

# Evaluation of the Global Food for Education Initiative in the Dominican Republic



**BEPS**

## Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity

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# **Evaluation of the Global Food for Education Initiative in the Dominican Republic**

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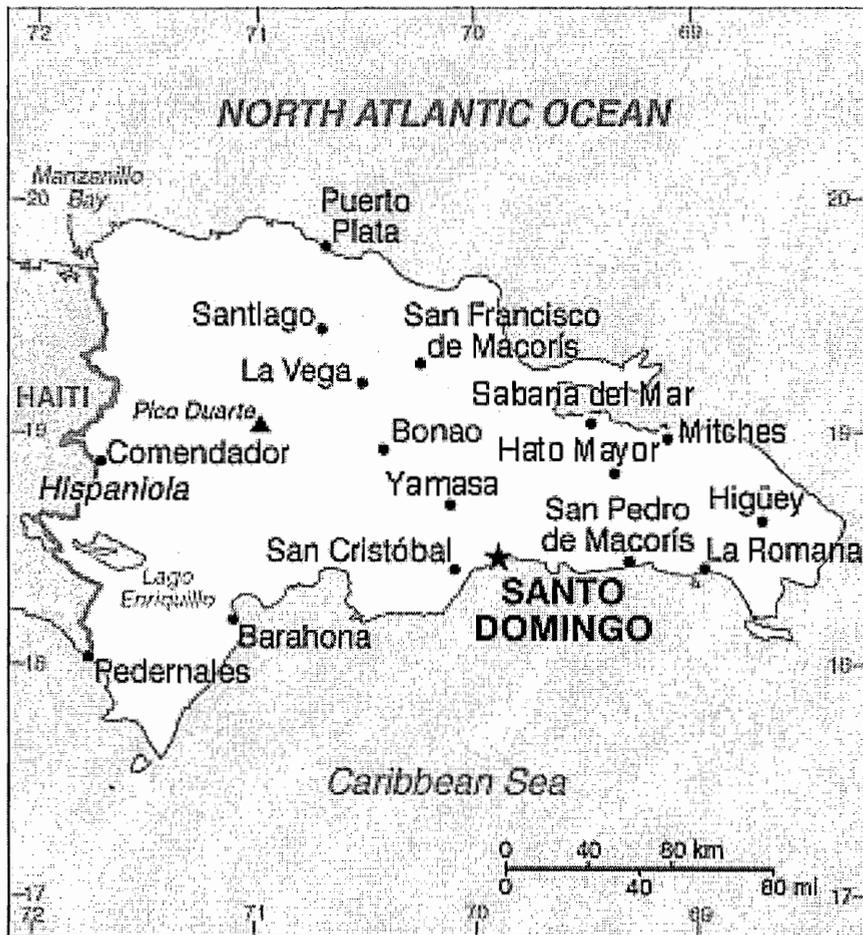
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*The opinions expressed in this document are those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the United States Agency for International Development*

## Map of the Dominican Republic



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## Executive Summary

### *History and Background of the GFEI*

In July 2000, in Okinawa, Japan the United States Government committed \$300 million in resources to establish a school feeding program for developing countries, especially for countries which had made a commitment to provide universal basic education for children at the EFA Global Forum meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. The Global Food for Education Initiative (GFEI) that resulted is administered by USDA and builds on the ideas promoted by Ambassador Georges McGovern and former Senator Robert Dole. Under this program, USDA provides surplus commodities and funds to cover transportation and distribution to the World Food Program (WFP), 13 private voluntary PVOs and one national government in the Dominican Republic, for use in 48 school feeding programs in 38 countries.

The intention of the GFEI is to use school feeding programs to increase school enrollments under the assumption that basic education can help provide an individual with the basic knowledge and skills needed for self sufficiency and an improved standard of living which in turn may help poor nations improve their productivity and national development.

GFEI projects are selected using a set of criteria that include need, technical criteria, ability to contribute matching resources, and government and host governments' commitment to implement the primary education component of the Education for all Declaration made in Dakar, Senegal.

To date, the GFEI program has reached 7 million children through school or pre-school feeding programs. This includes about 5 million children through the WFP sponsored projects and 2 million more through PVO projects, and this unique GODR run project. Out of the 25 school feeding programs surveyed at the end of 2003, 24 were conducted by PVOs and one by the government of the DR.

The USDA carried out a formal evaluation with cooperating sponsors in all GFEI countries using a standardized survey questionnaire based on a modified version of a WFP developed survey instrument containing 210 questions. The results of the survey which was carried out in 2003 show a measurable improvement in school enrolments and a significant increase in girls' enrolments. However it is not clear whether these changes were a direct outcome of the school feeding program, or if they may be related to other exogenous factors not measured by the survey.

In poorer communities where food deprivation is a chronic factor undermining children's participation in school activities, parents and teachers report that children display improved concentration, greater energy, and more positive attitudes toward school work and learning. However, because the GFEI lacks a clearly measurable set of indicators, a correlation between school feeding programs and an improvement in retention and achievement rates still remain illusively difficult to demonstrate.

Likewise, this mainly quantitative assessment suggested that the GFEI program could be impacting communities in unintended ways. These more difficult to measure qualitative program benefits include stimulation of the local economy, civil society support for education, community capacity building, stronger parental support for schools and stronger teacher-parent partnerships.

### ***Evaluation Terms of Reference and Methodology***

The Scope of Work for the “Evaluation of the Dominican Republic’s Global Food For Education Initiative” was received by Creative Associate’s International in Washington DC on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 2004. The period assigned for carrying out the evaluation was 20 days from July 17 - August 16, of which 10 days were spent in situ collecting information and conducting interviews and field visits.

Time constraints, prior evaluation studies, logistics and budgetary constraints helped determine the methodology and approach selected for this evaluation. Five qualitative research methodologies seemed most appropriate for achieving this end and these included: 1) A review of selected background documents and project records; 2) In-depth interviews with selected key actors; 3) Field visits with available NGO partners to a variety of randomly selected field sites; 4) Field-based focal group meetings with parents, teachers and project support staff; 5) Visits, informal discussions and interviews with senior STP, SEE, USAID and USDA managers and program administrators both in the DR, Washington, D.C., and Romania.

Thirty-eight project sites were visited, 27 schools seen, 6 focus groups convened and 121 persons interviewed over the course of 10 days field work in 3 northeastern provinces and Santo Domingo. The data collected and the qualitative analysis carried resulted in the following principal conclusions.

### ***Main Findings and Conclusions***

- The Dominican Republic GFE initiative is the only government to government program currently being implemented and has several unique features; 1) the host MOE assumed responsibility for providing school meals leaving the USG donation free for implementing community development and school construction activities; 2) an independent Program Executive Council was set up to manage the program; 3) responsibility for NGO oversight was given to a government agency; 4) the DR program was the only program to address access and retention issues beyond merely delivering donated commodities; 5) the DR project was designed to be a three-year development process instead of the usual one-year pilot school feeding program.
- A comprehensive review of sample reports, audit documents and interviews with field staff and Directors from CRS, WV, MUDE, Alas de Igualdad, CEZOPAS, IDDI and IDAC led one to believe that despite initial delays and other administrative constraints, most NGOs did a reasonable job of delivering what was specified under their contracts.
- The 27 schools visited supported the general claim that the DR GFEI program was strong on construction but weak in showing measurable education achievements such as gains in learning achievement, enrolment and retention levels linked specifically to the impact being made by the school feeding program. The inability to see children and teachers in

an active classroom limited in understanding the impact made on teaching/learning dimensions on participating schools.

- If the DR's GFEI programs' success is to be measured in the number of construction projects completed such as schools refurbished, toilets built, kitchens completed and fences erected, then this would have to be rated as very good. In all 27 schools there was ample evidence of work successfully carried out to provide all or most of the physical infrastructure requirements for the schools listed.
- In 99% of the schools visited, newly established school libraries were bookless or only had a set of four reference books. The reason given for the lack of books was that the books promised by the GFEI project had yet to be delivered by the government agency responsible.
- School vegetable gardens seemed to be most successful where the NGO leading this aspect had prior experience in horticulture, could field trained agricultural extension workers and had the motivation to provide training and timely technical support.
- Highly visible community school construction projects provided the catalyst needed to motivate dormant PTAs into committing time and resources for the improvement of local schools.
- SEE provided the meals that were making a positive impact on children's health and attendance, especially in poorer communities. There were some anomalies, though: meals delivered were undercounted and had to be carefully checked by teachers on delivery; meals were sometimes not delivered on time; meals were not delivered because of fuel shortages; and school meal programs were poorly monitored and supervised by local SEE staff.
- NGOs with strong sectoral experience in health, nutrition or agriculture were able to use this experience to successfully promote community outreach programs. Notable in this respect were WV in health and community development; MUDE, CEZOPAS and CE-Mujer in mobilizing women's support and in promoting home-based milk and egg production and nutrition improvement; CRS-IDAC in promoting community health, hygiene training and change in health behaviors; Alas de Igualdad in supporting community production of vegetables and poultry in some of the poorest communities; Only WV and CRS had had substantial prior experience doing educational programs, which probably explained why many of the educational dimensions of the GFEI program remained unresolved.
- The best locally produced nutrition and hygiene materials seen were those produced with CRS in collaboration with IDAC, CEDECO, CE-Mujer, WV, MUDE and teachers from 20 participating rural schools. The materials seen were of high quality and well produced. A unifying environmental health and hygiene theme was used to bring together different components in an integrated way.

### *Some Unintended Outcomes*

- For many Batey communities learning to work together through the GFEI experience, in what was essentially a highly dysfunctional and competitive social environment, was a healing experience. The resulting community empowerment process spawned new

community initiatives and helped to trigger a spirit of cooperation, as was the case in Altigracia and Villa La Construcción.

- International NGOs with prior experience working with donors or UN agencies were able to bring to the program a wealth of experience and resources that helped smaller local NGOs build capacities to deal with some of the more challenging aspects of the DR GFEI.
- The addition of new classroom space seems to have stimulated a demand for more teachers and at the next level (i.e., communities, where primary schools have expanded to provide the full 8<sup>th</sup> grade elementary cycle, now want secondary schools).
- In some communities, NGO-sponsored training in the management of Water and Sanitation Services, led to the creation of voluntary village committees to deal with sewerage, garbage disposal, road drainage and other non-program related reconstruction projects.

### *Lessons Learned*

- Some NGOs selected were never in the position to take on the administrative and financial management challenges of an internationally funded program. The GODR was slow to recognize this and failed to carry out the training needed to bring NGOs up to par on the basics of sound management, especially financial management practices.
- The STP failed to understand the need for establishing norms and indicators for the work being commissioned from NGOs. This meant that a lot of the work carried out was poorly monitored and of variable quality.
- GODR and NGO managers commented on the shortage of time allowed to implement the GFEI. The three years allotted were not enough to see the softer educational achievement and community development elements reach conclusion.
- A lack of clarity in accounting procedures, or an unwillingness on the part of some NGOs to show their cost-sharing contribution, delayed the disbursement of program funding at critical moments in program implementation when external funding was needed to keep program momentum going.
- The institutionalization of a community co-financing aspect in the GFEI was seldom stressed and never included in the original project plan. The long-term success of this kind of integrated community development approach will depend on implementing a viable co-financing or community credit strategy that can be made to work for poor DR communities.
- Membership in the CEP helped to forge the trust needed to build transparent management practices and strengthen decision making processes between USAID, USDA, SEE and the STP.
- USAID and USDA learned that NGOs living and working within targeted communities were better able to get the job done than NGOs supervising program implementation from Santo Domingo.
- The DR GFEI was too diffuse and tried to do too much. Too much emphasis was given to the water and sanitation and construction elements and not enough to the teacher training and the learning dimensions of the program.
- The integrity, transparency leadership skills of the GFEI-STP coordinator, may have contributed to the overall success of the DR-GFEI model.

- The external audit drew attention to the cumbersome bureaucratic financial management systems operating within the STP and other government offices. STP management will need to review and reform financial and other management protocols, should the program be extended.

### ***Recommendations for the Future of the Program***

The high cost and the amount of funding available to support a continuation of the DR GFEI will be critical determinants in any decision to extend the program. The high opportunity cost of continuing the program in its present form and scope will be the challenge.

