Bolivia's Complementary School Feeding: A case study

July 2014
Bolivia: Alimentación Complementaria Escolar (ACE)  
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Country Profile

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gross Domestic Product Per Capita in 2012 (US$)</strong></td>
<td>2,576 (World Bank, 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population ages 0 to 14 years in 2011 (% of total)</strong></td>
<td>31 (National Institute of Statistics, 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary School Net Enrolment Ratio in 2012 (%)</strong></td>
<td>94 (National Institute of Statistics, 2013)</td>
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</table>

Introduction

The Plurinational State of Bolivia\(^1\) has experienced significant socio-political and economic change since 2006 when President Evo Morales's party, the Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (Movimiento al Socialismo-Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos, MAS-IPSP) came to power. Reforms included the strengthening of the role of the state in the economy and the application of a variety of social programs. The new Political Constitution approved in 2009 promotes social and cultural inclusion, decentralization and social participation, and recognizes the right to food as a fundamental right (Asamblea Constituyente de Bolivia, 2009).

As a result of high-priced raw material exports such as gas, oil and soy and a prudent macroeconomic policy, Bolivia’s economic growth has averaged 4.8% over the past seven years; and gross national income (GNI) per capita grew from US$900 in 2003 to US$2200 in 2012 (World Bank, 2013). The country graduated to a lower middle income country in 2010.

Despite economic progress, the Andean landlocked country still faces major development challenges and ranks 108\(^2\) out of 187 in the 2011 human development index. Levels of moderate poverty decreased significantly from 2007 - falling from 60% in 2007 to 51% in 2009 - but remain high, rising to 69% in rural areas. More than 25% of the total population and 45% of rural households cannot afford a minimum food basket (UDAPE, 2010).\(^2\) High food prices and persistently low incomes hamper access to food for the most vulnerable. Inequality and exclusion persist: almost two-thirds of extremely poor people live in rural areas, 60% of which are indigenous people (UN, 2011), who account for 65% of the population of 10 million. Rates of chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies in children under 5 remain high. Stunting among children under 5 dropped from 32% in 2003 to 27% in 2008, but it is 39% in rural areas (National Institute of Statistics & Al., 2004 & 2008). Anaemia affects 61% of under-fives and 38% of women. On the other hand, Bolivia is also facing increasing rates of overweight and obesity: 50% of women aged 15-49 are overweight or obese (National Institute of Statistics & Al., 2008).

In 2011, the net enrolment rate reached 82.2% in primary education and 67.4% in secondary education (ME, 2013a). The government has made important investments in the education sector in the recent years, for instance through the Bono Juancito Pinto, a conditional cash transfer program, which contributed to reduced drop-out rates.

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\(^1\) The official name of the country since April 2009 is Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia.

\(^2\) Extreme poverty is defined as having insufficient income to purchase a minimum food basket.
The government has made food sovereignty and nutrition national priorities. In 2006, the President consolidated the Food and Nutrition National Council (Consejo Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición – CONAN) to ensure the collaboration among ministries in the formulation of multisectoral food and nutrition policies and programmes. Important social protection programmes, including conditional cash transfers for the elderly, schoolchildren, pregnant and lactating women, and children under 2, have been credited with reducing the number of poor and extremely poor people, but need to be made more accessible. The Multisector Programme Zero Malnutrition (PMD-C – Programa Multisectorial Desnutricion Cero) (CT CONAN, 2008) was launched in 2007 to reduce chronic malnutrition levels, with a focus on marginalized areas. In 2011, the Government passed the Law 141 of the Productive, Communal, and Agricultural Revolution (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2011), which promotes multisectoral, long-term policies to support food security and food sovereignty, including by enhancing agricultural production, particularly from small farmers; and establishing food-based safety net programmes, such as school feeding. The government has also established measures to stabilize food prices (WFP, 2012).

In the context of the multisectoral approach to food sovereignty, school breakfast programmes implemented by local governments received renewed attention. Food programmes for school children in Bolivia originated in the 30’s with a free milk program. The first breakfast programme was formally established in 1951. Initially implemented in schools of mining and industrial companies, it was progressively expanded to urban public schools with funding from President Kennedy’s Alliance for Progress, and to rural schools with support from the World Food Programme (WFP).

The Law of Municipalities of 1999 is a turning point: it clearly defined the provision of school breakfast as a competence of municipal authorities (Congreso Nacional, 1999). Implementation of school breakfast programmes through municipalities started in October 1999, however at the beginning few municipalities took responsibility for the programme as they did not have previous experience and adequate resources to manage school feeding. In the next decade, the funding basis for the programme was consolidated. With the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief initiative, school feeding and school-children transport were defined as key strategies to support school attendance in 2000 (Congreso Nacional, 2001). In 2005, profits from the Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons (IDH) were allocated to Municipalities to fund social, health and educational programmes – including school feeding (Congreso Nacional, 2005). Coverage increased gradually as Municipalities started their school feeding programmes and developed the skills and means to implement them. By 2011, school feeding coverage in primary education was close to universal. To date school feeding provision is not mandatory: municipalities decide whether or not to implement programmes and allocate resources.

Today, Bolivia offers an example of a highly decentralised approach to school feeding as there is not yet a national program. The name was changed to Complementary School Feeding (Alimentación Complementaria Escolar - ACE) in 2007 to help highlight that food provided at school has to be regarded as a complement to the food children consume at home. ACE programs can be divided into two broad categories. The rural model provides breakfast and/or lunch cooked in the schools premises. It was first promoted by the government with support from WFP and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in highly food insecure municipalities. In the urban model, initially introduced by capital cities’ municipalities, service delivery is outsourced to private companies, which provide ready to consume foods for breakfast.

