong cooperation between MEYS and MOH is needed to guarantee quality and hygienic school meals. *(PDHJ)*
- Inter-ministries coordination should happen via KONSANTIL at municipal level. MAF has extension workers working in each village and they can help organizing farmer groups to supply schools if Municipal Education and Municipal Agriculture work together. *(MAF)*

**4.3.3. Efficiency of physical means**

Most stakeholders agree on the fact that schools have very limited infrastructures. PDHJ observed that many school buildings are broken with no efforts to renovate. Often schools do not have access to clean water, have toilets but no water, and kitchens are inappropriate for cooking.

**a. Access to water, a high priority for school feeding**

Some schools are still lacking clean water, as well as toilets/sanitation facilities which are basic infrastructures to guarantee school feeding can be implemented in a hygienic and healthy environment. Stakeholders at all levels recommended that this should be a high priority for the government168.

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167 Many of the more active PTA members live close to the school, enabling more frequent visits.
168 MOH, school inspectors, Municipal Education, school directors/coordinators, cooks, WFP.
Infrastructure should be addressed before implementing a SFP. It is a pity that, until now, children defecate in the forest, eat without washing their hands and do not have a school kitchen. The government should develop an integrated plan with partners to address this issue and should include this in the budget plans as soon as possible. [MOH]

Having access to water will also prevent schools from having to ask students (and parents) to bring water to schools.

b. Building kitchens and food storage rooms within schools

The second priority should be given to building or renovating kitchens and food storages within schools as it is frequent for cooks to prepare meals outside the school compound and to store food in their own house. This was also recommended by stakeholders at all levels.\(^{169}\)

We request the Education Department to assess the condition of kitchens and food storages in schools. [School inspectors]

Survey data helps provide more specific recommendations regarding the most frequent renovation work needed for kitchens: building/repairing roofs, ensuring sufficient ventilation, adding doors and changing/rebuilding damaged walls made of bamboo/palm leaves.

As for food storage: larger spaces are needed in about half of the basic education schools, walls made of bamboo/palm leaves also need to be changed/rebuilt, leaking roofs need to be repaired.

c. Fill the gaps in cooking utensils and plates/cutlery

DNASE distributed cooking utensils and plates/spoons more than five years ago. Equipment has deteriorated and some need replacement.\(^ {170}\) An EBF coordinator suggested an assessment of the equipment that needs to be replaced or distributed to all schools.

As noted in the survey findings, insufficient plates and spoons also have an impact on hygiene (students sharing the same plates/spoons/glasses) and on the time spent for serving students as children have to take turn to use plates/spoons.

DNASE has not had funding in recent budgets to replace broken cooking equipment. The school supplies budget does not allow use for cooking equipment, plates, cups bowls or utensils and the school feeding budget of 25 cents per child per meal is intended for food not equipment. Funding should be identified and provided to schools of municipal administrations to allow the replacement of needed items.

d. Canteens

Municipal Education and school directors/coordinators requested for more canteens to be built in schools. As indicated by the survey data, serving meals in canteens takes less time on average. Building of school canteens should be prioritized in schools with higher number of students.

e. WASH facilities

Several school directors/coordinators requested for school toilets to be built or simply repaired.

UNICEF expressed concerns with the poor WASH facilities, highlighting the critical need to reduce illnesses. There are different levels of standards that could be developed using different materials:

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\(^{169}\) School inspectors, Municipal Education, school directors/coordinators, WFP.

\(^{170}\) Stated by school inspectors, school directors/coordinators and cooks.
from low cost latrines using local materials to medium level latrines with cement floors or even higher standards.

**f. Overcoming the gap in financial and human resources**

It is unlikely that MEYS could overcome this gap in school infrastructure alone. WFP recommends that MAF, Public Works, MEYS, MOH and others relevant institutions collaborate for the improvement of basic infrastructure to support the SFP in schools. Schools may consider different levels of solutions depending on local conditions and resources.\(^\text{171}\)

Another aspect to consider is the involvement of PTAs to support basic maintenance of school infrastructure. Municipal Education Directors indicated that parents' involvement in SFP activities is still low in some schools. Yet, in some schools parents help supply clean water, fix pipes, build or renovate school kitchens. Some PTAs are also reporting problems to Municipal Education through School Inspectors.