Therefore, any one of the following three options can be recommended:

1. Continue the GFEI program as is, but with a smaller number of participating NGOs targeting a smaller better focused group of deserving communities with a clearer set of community development guidelines and better defined educational objectives.
2. Radically modify the existing program, emphasizing only the most successful social and educational aspects such as more support to PTAs, increase locally produced dietary supplements, strengthen community outreach programs, etc. Where possible, encourage communities and the local private sector to contribute toward the improvement of basic services to meet locally identified education and community development priorities.
3. Discontinue USAID support for the GFEI integrated community development program and replace it with a rural basic education quality improvement program focused on the educational priorities proposed in the new USAID country strategy for basic education.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ALAS</b>	Wings of Equality
<b>CE-MUJER</b>	Center for Solidarity for Women's Development
<b>CEZOPAS</b>	Social Pastoral of the Central Zone
<b>CIAC</b>	Center for Investigation and Cultural Support
<b>CPBP</b>	Presidential Commission for Peri-Urban Communities
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>DR</b>	Dominican Republic
<b>EERC</b>	Educational Evaluation Research Consortium
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization
<b>FAS</b>	Foreign Agricultural Service
<b>FUSABI</b>	Dominican Health and Wellbeing Foundation
<b>GFEI</b>	Global Food Education Initiative
<b>GODR</b>	Government of the Dominican Republic
<b>IDAC</b>	Dominican Institute for Community Action
<b>IDDI</b>	Dominican Institute for Integrated Development
<b>MOA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MUDE</b>	Women in Development
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PAHO</b>	Pan-American Health Organization
<b>PEC</b>	Program Executive Council
<b>PTA</b>	Parent Teacher Association
<b>PVO</b>	Private Voluntary Organization
<b>SEE</b>	Secretariat of Education
<b>STP</b>	Technical Secretary of the Presidency
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture
<b>WATSAN</b>	Water and Sanitation
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Program
<b>WV</b>	World Vision

## **Introduction and Background**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2001 USAID Santo Domingo and the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) in cooperation with the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) through the Technical Secretariat to the Presidency (STP) and the Secretariat of Education (SEE) signed an agreement GFE-517-2001/687-00 to carry out education improvement, community development and school feeding programs in six Eastern Provinces of the island. The USDA managed Global Fund for Education Initiative (GFEI) donated 50,000MT of wheat and 12,200MT of Crude Soybean Oil which was sold locally for RD\$238,800,000 (Officially given at USDA GFEI closing conference) including interest, or 12M US\$. The proceeds were placed in a special account managed by a Program Executive Council (PEC) specially constituted to include representatives from USAID, FAS, STP and the SEE. The proceeds of this donation were then used to implement school feeding and educational improvement programs in poor rural Bateyes, and peri-urban communities. Local and international NGOs were encouraged to put forward proposals to manage programs targeted at improving primary school enrollment, increasing school retention, and improving learning achievement levels in children participating in the program.

## **Proposal Selection Process**

PEC was responsible for soliciting proposals through advertisements in the local press and the mass media. After 69 proposals were received from local organizations, a four agency committee of adjudicators was convened and criteria developed to guide the selection process, reduce bias and prevent irregularities from interfering in the bidding process. To guide potential bidders a manual and set of instructions for writing proposals was prepared and shared with interested parties.

The committee's deliberations lasted 7 weeks before decisions were taken to choose proposals submitted by 15 NGOs and the SEE. The 11 implementing organizations selected would be responsible for carrying out improvements to 360 schools benefiting about 48,000 students. Winning organizations were allowed to implement programs in areas of their choice provided they met criteria which included giving priority to the needs of families and children living in areas most in need of essential basic services. General proposal objectives would need to include specific activities for:

- Implementing model community feeding programs in areas lacking such services.
- Improving school access and raise primary school retention rates giving special attention to girls' enrolment.
- Improving child health and nutrition levels.
- Improving learning achievement levels.
- Insuring that matching funds from local communities, the participating NGO or government organization, should not be less than 20% of the total budget.
- Active community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs must be clearly evident from the start.
- A record of good management, administrative and fiscal responsibility.

- The budget submitted should not be less than US\$300,000 and not more than US\$750,000 for each project, over the duration of the program.

Evidence gleaned from those involved in the selection process, suggested that a lot of care was taken in choosing qualified and able NGOs. Proposals accepted included projects with communities in Monte Plata, El Seibo, Hato Mayor, Samana, San Pedro de Macoris and two communities within the Federal District of Santo Domingo. NGO performance during the post Hurricane Georges reconstruction program, financial management, technical expertise and training experience were all carefully weighed up prior to making a final decision. Where relatively unknown but potentially able local NGOs were involved, the decision to bring them into the program was more complicated. Some untested local NGOs were urged to team up with more experience international NGOs like Catholic Relief Services (CRS). However, the PEC selection committee agreed to bring on other less experienced organizations like Alas de Igualdad contingent on STP providing technical assistance, training and support to help them cope with the administrative requirements needed to deal with large budgets and GODR bureaucratic protocols.

## Participating Institutions

Institution	Project Activities
World Vision (WV)	Repair school infrastructure; implement school and family gardens; install school water and sanitation systems, train health and nutrition promoters; training of teachers, parents, and community leaders.
Dominican Institute of Integrated Development (IDDI)	Repair deteriorated schools and build additional classrooms; install school gardens and community poultry production; build school water and sanitation systems, provide teacher and community training in health and hygiene, contribute fruit and vegetable production to school lunch program, child de-worming campaigns.
Catholic Relief Series (CRS)	Repair schools and build new classrooms, provide locally produced rations to school lunch program, build school and community water and sanitation systems, provide training to PTAs and families in health, hygiene, and nutrition.
Center of Solidarity for Women Development (Ce-Mujer)	Build school water and sanitation, train teachers and parents in community development, education and health. Stimulate improved attendance through community organization. Form student councils; and provide health/nutrition education.

Institution	Project Activities
Social Pastoral of Central Zone (CEZOPAS)	Build and repair school infrastructure and water systems; train parents and community leaders in community development, nutrition, and health. Stimulate better health and nutrition through family/student based agricultural production activities and training.
Center for Investigations and Cultural Support (CIAC)	Stimulate local agricultural production to be used in school lunch program. Repair schools and build new classrooms. Install water and sanitation systems. Train community in health and nutrition. Organize PTAs and provide teacher training.
Wings of Equality (Alas de Igualdad)	Organize and train PTAs to manage community food production projects to deliver school lunch program. Install kitchens and water systems at schools. Train teachers, community leaders and health promoters.
Dominican Health and Wellbeing Foundation (FUSABI)	Organize and train community groups and student's families in agricultural production aimed at improving child nutrition and servicing school lunch program. Provide community health training, de-worming campaigns, and promote good hygiene campaigns.
Secretariat of Education (SEE)	Implement school lunch program based on preparation of meals from locally produced foodstuffs. Organize and train communities to prepare school lunches. Provide training to teachers and PTAs in health and nutrition and de-worming campaigns.
Women in Development (MUDE)	Provide health and sanitation training and stimulate community participation to improve child health and the school environment. Build water and sanitation systems at schools. Form student councils and work with parents to increase student enrollment and attendance.
Commission Presidential	Repair schools and build additional classrooms. Construct water and sanitation systems. Train community leaders and promoters in health, hygiene and nutrition. Organize PTAs and involve parents in preparation of school lunches.

The final shipment of donated food arrived in the DR on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2001. The PEC convened its first meeting with the NGOs on May 22, 2002. After the PEC approved the best 11 projects submitted, disbursement of funds began to participating organizations in late June and early July of the same year.

## **A Brief History of the GFE Initiative**

### **The USDA's Global Food for Education Initiative**

In July 2000, at the G-8 meeting in Okinawa, Japan, the United States committed \$300 million in resources to establish a school feeding program for developing countries, especially for countries which had made a commitment to provide universal basic education for children. Following the Global Forum for Education for All Conference which took place in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000, delegates estimated that over 120 million children around the world did not attend school. It was discovered that this was partly due to hunger, malnutrition and poor health. Two-thirds of these were out-of-school girls.

The corresponding Global Food for Education Initiative is administered by USDA and builds on the ideas promoted by Ambassador Georges McGovern and former Senator Robert Dole. Under this program USDA provides surplus commodities and funds to cover transportation and distribution to the World Food Program (WFP), 13 private voluntary PVOs and one national government in the Dominican Republic, for use in 48 school feeding projects in 38 countries. USDA also provides some administrative and technical assistance and some monitoring and evaluation inputs.

The intention of the GFEI is to use school feeding programs to increase enrollment, under the assumption that basic education can help provide an individual with the basic knowledge and skills needed for self sufficiency and an improved standard of living which in turn helps poor nations improve their productivity, the United States is committed to providing school meals to low-income children both at home and abroad.

GFEI projects are selected using a set of criteria that included need, technical criteria, ability to contribute matching resources by governments and host governments' commitment to implement the primary education component of the Education for All Declaration made in Dakar, Senegal. Each project proposal was subjected to scrutiny to insure that food donations made by the USG would not distort local markets or disrupt the local commercial food production industry.

### **GFEI Preliminary Results**

USDA carried out a formal evaluation with cooperating sponsors in all GFEI countries using a standardized survey questionnaire based on a modified version of a WFP developed survey instrument. In the process selected FAS field staff review projects and ensure that local monitors collect baseline surveys using the standardized questionnaire. In addition, locally hired field staff conducted targeted focus group interviews to gather information on perceptions barriers and alternatives that aren't captured in the survey. The standardized questionnaire used for the USDA survey contained 210 questions. However, much of the data collected was only as reliable as the source and frequently hid difficult to measure variables like inflated school enrollment data, falsified school attendance records and teacher absenteeism which was obscured by pupils who filled in for absent teachers, etc.

The results of the survey which was carried out during 2003 show a measurable improvement in school enrolments, and a significant increase in girls' enrolments. However, it isn't clear whether these changes were/are directly correlated with the provision of school feeding programs, or if they may be related to other factors not being measured in the survey.

In GFEI sponsored projects involving more than 4,000 participating schools, the WFP reports an overall enrolment increase exceeding 10 percent, with an 11.7 percent increase in enrollment by girls. Participating PVO programs reported only an overall enrolment increase of 5.75 percent.

Without a clear set of baseline indicators, retention and achievement rates are more difficult to measure. However, qualitative data gathered through interviews with parents and teachers suggest that where school feeding programs are established, absenteeism seems to be on the decline. In poorer communities where food deprivation is a chronic factor in undermining children's participation in school activities, parents and teachers report that children display improved concentration, greater energy, and more positive attitudes toward school work and learning. Again, for lack of a clearly measurable set of indicators, a correlation between school feeding programs and improvement in retention and achievement rates will remain illusively difficult to demonstrate.

To date, the GFEI program has reached 7 million children through school or pre-school feeding programs. This includes about 5 million children through WFP sponsored projects and 2 million more through PVO projects, and this unique GODR run project. Out of 25 school feeding programs surveyed at the end of 2003, 24 were conducted by PVOs and one by the GODR. By July 2004, five had completed two school years, nine had completed just over one school year and ten only one school year. USDA had gathered data on 165 schools through 11 PVO country projects and WFP had gathered data on over 4,000 schools in 23 countries.

This mainly quantitative assessment demonstrated that the GFEI program maybe impacting communities in unintended ways. These more difficult to assess program benefits included stimulation of the local economy, civil society support for education, community capacity building, revitalized and energized parental support for schools, and stronger teacher-parent partnerships for school and community development.

