

School Meal Report – January to October 2008



During this school year RSVP served 18,208 meals to pupils studying in classes 5A, 5B and 6. Detailed statistics are available on our website; www.rsvpcharity.org.uk.

The aim was to provide at least one good meal a day to children coming from poor background in order to help them concentrate and attend school better.

Figure 1: Pupils (n=123) having a meal. Not all of them seen.

How is the data collected?

Three teachers accompany pupils to the caterer's premises and record the number of pupils who are present, independently of each other. Their other task is to ensure good discipline in the restaurant.

Since the caterer has a fixed order for 123 children, she caters for this number daily except when an advance notice is given about a sick child or public holiday. Early February 2008, she was asked to count the total pupils present in order to independently verify the teachers' figures.

So, the data is collected daily by 3 teachers and caterer independently of one another. The data is then submitted to the Rwandan Coordinator through the head teacher. Before issuing a cheque to the caterer, RSVP compares the above data with the school register, which is compulsorily held by each teacher for the ministry of education.

A grey area has already been detected. In theory, a child could just turn up for meals at 12.30 and miss the morning register. Alternatively, a child could go home after a meal and be absent for the evening's register. Interestingly, those instances have so far been negligible. For example, on 30th of April 2008, there were 2 more children in the dining hall than P6 School's register; whereas on 28 and 29 Feb 2008 the school register for P5B had 1 more present at school than in the restaurant.

What does the data show?

RSVP served 18,208 meals to pupils and 471 to teachers between January and October 2008.

489 meals were unclaimed; this represents an average annual absenteeism rate of 2.85%. Absenteeism figures include permitted, non-permitted and sickness absences.

The unit meal price rose from 300 to 360 RFW from 30th April 2008. With the fluctuation of exchange rates, just wonder whether we should trade in US \$. With today's rate, a meal would cost about £0.43.

Change to the Education System for 2009

A radical change is to be implemented to the education system in Rwanda this January: Pupils will now study half day. That is either morning or afternoon.

This will be achieved by reducing the number of lessons listed on the curriculum and merging some others.

- Advantages: The one known so far is smaller class sizes particularly in the lower classes (1, 2 and 3).
- Anticipated challenges: Will the children lapse into antisocial behaviour now that they spend longer time out in the community? Will the pupils go with their parents to the fields to work and then fail to turn up for school on time, if at all. (Please note very few people have watches!).

From January 2010 there will no longer be a National Test at the end of P6 (age 12). It is postponed until 15 (class 9). This means that children will remain in education till the age of 15 which is good news. However this will pose new challenges as the first three years of secondary education, which has previously taken place in boarding schools, will now take place locally and so the Bugarama primary school will have to address issues of staffing, curriculum books, study facilities, etc.

These changes were announced in the last week and so RSVP is currently reviewing our plans for 2009 onwards, to meet these new challenges.