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EVALUATION REPORTS

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SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT – TIMOR-LESTE COUNTRY PORTFOLIO (2008–2012)

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Timor-Leste country portfolio evaluation covered the period from 2008 to 2012, with a focus on: i) portfolio alignment and strategic positioning; ii) factors that drove WFP's strategic decision-making, including its intended hand-over and exit by the end of 2013; and iii) performance and results. The portfolio comprised three main operations and included emergency relief, food for work/assets, school feeding, mother-and-child health and nutrition, and capacity development.

Timor-Leste, which achieved independence in 1999, is a young and fragile state with a population of 1.2 million people. It has experienced rapid economic growth since the mid-2000s, based mainly on the exploitation of offshore oil, and now qualifies as a middle-income country. However, the country's educational and institutional infrastructure faces severe capacity constraints, and social indicators are very poor. Nutrition indicators are among the most severe in the world. Following significant progress in primary education, the net enrolment rate increased to more than 90 percent in 2011. Recent improvements in health indicators reflect well on government efforts to ensure nationwide coverage of primary health-care services.

The evaluation found that the portfolio was relevant and well aligned with the needs of women and men, as well as with government policies and priorities. WFP's strategy of supporting and working through government systems for the delivery of basic services was highly appropriate given the fragility of Timor-Leste.

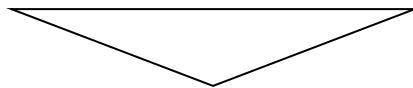
The Timor-Leste country office was commendably proactive, innovative, diligent and adaptable, pragmatically adjusting operations to maximize their contribution to results. However, monitoring of the programme was very weak. Food-for-work/assets activities, emergency support and the school feeding programme were broadly effective. There was strong evidence that the food component of the mother-and-child health and nutrition programme provided an incentive for attending health services, but much less evidence that it achieved its primary aim of improving the nutritional status of intended beneficiaries.

There were some notable successes in capacity development, but sustainable improvements across service delivery sectors remain an enormous challenge. The Ministry of Education assumed full responsibility for the school feeding programme and changed the school feeding strategy without WFP involvement. Systematic hand-over of the mother-and-child health and nutrition programme to the Ministry of Health started in November 2012, but completion before the country programme's current end date of December 2013 is not feasible.

All the main operations were underfunded – obtaining about half of the requirements – which negatively affected achievements. The number of donors declined over time, but the Timor-Leste Government became a significant contributor to the local production of a fortified blended food known as *Timor Vita*.

The evaluation made seven recommendations, addressing the immediate transition strategy for Timor-Leste; hand-over/exit strategies for WFP; and further strategy development for mother-and-child health and nutrition, local production of fortified blended food, school feeding, capacity development and gender mainstreaming.

DRAFT DECISION*



The Board takes note of “Summary Evaluation Report – Timor-Leste Country Portfolio (2008–2012)” (WFP/EB.A/2013/7-D) and the management response in WFP/EB.A/2013/7-D/Add.1, and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

EVALUATION FEATURES

1. This country portfolio evaluation covers operations in Timor-Leste from 2008 to 2012. Serving the dual objectives of accountability and learning, the evaluation considered all WFP activities in the country focussing on: i) portfolio alignment and strategic positioning; ii) factors that drove WFP's strategic decision-making, including its intended hand-over and exit by the end of 2013; and iii) performance and results. The Timor-Leste country office was selected because it has a small WFP portfolio and, unusually, the current country programme (CP) anticipates withdrawal at the end of 2013, following the hand-over of all WFP activities to the Government. The evaluation, therefore, gave special attention to capacity development and transition, and drew lessons that may have wider relevance for WFP. In view of the proposed exit date, the country office and regional bureau requested presentation of the evaluation at the 2013 Annual Session of the Executive Board.
2. The evaluation was conducted by an independent team of one national and three international consultants, with fieldwork in Timor-Leste during November and December 2012. Assessment of capacity development is inherently difficult, and the evaluation was also challenged by a scarcity of reliable quantitative data. In particular, WFP did no post-distribution monitoring and there were virtually no outcome data for the supplementary feeding programmes. The team augmented available data and document review with extensive interviews and focus group discussions¹ in three districts. It drew on international evidence about the effectiveness of nutrition and capacity development interventions. A 2009 evaluation of the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO)² provided a valuable assessment of relief, food-for-work/assets (FFW/A) and school feeding components.