3 Decreto Supremo No.2896 de 1951, resolución ministerial 251-1
4 The 1994 Popular Participation Law (Ley de Participación Popular) had transferred to municipalities the resources and responsibility for the implementation of food-based programmes, among which school breakfasts.
Over the years, municipal governments have developed a multiplicity of service delivery modalities and the necessity of having an established national programme and a common policy framework has become evident. In 2007, a multisectorial ACE working group was established to draft a school feeding law. At the time of drafting this case study, three documents were under discussion: a draft ACE Law (Anteproyecto de Ley de Alimentación Complementaria Escolar) (ME, CT-CONAN, 2012), its Regulatory Decree, and the Technical and Administrative Guidelines, Quality Standards for Complementary School Feeding in Bolivia (ME, 2013b). In addition, an ACE team was established in 2008 within the Intracultural, Intercultural and Pluri linguism Unit of the Ministry of Education (ME) and is currently drafting its first National School Feeding Plan.

**Methodology**

This case study is based on a comprehensive literature review. The main sources are the two technical diagnoses of school feeding in Bolivia conducted in 2003 and 2008 by the Ministry of Education with technical support from the WFP (ME & WFP, 2007; ME & WFP, 2009). These diagnoses are based on official data from ME, Municipal Annual Operational Plans and information from NGOs, international organizations and development partners. The analysis also draws on a report prepared by the World Bank office in Peru as part of a technical assistance project through the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) (Narvaez: 2012).
Country School Feeding Programme Factsheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>1951&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
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</table>

### Rational/Impact
- Support poor children’s access to education and retention and food security
- Support children’s nutrition and health
- Means to foster local, highly nutritious food production, processing and consumption through local purchases.

### Beneficiaries and types of schools targeted
- Girls and boys enrolled in public initial, primary and secondary schools. Municipalities define which levels are covered in their respective administrations.
- 2,162,921 school children received some form of school feeding in 2011 (FAO, 2013).

### Supply, Storage and Logistics
- The programme administration is fully decentralised. Supply chain is managed by autonomous Municipalities.

### Design and Implementation

#### Modality, Food Basket Details
- Lunch, and/or breakfast and/or snack. Food baskets and modalities are defined by Municipalities subject to resource availability.
- In urban settings: usually only breakfast composed of ready-to-eat products (i.e. bread, milk, yogurt, fruits, etc.).
- In rural areas: depending on modality dry foods cooked in schools by parents. Parents and/or schools provide fresh foods, including vegetables, to complement the rations.

#### Food Preparation
- In rural areas, food preparation, storage and distribution at school level are the responsibility of the Social Community Education Councils (Consejos Educativos Social Comunitario) with the assistance of teachers.
- In urban settings, food supply and distribution are outsourced to private companies selected through competitive processes to provide ready to eat breakfast. Supervision is made by the technical teams in charge of school feeding of each municipality.

### Policy and Legal Frameworks
- No specific law on school feeding exists. The 2009 Political Constitution and a number of laws and sectorial policies give the legal underpinning to school feeding in Bolivia (see Box 3).

### Institutional Arrangements

#### Lead Institution
- Ministry of Education

#### Supporting Institutions
- Ministries that compose the ACE Working Group established as part of CONAN: Ministry of Rural Development and Lands, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment and Water; Municipalities and Departmental Governments; Social Organizations.

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<sup>5</sup> In 1951, through Supreme Decree 2896 dated December 13, 1951, the first school breakfast was delivered to the schools of the mining, railway and related industries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finance</th>
<th><strong>Annual Budget</strong></th>
<th>Bs 360 million (US$51.3 million) in 2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cost Per Child</strong></td>
<td>Cost per child varies in each Municipality. The average cost in rural settings varies from 1 to 5 Bs/child/day (ME and WFP, 2009). The average cost in urban settings is higher but has not been calculated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Innovations/Good Practices
- School feeding is fully integrated in the country food and nutrition security framework; legal framework supports local procurement from micro and small scale providers.
- Local initiatives successfully link school feeding and local, small scale production.
- High level of commitment and ownership at local level. In 2009, 90% of Municipalities provided school feeding services, even if it was not mandatory.
- Strong community participation.

### Weaknesses/Risks
- Absence of unified normative framework at the central level, which leads to a dispersion of initiatives and uneven service delivery.
- Management and implementation capacity is not uniform across Municipalities.
- Irregular provision of meals in some municipalities, poor infrastructure.
- Food quality (Municipalities and providers do not necessarily respect food quality norms)
- There is no central monitoring and evaluation system and thus each municipality or partner organization has its own system.
Design and Implementation

Bolivia offers an example of a highly decentralised school feeding model, in which the Municipalities plan, fund, manage and implement school feeding, either directly or through partnerships with NGOs and international organizations. This has led to a wide variety of implementation approaches and programmes on the ground; some of them work closely with local small scale food producers.

ACE can be divided into two broad categories. The rural model provides breakfast and/or lunch prepared in the schools premises. In the urban model, service delivery is outsourced to private companies, which provide pre-packed foods for breakfast or snack. It was first promoted by municipalities of the city capitals, being the ACE of La Paz the largest programme to date.

The ME drafted the first national guidelines in 2013 to guide Municipalities in ACE organization, implementation, supervision and monitoring, with the goal of increasing the quality and equity in the service delivery across the country (ME, 2013b).

Objectives

The goal of ACE, as stated by the Ministry of Education is to “contribute to realize the rights to food and education, to improve educational achievement and school children nutritional status with adequate, healthy and culturally appropriate food, and to promote local economic development in Bolivia” (ME, 2013c). The Political Constitution frames school feeding as a strategy to support poor children’s access to education (art 82.1). ACE contributes to the Ministry of Education’s overall objective of increased coverage and school retention from early childhood to secondary education (ME, 2010) On the other hand, the Law 141 of the Productive, Communal, and Agricultural Revolution prioritises school feeding as a means to foster local, nutritious food production and processing through local purchases from small holder peasants.

The draft ACE Law (Art. 2) spells out the following objectives: facilitate school access and retention, contribute to the right to education and food; contribute to improving school performance and to closing the gender gap, principally among populations highly vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity; guarantee the coverage and quality of ACE; improve school children’s nutritional status, respecting traditional food habits and delivering nutrition education; and promote local economic development through the procurement of local products at community, municipal and regional levels.