Feedback from PTA themselves shows that some PTAs are indeed very active in supporting schools:

- "If there are problems at school, PTA members will meet with the community to try solve them." [Preschool PTA, Ermera]
- "We have plans for construction but we still need to sit together with parents." [Preschool PTA, Ermera]
- "We have plans to build a kitchen but there is no place." [Preschool PTA, Ermera]

Yet, many PTAs still seem to lack proper organization and power to call for meetings to discuss solutions with school management and communities. As recommended in the Manual, the KPME has a key role to play in this regard.

### 4.4. How to ensure the program’s sustainability

**SUSTAINABILITY**

The ability of the program to continue its implementation successfully over time.

Stakeholders’ recommendations are organized into three main areas:

- Importance of having strong PTAs;
- Building capacity of all SFP implementers;
- Importance of establishing an efficient monitoring system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Recommendations - Sustainability:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Strengthen the participation of parents in the SFP through the PTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Provide regular training to all SFP implementers (cooks, school administrators and parents) in SFP procedures, nutrition and hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Strengthen the monitoring of SFP by PTA, supervisors and other actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Improve data collection on SFP indicators to better measure compliance and effectiveness of program compared to expected results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1. PTAs role in the program’s sustainability

The findings of this study revealed that schools often have adopted different practices in terms of SFP implementation. Some of these practices are responding to specific conditions schools have to overcome. Yet, there is one fundamental component to ensure implementation of school feeding can be maximized in all schools, and that is the PTA.

The PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative explained that the family is the foundation to provide nutritious food for children at home. “We can’t only depend on government subsidies and we should think about how to involve families to sustain the program in the future”.

Parents are very receptive to the fact that their children receive a free meal at school. This is a key opportunity for the program to involve dedicated people in its implementation and it is already happening in some schools.

“PTA members at the Inacio de Loyola Catholic School understand their role, the SFP implementation system, and education activities because the PTA is highly involved and always participates in briefings or orientations from the school director.” [Liquiça Municipal Education Director]

But a lot of schools also complain about having weak/inactive PTAs. Indeed, in a context of subsistence agriculture, most parents are busy trying to make daily income and do not have spare time to join school activities.

“PTAs do not carry out monitoring because they are volunteers (which means monitoring is carried out when they have time to do it). Community members do not know about the SFP and they also don’t know how to support it.” [Superintendent]

On the other hand, data showed that some schools are still weak in involving PTAs, even though PTAs or parents have requested for more consultation with school personnel.

A number of key recommendations can be drawn from the study findings to remedy this situation:

- Firstly, it is important for SFP Coordinators to ensure that the Manual’s rules in terms of how to involve PTAs are followed by schools: PTAs should be systematically included as a member of the KPME172 and school directors/coordinators should invite the PTA in all KPME meetings.
- Secondly, awareness raising in communities about the functions PTAs are supposed to play in implementation of the SFP can help parents more actively advocate for schools to involve PTAs and be receptive to parent involvement.

PTAs can help link schools to communities in order to renovate school infrastructure or to identify local producers for example; issues which clearly are bottlenecks for the program’s sustainability.

The importance of better involving PTAs was also recognized by national and municipal level stakeholders:

“Teachers should work together with parents /PTAs and share information regarding the progress of SFP implementations and obstacles.” [PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative]

172 According to PTA members, that was the case in less than half of the schools where PTA members were interviewed.
“The established commission should involve parents’ representation, teachers as well as the episcopal commission (church commission).” [Director General for Policy, Planning and Partnership, MEYS]

“In order for the SFP to be implemented successfully, we should involve parents and line ministries.” [Superintendent]

4.4.2. Capacity building of all SFP implementers

a. Recommendations for trainings

- **Training of cooks**

Study findings highlighted important gaps in cook’s capacities. The following summarizes the key recommendations which can be drawn from this situation:

- **More Regular Training of cooks, PTAs and school administrators** is required given the high turnover cooks and the oversight role of PTA and school administrators. DNASE has been responsible for training but not adequately funded to regularly deliver the needed training. As decentralization progresses, it may make more sense for the training responsibility to be under the municipal government. Whatever entity responsible for training, needs to have a budget to fulfil the responsibility.

- **Training of cooks in preparation of nutritive meals** is crucial given the school feeding observation indicated many deviations from the Manual’s guidance in terms of meal composition. Such deviations were also observed among cooks who said they always follow the Manual, which reflects cook’s very poor understanding of the Manual. Cooks need to receive closer guidance, in the form of coaching for example.