CONTEXT

3. Timor-Leste is a young and fragile state with 1.2 million inhabitants. After four centuries as a Portuguese colony and 25 years of Indonesian occupation, in 1999 its people voted for independence, which arrived in 2002, after a period of United Nations administration. Following further turmoil in 2006, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste provided administrative support and police services, withdrawing in 2012 after successful national and local elections. Throughout the evaluation period, Timor-Leste was seeking to establish and consolidate the institutions of a functioning state. The Government is prominent among the G7+ group of fragile states seeking aid relationships that are appropriate to their special circumstances.
4. The prevalence of undernutrition in Timor-Leste is among the highest in the world (see Table 1). Between 2003 and 2009, demographic and health surveys (DHS) levels of stunting and wasting rose, and underweight rates did not improve significantly (see Table 2). One gender dimension is the intergenerational effect of small mothers giving birth to small babies, but the full gender dimensions of undernutrition are not well

¹ More than 100 key informant interviews and seven focus group discussions were conducted: two men-only, three women-only and two mixed.

² WFP/EB.A/2010/7-E.

understood.³ Indicators are worse in some districts than others, but undernutrition is a serious problem countrywide, including in urban settings. Timor-Leste registers 27.3 in the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) Global Hunger Index 2012, putting it into the second-worst category of "alarming".

TABLE 1: INTERNATIONAL RANKING ON NUTRITION INDICATORS					
Stunting (%)		Underweight (%)		Wasting (%)	
Afghanistan	59.3	Timor-Leste	45.3	Djibouti	26
Burundi	57.7	India	43.5	Sudan	21
Timor-Leste	57.7	Yemen	43.1	India	20
Yemen	57.7	Bangladesh	41.3	Timor-Leste	18.9
Niger	54.8	Niger	39.9	Bangladesh	17.5

Note: Five countries with the highest severity in each category.

Source: World Health Organization, 2012.

TABLE 2: NUTRITION INDICATORS, 2003 AND 2009			
DHS survey year	Stunting (height-for-age, %)	Underweight (weight-for-age, %)	Wasting (weight-for-height, %)
2003	49.4	45.8	12.4
2009	57.7	45.3	18.9

Sources: Government of Timor-Leste, 2004, 2010.

5. The most recent comprehensive food security and living standards surveys were in 2006 and 2007. At the national level, based on food access and dietary diversity indicators, WFP⁴ assessed 20 percent of households as food-insecure, 23 percent as highly vulnerable, 21 percent as moderately vulnerable, and 36 percent as food-secure with severe stress on food availability during the lean season. Analyses show very little variance in undernutrition between food-secure and food-insecure groups, indicating that the causes of chronic undernutrition are complex, with traditional beliefs and nutrition practices playing a role alongside such factors as water, sanitation and caring practices.
6. However, surveys show substantial improvements in health indicators (see Table 3), reflecting well on government efforts to ensure nationwide coverage of primary health care services, with clinics and health posts augmented by mobile monthly clinics known as Integrated Health Services at the Community Level (*Serviço Integrado da Saúde Comunitária – SISCa*).

³ Recent analysis of 2009 DHS data found that throughout the country boys were significantly more likely to be stunted than girls, but this appears to be a novel finding that needs more investigation. UNICEF, 2011. *Determinants of Chronic Undernutrition among Under-Five Children*. Draft.

⁴ WFP, 2006. *Timor-Leste: Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment*. Rome.

TABLE 3: HEALTH INDICATORS, 2003 AND 2009

Indicators	DHS 2003	DHS 2009
Total fertility rate	7.8	5.7
Contraceptive prevalence rate (%)	10	20
Maternal mortality rate	420–800/100 000	557/100 000
Neonatal mortality rate	42/1 000	33/1 000
Infant mortality rate	60/1 000	44/1 000
Under-5 mortality rate	107/1 000	83/1 000
% of children 12–23 months immunized against DPT3	51	79

Note: DTP3 = diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus.

Source: Government of Timor-Leste, 2010.