*WFP and PVO GFEI Global Enrollment Gains*

WFP GFEI Projects	Boys	Girls	Total Change
<b>Central and South America</b>			
Colombia	17.1%	16.8%	16.9%
Dominican Republic	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%
El Salvador	1.8%	2.4%	2.1%
Honduras	5.5%	4.8%	5.1%
Nicaragua	9.8%	8.4%	9.1%
Peru	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>Asia</b>			
Bhutan	1.5%	3.6%	2.4%
Cambodia	6.7%	8.5%	7.5%
Pakistan	--	32.3%	32.3%
Tajikistan	3.2%	2.9%	3.1%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>
<b>East Africa</b>			
Ethiopia	16.1%	17.7%	16.7%
Kenya	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
Mozambique	8.5%	7.9%	8.2%
Tanzania	26.6%	26.2%	26.4%
Uganda	9.7%	13.2%	11.2%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
<b>West Africa</b>			
Cote d'Ivoire	9.0%	10.4%	9.6%
Cameroon	17.0%	27.4%	20.5%
Gambia	9.3%	12.5%	10.8%
Ghana	6.7%	15.4%	10.4%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR WFP SCHOOLS</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>

<b>PVO GFE Projects</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total Change</b>
<b>Central and South America</b>			
Bolivia	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
Guatemala	7.1%	5.3%	6.1%
Honduras	11.6%	13.8%	12.6%
Nicaragua	17.4%	10.2%	13.3%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
<b>Asia</b>			
Vietnam	-3.6%	-4.3%	-4.0%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>	<b>-4.3%</b>	<b>-4.0%</b>
<b>East Africa and Middle East</b>			
Eritrea	9.2%	12.1%	10.1%
Lebanon	5.2%	2.7%	3.8%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
<b>West Africa</b>			
Benin	9.5%	10.5%	10.4%
Congo (Brazzaville)	6.8%	8.2%	7.5%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
<b>Eastern Europe</b>			
Albania	1.4%	3.9%	2.4%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	15.3%	-10.4%	2.5%
Moldova	-4.7%	-2.4%	-3.8%
<b>Total for Region</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR PVO SCHOOLS</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

## **The Uniqueness of the DR Program Approach**

The Dominican Republic GFE initiative is the only government to government program currently being implemented. Several unique features have helped to distinguish the DR approach from other GFEI projects, including the following innovatory practices:

1. Having the hosting Ministry of Education assume responsibility for providing school meals to all GFEI schools leaving the USG donation free to be used to implement supporting community development activities and programs.
2. The setting up of an independent Program Executive Council (PEC) within the GODR to manage to share decision making and oversight responsibilities between the four responsible agencies; FAS, USAID, SEE and STP.
3. Giving NGOs administrative, management and budget oversight and control responsibilities to the STP, a GODR management-oversight function never before tried in the DR. (DR

government agencies do not normally work closely with the private sector, and least of all with PVOs.)

4. The exceptional level of cooperation in program implementation and sharing between USAID and USDA, in the DR may be considered a successful model for future collaboration, for both agencies.
5. The DR program was the only program addressing access and retention issues beyond merely delivering donated commodities. The DR approach prioritized the need to address supporting community, infrastructure, health and sanitation issues as part of the process.
6. The DR project was designed to be a three-year development process instead of a normal one-year pilot school feeding program.

Information shared by the principal actors interviewed, suggests that with some adjustments, this model could be successfully replicated to improve GFEI implementation, elsewhere.

## **Evaluation Methodology and Constraints**

### **Evaluation Terms of Reference**

The Scope of Work for the “Evaluation of the Dominican Republic Global Food for Education Initiative” was drafted and sent to Creative Associates International Inc., on the June 28, 2004. The period assigned for carrying out the evaluation was 20 days, of which at least 10 days were spent in situ collecting information conducting interviews and visiting project field sites.

The evaluator would be responsible for conceptualizing and writing a document that examines the DR GFEI model with the view to assessing whether or not the main objectives of the program have been met, from three perspectives:

- 1) To determine the constraints and obstacles that prevented full attainment of program objectives as stated in the agreement, as well as the strengths and opportunities that permitted achievement of unexpected outcomes.
- 2) To lay out the lessons learned from the program management and implementation points of view.
- 3) To provide an input in the design of a new model based on the two points above, with a view to facilitating the replication of an improved version of the DR GFEI by USAID and FAS elsewhere.

To achieve this, the evaluator would be expected to read background materials and to identify and interview selected individuals who may have played a key role in the formation, design and execution of the program. Specifically, the evaluator was expected to interview:

- The USAID Education specialist
- The USDA Program Manager
- The USDA Program Assistant
- The USAID Mission Director
- Key GODR Counterparts
- NGO Implementing Partners

The contractor was responsible for coordinating with the USAID Education Specialist as well as the USDA/FAS/ICD Program Manager (or Program Assistant). A first draft was to be shared with the USAID Education Specialist who will be responsible for circulating same among all interested parties. Ten days were allowed from receiving the draft, for written comments and recommended changes to be fed back to the evaluator. Within five days, final additions or changes were to be inserted in the final version prior to submitting a completed finished version of the evaluation report.

## **Evaluation Methodology**

Time constraints, prior evaluation studies, logistics and budgetary constraints helped to dictate the methodology and approach selected for this evaluation. Since there already existed some survey studies carried out by USDA and some NGOs highlighting the none educational quantitative outcomes of the DR GFEL, the evaluator opted to focus the time available on using a “gap filling” qualitative approach to address educational, community, training and other key socio-economic variables.

Five qualitative research methodologies seemed most appropriate for achieving this end involving:

1. A detailed review of selected background documents and project records,
2. In-depth interviews with selected key actors,
3. Field visits with available NGO partners to a variety of randomly selected field sites,
4. Field based focal-group meetings with parents, teachers and project field support staff, and
5. Visits and informal discussions with senior STP, SEE, USAID and USDA managers and senior program administrators both in the DR, Washington, D.C., and Bucharest, Romania.

## **The Evaluation Process and Schedule**

Baseline information was received from USAID in Santo Domingo (SD) during the week beginning Monday, July 12 and was carefully reviewed before traveling to the DR on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July.

After discussions with the Education specialist at the US Mission in SD, the tasks pertaining to how time would be spent in the DR were allotted in the following way:

**Phase I:** The first two days were spent working alongside a visiting USDA Mission from Washington, D.C. with the Assistant Secretary for US Department of Agriculture and her assistants, to attend an event hosted by the GODR and USG to celebrate the positive conclusion

of the first phase of the DR GFEI program which had officially ended on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. Part of the celebration also included a field trip two GFEI schools managed by a Colombian order of Nuns working for CEZOPAS in the Southeastern Region of the Island. Travel with the official USDA delegation provided ample opportunity to interview and speak with DC based USDA administrators of the GFEI program.

**Phase II:** The second phase was dedicated to visiting field sites with selected NGOs to show the evaluator the work that was being done. Thirty-seven sites were visited and 6 focal groups convened during an intensive four-day period of field travel to three regions.

**Phase III:** After returning to Santo Domingo a series of interviews were arranged with senior technical and management staff from STP, SEE, USAID and USDA to discuss administrative, organizational and NGO oversight aspects of the GFEI model. Time in Santo Domingo was also used to collect more documents, review reports and generally fill gaps in the information already gleaned from field visits and documentary sources.

**Phase IV:** On Thursday, July 29, the evaluator returned to the US to complete the data analysis and write the first draft of the evaluation report which was sent to USAID, SD on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August for review, and final comments.

***Evaluation Activities Schedule***  
**(07/17 - 07/29/04)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Persons Involved</b>
Saturday, 07/17/04	Washington, D.C. and Santo Domingo	Flight from D.C. on American Airlines via Miami to Santo Domingo	Frank Dall (FD)
Sunday, 07/18/04	Sofitel, Santo Domingo	Preparation, reading, coordinate meetings with USAID and USDA	Frank Dall, Neici Zeller, Paola Morales
Monday AM, 07/19/04	Field Trip – Yamasa Area	Visit CEZOPAS Schools in Yamasa Area with USAID and USDA	FD, NZ, PM & USDA Asst. Secretary Ellen Terpstra and team.
Monday PM	Hotel Santo Domingo	Discussion with NGOs, USDA, USAID at Hotel to coordinate field trip.	FD, NZ, PM, IDDI, ALAS, WU, CAIC, FUSABI, MUDE, <i>Ce-Mujer</i> , CRS, IDAC
Tuesday AM, 07/20/04	Hotel Santo Domingo	Participate in USDA, GODR, GFEI Closure Conference	FD, NZ, PM, and all NGOs, GODR and USG VIPs.
Tuesday PM	Hotel Santo Domingo	Interviews with GODR, NGO and USG representatives	USAID Director, Vice-President DR, WV, IDDI, CRS, MUDE, CAIC
Wednesday AM, 07/21/04	San Pedro, Seibo	Focus groups, parent committees interviewed	FD, Luis Sánchez, teachers, parents, extension workers
Wednesday PM	Hato Mayor, Mitches, Hicaco Blanco	Visits to schools, WV offices and IDDI district	See and IDDI Field Directors

Date	Location	Activity	Persons Involved
		offices.	
Thursday AM, 07/22/04	Mitches, Pedro Sánchez, Las Canitas	Meet MUDE to visit schools, PTAs, focus groups, centers and WATSAN committee	Luis Sánchez, Silvia de Fonseca, Dalmasio Pérez
Thursday PM	Sabana del Mar, Hato Mayor, San Pedro	Meet Ce Mujer to visit schools, dairy project, poultry unit, women's committee focus groups.	Juanito Velorio, Kenia Bocid, parents, teachers and farmers.
Friday AM, 07/23/04	San Pedro, Ingenio Consuelo, La Guinea	Visit bateyes in the Consuelo area, focus groups, PTAs, teachers, farmers.	CRS, IDPIC, Miosotis Figueroa, Israelo Sorio, teachers, PTAs, mothers.
Friday PM	Batey Altagracia, Batey Las Pajas, Batey Don Juan	Visit Bateyes and centers. Meet women, teachers and farmers.	Alas De Igualdad, Nesly Julien, Virina Urena, PTAs, schools, farmers.
Saturday AM, 07/24/04	Sofitel, Santo Domingo	Meeting and debriefing with Neici Zeller of USAID.	FD, NZ
PM	Sofitel	Meeting with Dani Roziewski of CAII	D. Roziewski
Sunday AM, 07/25/04	Sofitel	Analyzing Data	FD
Sunday PM	Sofitel	Preparing questions for interviews	FD
Monday AM, 07/26/04	Batey el Naranjo, Batey Los Barroas	Visit peri-urban Bateyes with CRS-CEDECO focus groups, PTAs	PM USDA, Oleida Acosta, Manuel Mejia
Monday PM	Batey Mojarra, Santo Domingo	Teachers, local leaders, directors of schools	USAID NZ, Joseph Goodwin, Manuel Mejia
Tuesday AM, 07/27/04	Sofitel, Palacio del Gobierno	Interviews with Domingo Moreta, STP, Omar De Leon, SEE	FD
PM	Palacio del Gobierno SEE (Ministry of Educ.)	Ancel Shecker, SEE, Technical Staff, SEE	FD
Wednesday AM, 07/28/04	Palacio del Gobierno, SEE	Interview with Pedro Guzmán STP, Ing. Morros Draiby, STP	FD, CEP/STP
Wednesday PM	STP	Rafael Hernández Sánchez, STP, Paola Morales, USDA, Pedro Guzmán, Elena Brineman	Committee Members, NZ, EB (Mission Director)
Thursday AM, 07/29/04	USAID	Reviewing documents, Interviews at USAID	FD, NZ, Kelva Perez (Health)
Thursday PM	Airport	Leave for airport, Return to US	Joseph Goodwin (Econ) David Losk (Health) EB

## DR Program Objectives and Accomplishments

To meet the GFEI's program goals laid out in the government to government agreement, the PEC recommended that all participating institutions both private and public draw up activity

plans that would contribute toward the attainment of the following context specific objectives in their proposals;

- Work with local NGOs to establish model community food programs in poorer, least-served areas.
- Work to strengthen parent–teacher organizations.
- Carry out school feeding programs for about 45,700 pre-primary and primary school children and their teachers.
- Design and deliver training in health, nutrition, hygiene and improve teaching methodologies for teachers and community workers.
- Improve and construct school water and sanitation facilities.
- Develop local food procurement programs and strengthen local production capacities to meet procurement needs.
- Repair and construct educational infrastructure, including new schools, kitchens, classrooms, doors, windows, fencing and libraries.

A review of sample reports, audit documents and discussions with Field Program Directors from CRS, WV, MUDE, Alas and CEZOPAS led one to believe that despite initial delays and other administrative constraints, most NGOs did a reasonable job of delivering what was specified under their contracts. The table below, which compares expected outcomes with end of project achievements, suggests a high level of compliance in meeting more tangible and quantifiable deliverables. However, the short time allowed for this evaluation did not permit a more comprehensive survey of all schools impacted by the program, so a confirmation of the data and numbers provided was not possible.

The random sample of schools visited, supported the general claim that the DR GFEI program was strong on construction and probably weaker in showing measurable education achievements such as gains in learning achievement, enrolment and retention levels linked specifically to the school feeding program. The inability to see children and teachers in an active classroom setting limited the depth of assessing the teaching/learning dimension of what was going on in the random sample of GFEI schools seen.