The importance of training cooks in how to prepare nutritious meals, and more specifically how to follow the nutritional recommendations of the Manual, was also highlighted by stakeholders at national, municipal and school levels.\(^{173}\)

- **Training of cooks in basic financial management and reporting.** This is especially important if cooks will manage larger amounts of money in the future.\(^{174}\) Note that an obvious precondition to this is that the cooks selected should be literate. Inspection services at national and school level also recommended for such trainings to be delivered to cooks.

- **Training of cooks in hygiene practices**, most importantly washing hands during meal preparation and maintaining a clean working place. This was mentioned by stakeholders but is definitely to be strengthened given the results of school feeding observation: about half of the kitchens were “not so clean to dirty”, one-fourth of water containers dirty, and more than half of the cooking teams not washing hands systematically even though water was available in the kitchens.

\(^{173}\) More specifically MSA, MOH at national and municipal level, superintendents, Permatil Director and school directors and coordinators.

\(^{174}\) Only 11% of the cooks are currently managing SFP money by tranches of one month. About 75% manage money by tranches of one week only.
The MOH at national and municipal level, school directors/coordinators and cooks themselves also recommended that cooks be trained in hygiene practices. Municipal MOH indicated that they could help deliver such trainings.

- **Training of other stakeholders**
  - **Training of PTAs** in understanding what are their role and responsibilities in the school (and more specifically in the SFP implementation) was recommended by the Municipal Education. Study findings indeed reflected PTA’s lack of understanding of their role which might explain partly their limited involvement in the SFP. MOH indicated that socialization of the Manual might be enough to raise PTA’s awareness.
  - **Training of teachers.** Even though the Manual does not recommend for teachers to be actively involved in the implementation of the SFP, a number of stakeholders suggested that teachers should be trained in hygiene and nutrition.\(^1\)

Lastly, it is highly recommended for the trainings to be delivered at administrative post or school levels as the impact would be limited if trainings were delivered at municipal level only. Trainings at the school cluster level would allow greater participation of parents. Additional guidance and coaching of cooks during the course of the year and when cooks are changed is required to ensure this knowhow is sustained.

### 4.4.3. Monitoring of the SFP implementation

As expressed by WFP, strengthening monitoring is crucial to successfully implement the SFP in Timor-Leste in the long run. Yet, several stakeholders indicated that the current system is lacking proper monitoring. The Audit Court for example, regretted that auditors did not meet PTAs during the audit.

#### a. Need for more frequent school feeding observation by PTAS

As indicated by the national sub-inspector, motoring of the SFP should mainly be done via direct observation of school. Yet, survey findings revealed that some PTAs are not conducting enough monitoring visits.

Most of the recommendations that can be drawn from the data on how to enhance PTA’s involvement in SFP monitoring were already presented earlier: systematic inclusion of PTAs in the KPME, including KPME meetings, awareness raising of parents on the role of PTAs.

Many stakeholders insisted that monitoring should focus on the cook’s work and how they comply with the Manual’s guidance.\(^1\) More specifically, these observation visits should focus on:

- The quality of the foods used to prepare school meals and purchase of fresh food from local farmers. The Director of Permatil also suggested to ask students about the quality of the foods they are served.
- The timing of food service. The observation survey indicated that some schools serve meals during class or after class which are deviations from the Manual. To avoid such situations, cooks need to start preparing meals earlier.

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\(^1\) Stated by MOH and PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative.
\(^1\) Stated by PM’s Food Security and Nutrition Representative, PDHJ and Audit Court.
\(^1\) Stated by PDHJ, superintendents and MOH. MOH suggested that a “health person” should control ingredients before cooking.
\(^1\) Stated by school inspectors.
- The duration of school feeding (lasted more than 35 minutes in a significant proportion of school).
- Hygienic practices of cooks and students.
- The use of students or children of school age to help during meal preparation and service. Such practices should be totally banned.

PTAs should report urgent issues as soon as possible to school directors/coordinators. Interestingly, some stakeholders pointed out the need for standard formats to help PTAs record results of monitoring visits179.

b. Monitoring by other actors

Firstly, school directors/coordinators should control cooks and report problems to MEYS. Penalties should be given for cooks who are not complying with the Manual180.

Interestingly, cooks themselves recommended better monitoring to be conducted:

“MEYS should better control the implementation of the SFP because our menu never changes and we always serve canned fruits instead of fresh fruits.” [Cook, preschool in Manatuto]

MOH pointed out that both the MEYS and MOH were weak in controlling school activities such as the SFP and hoped this would change in the future. He suggested that teachers, PTAs, parents and school coordinators work as a team to conduct regular evaluations and take immediate actions to solve the problems identified.