7. Timor-Leste has experienced rapid economic growth, mainly from the exploitation of offshore oil. Based on per capita gross national income, Timor-Leste now qualifies as a middle-income country, with rapid growth in government revenue and expenditures. By law, oil revenues are kept in a petroleum fund, from which only a sustainable level of income may be allocated to support the annual budget. Stability and economic growth are making it more difficult to attract international aid, although the country faces substantial educational and institutional capacity constraints, and social indicators – including those for health and nutrition – are very poor. Timor-Leste ranked 147 out of 187 countries in the 2011 Human Development Index. Significant progress in primary education led to an increase in the net enrolment rate from 68 percent to more than 90 percent between 2004/2005 and 2010/2011. The gender balance is fairly even for primary education, but becomes progressively less so at higher levels of education. At least 10 percent of the population benefits from cash transfer programmes targeting vulnerable groups.⁵
8. International aid in 2012 financed about 10 percent (US\$190 million) of the government budget and was dwarfed by oil revenues; aid flows remain important for the technical and institutional support they provide as much as for their financial input.

WFP Portfolio and Strategy

9. As shown in Table 4, the portfolio comprised three main operations, with a total planned budget of US\$75.4 million, of which US\$38.6 million was contributed: a PRRO from 2008; a special operation (SO) from 2009, focusing on capacity development; and a CP begun in 2011 and expected to finish in 2013. Smaller grants and trust funds contributed a further US\$3.4 million to the portfolio, and WFP participated in two joint United Nations programmes addressing nutrition and food security. As shown in Table 5, the annual average of 312,428 beneficiaries – of whom 51 percent were women/girls – receiving assistance under the PRRO declined to 48,542, with 66 percent women/girls under the CP. Figure 1 shows the shares of beneficiaries by activity, with school feeding (education) accounting for three quarters and MCHN (nutrition) almost one fifth of the total.

⁵ Robles, Andrea, 2011. *Timor-Leste: Innovative Approaches for Developing Effectiveness of Safety Nets*. World Bank, Washington.

TABLE 4: COUNTRY PORTFOLIO BY PROGRAMME CATEGORY, 2008–2012

	Number of operations	Requirements (US\$ millions)	Share of requirement (%)	Actual received* (US\$ millions)	Received as % of requirement
CP 200185**	1	22.5	30	12.3	55
PRRO 103881	1	50.9	68	25.1	49
SO 107790	1	2.0	3	1.2	59
TOTAL	3	75.4	100	38.6	51

Sources: WFP database, resource situations (4 March 2012 and 10 February 2013), standard project reports.

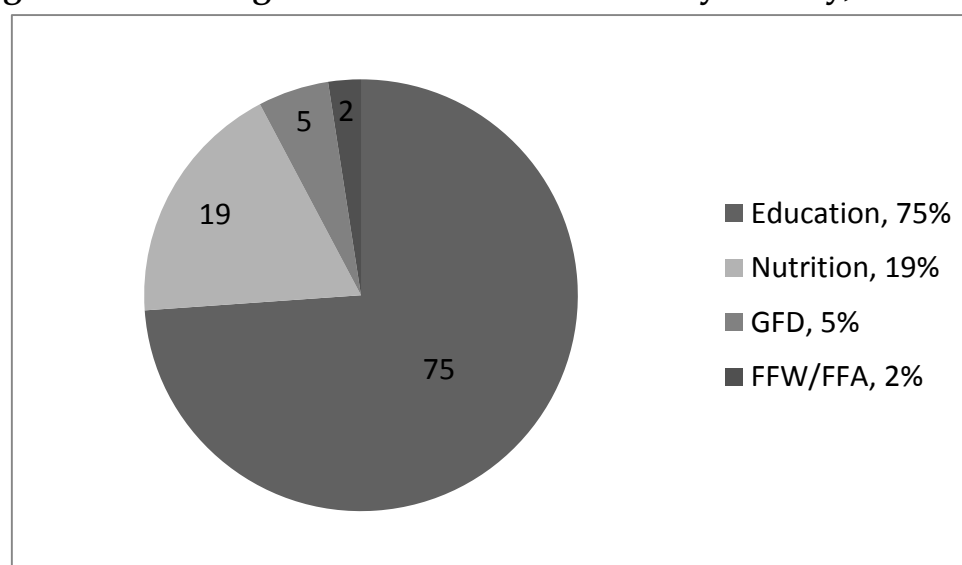
* These figures take into account the carry-over.