### ***DR GFEI Program Achievements***

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Programmed</b>	<b>Accomplished</b>
Beneficiaries	58,000	60,700
Participating schools	350	325
Daily rations served	45,700	48,013
New classrooms built	82	270
New kitchens built	200	152
New toilets built/ repaired	180	158
School water systems built/repaired	120	115
Teachers trained in new methodologies	5,000	1,360

Students trained in self-esteem hygiene	N/A	37,056
Health promoters trained	450	488
Children de-wormed	32,000	33,004
Children receiving vitamin supplement	1,100	25,811
School gardens	38	53
Family gardens	2,800	1,071
Daily egg production	1,015	8,537
Students benefiting from dairy production	N/A	549
Parents on PTAs organized and trained	305	18,782

The more difficult to assess education impact variables were elusive to find. When the most recent school enrolment data was requested on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July from the STP, in Santo Domingo, the evaluator was informed that they were still waiting for this and other information to be delivered as part of each NGO's project closing report and that only three NGOs had submitted data so far. Some of the data requested was received on August the 10<sup>th</sup> and is shown in the table below.

However, as in the case of similar data gathered by the GFEI elsewhere, it is difficult to say with any certainty if the enrolment gains recorded in the DR are a direct result of the impact made by the school feeding program, or not. Exogenous factors like less opportunity for child employment in the current economic situation, parental awareness that education holds a key to future employment, and campaigns by the Church and other NGOs to encourage children to go to school, may all be making a significant positive impact on the increase in student enrolments which are shown here.

#### *DR GFEI School Enrollment Data for 2003 and 2004*

Implementing Agency	School Name	2003 Enrollment Rate	2004 Enrollment Rate	Total Change
Ce-Mujer	Los Hatillos	90	91	1
Ce-Mujer	Centro Educativo Morquecho	88	91	3
Ce-Mujer	Centro Educativo El Manchado	90	98	8
Ce-Mujer	Antolin Rosa Padilla	88	98	10
Ce-Mujer	El Mamon	91	92	1
Ce-Mujer	La China	91	95	4
Ce-Mujer	Villila	92	95	3
Ce-Mujer	Paso Cibao	88	92	4
Ce-Mujer	Las Guajabas	92	98	6
Ce-Mujer	Sudadero	87	95	8
Ce-Mujer	Arroyo Seco	87	98	11
Ce-Mujer	San Valerio	88	92	4

Implementing Agency	School Name	2003 Enrollment Rate	2004 Enrollment Rate	Total Change
<b>Ce-Mujer</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>5.25</b>
CAIC	San Anton	76	92	16
CAIC	24 de Abril	0	91	-
CAIC	Las Colinas 1	85	93	8
CAIC	Especial de Sordo	75	84	9
CAIC	Batey Cachena	86	92	6
CAIC	Batey Margarita	84	91	7
CAIC	Batey Chicharrones	87	92	5
CAIC	Batey Jalonga	84	93	9
CAIC	Batey Boca de Soco	87	80	-7
CAIC	Batey Central Santa Fe	90	93	3
CAIC	Divina Providencia (Ing. Consuelo)	92	93	1
CAIC	Batey Alejandro Bass	84	86	2
<b>CAIC</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>5.4</b>
CEZOPAS	El Dean	43	30	-13
CEZOPAS	Estrella Vieja	71	100	29
CEZOPAS	Franciscquito Abajo	27	30	3
CEZOPAS	Hoyo de Pun	20	30	10
CEZOPAS	La Caguaza	45	30	-15
CEZOPAS	Lambedera	20	33	13
CEZOPAS	Las Cabirmas	34	32	-2
CEZOPAS	Las Taranas	66	70	4
CEZOPAS	Los Arroyos	88	76	-12
CEZOPAS	Los Mapolos	51	44	-7
CEZOPAS	Mata Seco	33	32	-1
CEZOPAS	Plaza Cacique	60	65	5
CEZOPAS	Sabana Larga	27	25	-2
CEZOPAS	Vara de Capa	16	40	24
CEZOPAS	Villa Juana	73	56	-17
CEZOPAS	Marcelino de Paula	81	104	23
CEZOPAS	La Guardia	53	51	-2
CEZOPAS	Los Morrones	37	28	-9
CEZOPAS	El Consuelo	69	70	1
CEZOPAS	El Mogote	0	0	-
CEZOPAS	La Jaguita	40	40	0
CEZOPAS	Boca de Mayiga	77	74	-3
CEZOPAS	Francisco Pena Gomez	68	81	13
CEZOPAS	El Capa	52	50	-2
CEZOPAS	La Cuneta	100	103	3
CEZOPAS	Los Almendros	47	46	-1
CEZOPAS	Zambranita	68	81	13
CEZOPAS	El Llano	45	55	10
CEZOPAS	Mayiga Arriba	109	111	2
CEZOPAS	Fernando Arturo Merino	39	47	8
CEZOPAS	San Rafael	31	45	14
CEZOPAS	Los Angelitos	0	81	-

Implementing Agency	School Name	2003 Enrollment Rate	2004 Enrollment Rate	Total Change
CEZOPAS	Arroyo Majagua	0	37	-
CEZOPAS	Dajao	0	18	-
CEZOPAS	Lambedera del Pico	18	34	16
<b>CEZOPAS</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3.4</b>

## Constraining Factors and Limitations

The principal constraints encountered carrying out the scope of work under this contract were:

### Logistical Support

For a variety of reasons, but mainly due to timing and a shortage of vehicles at USAID, transportation to the field and between meetings in Santo Domingo depended on the good will of participating NGOs and local taxis. That meant that valuable time was often wasted waiting on public transportation, or transferring from one NGO vehicle to another during tightly planned field trips to provincial towns and rural communities. Efforts on the part of both USAID and USDA GFEI managers sped up coordination between participating NGOs and helped ease the situation.

### Availability of Participating NGOs

All 11 participating NGOs were reached to try to coordinate visits to field sites. Of these, only 9 were willing to accompany the evaluator to program sites in the field. Two, FUSABI and CAIC, out of 11 did not respond because they had already closed their GFEI offices. The delay in the timing of the evaluation imposed significant limitations on how the evaluation could be carried out.

### The School Year

Another negative outcome of the “timing factor” was not being able to visit schools while they were still in session. In the DR schools begin their long summer vacations in June and stay closed till early September. This meant that the evaluator was unable to see teachers and students interacting in normally functioning classroom situations. Most persons interviewed were either PTA leaders and parents living near schools visited, or some teachers and a small but not very representative group of children from neighboring homes. No classroom teaching or learning activities were observed and an important opportunity to assess the educational impact of the GFEI program, was missed.

## Findings and Conclusions

The following are conclusions emerging from an analysis of information gathered after visiting 27 schools, and meeting with 6 focus groups of parents, teachers and community leaders in the three regions visited. Where possible, PTA committees, school principals, District SEE officials were individually interviewed to get the background information which was used to inform the observations, recommendations and conclusions shared below. Otherwise, a lot of the general information gathered resulted from the evaluator's participation in six informal focus groups organized by the NGOs responsible for organizing an ambitious schedule of field visits to 38 different sites.

## **A. Successes and Constraints in School Refurbishment and Construction**

### ***Measurable Successes***

- 1) If the DR's GFEI programs' success is to be measured in the number of construction projects completed such as schools refurbished, toilets built, completed kitchens and fences erected, then this would have to be rated as very good. In all 27 schools seen, there was ample evidence of work carried out to meet all or most of the physical infrastructure requirements of the schools visited.
- 2) A quick but thorough inspection of the construction work carried out revealed, on the whole, well-finished work of professional quality.
- 3) There was clear evidence of the attention given to important practical details in most of the school infrastructure inspected. Evidently, attention had been given to important details like the safety of children in play areas, accessibility to school premises from busy main roads, and school maintenance issues.

### ***Water and Sanitation (WATSAN)***

- 1) About 55% of schools visited had no running water due to failure to pump water into newly constructed school tanks because of frequent power outages. Pumps installed were mostly electrically driven. Only in three cases were water pumps solar energy powered.
- 2) In schools where water and sanitation committees weren't functioning, or were poorly organized and weakly led, there was evidence that newly constructed facilities were already deteriorating due to lack of security and poor maintenance (i.e., vandalized toilet seats and basins and stolen water taps, lack of cleanliness, etc.).
- 3) In three cases where the school water supply was dependent on a privately controlled water source (i.e., in some Bateyes), schools weren't getting the water they needed to run effective WATSAN facilities.

### ***School Kitchens***

- 1) The majority of schools had newly installed kitchen facilities.
- 2) In about 50% of the schools, kitchens were not used for the preparation of school meals. Some also lacked kitchen equipment.
- 3) About 10% of the schools visited had kitchens without access to running water.
- 4) Where schools had established a PTA sub-committee to organize a school feeding program, kitchens seemed to be well organized and maintained.

### *Classrooms*

- 1) The majority of the classrooms seen were clean, well lit and ventilated, and adequately furnished.
- 2) The majority of classrooms seen had standard good quality desk-chairs, as opposed to the older separate chair and desk combination.
- 3) In about 70% of the classrooms visited, a teacher's table and chair combination was evident.
- 4) Some classrooms were better endowed with teaching aids, diagrams and other learning materials than others. This most likely reflected individual teacher efforts to develop teaching /learning materials.
- 5) All classrooms visited had chalkboards. In the majority of new or refurbished classrooms, boards were newly purchased. In some of the older larger rural schools where GFEI had only done cosmetic improvements to classrooms, chalk-boards had been refurbished.
- 6) In some new schools, the presence of older damaged school furniture suggested that there was still a need to do a more thorough inventory of new schools to see if local school construction had complied with standards set by the STP and SEE.

### *Libraries*

- 1) There was a near 100% awareness among the teachers, parents and NGOs interviewed of the need for school libraries.
- 2) In 95% of the schools visited, a set of shelves and area had been set aside to accommodate this function.
- 3) In only three schools, a separate purposely built room had been set aside to accommodate the school library.
- 4) In 99% of the schools seen, libraries were bookless, or only had a set of four reference books. The reason given for the lack of books was that the books promised by the GFEI project had not arrived and that schools were still waiting for books to be delivered.
- 5) In one model school, E.B. Monte Cristy, over 500 carefully catalogued and shelved books attested to the presence of the only proper working library seen. Here, the success of the library was reflected in the community's demand for access to the facility during evenings and weekends when local university students and parents frequently requested to use the school library.
- 6) After checking with the STP, the evaluator was shown a list of 20 books which had been ordered through an international supplier that will form the core of each schools collection of library books. This modest start will, hopefully, stimulate the kind of community supported response seen in EB Monte Cristy. However, no real progress can be made getting school libraries started until the SEE or the STP begin training teachers how to set up and run small school libraries.

### *Fencing, Doors and Windows*

- 1) In the majority of schools seen, care and attention had been given to installing quality doors and adjustable aluminum-slat window shades. Most new doors inspected were made of steel with built-in locks.
- 2) In all but four cases, schools were well fenced in with wide gauge steel mesh fencing, about 1.5 to 2.0 meters high, supported by steel posts embedded in concrete. School gates were made of the same materials. Nearly all were kept padlocked.
- 3) In two peri-urban schools, with a high incidence of local crime, school Principals complained about fencing and lack of security.
- 4) In three schools, Principals had asked local SEE Directors for assistance to hire an armed night-guard to protect school property that was being broken into. In only one case was this request for help granted.

### *School Garden Plots*

- 1) 80% of the schools visited had attempted to start, or were cultivating school gardens.
- 2) In the majority of cases, school gardens were used as demonstration plots, or for the promotion of better nutrition, or to promote new horticultural practices.
- 3) In 4 cases schools with little or no space for a garden plot were donated land by the local community, or by a local land-owner.
- 4) Few gardens showed signs of recent cultivation. Informants claimed that this was because of the school holidays, or because the heavy rains had impeded work on school gardens.
- 5) The average size of a school garden was between 5X15 meters and 8X20 meters—too small to produce sufficient produce to supplement what was being provided through the school feeding program.
- 6) In the majority of cases teacher-student committees were responsible for running school gardens. In three cases, members of the PTA were hired to look after school gardens.
- 7) The majority of PTA members interviewed complained about the lack of technical support and follow-up from NGOs in aspects of school gardening. Teachers, parents and students were discouraged by their inability to purchase seeds, fertilizers or insecticides in sufficient quantities or in time to make a positive impact on what they were trying to grow on their school plots.
- 8) In the Mitches and Hato Mayor areas, garden plots in three schools had played a significant demonstration role in getting local farmers and parents to begin cultivating their own vegetable gardens. This unplanned spin-off effect attests to the positive impact the project may be having in some areas, on local horticultural practice.
- 9) School gardens seemed to be most successful where the NGO leading this aspect had prior experience in horticulture, could field trained agricultural extension workers and the motivation to carry out training and to follow up training with support services and frequent visits to the field.
- 10) Conversely, NGOs without experience, motivation or trained staff were visibly unable to demonstrate progress in this important area of their community outreach program. World Vision, Ce-Mujer, Catholic Relief Services, IDAC and Alas de Igualdad seemed

to be making an impact in this and the related animal husbandry, poultry and dairy cow projects.

