

**ORIENTATION ORGANISED FOR COOKS AND CHIEF COOKS OF THE
GHANA SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM AT THE EFFIDUASE ROMAN
CATHOLIC CONFERENCE ROOM BY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION UNIT ON THE 17TH
NOVEMBER, 2022 FOURTH QUARTER**

BACKGROUND.

The Ghana School Feeding Program is one of the cardinal pillars of government's social intervention programs. This government flagship initiative was introduced in 2004. The objective of the program is to provide the beneficiary basic school children one nutritious meal a day to enhance teaching and learning. This is to ensure that children stay in school till the closing time and do not leave school during instructional hours in order to look for food.

It is also to ease the burden of parents and promote local economic development as most of the food items are produced locally.

All caterers and chief cooks from the 45 schools benefitting from the program within the Municipality participated. In attendance there were 71 caterers and chief cooks and 5 facilitators.

The training exercise was conducted to enable the desk officer familiarize himself with the conditions in the beneficiary schools, enlighten caterers about the preparation balanced food to pupils and the disease prevention measures and also have the opportunity to discuss challenges faced by caterers, head teachers and management of the schools as far as the program is concerned and report for necessary action.

The training session commenced at exactly 10:29 am after a short prayer by Mr Prince Osei Frimpong. Afterwards, the SHEP coordinator, gave a brief insight into the school feeding program. She further cautioned the new entrants (caterers) to the GSFP to update the Development Planning officer and other core members who handle the program on their credentials for payment to be effected without any concern.

In the course of the training, the Senior district Planning Officer took over from the SHEP Coordinator and begun her session on the General overview of the GSFP and how beneficial it has been to the district. She commended the Caterers for their efforts in the course of the training after admitting that, the monies allotted to them had not been enough but the quality of food being served was at an appreciable level.

1.1 EDUCATION ON FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE

In order to maintain high hygienic standard in the food preparation process, one must know what is food? Which he defined “*as any nutritious substance that people eat or drink in order to maintain life and growth*”. The District Environmental Health Officer (DEHO) madam Mahama Meiri, cautioned the caterers who do not under medical screening should not be allowed to prepare food. she added that food must be prepared under hygienic condition at all times. In the light of reducing the possibility of food borne diseases and food poisoning, which could lead to death and closure of schools, the DEHO pleaded with caterers to adhere to positive food handling measures. He further pleaded with the caterers to observe the following;

- Maintain high hygienic standard
- Using portable water for food preparation
- Keeping one's environment clean at all time
- Cover food and serve food hot
- Personal hygiene (keeping finger nails short, cover hair,)
- Wear protective clothing (Apron)
- Ensure regular hand washing and frequent rubbing of hand with alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Ensure the presence of first Aid box
- Be screened and declared fit by a certified Medical Officer
- Ensure effective washing of vegetables before use
- Avoid adding over-left food to newly prepared ones
- Avoid cooking in the open
- Avoid serving noodles to pupils
- Avoid the use of unapproved salt
- And the need for every caterer to get a fire extinguisher in his or her kitchen.

The purpose of the protective clothing is not only to protect the food handler from injury but to also protect the food from contamination. The DEHO explained that it is common among food handlers from not adhering to precautionary measures in food preparation. In this light, the caterers were directed to desist from that for their own safety and not poisoning the foods for the pupils. Additionally, first aid box and fire extinguishers were other items that, the

DEHO hammered on to be made readily available in kitchens in order to curb any possible accident that might sprung-out.

After the DEHO was done, the SHEP Coordinator took over and laid emphasis on portion control. The main essence for the program is to provide the beneficiary basic school children one nutritious meal a day to enhance teaching and learning. It is inevitable that *a hungry man is an angry man*. In a bid to make the government's flagship program beneficial to the pupils, the SHEP coordinator gave an insight into the portion of food that is supposed to be served to the pupils. Other than that, it will be an exercise in futility since the beneficiaries may not in any way benefit from the initiative.

1.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Furthermore, on the need to manage the little resources amassed by caterers, the finance officer advised caterers on financial management. Since most caterers or food handlers are in the habit of purchasing food items in bits, he advised that it makes little economic sense to purchase items in bits since bulky purchasing comes with steady monetary valuation. Additionally, food handlers are to verify from different places and markets on the pricing of commodities. This in one way or the other bridge the incessant exploitation that they may be faced with, hence, saving money from a possible loss. As part of normalcy, the habit of saving and floating shares has not been a routine activity for us. In this case, the finance officer for the district advised caterers to make extensive use of their scarce resources by floating shares in order to make the most out of the little resources they have.

1.3 MENU PLANNING

After the presentation by all resource persons, the Desk officer introduced a proposed food timetable for the district. In doing so, the caterers suggested the commonest foods in their locality and the food illustrated in the table below were agreed on. She stressed that, the food must always be balanced in diet.

S/N	FOOD	TYPE	DAYS
1	RICE	JOLLOF	
		PLAIN RICE	
		WAKYE	
2	KENKEY (GA)	-	
3	AMPESIE	-	

4	BEANS	-	
5	OMO TUO	-	
6	BANKU	-	

In a nutshell, the DCE, HON Osei Adiyaah briefed Caterers that, they are aware of the efforts being put in place by caterers to save lives and promote teaching and learning. Even though, the monies allotted to them are woefully inadequate but he commended the caterers for their dedication and assiduousness to ensure the implementation of the GSFP. Afterwards, he also asked the caterers to air their grievances concerning the program and below were some of the problems sampled from the Caterers grievances.

- They proposed increment in the amount of money allotted per head (from Ghc 1 to Ghc2)
- Delay and irregular payment plans.
- Teachers complaining of portion of food given to them.

After all these complaints have been registered, the training session came to a close at 1:46pm after a prayer by Mr. Prince Osei Frimpong.

Annex: Pictures Of the Training for Cooks and Chief Cooks, below.



MAHAMA MEIRI

DISTRICT. ENVIRONMENTAL. HEALTH OFFICER