

## Assessing Operational Requirements for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) in the National School Nutrition Programme in South Africa

Jugen M Manyatsa<sup>1</sup>, Ryk Lues<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mangosuthu University of Technology, Durban, South Africa. <sup>2</sup>Central University of Technology, Bloemfontein, South Africa

### Abstract

While the aim of the National School Nutrition Programme is to provide the learners with meals, it is also obliged to provide nutritious and safe food. Compliance with hygiene standards and good manufacturing practices (GMP) is key and should be included in the pre-requisite programmes (PRPs). The main aim of this study was to determine whether GMPs are adhered to at the schools participating in the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) in the Motheo District of the Mangaung Metropole, South Africa. This descriptive study was conducted among 98 randomly selected quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools participating in the NSNP. The survey was performed using a structured checklist based on the South African National Standards requirements for food safety management, PRPs, and monitoring procedures. While the majority of participating schools showed evidence of compliance in most categories, including checks for conformance, identifiable product materials during storage, the release of food products by authorized personnel, usage of the appropriate containers used for the storage of food and adherence to the first-in-first-out (FIFO) rule, there were revealed as areas of non-adherence leaving feeding programme vulnerable to cases of foodborne diseases. Non-conformities relating to suppliers of the food products among the majority of the schools participating in NSNP. In addition, as much as all the food products stored had approved labelling, there is less control over the suppliers. Unfortunately, the majority of the schools are struggling with good storage practices of food products. Some of the storage practices might encourage either cross-contamination or decrease food product quality. Evaluating suppliers and monitoring the incoming products is critical in ensuring safe products within the schools. Suppliers play a major role in the food chain; therefore, their credibility is very important in ensuring the quality of food. On the other hand, the storage of food products needs to be monitored and documented. Among others, concomitant storage of food and chemicals must be avoided.