## **B. Obstacles and Successes in the Attainment of Program Objectives**

### **1. *Working with NGOs to Establish Model Community Feeding Programs in Poor Least-Served Areas.***

- This seems to be achieved successfully in poor communities where direct school feeding programs are making a significant difference in the quality of the lives of participating families and children. Where meals are being prepared by parents and commodities supplied by the local community, or by a local producer, the twinning of economic with nutritional benefits seem to have generated a stronger community response.
- NGOs working to organize mothers into PTA school feeding committees seem to have created the best base for a long term sustainable school feeding program outcome.
- NGOs like Alas de Igualdad, IDAC, CE-Mujer and WV which are actively promoting community involvement in the production of milk, eggs and vegetables have been more successful in persuading communities to take on full responsibility for their school feeding programs. Three PTAs proudly announced that if food subsidies were withdrawn they would be still be able to continue supporting their own school feeding programs. This trend, if it persists, bodes well for the sustainability of the program after international support is withdrawn.
- In peri-urban communities where both parents were forced to go out to look for gainful employment, the program may be in danger of succumbing to local economic pressures (i.e. reaching self-sufficiency in school feeding looks less likely in peri-urban areas than in some rural areas, as the economy continues to decline).

### **2. *Strengthening Parent-Teacher Associations***

- There was ample evidence at nearly every site visited, where parents, teachers and the community worked together with NGOs to construct or refurbish school buildings and facilities, this joint effort has translated into a commitment by PTAs to continue providing long-term support for the up-keep and improvement of their schools.
- Highly visible community school construction projects provided the catalyst needed to motivate dormant PTAs into committing time and resources to the revitalization and improvement of local schools.
- Work on communitywide services like WATSAN and garbage disposal, where immediate and tangible benefits were an outcome, brought the quickest positive response from the community.
- In the poorest Batey communities, where the links between poverty, seasonal unemployment and family survival are critical variables, school feeding programs got priority attention.

- Where NGOs were strongly committed to forming WATSAN, school feeding, school garden or health committees, there was a better chance that community participation may be playing a positive role in the longer term success of the program.
- Well planned and delivered parent-teacher training seemed to be a necessary ingredient for revitalizing strong PTAs, gaining credibility with local communities and obtaining community inputs for school improvement.
- Where NGOs used modified versions of professionally tested and produced training materials obtained from FAO, PAHO, UNICEF, the MOH and other quality sources, demand for more training and technical support grew.
- However, feedback from focus groups indicated that where post training follow-up and supervision is weak, training impact was poor and demand declined. Several PTAs complained about lack of follow-up and support after receiving NGO-led training.

### ***3. Carrying-out Direct Feeding Programs for 45,700 Pre-Primary and Primary School Children***

- Lack of accurate data on the provision of school meals to the schools visited made it difficult to assess the final outcome of the aspect of the program. The final total given in the report presented by STP at the closing Conference in Santo Domingo was about 48,000 which exceeds the programmed number given above.
- Testimony from both parents, teachers and SEE officials interviewed indicated that where parents had been properly organized into school feeding committees, children were receiving school meals on a regular basis.
- The SEE supplied meals seemed to be making an equally important contribution, especially in poorer communities. There were some anomalies though: The food delivered by contractors was sometimes of inferior quality; meals delivered were undercounted and had to be carefully checked by teachers on delivery; meals were sometimes not delivered on time; meals were not delivered due to lack of gasoline or because transport was not available; Meal delivery programs are poorly managed and monitored by local SEE officials.

### ***4. Design and Deliver Training in Health, Nutrition, Hygiene and Improve Teaching Methodologies.***

Information shared by NGOs, teachers, parents and community leaders indicated that:

- NGOs with strong sectoral experience in health, nutrition or agriculture were able to use this experience to successfully promote community outreach programs. Notable in this respect were WV in health and community development; MUDE, CEZOPAS and Ce-Mujer in mobilizing women's support and in promoting home-based milk production and nutrition education; CRS-IDAC in promoting community health, hygiene training and behavioral change; Alas de Igualdad in supporting community production of vegetables and poultry in some of the poorest communities. Only WV and CRS had had some prior experience doing educational projects, which likely explains why the educational dimensions of GFEI in the DR remained unattended.

- Where training was closely linked to the school and involves teachers and students through a school based outreach program, as in the case of Ce-Mujer's home nutrition, milk and egg production outreach programs, school-community linkages were re-enforced by parents becoming fully involved in the process. There was, however, little or no evidence to suggest that either the STP or the NGOs themselves had made any attempt to assess the impact of this kind of training on beneficiaries.
- The FAO led "*Mejorando la Nutrición a través de Huertos y Granjas Familiares*" training program a good example of the synergies that can be brought to bear in support of community targeted training. However, these seemed to lack attention to organizational aspects like monitoring and evaluation, follow-up and technical assistance elements. Here, in the future, there may be a need to re-enforce NGO experience and capacities, by bringing in additional technical support from corresponding ministries like agriculture and health.
- The impact made by WATSAN, health and hygiene training was noticeable in that in all 6 focus groups visited, health and hygiene training was the topic of frequent interest and discussion. The lead agency in the area seemed to be CRS who helped pioneer health and hygiene courses for teachers and community workers, through their well produced "*Manual de Capacitación Para Profesores en Cambios de Comportamientos en Higiene y Salud.*" Parents were quick to link the availability of clean water to the decline in illnesses like parasitosis, diarrhea and vomiting—all common symptoms of gastrointestinal infection, easily recognized in children, even by parents without a basic education.
- Successful attempts to teach personal hygiene in the school curriculum seemed to have had positive effects. There was evidence that the school hygiene lessons learned in the classroom were actually put into practice in daily school routines which emphasized the need to wash hands after going to the toilet and especially before eating meals. Emphasis on drinking boiled water from reliable water sources was re-enforced through the provision of school drinking fountains, where previously these had not existed, etc.
- The best locally produced nutrition and hygiene materials seen were those produced with CRS in collaboration with IDAC, Ce-Mujer, WV, MUDE and teachers from 20 participating rural schools. The materials seen were of high quality and well produced, both in flip-chart and text-book forms. A unifying environmental health and hygiene theme was used to bring together all the components in an integrated way. Training materials designed to teach teachers and extension workers how to use these materials effectively with different target groups, were also evident. There was also some evidence to suggest that these materials were being shared with other participating NGOs. However, items such as reports and evaluations of training courses, and the number of beneficiaries impacted, were not available.
- Unfortunately, no teaching/learning, or training sessions were observed by the evaluator.

##### **5. *Improve and Construct School Water and Sanitation Facilities***

- Over 96% of the schools visited had benefited from improved school water and sanitation facilities.
- The WATSAN element seems to have been one of GFEI's outstanding successes, but there were anomalies that still need to be addressed. In 30% of the schools seen, taps and

other essential fittings had been removed, or vandalized; in over 50% of schools where school tanks are filled with electrically powered pumps, schools were without water due to power outages; where sanitary facilities are not being cared for, deterioration in newly installed facilities is already apparent; where school WATSAN facilities are linked to community services, the program seems to be making a positive impact on community health issues, yet this needs to be more systematically evaluated, in a separate study (see the previous section on school construction for more details).

#### **6. *Develop Local School Procurement Programs and Strengthen Local Capacities to Meet School Procurement Needs***

- Where school feeding programs were a locally shared responsibility between PTAs and local producers, the synergy created between the community and local private small businesses may have helped to create a better environment for program sustainability.
- The introduction of successful local nutrition enhancing programs like poultry units, dairy cattle schemes and horticultural plots may be viable if they meet a real nutritional need. However, innovations like these need to be closely supported and backed up with training, technical support and with a flexible family credit program. Most of the informants interviewed were adamant in stating that they would not be able to support food production programs like the poultry or home-dairy schemes, without continued financial and technical support.
- SEE contracted suppliers of milk, bread, fruit and the basket of staples which make up the SEE school feeding program, were sometimes local private store owners, but the majority seemed to be larger regional suppliers receiving generous compensation through the program for services rendered. To maximize economic impact among participating rural communities, SEE contracts should be placed, wherever possible, with locally-owned community businesses so that benefits can impact jobs nearest to the schools being served.
- SEE regional Directors should enforce a closer supervision of all school food supply contracts to reduce corruption, petty theft and kick-backs to local officials and teachers.

### **C. Strengths and Opportunities that Permitted Achievement of Unintended Outcomes**

Interviews carried out with local beneficiaries, NGOs, local SEE officials, community leaders and parents revealed the following unintended benefits and outcomes accruing from the DR GFEI program in the three regions visited.

#### **1. *Community Participation***

- The call to help in reconstruction helped parents, teachers, and private sector business owners learn how to bury their differences and come together to produce something tangible for the good of the community. For many Batey communities working together in what is essentially a highly conflictive and competitive environment, has been a healing experience. The resulting empowerment has spawned new community initiatives and a spirit of cooperation, i.e., in Altigracia and Villa La Construcción.

- Re-building the local school helped turn schools into adult education and community learning centers, as in the case of the Monte Cristy School library complex.

## ***2. Sharing NGO Experiences.***

- NGOs with prior experience working with donors or UN agencies were able to bring to the program a wealth of experience and resources that helped smaller local NGOs build capacities to deal with some of the more challenging training and extension aspects of the GFEI program.
- NGOs, both international and national, that had lived through the Hurricane Georges experience, found that much of what was learned about DR communities then could be adapted and used to strengthen and re-enforce community development strategies in the GFEI program.

## ***3. Improved Relations Between NGOs***

- Prior to GFEI, many of the larger national and international NGOs were in competition for contracts in areas where habitually each NGO carved out an exclusive territorial right to provide services to local communities. Under GFEI and under the ameliorative coordination of the STP, squabbles and petty rivalries were reduced and replaced by a “spirit of cooperative teamwork.”

## ***4. Encouraging Community Action***

- NGO provided training in the management of WATSAN services, led to the creation of voluntary village committees to deal with community sewerage, garbage disposal, road drainage and reconstruction projects in a more organized manner.
- Parents who learned how to dig foundations and build schools transferred what they learned to community improvement schemes, like church construction and home improvement projects.
- The conception and completion of school WATSAN projects led communities in several villages to expand the program to service the broader needs of the community, or communities, i.e., the sewerage and water program expansion to all 18 homes in Villa Construcción.

## ***5. Growth in Demand for More Education Services***

- The creation of new schools and the expansion of existing ones by adding more or better classrooms resulted in an unexpected demand for more education for children and adults.
- Schools adding classes now have a local demand for more teachers and for educational facilities to the next level, i.e., communities where primary schools have expanded to provide the full 8 grade elementary cycle, now want secondary schools. In some communities where NGOs have used the school successfully as an adult training center,

adults and teachers have asked for more evening classes to satisfy the broader need for comprehensive adult education.

- Where some schools have expanded their intake to take children from neighboring communities, parents have pooled their resources to hire transportation to bring children from outlying communities to school every day.
- Where school feeding committees have empowered mothers to play an active role in providing school meals, some mothers have pooled resources to bake bread, produce cakes and coordinate their efforts to provide dietary supplements to enhance the school feeding program.
- A growth in demand for better nutrition has encouraged small NGOs like Alas, CEZOPAS and Ce-Mujer to be more innovative in their response for more and better ways to improve nutrition and increase food production, i.e., the dairy cow project, the home poultry unit project, community banking program and the earth-worm breeding program.

## **D. Lessons learned from Program Management and Implementation**

Interviews with principal GODR and USG actors on the management and program implementation variables of GFEI in the DR were revealing in that what was shared seemed to parallel experiences and lessons shared by some participating NGO institutions.