Secondly, it was recommended to control the selection process of the cooks181. This task should mainly be conducted by SFP Coordinators as they are the ones reviewing school reports that should include all documents related to the selection of the cook.

The national sub-inspector also highlighted the importance of monitoring how SFP money is spent. It is recommended to ensure that the Manual’s guidance in this regard is followed: GATs monitor financial expenditures in schools, SFP Coordinators verify the accuracy of school reports and school inspectors conduct regular audits.

Lastly, measuring the actual impact of the program will only be possible if DNASE or Municipal Administrations systematically collect, compile and publically report data on the number of school feeding days delivered as well as attendance and drop-out rates.182 Expected results and indicators should be developed in the SFP Manual revision to better measure compliance and effectiveness of program.

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179 Stated by Permatil Director and National sub-inspector.
180 Stated by Audit Court.
181 Stated by subinspectors.
182 The Provedor’s 2017 report (p. 29-30) also noted difficulties in obtaining documents and data on the school feeding program from the Ministry at national and municipal level and at school level siting the lack of effective control systems and transparency as a violation of good governance.
# Appendix I: Summary of compliance and deviations with the SFP Manual

## 1. DISPARITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF SFP

**Manual**

In order to achieve its first purpose (improve nutrition and decrease dropout), school feeding shall be delivered during all effective days and in all schools of Timor-Leste.

*191 effective days in 2019*

**Actual proportions of school feeding days delivered:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Days Delivered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banners</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emoera</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquica</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufahi</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 2. SELECTION OF SUPPLIERS

**Manual**

1. **Who selects the cook**
   - Lead by PTA with support from Directors/Coordinator
2. **Selection criteria**
   - Based on 3 quotes, with priority given to local women groups
3. **Cooks’ contracts**
   - Each supplier covering a batch of 300 students should hold a valid contract

**Actual**

1. **Who selects the cook**
   - BE: 51-71% PTA / 18-23% school management alone
   - PE: 22-38% PTA / 63-70% school management alone
2. **Selection criteria**
   - All women groups or individuals but Manual procurement process often not followed
3. **Cooks’ contracts**
   - BE: 83% have a contract
   - PE: 70% have a contract

## 3. FUNDING MECHANISM AND MANAGEMENT

**Manual**

1. **Who holds SFP money**
   - Cooks (fornezedor)
2. **Cook holding money for how long**
   - Monthly

**Actual**

1. **Who holds SFP money**
   - BE: cooks in 94-98% of schools
   - PE: > cooks in 75-90% of schools
   - > Coordinator in 10-25% of schools
2. **Cook holding money for how long**
   - BE: 77% weekly, 11% monthly, 9% per 2 weeks, 4% daily
   - PE: 72% weekly, 13% daily, 11% monthly, 4% per 2 weeks
## 4. REPORTING EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Who prepares expenditures report</strong>&lt;br&gt;Cooks</td>
<td>1. <strong>Who prepares expenditures report</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>EBF</strong>: 77% Coordinators, 12% cooks, 8% GAT&lt;br&gt;<strong>EBC</strong>: 76% GAT, 24% cooks&lt;br&gt;<strong>PE</strong>: 92% Coordinators, 2% GAT, 2% teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 5. FOOD PROCUREMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Use of SFP money for food and school feeding management</strong>&lt;br&gt;2. <strong>Purchase local products as much as possible</strong></td>
<td>1. <strong>Uses of SFP money besides for food</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>BE</strong>: 71% (mainly firewood, soap, transport, helper)&lt;br&gt;<strong>PE</strong>: 30% (mainly: firewood, water, soap, transport)&lt;br&gt;Cases of misuse identified for infrastructure repairs.&lt;br&gt;2. <strong>Purchase local products as much as possible</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Buying local products</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>BE</strong>: 39% daily, 53% sometimes, 7% never&lt;br&gt;<strong>Buying from local farmer</strong>:&lt;br&gt;<strong>BE</strong>: 25% daily, 12% sometimes, 63% never&lt;br&gt;<strong>PE</strong>: 6% daily, 17% sometimes, 77% never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 6. FOOD STORAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storage free from insects, water, dust and animals.</td>
<td>1. <strong>Cleanliness</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>BE</strong>: 33% mostly clean to clean, 51% not so clean, 16% dirty&lt;br&gt;<strong>PE</strong>: 33% mostly clean to clean, 58% not so clean, 9% dirty&lt;br&gt;2. <strong>Food raised off the floor</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>BE</strong>: 72% food raised, 28% food on floor&lt;br&gt;3. <strong>Roof not leaking</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>BE</strong>: 24% not leaking, 76% leaking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 7. FOOD PREPARATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Cooks wash hands before cooking</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Cooks wash hands before cooking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Wash utensils</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Wash utensils (only data on access to water in kitchen available)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Kitchen is clean</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Kitchen is clean</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BE:** 35% often wash hands but without soap, 62% wash hands rarely or sometimes only (without soap), 3% never
**PE:** 39% often wash hands (incl. 9% with soap), 24% wash hands rarely or sometimes only (without soap), 45% never