Within this broad framework, each Municipality defines the specific objectives of its programme in its Annual Operational Plan (AOP). According to the 2008-2009 diagnosis undertaken by the ME in collaboration with WFP, more than half of the municipalities providing the service defined objectives in their operational plans. 22% had objectives related to school dropout and enrolment, 5% to school performance, and 9% to nutrition. Improving coverage and food quality and contributing to food security were occasionally mentioned (ME & WFP, 2009).

Coverage and targeting

While the provision of school feeding is currently not mandatory in Bolivia - the Popular Participation Law does not impose an obligation on delivering school feeding- most municipalities provide some kind of school feeding service: according to the 2008-2009 Diagnosis, 90% of municipalities provided school feeding in 2008, compared to 55.4% in 2003 (ME & WFP, 2009). Of Bolivia’s 2.6 million

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6 The Guidelines were presented in November 2013 in the II Plurinational Meeting of ACE in Bolivia (Tarija)
schoolchildren enrolled in initial, primary and secondary schools in 2008, 1.9 million or 74.3% received some type of school feeding, ranging from a drink every two days to a full breakfast and lunch every day (ME & WFP, 2009). This important up-take shows very strong commitment and ownership for school feeding at the local level, highlighting its potential to become a universal programme in the near future. According to FAO, the number of beneficiaries increased to 2,162,921 in 2011 (FAO, 2013). The increase in coverage was gradual in all departments, and accelerated from 2006, with increased resources from the oil revenue tax made available to Municipalities.

Coverage rates varied across departments and municipalities (Table 1). Municipalities decide on the educational levels to be covered. Priority is generally given to primary schools.

### Table 1: School feeding coverage by department, as a proportion of children enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education, and as a proportion of Municipalities - 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries</th>
<th>% of school children</th>
<th>% of Municipalities providing SF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chuquisaca</td>
<td>126,386</td>
<td>95,7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pando</td>
<td>19,735</td>
<td>93,1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarija</td>
<td>113,931</td>
<td>90,4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potosí</td>
<td>196,748</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>401,919</td>
<td>60,9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oruro</td>
<td>117,099</td>
<td>94,3</td>
<td>97,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochabamba</td>
<td>366,747</td>
<td>77,7</td>
<td>82,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beni</td>
<td>69,977</td>
<td>49,6</td>
<td>78,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paz</td>
<td>516,708</td>
<td>78,3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Bolivia</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,929,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ME & WFP, 2009

However, service provision is often irregular. A study conducted in 71 municipalities in 2008 showed that only 54% of Municipalities provided ACE every school day. An inadequate budget to cover the entire school year is the main reason for this (Garfulic & Al., 2008).

**Modalities, food basket and nutritional norms**

Each Municipality decides on the modalities and types of menus. School feeding modalities depend mainly on the allocated budget, municipal priorities, social demand, and on whether the Municipality is in an urban or a rural area. For instance some municipalities provide breakfast three days per week and lunch the other two days, while others with higher budgets provide two rations every day. In rural areas, the ration provided by the Municipality can be complemented by partners. Capital cities tend to provide ready-to-consume processed foods, whereas in rural areas the meals are cooked in schools by Social Community Education Councils composed of community members. Menus are generally designed by these councils and nutritionists, sometimes with technical support from NGOs and WFP, based on the products available at the local level. To assist them, the Mancomunidad de Alimentación Escolar de Chuquisaca (MAECH) (see box 1) and other Municipalities have designed reference menus, often in collaboration with partners.

As a result, the service – and its quality - varies greatly across the country. This diversity further increased as new municipalities joined the programme and as initiatives to link the programme to local development multiplied. The study conducted in 71 municipalities reported that 67% of municipalities provided breakfast, and 33% of them provided breakfast and lunch in 2008 (Garfulic & Al., 2008).
According to the government, the overall picture remains similar today. The data also shows that 21% of menus were composed of ready-to-consume products, 35% of foods that needed to be prepared, and 45% of both types of products. Products most procured for breakfast were processed foods such as pre-packed dairy products, biscuits and bread, followed by fruits and cereals. For lunch, unprocessed products such as rice, wheat flour, vegetable oil, salt and milk were more prominent. Annex 1 provides more detailed information on the school feeding modalities and types of menus.

To assist the Municipalities and support quality and equity, the recent Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education provide detailed guidance on school meals composition and nutritional value (ME, 2013b). The Guidelines establish that a school ration should cover 30% of the energy and micronutrient requirements for school aged children. They define minimum recommended values for energy (at a minimum, daily rations should provide 450 kilocalories), protein, fat, carbohydrates and 9 vitamins and minerals, and recommend that all processed foods be fortified. They also provide examples of menus and suggestions on the types of foods for breakfast, snack, lunch and even dinner for boarding schools. The ME Guidelines are based on and promote the 2001 Bi-Ministerial Resolution on school health and food programmes (ME & MoH, 2001), which has been neither known nor used by Municipalities so far.

**Supply/value chain: food procurement, transportation, storage and preparation**

From the beginning, the programme has been managed and implemented autonomously by Municipalities without unified strategic guidance, as no central institution had a regulatory role. As a result, a variety of implementation approaches were developed across the country (see box 1), within the general principles outlined below.

Generally, food is procured by Municipal services with Municipality funds. In rural areas, where the meals are cooked in schools, Municipalities procure a variety of non-perishable foods such as flour, rice, *api* (a traditional Andean drink made of purple maize), beans, vegetable oil or biscuits. The municipality specifies food quality requirements in the tenders (?) and the direct calls for proposals - including production or preparation dates and expiration dates. In some instances such as in the department of Tarija, Municipalities give a certain amount of money to the Community School Councils and each of them decides what to buy from the local markets. In urban areas, where schools do not have food preparation and storage areas, Municipalities outsource service delivery (including distribution) to private companies.