** The project is ongoing, so figures are subject to change; requirement is until December 2013.

TABLE 5: BENEFICIARIES BY PROGRAMME CATEGORY

Operation	Timeframe	Annual average			
		Planned		Actual	
		Men/boys	Women/girls	Men/boys	Women/girls
CP 200185	Sept. 2011–Dec. 2012	25 500	49 500	16 492	32 050
		75 000		48 542	
PRRO 103881	Sept. 2008–Aug. 2011	183 205	193 345	153 524	158 904
		376 550		312 428	

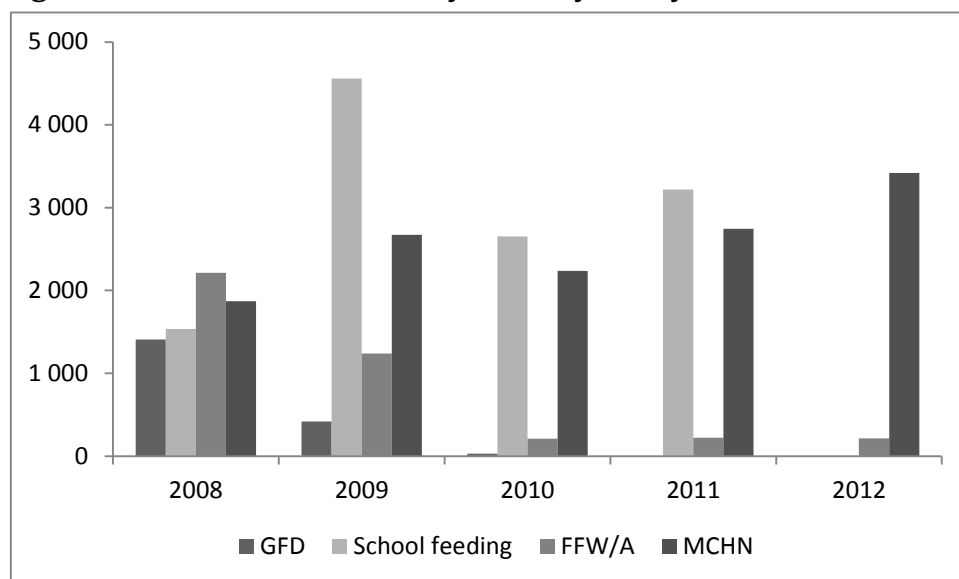
Source: WFP.

Figure 1: Percentage of beneficiaries (actual) by activity, 2008–2012

Source: WFP.

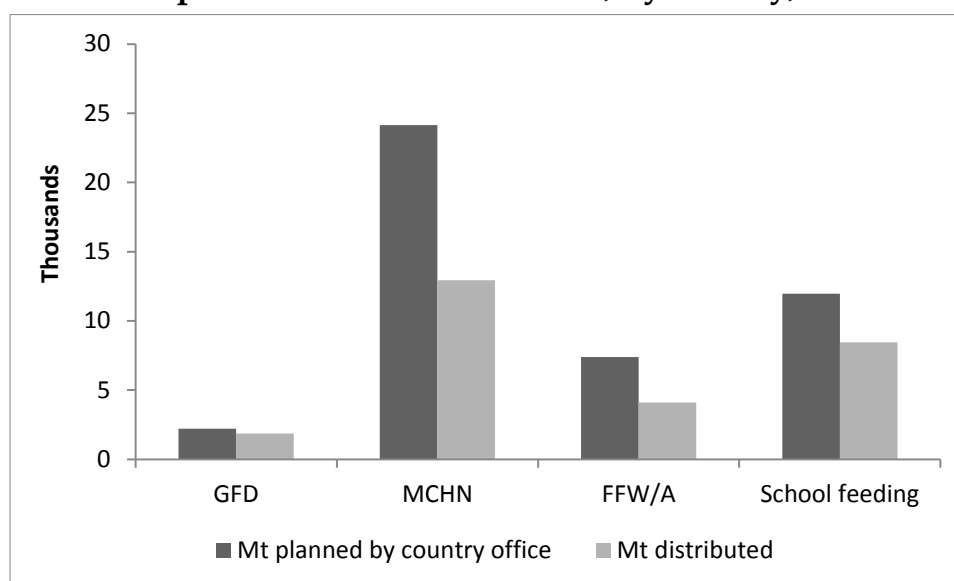
10. As Table 4 shows, all the main operations were substantially underfunded. Financing was from a variety of sources, but the funding base narrowed: six bilateral agencies provided funds for the PRRO, but only four for the CP. Of these four, Ireland has since exited Timor-Leste, and Australia remains heavily engaged but is seeking to work directly with the Government in the future. Significantly, the Timor-Leste Government became a contributor, providing more than US\$2 million towards the local production of a fortified blended food (FBF).
11. There was no overarching country strategy document, but there were strong common threads between the PRRO and the CP that followed it. The high-level strategic objectives of the portfolio were summarized in the CP as:
- to improve the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable groups in ways that build longer-term human and physical assets;
 - to enhance the capacity of the Government to design, implement and manage tools, policies and systems for reducing food insecurity; and
 - to hand over food-based programmes to the Government in a responsible manner.
12. The main thematic components of the portfolio were emergency relief using general food distribution (GFD), FFW/A, school feeding, supplementary feeding to support mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) and capacity development. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the changing balance of the portfolio in terms of food distributions for different activities.