**BE:** 74% have water in the kitchen, 26% don’t have water
**PE:** 77% have water in the kitchen, 23% don’t have water

**BE:** 56% mostly clean to clean, 44% not so clean
**PE:** 39% mostly clean to clean, 50% not so clean, 11% dirty

## 8. FOOD COMPOSITION ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL MEALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Types of meals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE: snack</td>
<td>PE: 76% snack / 24% cooked meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: cooked meal</td>
<td>BE: 48% cooked meal / 52% snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Meal composition:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 “vitamins” + 1 “protein” + carbohydrate</td>
<td>PE: 12% reach standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE:</td>
<td>BE: 35% reach standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Foods to avoid/less preferred foods:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sausage, flavour enhancers, instant noodles, canned fish, tomato sauce, etc.</td>
<td>Observed use of sausage, flavour enhancers, instant noodles, canned tuna.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 9. FOOD SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Students wash hands</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Place to wash hands and soap available</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Meals served class or during break</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Meals served class or during break</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. School feeding lasts 30 minutes</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. School feeding lasts 30 minutes</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BE:** 50% yes (18% have soap) / 50% no place to wash hands
**PE:** 81% yes (67% have soap) / 19% no place to wash hands

**BE:** 88% during break, 16% after class, 12% during class (students still eating when class started in 26% of BE schools)
**PE:** 92% during break, 8% after class

**BE:** 62% under 35min, 38% above 35 min
**PE:** 92% under 35min, 8% above 35 min
## 10. MONITORING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**1. **Existence of a PTA in each school (KPME)</td>
<td>**1. **Existence of a PTA in each school (KPME)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: 98% have a PTA &amp; 47% of PTAs are part of KPME</td>
<td>PE: 81% have a PTA &amp; 44% of PTAs are part of KPME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**2. **PTAs meet whenever required</td>
<td>**2. **PTAs meet whenever required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: 30% met in 2019, 33% met in 2018, 37% never meet</td>
<td>PE: 64% met in 2019, 25% met in 2018, 11% never meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**3. **PTA in charge of monitoring food supply and cook</td>
<td>**3. **PTA in charge of monitoring food supply and cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE: 76%, among which 85% conducted at least 1 monitoring mission in the second trimester</td>
<td>PE: 79%, among which 86% conducted at least 1 monitoring mission in the second trimester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix II: List of Key Informant Interviews at National Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/10/2019</td>
<td>Ministériu Edukasaun Juventude Desportu (MEJD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4/10/2019</td>
<td>Ministériu Edukasaun Juventude Desportu (MEJD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30/10/2019</td>
<td>Ministériu Administrasaun Estatal (MSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28/10/2019</td>
<td>Ministériu Saúde (MOH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>29/10/2019</td>
<td>Ministériu Agrikultura no Pêska (MAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21/10/2019</td>
<td>Gabinete Primeiru Ministru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>08/10/2019</td>
<td>Parlamentu Nasional (PN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16/10/2019</td>
<td>Provedoria Diretus Humanos no Justisa (PDHJ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16/10/2019</td>
<td>Audit Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7/11/2019</td>
<td>FONGTIL (Forum Organizasaun Nau Goveurnamental Timor-Leste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>03/10/2019</td>
<td>World Food Program (WFP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3/10/2019</td>
<td>World Health Organization (WHO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>7/10/2019</td>
<td>Permakultura Timor Leste (PERMATIL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>21/10/2019</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix III: Survey Instruments

A. Formatu Observasaun
B. Formuláriu Entrevista Diretór ka Koordenadór
C. Formuláriu Entrevista Fornesedór
D. Formuláriu Entrevista Membru APP