Food procurement for ACE programmes is regulated by the 2009 Supreme Decree 0181, which establishes the Basic Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services. Different procurement modalities can be used depending of the amounts to be procured: small contracts (*Contratación menor*), the most flexible modality, for amounts up to Bs 20,000 or 50,000 depending on the municipality poverty levels; the modality of national support to production and employment (*Modalidad de Apoyo Nacional a la Producción y Empleo -ANPE*), which permits purchases through direct bid invitation and has more flexible requirements than tenders regarding the documents to be provided, for amounts up to Bs 1 million; and national public tenders for amounts above Bs 1 million. Procurement with waivers (*Contratación por excepción*) and direct contracting for local purchases are also possible (Supreme Decree 0181, art 13 and 14). All food suppliers must be registered by the National

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7 In Municipalities with high poverty rates, there is no ceiling for this modality. The Municipality invites local potential suppliers to present their bids. The least expensive offer that complies will all the requirements is selected.
Agricultural Health and Food Safety Service (SENASAG) and, depending on the product, also in the Departmental Health Service (SEDES) health registers.

In rural areas, the food is delivered to schools. Depending on the climatic conditions, the delivery can be every 6 months, every trimester or even shorter periods, particularly in tropical areas, as the schools normally do not have a proper storage place. Social Community Education Councils are responsible for managing food preparation and distribution with assistance from teachers. Food movements are usually recorded in a registry at school level. Fresh vegetables and other perishables are provided by parents and sometimes the community and in some cases from school gardens and greenhouses. Food preparation and distribution organization depends on the school size. Usually, in small schools Community Education Council members or mothers prepare the food on a rotating basis. When the school is bigger, the Council collects a contribution from parents to hire cooks within the community.

**Box 1: Two successful experiences: La Paz urban programme and the School Feeding Mancomunidad of Chuquisaca** (MAECH)

- The school breakfast programme of the city of La Paz has become a reference for big cities in the country. The programme is exemplary due to the quality and variety of the food provided and the recycling of packaging materials, as well as for its universal coverage, transparent and efficient tendering processes, and monitoring and evaluation system. In addition, the municipality implements other nutrition and health interventions such as nutritional surveillance, oral health care, micronutrient supplementation, and hand washing campaigns. The provision of the rations is outsourced to companies, the other services are carried out by the municipality. The Program covered 154,000 school children in 2012 and had an annual budget of Bs 40 million. The cost of the ration was Bs 1.60/child/day. The Program conducted a study on school feeding’s impact on anaemia with the Nutrition Faculty of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in 2000 and 2010, which showed a reduction in anaemia prevalence from 37% in 2000 to 2% in 2010. (Gabriela Aro, Coordinator of the Program).

- 11 Municipalities in the department of Chuquisaca, an area of low population density and high food insecurity levels, formed a group of municipalities (Mancomunidad) in 2008 to administer school feeding in Chuquisaca, pool resources and improve efficiency. The Mancomunidad acts as an ACE implementing agency. Municipalities transfer the financial resources allocated to ACE to the MAECH bank account, and the MAECH technical team manages all programme implementation, including procurement, logistics, monitoring, training and oversight. It is governed by a General Assembly formed by the Mayors of member Municipalities. The technical - operational team is composed of a manager, an administrator, an accountant, and technical and logistics staff. The Mancomunidad procures the food and distributes it to Community Education Councils. Some products are procured from Peasant and Community Organizations (organizaciones económicas comunitarias y campesinas - OECCs), such as rice, maize, amaranth, beans, peanut butter, api and tojori (FAO, 2013). The budget allocated in 2012 for local purchases alone was Bs 1,163,000. (Luis Erquicia, Manager MAECH). This model proved to be efficient as technical staff are available to guide implementation and provide technical advice and training to Community Education Councils - for instance in cost analysis, priority setting, and on complementary activities to consolidate the school food service. Municipalities provide both breakfast and lunch. Supporting activities include the promotion of local production, school gardens and energy-saving stoves, following the Productive Schools model used by WFP. In 2012, MAECH reached 30,047 beneficiaries in 8 municipalities (of these, WFP continues to provide support to 15,000 students in 5 municipalities).
Food quality and safety is a recurring issue among stakeholders. As a result of the diversity of norms used by municipalities, the variety of tendering processes, different food storage, preparation and distribution conditions, and a high number of suppliers, there is no common written reference regarding the quality of products distributed. Hygiene conditions and the attention paid to food quality and quantity remain weak. Storage processes are not always adequate, especially for dairy products, putting children’s health at risk. In rural areas, the conditions for safe food preparation are often not in place, and this is compounded by lack of access to safe water. Recognizing these limitations and the absence of a national norm that could regulate food quality in schools, the Ministry of Education recently issued the Technical and Administrative Guidelines, Quality Standards for Complementary School Feeding in Bolivia (ME, 2013b).

Food quality control is expensive and complex. Two official bodies can perform food quality controls: SENASAG and Ministry of Health Food Safety Surveillance and Control Unit (Unidad de Vigilancia y Control de la Inocuidad Alimentaria del Ministerio de Salud). Insufficient capacity of control laboratories, high costs and lack of norms for the products used in food-based programmes are the main constrains to ensuring better and larger food quality control (ME & WFP 2009). The lack of personnel with nutritional qualifications at municipal level is also a contributing factor.

School feeding and local economic development

In Bolivia, school feeding clearly has been considered for many years as an opportunity to foster local economic development and national food sovereignty. Governmental institutions, municipal governments, NGOs and international organizations have joined efforts to support and boost local produce procurement. The potential to link the programme to local, small scale farming is significant, as the small scale farming sector has an important production capacity for cereals, fruits, vegetables and dairy products (FAO, 2013). Local processing capabilities are also emerging for energy bars made of amaranth and quinoa, honey sachets, peanut butter, cookies made of oca (a tuber) and api, among other products. These products are currently being procured by MAECH and other ACE programs.