### ***General Lessons Learned***

- The institutional tensions which underlie a program of this sort are difficult to evaluate, but several respondents alluded to differences in goal emphases as being an ongoing source of frustration and constraint.
- USDA's main objective was to use food commodities to stimulate the US home market while at the same time benefiting poor children in developing countries. By agreement, the DR GFEI primarily emphasized school construction to improve access and school enrolments; this aspect received a significant proportion of all resources allocated to the program.
- USAID, conversely, supported using the funds raised through the sale of commodities to supplement and support a broader more educational set of goals which included improving educational quality through learning achievement, teacher training and community support for education in least serviced communities.
- The GODR's goal was always to try and use the resources emanating from the sale of USDA commodities primarily to serve the needs of the public sector, especially since the recent collapse of the economy had almost crippled GODR institutions. The GODR would have preferred using all or most of the funds resulting from the monetization program to run only their school feeding program and balked at the controls applied by funding agencies through CEP, which had decision making oversight over how the GFEI donation was used. The inclusion of PVOs into the implementation equation also proved an irritant not only because the GODR had little or no experience working directly with local NGOs, but because resources that could have been freed for use by public sector

institutions were now tied to meeting the program implementation needs of PVOs outside GODR control. The bureaucratic “heel dragging” that slowed down the implementation of the program in the opening seven months, may have been, in part, due to this divergence in program goal expectations.

- The GFEI program, as reflected in nearly all projects worldwide, was never intended to be a cross-sectoral community led education program and so a number of important unintended effects were never fully encouraged or exploited by the lead GODR agency, the STP.
- Some NGOs selected were never in the position to take on the administrative and financial management challenges presented by the program. The GODR was slow to recognize this and failed to carry out with determination the level of training needed to bring NGOs up to par on the basics of good management, especially financial management practices.
- Some NGOs exaggerated claims that they knew the communities and districts they had chosen to work in and this had negative consequences for program start-up and for the quality of the work they were able to achieve with communities.
- The STP failed to understand the need for establishing norms, standards and indicators for the work being commissioned from NGOs. This meant that a lot of the work carried out was of a variable quality and standard; a set of clearly defined guidelines for how and what to do with communities would have focused the community development aspects on priorities and would have helped NGOs identify objectives based on measurable indicators.
- Slow GODR administrative procedures, like clearing and disbursing program funds, the granting of permission for changes in activity plans, etc., all slowed down program implementation.
- Both GODR managers and NGOs commented on the shortage of time allowed to implement the GFEI. The 2-3 years allowed were not enough to see the softer educational achievement and community development elements, come to fruition. Project timelines were geared mainly to the infrastructure development and construction aspects of the program and failed to allow time or sufficient resources for the subtler social impact dimensions.
- Unwillingness, or lack of clarity in reporting counterpart financial data, led to some confusion over the amount of cost-sharing which was actually achieved. GODR institutions were expected to make significant in-kind contributions (20% or more) towards the achievement of program objectives. This aspect was brought to the GODR’s attention by the independent audit.
- A similar lack of clarity in accounting procedures, or an unwillingness on the part of some NGOs to show their cost-sharing contribution, delayed the disbursement of program funding sometimes at critical moments in program implementation when external funding was needed to keep the program moving. The audit signaled the need to establish proper computerized accounting procedures since many NGOs, and SEE departments, were still recording expenditures only on electronic spreadsheets.
- From inception, the DR GFEI tried to include inputs from the MOH. However, slow response on the part of the MOH encouraged NGOs working on health promotion and health training issues to turn to local health authorities where willingness to cooperate and provide technical inputs existed. No similar attempt was made to involve the MOA in

program activities, but in isolated cases, NGOs did try to include local MOA staff in program activities.

- The institutionalization of the community co-financing aspect in the GFEI was seldom stressed and never included in the original project plan. The long term success of this kind of integrated community development approach will depend on developing a viable co-financing or community credit strategy that can work for DR rural communities. The introduction of any co-financing program will need to be thought through and introduced in a phased way, especially for poorer communities who have been and are, most affected by the current national economic decline.
- The STP management and staffing structures were technically strong in the engineering and agronomic fields, hence the failure to fully comprehend how best to manage the softer community, health and educational dimension of the program. Too much responsibility for the management of the community development aspects of GFEI in the DR was left solely with NGOs who, in some cases performed well, but in others, failed to deliver what was expected.

### *Lessons Learned by the Donor Agencies*

- Membership in CEP helped to forge the trust needed between USAID, USDA, SEE and STP to build transparent management and administrative processes and speed up decision making. The technical managers eventually tasked with representing each agency were able to build a strong management oversight team which had a positive effect on the way the program was implemented.
- The experience gained in community development and reconstruction during Hurricane Georges provided the foundation for a good working relationship between USAID, USDA and the STP. In most cases, the teams representing each entity had worked on rural development issues together, during the Hurricane Georges emergency.
- USAID and USDA learned that NGOs living and working within communities were better at getting the job done than NGOs based in Santo Domingo, who sent technical staff to the field to supervise the work being done by community extension workers.
- The GFEI seemed to have exceeded all expectations on the construction side, but still has to prove that the less tangible community and educational aspects are making a sustainable impact.
- STP, which took on the responsibility for keeping track of what was being achieved by participating NGOs, failed to keep an up to date accurate record of what was being achieved in the field. An accurate final accounting of program achievements is still pending because few NGOs have submitted final reports.
- Globally, GFEI projects have had difficulty collecting educational enrolment and access data. No real attempt was made to collect achievement data since this aspect was never included in the USDA survey instruments used to assess the impact of the GFEI.
- USDA may not be anxious to replicate the DR model, for reasons to do with amount of time required for implementation and high management costs.
- USG partners recommend tighter guidelines for the educational and community development aspects of the program and greater focus on the educational goals. The DR GFEI became too diffuse and tried to do too much. Too much emphasis was given to the

WATSAN and health aspects and not enough to the teacher training and learning dimensions of the program.

### ***Lessons Learned by the GODR STP Team***

- The integrity and transparency of the GFEI STP leadership, may have contributed to the success of the DR GFEI model. This was principally due to the outstanding contribution made by the team leader whose attention to detail and tireless energy helped to unite the STP team around clearly defined program goals.
- Putting CEP in a neutral STP environment and not in the SEE, meant that decision taken by the CEP were acted on quickly, without the bureaucratic inertia associated with decision making processes within the Ministry of Education.
- Giving the sponsoring donor agencies a day to day technical and managerial role through the CEP helped to build confidence in the GODR STP's leadership.
- Politically appointed staff were expected, like everyone else in the STP team, to pull equal weight on tasks assigned by the STP Director. All STP team members were expected to adopt a work ethic that didn't allow for "sleeping on the job." This created a strong team spirit, exceptional in the DR's current socio-political climate.
- Working in an open honest way with a clearly defined work ethic helped to ease the transition needed to accommodate the new challenge of working with PVOs.
- The external audit drew attention to the cumbersome bureaucratic financial management system operating within the STP. STP management will need to review and reform financial and other management procedures, should the program be extended.
- If the PEC had included an NGO representative, perhaps, some of the misunderstandings and disagreements between the NGOs and the GODR could have been avoided.
- The technical staff representing the SEE at PEC meetings was of a rank unable to take important decisions on behalf of the Ministry of Education. This contributed, considerably, to a slowing down of the PEC decision making process.

## **Recommendations**

**Next phase:** Three recommended alternative options will be presented in this section. The choice as to which option would be best suited for the USAID Mission in Santo Domingo to follow rests with the Mission and will depend on a number of variables.

Obviously, cost and the amount of funding available to support this program are and will be critical determinants. The additional donation in food commodities from USDA is a generous and tempting example to follow. However, unless more funding becomes available for education, the opportunity cost of continuing the present program with additional funding from USAID, may be a real constraint.

The following are some recommended options:

1. ***Continue the GFEI program as is, but with a smaller number of participating PVOs targeting a smaller better focused group of deserving communities, with a clearer set of***

***community development guidelines and better defined education objectives.*** If USAID would agree to add a matching \$2 million to the USDA donation to give a total of \$3-4 million over 18-24 months, this would allow enough time for the softer community development and learning improvement aspects to get started. The reduced group of NGOs would be asked to continue implementing the program, with defined community development parameters, specifying clearer standards and measurable indicators. The STP, SEE, USAID and USDA would continue to manage the day to day aspects of the modified second phase using the same STP-PEC management structure, but with some attempt at reforming financial, and other slow and inefficient management procedures. Defining which will be the most deserving communities to include in the next phase will need more attention.

The educational and social impact the GFEI is making in many of the Bateyes visited would lead one to believe that the few resources available for a next phase would be more profitably used helping those communities obtain the basic services they lack and deserve. Since community construction projects seem to be playing an important “catalytic” role in mobilizing community participation, some construction projects would still need to be included. However, for the \$3-4 million which is proposed, construction projects would have to be limited to fewer projects, focused on clear and well defined educational priorities. The outreach and community oversight aspects of this second phase would benefit greatly from the addition of a cadre of Peace Corps volunteers to monitor and evaluate the work being carried out by participating NGOs. Each volunteer could be made responsible for overseeing X schools in Y communities, thus reinforcing STPs supervisory function with the addition of a stronger field based hands-on training and TA support element.

2. ***Radically modify the existing program, emphasizing only the most successful social and educational aspects such as strong PTA support for education, community action committees to mobilize resources and support for a better defined set of basic services based on locally identified education and community development priorities.*** Here, the socio-educational dimensions would be emphasized in communities already benefiting from phase I of the GFEI. However, because of resource limitations, school construction projects would have to be replaced by a stronger emphasis on the educational aspects which were poorly implemented in the first phase. Priority should be given to training the remaining NGOs to carryout the educational dimensions of the program such as, teacher training, improved quality pre-school education, the setting up and running of effective school library services, a more effective monitoring of learning outcomes, the production of context relevant health, nutrition and hygiene education materials for use both at the classroom level and in adult education and training. Since the schools selected for the second phase would all have kitchens, a special effort would be made to persuade parents in participating communities to provide cooked meals. This approach is favored, given the successful contribution made to the school feeding program, through the PAE-REAL program administered by the SEE.

Some schools, with the help of the NGOs and the SEE, could act as pilot “adult evening centers” where school facilities would be used to provide adult education courses in topic

areas like small business management, account keeping, sewing, food processing, horticulture, animal husbandry and construction skills, among other options to be would be identified through a local needs assessment. Paralleling this thrust for improved quality basic education in poor rural communities, would be a pilot project linking the USAID monitoring and evaluation of learning achievement program (EERC) to some, or all, of the schools participating in the GFEI program. GFEI teachers, parents and school principals would be induced into the learning achievement measurement project and encouraged to provide support in their distinct, but complementary roles as parents, teachers and school principals. This option would explore the probability of creating productive synergies between a modified version of the GFEI and the quality improvement initiatives which are being planned as part of the new USAID Country Strategy for education.

3. ***Discontinue support for the GFEI integrated community development program, and replace it with a rural basic education quality improvement program focused on the priorities proposed in the new country strategy for basic education.*** Here, the assumption is that the opportunity cost of using scarce Mission resources would be too high to entertain giving Mission support to Phase II of the GFEI. Another assumption is, that the current school feeding program is merely cosmetic and will not have any long-term impact on either the welfare or education achievement levels of the children targeted. At best, by providing more classrooms and some new schools, the GFEI will have made a positive contribution to school enrolments, especially in some of the poorer rural communities where basic education services were lacking. However, given the current economic situation, unless the same level of international donor funding materializes, it is unlikely that the next GODR administration will be in the position to continue a school construction and feeding program of the same quality and breadth as the existing one.

## **Some Pending Issues**

There are three variables that may impact the decision to continue the GFEI in its current form, or not. These are;

### **1. Change of Government**

The incoming government led by the PLD, has yet to define its policy toward social and educational development, especially rural development. Any radical change in the composition of the staffing and structure of technical support units, like the STP, could have negative consequences for the effectiveness of the current STP-GFEI program. The special mix of experienced technical and administrative staff which contributed toward the effectiveness of the DR's government to government GFEI model may be difficult to replicate if the new government re-shuffles key members of the STP team to other ministries, or GODR institutions. The new government may also not be in a position to continue the school feeding program, for economic reasons.