Figure 2: Food distributed, by activity and year, 2008–2012 (mt)



Source: WFP.

Figure 3: Food planned versus distributed, by activity, 2008–2012 (mt)



Source: WFP.

13. The portfolio evolved from a short-term emergency and post-conflict focus of WFP Strategic Objectives 1 and 3 to the longer-term focus of Strategic Objectives 4 and 5.
14. Overall, the largest portfolio components were school feeding and supplementary feeding linked to the MCHN programme. FFW/A tended to be squeezed out by funding shortfalls and the need for continuity in supplementary and school feeding. However, there were FFW/A activities under a joint United Nations programme in two districts. Two additional districts were part of a five-country WFP research programme into conditional cash transfers, but management difficulties meant that this research was not completed. Other activities included support to the development of a food security information and early warning system and capacity development in warehousing and supply chain management for several ministries. Capacity development was also an explicit objective of food-based activities; the *Timor Vita* project to promote the local production of FBF was a particularly high-profile effort to develop national capacity.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Alignment and Strategic Positioning

15. The portfolio was well aligned with the needs of women and men, as well as with government policies and priorities. It focused on direct responses to undernutrition, especially through MCHN, rather than on addressing underlying food security issues linked to rural livelihood systems, reflecting WFP's comparative strengths and the availability of partners for funding and implementation. WFP's strategy of supporting and working through government systems for the delivery of basic services was appropriate and was aligned with international standards for engagement in fragile contexts. The United Nations is prominent in Timor-Leste, and WFP coordinated well with other United Nations agencies. However, in the joint programmes in which WFP participated, alignment of United Nations agencies with each other and with government was quite shallow. The portfolio was well aligned with WFP's strategic objectives and its evolution, including its increased attention to capacity development, was consistent with WFP's global strategy.

Strategic Choices

16. The country office's space for strategic decision-making was limited by both internal and external constraints. The improving post-emergency context for Timor-Leste represented a different complex challenge for WFP, making it more difficult to raise funds for food assistance. Developmental and capacity-development work require longer-term approaches and additional skill sets, which are not easy to pursue under WFP's internal constraints – its food-based funding model and short-term horizon – which are especially constricting for small country offices, which are further disadvantaged by their own capacity constraints, limited funds for staffing and difficulties in ensuring sufficient staff continuity and seniority.
17. Given this background, the evaluation judged that the Timor-Leste country office was commendably proactive, innovative, diligent and adaptable. It was appropriate for WFP to focus on nutrition issues, on the Government as its key partner and on capacity development as a primary objective. In doing so, WFP contributed to state-building and supported countrywide delivery. It was also pragmatic for the country office to adjust ongoing operations to focus on where there was most chance of making a difference. However, both the country office and Headquarters misjudged the intensive management requirements for the conditional cash transfers research programme, which made Timor-Leste unsuitable as a participant. The country office was energetic in seeking supplementary funding and trying to maintain adequate country office staffing, but a heavy reliance on relatively junior staff and an inability to offer job security were disadvantages. For example, the low capacity available in Timor-Leste forced the country office to recruit internationally for posts that in other middle-income countries would be filled by nationals.
18. One of the main signs of overstretched WFP capacity was the neglect of basic monitoring, with inadequate tracking of programme delivery and negligible attention to outcomes. Recently, there were commendable attempts to address this gap, but it weakened WFP's position in seeking continued MCHN funding. The programme's insufficient data on performance, and its use of inadequate formats and databases for measuring and reporting on outcomes reflect weaknesses in supervision and support from the regional bureau and Headquarters. As a result, the conclusions of the evaluation are not as firmly grounded as they might have been.
19. The crowding out of monitoring by other concerns may be linked to a general tendency to assume that programmes work as intended, without testing the assumptions on which WFP interventions are based. However, it is particularly important for WFP to carry out such checks, because its ability to raise funds depends on demonstrating effectiveness and meeting needs as planned.