National public procurement laws promote public procurement from national and local micro, small and middle enterprises and small holder organizations. Supreme Decree 0181 is of particular importance as it includes provisions to benefit small holder farmers and their associations: in particular, it increases the application of the ANPE modality and introduces the Contratación menor modality for small quantities, which is more adapted to small producers’ production capacity and allows monthly payments. Many Municipalities are using these modalities. Even when local food procurement is based on market competition, national laws encourage municipal governments to purchase food from within their own territories to promote food security and sovereignty (WFP, 2012). The adoption of the draft school feeding law would strengthen incentives to procure from local small holders as it stipulates that 30% of the school feeding rations should be composed of foods produced within the municipality.

Many Municipalities also have taken initiatives to support micro and small enterprises local production through school feeding with partners’ support (see box 2). For example, the Association of Municipalities of Potosi (AMDEPO) became a shareholder in small local processing companies that supply ACE with quinoa nougat, oca and maize api, and other products. In this case, AMDEPO links local food producing businesses and municipalities. It also provides companies with technical assistance, training and funding.

Partly thanks to urban ACE programs, big food companies have also modernized and developed their installations, acquired high technology equipment such as food quality control laboratories, and increased their staff, creating new job opportunities and markets for food producers. In Cochabamba,
PROLAM (Empresa Lechera Procesadora de Lácteos para Municipalidades), the largest dairy company with an average daily production of 20,000 litres of milk, was established with support from the government and Danish cooperation.

However this linkage has not often materialised despite the supportive regulatory framework. The main obstacle small scale farmers face to access school feeding markets are insufficient and irregular quality, quantity, and variety of their produce to meet ACE programmes daily requirements (FAO, 2013). According to some sources, despite the efforts in support of local production, medium and big agribusinesses have co-opted the major part of school feeding markets, especially in urban settings (Garáfulic et Al., 2008).

**Box 2: Productive Schools: A learning experience**

The Sustainable School Food Project (Proyecto de alimentación escolar sostenible - PAE-Sostenible) is an example of a fruitful collaboration between Municipalities and partners to link school feeding and local food production within an integrated approach to food and nutrition security.

In 2008, with funding from the European Union, WFP initiated PAE-Sostenible in four departments that contain 80% of Bolivia’s most food-insecure municipalities to develop local food production chains and ensure ACE programmes’ sustainability. The project had two components: Productive Schools, which established greenhouses, gardens, small livestock and irrigation projects to complement food rations and offer learning opportunities to school children; and Local Production Initiatives, a component oriented to local producers and processing companies to boost local food production for school feeding. WFP also provided a breakfast to complement the lunch distributed by municipalities.

The integrated school feeding model successfully promoted the use of traditional foods in school meals and the establishment of local food markets. However, few schools could reach the established nutritional targets, and animal production projects were less successful (WFP, 2009). Capacity development and training activities enabled several municipalities to take over the management and implementation of school feeding.

Based on this success, WFP has adopted this model into its Country Programme 2013-2017 and continues to support ACE projects in three departments. To improve children’s nutrition intake, micronutrient powders (MNPS) are provided. In addition, WFP provides fuel efficient stoves in order to create environmental awareness and prevent smoke inhalation by the people cooking the food. Through work with the ME, the Ministry of Rural Development and Land and partners, it is expected that by 2015 Municipalities will be providing all school rations and whenever possible, the food will be procured from local farmers.

Through a similar approach, until 2013 Project Concern International (PCI) supported school gardens and beekeeping and animal and fish husbandry projects, and purchased processed foods from local associations.

**Policy and Legal Frameworks**

The 2009 Political Constitution and a number of laws and sectorial policies give a strong legal underpinning to school feeding in Bolivia; and frame school feeding as a multi-sectorial strategy for food and nutrition security linked to the education, health and productive sectors (see box 3). However, there is no specific law or policy for school feeding yet, and this has been recognized as an important challenge to support consistent, quality service provision across the country.

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8 Since 2010, the Government has distributed locally produced MNPs for children under 2 as part of the national health insurance system. MNPs typically contain 15 vitamins and minerals.
The Constitution and its norms provide the framework for the Municipalities to fulfil their mandate to promote food and nutrition security. It recognises the right to water, food, education and health, and it lists school feeding among the strategies to support poor children’s access to education (art 82.1). In addition, it establishes that the State has the obligation to guarantee food security and defines integral and sustainable rural development as a fundamental part of State economic policies (Art 405) (Asamblea Constituyente de Bolivia, 2009).

More recently, the 2011 Law 144 of the Productive, Communal, and Agricultural Revolution defines school feeding as an important means to improve school nutrition, access to education, small holder production and food sovereignty (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, 2011). The Government’s promotion of school feeding in its new food sovereignty law will help ensure sustainability. School feeding is also a component of the country’s Patriotic Agenda 2025.

School feeding is also included in sector plans. The education plan includes school feeding among the programmes to increase enrolment and attendance. Its objectives are to promote school retention, and guarantee a minimum adequate food complement and minimum preventive health services to school children. The plan has provisions for the design of oversight and coordination mechanisms to ensure quality (ME, 2010). The Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy Plan links ACE with local economic development and food sovereignty through the support of small farmers’ food production.

While school feeding is well embedded in the existing legal and policy framework, the absence of a specific instrument has been identified as a weakness. In 2001, a Biministerial Resolution was issued to regulate school health and school feeding programme implementation (ME & MoH, 2001); however, it was never applied or enforced. As a response, in 2007, the CONAN Technical Committee and the ME established a multisectorial ACE Working Group to draft an ACE Law project and Decree. The draft Law provides a framework for programme universalization and a multisectorial approach, and seeks to improve programme implementation through minimum standards, complementary interventions (health, agricultural production, and nutritional education) and enhanced monitoring and evaluation. The draft law stipulates that 30% of funds should be used to procure food locally (ME, CT-CONAN, 2012). Both instruments are the result of an intense consultative process with the different state sectors and social organizations.