## **2. Economic decline**

The Dominican Economy shrank last year for the first time since 1990, contracting by nearly one percentage point, and is expected to shrink about the same amount by the end of 2004. Then country faces a financing gap estimated at \$100 million to \$200 million this year after the Peso tumbled in value more than 100% since last year, settling in at around 45 Pesos to the dollar. The country is now nearly \$6 billion in foreign debt after the previous government borrowed heavily during its first years in office, extending the dependence on foreign financing which had started when the incoming government was previously in office. "Never before in this country was more poverty created in such a short time span, less than a year," Said Miguel Ceara-Hatton, an economist with UNDP, in Santo Domingo. (New York Times, 07/12/04)

## **3. USAID's proposed basic education strategy**

USAID's proposed new education strategy may or may not be able to accommodate the objectives of the current GFEI program. The program proposed places a strong emphasis on improving policies for educational quality, increasing parental and community participation in selected schools and increasing private sector investment in public schools through school sponsorship schemes. The DR GFEI which was designed to use USG agricultural commodities principally to raise funding for school feeding programs to attract children to schools and to increase primary school access and attendance rates. The less tangible and more difficult to measure community, health and learning benefits emanating from what was essentially a highly subsidized school construction and feeding program, may be better achieved using other more focused educational strategies like those currently under review, in the USAID Mission.

## **Conclusions**

The three-year DR GFEI tried to develop a rural school model that empowers school communities to identify, prioritize and address their immediate needs. To the extent that the rural communities visited were being supported in situ by well organized NGO programs and technical assistance, some communities seen seemed to display the characteristics expected from communities undergoing an active process of empowerment. They were visibly enthusiastic about improving school access, involved in constructing local school infrastructure, and were actively engaged in a plethora of Parent-Teacher Association committees convened to provide tangible services like school meals, school gardens, school maintenance, health and hygiene and better nutrition through the cultivation of home vegetable plots.

Less tangible and much more difficult to assess in the time period allowed for this evaluation was the program's ability to meet some of the other more difficult to quantify objectives.

- 1) The establishment of model community-based school feeding programs in under-served poor communities, especially Bateyes, seemed on the surface to have been successfully achieved if what was being reported by informants was to be believed. In nearly every Batey visited, regular school meals were being prepared by a PTA school feeding committee made up of mothers who were, on the whole,

motivated and enthusiastic about being able to play an active role in the local school feeding program. Only time will tell if this initial level of parental enthusiasm will be sustainable beyond the life-span of the current USDA-funded GFEI program.

- 2) The expansion of access to primary education, especially for girls in remote areas was a little more difficult to assess in quantifiable terms because accurate up to date enrolment data was not available in nearly all the schools visited. However, it was clear that wherever the GFEI had constructed new classrooms or built a new school, reports from parents and teachers indicated that the demand for school places dramatically increased and enrolments were up. In about 10 cases, reports were received about parents' concern for additional classes to accommodate the growing cohort of children entering lower level classes. In three communities visited, parents and teachers actively made a case for building a secondary school in their village to accommodate the demand for education at the next level. A lack of recent enrolment data, disaggregated by gender, prevented an accurate assessment of the impact GFEI was making on girls' or boys' enrolments.
- 3) As to whether or not the GFEI was benefiting children's nutrition and health status, this was difficult to establish for want of harder data. However, judging by what parents who were interviewed said about improvement in their children's health the effects, specifically, of clean drinking water on stomach ailments seemed to be significant. All six focus groups attested to a decline in diarrhea, a reduction in parasitosis and a decline in vomiting in local children. In four communities visited, where poultry and dairy cows had impacted family nutrition levels, mothers attested to the positive effects of improved home feeding. In six communities seen, parents and teachers spoke of the importance of new varieties of vegetables and the impact these were making on household diets. However, no objective data seemed to be available to support the nutritional impact made by GFEI on children.
- 4) An improvement in learning achievement, or scholastic performance was impossible to assess. Schools were closed, teachers and children were by and large away on holiday, and the few parents and teachers interviewed couldn't comment on the learning achievement dimensions of their children's education beyond saying that they thought the school and teachers were doing a good job and that they as parents were pleased with the education their children were getting. Even the four Principals interviewed couldn't comment on learning achievement beyond claiming that a significant number of their pupils went on to the next education level. No current data on individual, class or school level learning achievement was available.

## **ANNEXES**

**Annex 1 - Persons interviewed for the GFEI Evaluation**

**Annex 2 - Profiles of Schools Visited**

**Annex 3 - Documents reviewed**

**Annex 1 - Persons interviewed for the GFEI Evaluation**  
**Dominican Republic, July 19-29, 2004**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>USAID Mission, Dominican Republic</b>		
1.	Dr. Elena Brineman	USAID Director, Santo Domingo (SD)
2.	Neici Zeller	Education Officer, USAID, SD
3.	David Losk	Team Leader, Health & Nutrition, USAID, SD
4.	Danielle Roziewski	International Development Consultant, CAII
5.	Kelva Pérez,	Manager Water and Sanitation Project, USAID, SD
6.	Joseph Goodwin	Deputy Team Leader & Senior Economic Policy Advisor, USAID, SD
<b>USDA</b>		
7.	Mark Holt	Deputy Director, DRD, USDA, Washington, D.C.
8.	David Salmon	Agricultural Attaché USDA, US Embassy, SD
9.	Ing. Paola Morales	Project Officer, USDA, SD
10.	Paul Trupo	Project Manager, USAID-USDA, Bucharest
<b>Government of the Dominican Republic</b>		
11.	Dra. Milagros Ortiz Bosch	Vice-President of the Republic and Secretary of State for Education
12.	Licda. Ancel Shecker	National Director of Basic Education
13.	Ing. Rafael Hernández Sánchez	Administrative Affairs, Technical Secretariat of the Presidency (STP)
14.	Ing. Leonardo Morros Draiby	Project Coordinator and Director, GFEI-STP
15.	Ing. Domingo Moreta	Programs Director, GFEI-STP
16.	Lic. Pedro Guzmán	Resources Coordinator, STP
17.	Lic. Omar De León	Director of Student Welfare, Secretary of State for Education (SEE)
<b>Comisión Presidencial para el Desarrollo Barrial (<i>Presidential Commission for the Development of Peri-Urban Areas</i>)</b>		
18.	Ing. Manuel Mejía	Director of Training and Community Integration
19.	Lic. Oleida Acosta	Coordinator, GFEI
<b>Ministry of Education, Seibo</b>		
20.	Lic. Félix Villa	Director, SEE, Seibo
21.	Lic. Nurup Sobeida Rivera	Teacher Training Director, SEE, Seibo
<b>22. Dominican Republic Based NGOs</b>		
<b>Social Pastoral of Central Zone (CEZOPAS)</b>		
23.	Sor Leticia Escobar	Executive Director, Orden de Hermanas Juanistas
24.	Sor Flor de María Galán Murillo	Director of Projects and Rural Development, Orden de Hermanas Juanistas

No.	Name	Position
<b>World Vision</b>		
25.	Ing. Luis Sánchez	WV Program Director
26.	Lic. Nilba Pérez	WV Public Relations Coordinator
27.	Severa Peverino	Community Health Promoter
28.	Guillermina Guerrero	Supervisor
29.	Bellguira Valdez	Health Technician
<b>CRS – IDAC , Catholic Relief Services – <i>Instituto de Acción Comunitaria</i> (Community Action Institute)</b>		
30.	Licda. Miosotis Figueroa	Director of Field Programs
31.	Lic. Israel Osorio	Coordinator of Field Programs
<b>MUDE (Women in development)</b>		
32.	Adele Williams	Planning & Evaluation Director
33.	Ing. Dalmasio Pérez	Project Coordinator
34.	Ernesto Julio Abreu	Health Promoter
<b>Alas de Igualdad (Wings of Equality)</b>		
35.	Lic. Nesly Julien	President
36.	Lic. Virina Ureña	Projects Director
37.	Ing. Raymundo Calderón Valenzuela	Extension Agronomist
<b>IDDE (Dominican Institute for Integrated Development)</b>		
38.	Lic. Silvia Viñals Fonseca	Projects Coordinator
39.	Marcial José Zorrilla	Nutrition Supervisor
<b>40. Field Sites</b>		
<b>Las Berroas Elementary School</b>		
41.	Yuberki Concepción Rojas	School Teacher
42.	Andrea Martínez	PTA Treasurer
43.	Michel José Eria	Parent
44.	Juan Martínez Calzado	Parent
45.	Marina Antonia Roja	Parent
46.	Carmella Bojui	Parent
47.	Marina Milo	Parent
48.	Sonia Ruben	Parent
49.	Anita Calizo	Parent
50.	Alida Leni	Parent
51.	Violeta Felipe	Parent
52.	Jineth Pies	Parent
53.	Gloria Lima	Parent
54.	Reneta Delice	Parent
55.	Sofia Sánchez	Parent
56.	Alejandrina Medina	Parent
57.	Isabel Martínez Mojica	Parent
58.	Gladis Berroa	Parent

No.	Name	Position
59.	Gladis Mercedes Fabián	Parent
60.	Eliás Corzo	Parent
61.	Reina Isabel Reyes	School Teacher
62.	Santa Castillo reyes	Parent
63.	Dionisio Fabián Rojas	Parent
<b>San Rafael Elementary School</b>		
64.	Cayetano Vizcaíno	Member of the PTA Committee
65.	Xiomara Sánchez	Member of the PTA Committee
66.	Faustino Sánchez	Vice president of the PTA Committee
<b>Ce-Mujer, Hato Mayor</b>		
67.	Keydi Leonardo	Secretary
68.	Juanito Velorio	Coordinator
69.	Kenia Bocio	Group Leader
70.	Nuris Valrio	Extension Outreach Worker
71.	Eunice Menegazo	Extension Outreach Worker
<b>Posa Cibao Elementary School Dairy Cow PTA Committee</b>		
72.	Juliana Díaz	Outreach Worker
73.	Aria Cabiulalínez	Outreach Worker
74.	Nieve Castro De la Cruz	Outreach Worker
75.	Soraya Díaz	Outreach Worker
76.	Belkis Jiménez	Parent
77.	Elena Aurora Santana	Parent
78.	José Manuel Morla Aponte	Parent
<b>Jagual Elementary School</b>		
79.	Jocelyn Medina	Discipline Committee member
80.	Saturnino González Rivero	Community Health Promoter
81.	Amparo Ortiz	PTA Committee President
<b>Monte Cristy Model Elementary School</b>		
82.	Santa Alade	School Teacher
83.	Tirsis Rodríguez	School Teacher
84.	Cecilia Abreu	School Teacher
85.	Carmen López	PTA Committee member
<b>Villa Construcción Elementary School</b>		
86.	Daisy Eusebio	PTA Committee member
87.	Miriam Vásquez	PTA Committee member
88.	Patricia Toribio	PTA Committee member
89.	Francisca Ruiz	PTA Committee member
90.	Alicia Suriel	PTA Committee member
91.	Medelín Organelo	Committee President
92.	Margarita Pacheco	Committee Member
93.	Juan De la Cruz	Committee Member
94.	Ismael Sánchez	Committee Member
95.	Francisco Rojas	Committee Member

No.	Name	Position
96.	Altagracia Moele	Committee Member
97.	Nelly Santana	Committee Secretary
98.	Bernerdo Lyn	Committee Member
99.	Bartolo Peguero	Committee Treasurer
<b>Group of Farmer Parents Training in La Trepada</b>		
100	Raymundo Calderón	Agricultural Technician
101	Manuel Antonio Reyes	Community Health Promoter
102	Guillermo Pio	Small-holder farmer
103	Carlos Hernández	Small-holder farmer
104	Víctor Vásquez	Small-holder farmer
105	Rafael Reyes	Small-holder farmer
106	Domingo Soto Ríos	Small-holder farmer
107	Silvio De los Reyes	Small-holder farmer
108	Rosa Elena Botitra	Small-holder farmer
109	Abelino Elurroceque Figueroa	Small-holder farmer
110	Manuel Elurroceque Figueroa	Small-holder farmer
111	Eligio Cordero	Small-holder farmer
112	Elia Borrayo	Small-holder farmer
113	Gerardo Sosa	Small-holder farmer
114	Roberto Ambrosio	Small-holder farmer
115	Ramón Sosa	Small-holder farmer
<b>Parent Teacher Committee ASOCAR</b>		
116	Alejandro Caraballo Núñez	Committee Coordinator
117	José Mercedes Rodríguez	Committee Treasurer
118	Isidro Morales Guerrero	Committee Advisor
119	Angelita Nolasco	Committee Secretary
120	María Fabin	Committee Member
121	Pedro Javier	Committee Director
122	María Velorio	Community Health Worker