Portfolio Performance and Results

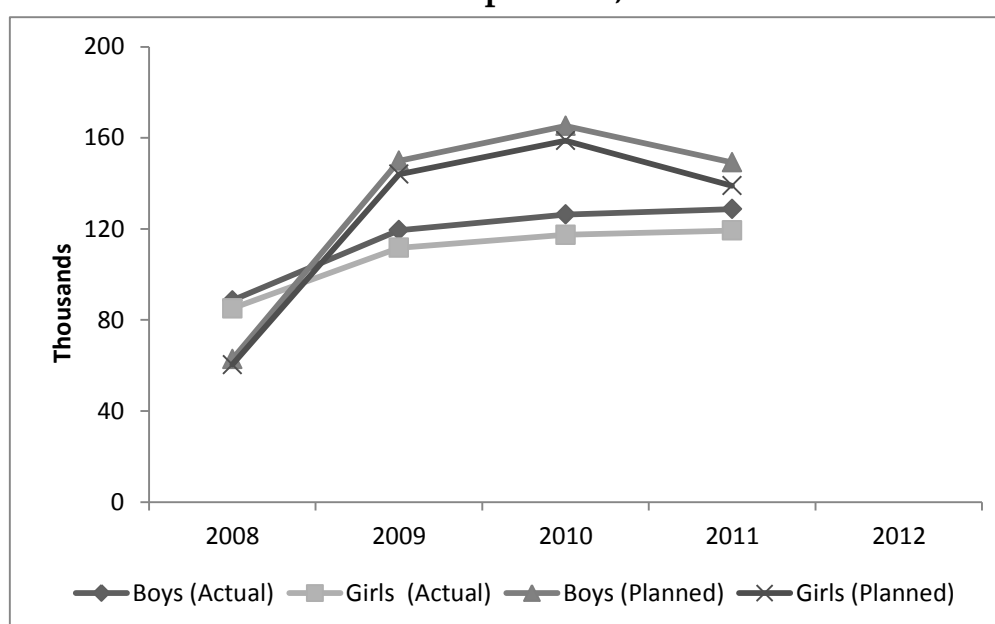
⇒ *Relief*

20. In 2008 and 2009, WFP assisted the return home of internally displaced persons (IDPs), with about 30,000 beneficiaries each year. In 2009, WFP collaborated with the Ministry of Social Solidarity in supporting 4,000 households requiring short-term emergency relief. After 2009, the Ministry took full responsibility for responding to natural emergencies, and there was no further need for WFP support to the reintegration of IDPs. An evaluation of the PRRO found that WFP had managed its relief activities pragmatically and effectively.²

⇒ *School feeding*

21. School feeding – providing cooked meals for grades 1–6 – started in 2005 as part of efforts to encourage school enrolment and attendance and support the strengthening of basic public services. WFP managed school feeding in five (later six) of the most vulnerable districts. In 2008, the Government began a school feeding programme in the seven districts not covered by WFP. In April 2009, at the Government’s request, the two programmes were merged to ensure the same standards of service across the country. WFP’s programme was always under considerable financial stress, and the ration was reduced from 30 to 20 percent of estimated daily requirements. School feeding reached up to 250,000 beneficiaries, almost evenly divided between boys and girls (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: School feeding beneficiaries by gender, actual versus planned, 2008–2011



Source: WFP.