### Box 3: Legal framework for school feeding (adapted from 2009 diagnosis)

- 2009 Political Constitution
- Agenda 2015
- Law Nº 1551 of Popular Participation (Ley de Participación Popular, 20 April 1994): Increases municipality competencies and makes them co-responsible for education and health services, including the provision of school breakfasts.

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9 The ME and WFP published two documents to inform the ACE Law as part of the 2003 Diagnosis: “Estrategia para la ampliación de la alimentación escolar en Bolivia” and “Plan de ampliación de la alimentación escolar en Bolivia”. The Government of Brazil also provided technical assistance in the preparation of the Law.
• Law Nº 1565 on Education Reform (Ley de Reforma Educativa, 1994): includes among its objectives improving education quality and efficiency and promoting retention as well as promoting health, nutrition and healthy practices.

• Law Nº 2028 of Municipalities (Ley de Municipalidades, October 1999): grants responsibility for school feeding to Municipalities.

• Law Nº 2235 National Dialogue Law (Ley de Dialogo Nacional, 2000): school feeding and school-children transportation are defined as key strategies to support school attendance.

• Act No. 1178 on Governmental Administration and Supervision (Ley SAFCO, 1990): regulates the norms for public tenders and contracts – including food procurement.

• Supreme Decree Nº 27328 on Domestic Procurement (Compro Boliviano, 2003): establishes preferential measures to procure national products and services, especially from micro and small producers.

• Law No.3058 on Hydrocarbons (Ley de Hidrocarburos, 2005) and Supreme Decree Nº 28421: allocate profits from the Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons (IDH) to Municipalities to found social, health and educational programmes.

• Biministerial Resolution Nº 002/00 (Resolución Biministerial, 2000): regulates school health and school feeding programme implementation. It defines nutrition and health objectives including reducing micronutrient deficiency, worm and dental decay prevalence. The Resolution defines all children enrolled in public pre-primary and primary schools as school feeding beneficiaries and establishes norms regarding the ration composition and nutritional content. However, it has never been enforced.

• Supreme Decree No.28667 (2006): modifies and relaunches CONAN

• Supreme Decree Nº 0181 on Basic Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services (Decreto Supremo de Normas Básicas de Contratación de Bienes y Servicios, 28 June, 2009): widens food procurement preferential measures for school feeding and nutrition programmes.

• Law 031 from 19 July 2010 “Ley Marco de Autonomías y Descentralización Andrés Ibañez”: it establishes the types of autonomies, and their rights and obligations. There are 4 autonomies: indigenous (“indigeno originaria campesina”); departmental, municipal, and regional.


• Law No.144 of the Productive, Communal, and Agricultural Revolution (Ley de Revolución Productiva Comunitaria Agropecuaria, June 2011): calls for expanding coverage to every pre-primary, primary and secondary public school in the country and for the participation of rural and indigenous communities in the provision of food at the local level.

**Institutional Arrangements**

School feeding in Bolivia is formally under the mandate of the Ministry of Education. However, programme management and implementation is fully decentralised. For many years the programme did not have a functional entity at central level and the Ministry of Education’s regulatory role was minimal. Over the last five years, the institutional framework at the central level has been progressively consolidated as part of government’s effort to strengthen the programmes for food and nutrition security.

ACE is guided and implemented with the collaboration of different sectors, which promotes a multisectoral approach. Since 2007, The CT-CONAN ACE Working Group (Mesa de trabajo) has guided and coordinated the programme. It is led by the ME and composed by representatives of the
Ministries of health and sports, productive development, water and environment, justice, and rural development and lands. Its objective is to define the lines of intervention of each sector.

In 2008, an ACE team was set up as part of the “Intracultural, Intercultural and Pluri linguism Unit” in the Ministry of Education with the mandate to work on school feeding, school gardens and student’s nutrition. The team contributed to drafting the ACE Law and is elaborating the first ACE National Plan with four expected results:

- Improved food attitudes, knowledge and practices among school children and improved ACE quality;
- Improved production, conservation, processing and marketing conditions for OECCs, and micro and small enterprises linked to ACE;
- Multisectorial coordination mechanisms, and management and accountability mechanisms for ACE, with provisions for the participation of civil society and social organizations, are established;
- A nutritional surveillance system and an ACE quality assurance system are established.

Autonomous municipal governments are responsible for providing school feeding services, from planning and funding to implementing and monitoring. They establish their own implementation and administrative processes. Some Municipalities have created specific units to manage and implement their ACE programme or have assigned a technician with its supervision. Small and rural municipalities have generally started their programmes more recently and some of them have only one person assigned to school feeding. Some municipalities are supported by national and international NGOs and the Word Food Programme to operate their programmes. Partners provide funding for food commodities (see section on Funding and Budgeting below) and technical assistance so that Municipalities can eventually manage and finance the programme on their own. Three other important actors at the local level are the school staff and community members, who participate actively in the programme management at the school level through Social Community Education Councils and the OECs that supply the programme. Municipalities work closely with the Community Education Councils and are responsible for training them.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Despite the provisions of the Biministerial Resolution of 2001, in practice there is no national system to monitor and evaluate school feeding. The Education Management Information System provides only coverage data by Department, Municipality and grade. Some municipalities have allocated staff and resources to this function, such as the Municipality of La Paz (see Box 2), but most Municipalities do not monitor food utilisation once it is delivered to schools. International organizations and NGOs monitor and evaluate their programmes. The ME has initiated the incorporation of ACE indicators into the Education Information Service with support from WFP, but this task has not been completed.

However, Municipalities are accountable on the use of resources. All institutions, at the central, department and local levels must report the budget execution every year to the Ministry of Economy. The Community Education Councils are responsible for controlling the quality and safety of the food distributed at school.

**Funding and Budgeting**

Municipalities are in charge of mobilising and managing resources for school feeding. ACE is funded through 3 main sources: municipalities’ own resources, including the funds from the direct tax on hydrocarbons (IDH), Departmental Governments’ resources, and international organizations and NGOs funding.
Municipal governments are the main funding source: 53% of them funded the programmes exclusively with their own resources, mainly received from the IDH (ME and WFP, 2009). The participation of Departmental Governments is relatively new: while none funded school feeding in 2003, in 2008 three of them were supporting the programme in 48 municipalities (14%) in Santa Cruz, Oruro and Tarija Departments. NGOs and international organizations supported 82 municipalities in the country (25%).