## Annex 2 – Profiles of Schools Visited

No	School Name	Students	Pre-School	Grade Range	Multi Grade	Shifts	Classrooms	Library	Teachers	Play area	Kitchen	Toilets	Water System	School Garden Size (m)
1	Zambranita E.S.	103	Y	1-6	Y	2	2	Shelves only	4	Y	Y	2	Aqueduct	30X30
2	Magote E.S.	291	y	1-8	-	2	6	Shelves only	8	Y	Y	4	Well	-
3	Kilometer 5 E.S.	45	Y	1-2	Y	2	1	-	1	Y	Y	1	Aqueduct	-
4	Batey 35 E.S.	65	N	1-4	Y	2	2	-	1	Y	Y	2	Aqueduct	-
5	Pedro Sanchez E.S.	320	Y	1-8	-	-	2	Shelves only	1	Y	Y	4	Well	-
6	Los Franceses E.S.	274	Y	1-5	-	2	4	Shelves only	5	Y	-	2	Aqueduct	-
7	Cuatro Cominas E.S.												Aqueduct	-
8	Hicaco Blanco E.S.	216	Y	1-8	-	2	8	Shelves only	4	Y	-	2	Roof/Tank	-
9	La Gina E.S.	660	Y	1-8	-	2	9	Shelves only	16	Y	-	4+(2)	Aqueduct	80X40
10	El Cabo E.S.	120	Y	1-8	-	-	8	Shelves only	7	Y	-	6	Aqueduct	50X50
11	Lulobina Chala E.S.	124	Y	1-6	-	3	5	Shelves only	5	Y	Y	2	Aqueduct	17X7
12	San Rafael E.S.	225	Y	1-8	-	2	8	Shelves only	6	Y	Y	6	Well	100X60
13	Juan Jimenez C.E.	Closed/Saw children murals depicting child rights campaign												
14	Manchado E.S.	217	Y	1-9	-	-	8	Shelves only	7	Y	Y	4	Well	50X60
15	Paso Cibao E.S.	Met Dairy Cow Focal Group												
16	San Valerio E.S.	18	-	1-2	Y	2	2	-	1	Y	-	2	Well/Solar	40X30
17	Jagual E.S.	131	Y	1-8	4	2	6	-	5	Y	-	4	Well	70X20
18	Monte Cristi E.S. *	416	Y	1-9	-	2	5	Library	8	Y	Y	4	Aqueduct	50X40
19	Villa Construcción E.S.	19	Y	1-4	Y	2	1	Shelves only	1	-	-	2	Aqueduct	-
20	Montecoca E.S.	300	Y	1-8	-	2	7	Shelves only	6	Y	Y	2	Well	15X15
21	Las Pantas E.S.	285	Y	1-8	-	2	5	Shelves only	6	Y	Y	4	Well	30X20
22	Altigracias E.S.	108	Y	1-4	Y	2	2	-	1	-	Y	2	Aqueduct	-
23	Lajagua	Visited Alas Poultry Unit / 200 Layers												
24	El Naranjo E.S.	404	Y	1-8	Y	2	5	Shelves only	10	Y	Y	4	Aqueduct	-
25	Los Barroas E.S.	103	Y	1-7	Y	2	3	Shelves only	3	Y	Y	4	Well	40X30
26	Cruz de Guerra E.S.	194	Y	1-5	Y	2	6	Shelves only	5	Y	Y	6	Aqueduct	-
27	La Grua E.S.	417	Y	1-7	-	2	5	Shelves only	5	-	Y	3	Well	-

\* Model school receiving support from SEE/NGO

## **Annex 3 - Documents Reviewed**

### ***A. Independent Audit Reports, submitted by Campusano and Associates, MRI, Santo Domingo***

1. A financial audit report for the New Strategies for Implementing PAE-REAL in Schools in Areas Lacking Basic Services and for the Improved Services to Schools Transferring to the PAE-REAL Program Situated in Socially Marginalized Communities, December, 2003, Santo Domingo.
2. A financial audit report for the PIGAE Program Agreement # OGSM: DFE-517-2001/687-00 financed through Section 416 (b) of the USG Federal Agricultural Law, September 2001–June 30 2003, Santo Domingo.
3. A financial audit report for the School Rehabilitation Program for the Peri-Urban Municipalities of Eastern Santo Domingo and Boca Chica of the CPADB, July 2002 –June 2003, Santo Domingo.
4. A financial audit report for the CIAC Basic Education for All projects, March 2004-May, 2004, Santo Domingo.
5. A financial audit report for the CEZOPAS Model Community Basic School program, June-July, 2004, Santo Domingo.
6. A financial audit report for MUDE Community Water and Sanitation program for improving Child Health Services, June-July, 2004, Santo Domingo.
7. A financial audit report for the FUSABI Monte Plata Public schools reconstruction and school feeding program, May – June 2004, Santo Domingo.
8. A financial audit report for the CRS Community Education Empowerment and Right to Education Program in the Yeguada and Construcción Communities, June, 2004, Santo Domingo.
9. A financial audit report for Improving the Quality of Girls Basic Education Program, in Bayaguana and Miches, April-March, 2004, Santo Domingo.
10. Audit Guidelines Manual, STP-SEE, Pedro Guzmán, 2002, Santo Domingo.
11. Instructivo de Normas y Procedimientos Adiministrativos y Financieros para los Proyectos bajo el Programa PIGAE, STP, Guzmán y Céspedes, 2002, Santo Domingo.
12. Resolución del CEP Para Fines de Auditoria, September, 2003, Santo Domingo.

### ***B. Technical Secretariat of the Presidency and the Ministry of Education***

13. Informe de Ejecución PAE-REAL, Programa Iniciativa Global de Alimentos para la Educación PIGAE, Octubre, 2003, Santo Domingo.
14. Informe del Departamento Coordinador de Recursos Externos: Estados Financieros, Junio 2004, PIGAE-SEE, Santo Domingo.
15. Manual Instructivo para la Elaboración de Propuestas por parte de las Futuras Instituciones Ejecutoras, Iniciativa Global de Alimentos para la Educación, Secretariado de la Presidencia/ SEE, Santo Domingo, 2001.
16. Various CEP Minutes highlighting decisions taken by the CEP concerning GFEI program implementation matters, submitted to SEE, USDA, USAID and STP, Santo Domingo.
17. Numerous Letters to NGOs, USAID and USDA from the STP signed by Ing. Domingo Moreta, Coordinator of the STP/DCR Office, drawing attention to issues related to contract protocols and program monitoring and implementation, 2003-2004, Santo Domingo.
18. STP Archives of reports and letters from NGOs to the STP Coordinators Office concerning a range of issues and audit findings.
19. STP Technical trip reports submitted by STP technical supervisors.
20. SEE/ Dirección General de Bienestar Estudiantil y Docente, reports and archives submitted by technical staff after field visits to various PIGAE program sites.

21. Logros del PIGAE, STP Power Point presentation, March 2003, Santo Domingo.
22. PIGAE, Lista de Escuelas Seleccionadas para la Línea Basal, STP, Santo Domingo.
23. Proyecto Escuela Multigrado Innovada, Informe Técnico, Taller de Iniciación, SEE, 2003, Santo Domingo.
24. Total de Centros, Raciones y Costos por Modalidad, SEE, Dirección General de Bienestar Estudiantil y Docente, STP-PIGAE, 2003-2004, Santo Domingo.
25. Programa de Alimentación Escolar, PAE, STP- PIGAE, 2003, Santo Domingo.
26. Government to Government GFEI Program in the Dominican Republic, STP, 2003, Santo Domingo.
27. Proceso de Evaluación de Propuestas PIGAE, 2002, CEP/STP, Santo Domingo.
28. Informe Ejecutivo PIGAE, Metas y Logros 2001-2003, STP, Santo Domingo.
29. Programa de Bibliotecas PIGAE, 2003-2004, STP Santo Domingo.
30. Plan Piloto Programa de Capacitación en Nutrición y Seguridad Alimentaria PIGAE, FAO/STP/USAID/USDA, Octubre, 2003, Santo Domingo
31. Informe Final de Desarrollo del Programa Conecta-PIGAE-INTEC Sobre Promoción de la Salud y Prevención de SIDA en Promotores de Salud, 2004, INTEC, Santo Domingo.
32. Convenio entre el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América y el Gobierno de la República Dominicana para el Suministro de Productos Agrícolas a través de la Iniciativa Global de Alimentos para la Educación Conforme a la Sección 416(b). GODR/USG, 2001, Santo Domingo.

### ***C. USAID/USDA Documents and Memoranda***

33. Informes de Viaje a Varios Lugares del Proyecto PIGAE, por Morros y Morales, USDA, Santo Domingo.
34. Criteria used for Selection of Baseline Sample, USDA, Dominican Republic, Government-to-Government GFEI Program, 2003.
35. School Feeding Support Unit Baseline Survey Questionnaire, USDA/USAID, 2003, Santo Domingo.
36. PEN/USDA-FAS Project Pictures from Site Visits to GFE Schools, 2003, Santo Domingo.
37. Technical Assistance to the Global Food for Education Program, Report on the Dominican Republic Site Visit, July-August, 2003, USDA, Washington DC.
38. The Global Food for Education Pilot Program: A review of Project Implementation and Impact, USDA, 2002, Washington DC.
39. El Proyecto Piloto del Programa de Alimentación Global para la Educación: Informe Final, USDA, 2004, Washington DC.
40. Minutes to the CEP Meeting held at STP on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002, Santo Domingo.
41. USAID DR, Standard Form for End-Use Checks; letter to Mark Holt, USDA, from Elena Brineman USAID Director, June 2004, Santo Domingo.
42. Various Memoranda and e mails from Neici Zeller USAID GFEI Program Coordinator to USDA, participating NGOs and the STP.
43. USAID- Dominican Republic Health Program, USAID Health Section, Santo Domingo.
44. Politics of the Dominican Republic, Encyclopedia Article about the DR, July, 2004, Free Dictionary.com.
45. CIA World Fact Book, Dominican Republic, May 2004, USG, Washington, DC.
46. United States Department of State, Background Note on the Dominican Republic, October, 2003, USG, Washington, DC.
47. Development Resources Division Directory, FAS-Online, 2004, USG, Washington, DC.
48. Fact Sheet: McGovern- Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, FAS-Online, 2004, USG, Washington DC.
49. Fact Sheet: Global Food for Education Pilot Initiative, FAS-Online, USG, Washington, DC.
50. GFEI Country Reports, FAS-Online, USG, Washington, DC.
51. DR- GFEI Achievements through September 30, 2003, FAS-USDA, Santo Domingo.

52. DR- GFEI Progress Report through September 2002, FAS-USDA, Santo Domingo.
53. Dominican Republic, Mission Education Profile (Draft), July 2004, USAID, Santo Domingo.
54. Dominican Republic: The Global Food for Education Initiative briefing note, USAID, Santo Domingo.
55. Improved Basic Education Through Community and Private Sector Participation, General Problem Statement (Draft), July 2004, USAID, Santo Domingo.
56. Scope of Work: Evaluation of Global Food for Education Initiative, June 2004, USAID, Santo Domingo.

#### ***D. NGO Information and Training Materials***

57. Bateyes del Estado, Encuesta Socioeconómica y de Salud de la Población Materno Infantil de los Bateyes Agrícolas del CEA, Diciembre 1999, USAID, Santo Domingo.
58. Manual de Capacitación para Profesores, Mi Escuela Ideal, Cambios de Comportamiento en Higiene y Salud- PIGAE, Catholic Relief Services, 2003, Santo Domingo.
59. Consulta sobre los Contenidos de Salud, Alimentación y Nutrición en la Currícula Escolar, Noviembre, FAO, 2002, Capella Beach Resort Juan Dolio, República Dominicana.
60. Mejorando la Nutrición a través de Huertos y Granjas Familiares, Manual de Capacitación para Trabajadores de Campo en América Latina y el Caribe, FAO, 2000.
61. Guía de Saneamiento, USDA/ USAID/IDAC, 2004, Santo Domingo.
62. Boletín Informático, Proyecto Alas de Igualdad, Número 12, Santo Domingo.
63. Horizontes, Número 1, Abril 2004, Visión Mundial, Santo Domingo.
64. Proyecto: Promoviendo el Derecho a la Educación, CRS-IDAC, PIGAE, 2003, Santo Domingo.
65. Plan de Rehabilitación de Escuelas de Localidades Periféricas de los Municipios Santo Domingo Este y Boca Chica, 2003, GODR-CPADB, Santo Domingo.
66. Sin Hambre se Aprende Mejor: Campaña Mundial del PMA de Alimentación Mundial, 2000, FAO, Rome Italy.

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