![ACE programmes' main funding source by Municipality, 2008](image)

An analysis of Municipal Annual Operational Plans showed that the increase in the number of beneficiaries was accompanied by a significant increase in the funding allocated to school feeding – from 100 million in 2003 to 360 million Bs in 2008 (US$ 51.3 million). 81% of these funds came from the IDH, a critical funding source for school feeding in Bolivia (ME & WFP 2009). The central government transfers IDH resources to municipalities based on population figures, and municipalities must report to the Ministry of Economy and Finance how they have invested the funds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Increase (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of beneficiaries</td>
<td>1.273.909</td>
<td>1.927.985</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget allocated (Bs.)</td>
<td>100 millions</td>
<td>360 millions</td>
<td>260%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget allocated (USD)</td>
<td>12.8 millions</td>
<td>51.3 millions</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Feeding Diagnosis, 2003 and 2009.

However, Municipal AOPs did not fully reflect actual school feeding budgets, as they did not always include the funds from development partners, NGOs and Departmental Governments. In addition, in many rural areas children’s parents contribute significant resources in kind, cash and labour to complement the food provided to their children. Today, when the programmes are implemented in collaboration with NGOs or international agencies, both partners’ resources and Municipality ones have to be registered in the AOPs, otherwise the Ministry of Economy and Finance will not disburse the funds.

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10 Data compiled from Municipal Annual Operational Plans. Other funding sources for school feeding reflected in AOPs include: HIPC I & II, Community participation, Own resources, Departmental Government, Law 3038, Royalties, Donations and external funding, WFP, USAID, Rec. CONCU, Rec. APRA.
funds. This has proved to be a good practice to formalise respective obligations, a necessary step towards sustainability.

The average cost of school feeding rations varies greatly. A study in a sample of 71 municipalities estimated the average daily cost of breakfast at Bs 1.0, ranging from 0.34 to 5 in 2008 (Garafulic & Al, 2008). These estimates did not include hidden costs related to voluntary labour, or logistics, storage and handling, technical assistance and complementary programs.

**Community Participation**

Communities play a pivotal role through the Social Community Education Councils: they manage and run ACE programmes in schools and constitute an essential community control mechanism. Community Education Councils organise school meals preparation and distribution; the parents or the people designated by the Councils prepare the meals. Training courses have been developed for them. In some cases, the community also takes part in identification of food suppliers and contributes to ensure that small producers and minorities participate in the supply of ACE programmes. Communities also contribute resources: in rural areas, parents provide fresh vegetables and other perishables, kitchen equipment and cooking fuel (gas or wood). In some schools they also pay a financial contribution to cover cooks’ salaries and the purchase of other items such as sugar, meat, etc.

Communities are also involved in programme design through the consultations on municipal Annual Operational Plans. Finally, Bolivia’s strong community organization tradition and experience – common to Andean countries – has fostered social control of programmes such as ACE: Community Education Councils control municipalities’ execution of financial resources.

Social Community Education Councils are exclusively composed of parents and community members and function on a voluntary basis, with no remuneration.

**Evidence of Programme Impact**

ACE programmes have never been formally evaluated. According to the education management information system, dropout rates in primary education (grades 1 to 5) decreased between 2006 and 2009 from 5.3% to 2.5%. While this significant progress cannot be attributed to ACE alone (other programmes such as school transport or the Bono Juancito Pinto also positively impacted the indicator), dropout reduction was greater in the municipalities where ACE was provided (Narvaez, 2012).

Some municipalities reported a decrease in anemia prevalence among school children as a result of ACE through the provision of iron fortified foods\(^\text{11}\) and the ferrous sulphate supplementation campaign\(^\text{12}\). This is the case for La Paz (ME & WFP 2009). However there is no evidence to support these conclusions. For the time being, there is no clear evidence of the impact of different initiatives and policies on micro and small producers either.

Beneficiary satisfaction information is available from the 2008-2009 Diagnosis (ME & WFP, 2009). A large majority of school children accepted and were satisfied with the food provided in school. However, there was dissatisfaction with biscuits and sweet p`orridges. Beneficiaries expressed concern

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\(^{11}\) Through Supreme Decree 24420 of November 27, 1996, the Government of Bolivia mandates the national industry to fortify wheat flour with iron. In 2011, MoH and Ministry of Productive Development and Plural Economy issued a Bi Ministerial Resolution (0006) ratifying the SD and establishing fortification technical norms.

\(^{12}\) MoH periodically launches supplementation campaigns for school-aged children.
about food safety, including product shelf life and food preparation hygiene conditions, and they requested the construction of kitchen and dining spaces.

WFP supported PAE-Sostenible (see box 2) was evaluated twice (WFP 2009; EU, 2010). WFP school feeding operations were also evaluated as part of the Country Programme 2008-2012 Mid Term review (WFP 2011).

**Discussion and Conclusions**

In Bolivia, the highly decentralised management of ACE programmes empowers local institutions and communities, who have progressively taken ownership for school feeding. Even if school feeding provision is not mandatory, almost all Municipalities in the country are providing food to their school children. This is a major achievement: through ACE programmes, schools directors and teachers, local authorities, parents, farmers and food suppliers and partners have joined efforts to provide school meals to more than 2.1 million Bolivian school children. The active participation of the community in rural areas through Social Community Education Councils has been determinant in the programmes’ effective implementation. Municipalities have also counted on the support of organizations with experience in large scale food procurement and distribution and adapted their interventions to Bolivia’s norms and priorities.

The absence of a unified normative framework at central level has led to a dispersion of initiatives and uneven implementation. Another challenge in the past has been the limited regulatory and coordinating role of the Ministry of Education, the lead institution for school feeding in Bolivia. Finally, management and financial capacity at municipal level varies greatly. These factors combined have generated problems in implementation leading to low effective coverage rates as rations are often not provided on every school day. Food safety is a recurring issue and measures are required to ensure safety and hygiene of food storage, handling and preparation. Lastly, there is no unified monitoring and evaluation system at the national level. It is important to mention that despite the challenges, good management practices exist, such as the MAECH and the City of La Paz urban programme. Even if the programmes’ impact has never been formally evaluated, the two diagnosis of 2003 and 2008-2009 and other studies suggest that they have contributed to reducing dropout and school children micronutrient deficiencies when properly implemented.

ACE is also exemplary for its integration in the country’s food and nutrition security framework and resulting efforts to link the programme to local economic development. School based productive projects such as school gardens, greenhouses and nurseries fostered local development and provided a complement to the rations distributed by Municipalities. Also, through the establishment of a secure market, ACE programs promoted the cultivation of crops that later on could be bought by municipalities (i.e. PAE-S experience). There are a number of opportunities in Bolivia to further strengthen the links with local, small scale producers: the agricultural potential, a supportive regulatory environment and small holder friendly procurement processes and a number of successful experiences, both in urban and rural areas, which can be a model for other municipalities. However, a number of constraints need to be addressed: local farmers still face challenges to access ACE markets and supply regularly the programme with foods of adequate quality and quantity. Support from the public sector and others to local producers is required so that they will be able to produce and market sufficient quality produce.

To address the important challenges faced by Municipalities and other stakeholders, the government has taken important steps since 2007 to institutionalize school feeding at the national level and guide implementation. The adoption of the draft ACE Law, which by now has been submitted to Parliament
for discussion, would support the sustainability and universalization of the programme and further promote local purchases. In the meantime, the National Action Plan under preparation and the new ME Guidelines will provide an initial reference framework to guide implementation and coordinate efforts.

**Abbreviations and Acronyms**
- ACE: Complementary School Feeding (*Alimentación Complementaria Escolar*)
- AOP: Annual Operational Plan
- CONAN: Food and Nutrition National Council (*Consejo Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición*)
- FAO: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
- HIP: Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
- IDH: Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons
- MAECH: School Feeding Mancomunidad of Chuquisaca (*Mancomunidad de Alimentación Escolar de Chuquisaca*)
- ME: Ministry of Education (*Ministerio de Educación*)
- MoH: Ministry of Health and Sports (*Ministerio de Salud y Deportes*)
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- OECC: Peasant and Community Organizations (*organizaciones económicas comunitarias y campesinas*)
- WFP: World Food Programme (*Programa Mundial de Alimentos*)
- SENASAG: National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Service

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The main sources are the two technical diagnosis of school feeding in Bolivia conducted in 2003 and 2008 by the Ministry of Education with technical support from the WFP (ME & WFP, 2007; ME & WFP, 2009). The analysis draws on a draft report prepared by the World Bank office in Peru as part of a technical assistance project with guidance from Alessandra Marini (World Bank) and Carmen Burbano (WFP).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Feeding Modality</th>
<th>Sample Menus</th>
<th>Examples of Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ready-to-consume breakfast, Elaborated and provided by private companies</td>
<td>Milk with oat, chocolate milk, yogurt, milk-based drink Cereal and pulses bread, empanada integral, banana. Yogurt, fruit juice, soy milk, milk with oat. Banana, cheese bun, cañahua bun.</td>
<td>Cities of La Paz Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Sucre El Alto, Laja, Machacamarca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple breakfast: same ration every day</td>
<td>Fortified milk and fortified bread</td>
<td>Tiwanacu, Puerto Acosta, Taraco, El Alto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed break-fast: some days ready-to-consume, some days cooked at school.</td>
<td>Hot meals: api, milk with oat, quinoa or rice, tojorí. Cold ready-to-consume rations: yogurt, fruit juices fruit, bread and biscuits.</td>
<td>Cities of Oruro and Potosí, Tiquipaya, Montero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternated: breakfast or lunch depending on the days, cooked at school.</td>
<td>Breakfast: Tojorí, milk with oats, egg and fried potatoes, milk and bread Lunch: different menus based on the commodities provided by the Municipality (powder milk, sugar, rice, pasta, wheat flour, oil, tojorí…), complemented by fresh products provided by the community.</td>
<td>Yotala, Sucre – rural area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast and lunch daily, cooked at school.</td>
<td>Several menus based on the commodities received from partners (wheat flour, api, salt, sugar, oil, local processed products) complemented by fresh products provided by the community and from school based food production products. Several menus based on the commodities received from Departmental Governments complemented by fresh products provided by the community.</td>
<td>San Lucas, Poroma, Presto, Icla, Mojocoya, Yunchará, Villazón, Tupiza Cotagaita, Yitchi, Atocha, Uyuni, Tomave, Colcha K, San Pedro de Quemes, Lípa, Tahuí, Mojinete, San Antonio, San Pablo El Trigal, Pampa Grande, Samaipata, Quiruisillas, Mairana, Comarapa, Saipina, Charagua, Camiri, Lagunaillas, Cabezas, Ascensión de Guarayos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternated, outsourced: Breakfast or lunch depending on the days, elaborated by suppliers, micro-enterprises or parents, based on reference menus.</td>
<td>Reference menu: special bread, milk with oat, chocolate, fruit salad, tarhui sticks, rice bread. Municipalities supported by the SADEL project. Rice porridge with chocolate, rice bread, Maize chicha, home-made bread, majadito…</td>
<td>Cobija, San Lorenzo, Bolpebra, Filadelfia, Gonzalo Moreno Rurrenabaque, Reyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternated: breakfast, lunch or snack depending on the days. Ready to consume foods or meals cooked in school, depending on the days.</td>
<td>Wide diversity of menus defined by a school feeding committee. Can include ready to consume processed products, hot meals, or sandwiches depending on the days.</td>
<td>Tarija city and rural areas San Lorenzo, Padcaya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>