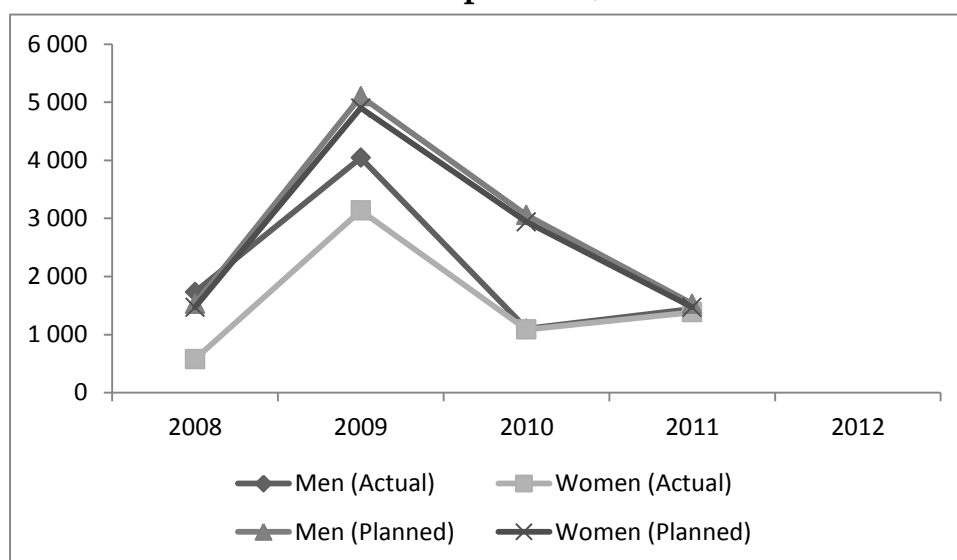
22. WFP was keen to continue working with the Ministry of Education on strengthening the national system, but the Government chose to take over full responsibility, and WFP’s involvement in the school feeding programme ended in August 2011. The Government has adopted a different approach, supplementing a basic ration of rice with locally purchased complementary foods, for which schools are supposed to receive a cash allowance. The programme remains seriously underfunded and is experiencing implementation difficulties.⁶

⁶ Lenci, S. 2012. MDG-F Joint Programme: Promoting Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security in Timor Leste – Final Evaluation, Dili; and evaluation interviews.

⇒ *Food for work/assets*

23. Assets created under FFW/A included the construction/rehabilitation of 440 km of rural roads, 27 schools, more than 200 reservoirs, and 24 km of irrigation canals, along with agricultural improvements such as forestry, fencing and land reclamation. Figure 5 shows levels of participation. The PRRO evaluation included a comprehensive review of the FFW/A programme and assessed it very positively, making suggestions for technical improvements; the joint United Nations 2011 mid-term evaluation found that FFW/A activities were relevant, implemented in a timely fashion, and likely to be effective.⁷

Figure 5: FFW/A participants (workers only) by gender, actual versus planned, 2008–2011



Source: WFP.

⇒ *Blanket and targeted supplementary feeding for children and women*

24. WFP support focused on blanket feeding for children aged 6–23 months, and targeted feeding for pregnant and lactating women and children aged 24–59 months, all delivered through government health services during mobile monthly clinics (SISCa) at health facilities and outreach centres. During the evaluation period there was considerable expansion of food deliveries and facilities covered, while beneficiary numbers varied, reaching their highest levels in 2009 at just above 49,000 (see Table 6). Throughout the period, reviews and assessments found that sharing of rations tended to undermine the programme. However, the food component of MCHN was considered a strong incentive for drawing mothers and children to primary health-care services.

⁷ Summary Evaluation Report, Timor-Leste PRRO 103881 (WFP/EB.A/2010/7-E) and Beasca, J. 2011. *Community Mobilisation for Poverty Alleviation and Social Inclusion in Service Delivery (COMPASIS) Mid-Term Evaluation: Evaluation Report*. New York.

TABLE 6: MCHN FOOD DELIVERIES AND BENEFICIARY NUMBERS, 2008–2012						
Year	Planned food (mt)	Delivered food (mt)	Delivery rate (%)	Planned beneficiaries	Reached beneficiaries	Access rate (%)
2008	2 416.00	1 868.59	77	51 650	44 317	86
2009	5 415.00	2 672.97	49	61 000	49 245	81
2010	3 010.00	2 236.37	74	64 200	32 534	51
2011	5 129.00	2 746.25	54	75 000	48 542	65
2012	8 161.00	3 419.38	42			

Source: WFP.

25. WFP also supported the establishment of a factory to produce an FBF known as *Timor Vita*. There were considerable start-up problems and unanticipated costs; for example, the machinery required additional generating capacity, and a full-time food technologist had to be recruited to supervise production. All ingredients were imported and production levels were much lower than planned. In 2012, *Timor Vita* covered 22 percent of MCHN food requirements.

⇒ *Capacity development*

26. The aim of capacity-development interventions was to contribute to the achievement of nationally owned hunger solutions by establishing effective national capacity in logistics and supply chain management, and in school feeding and nutrition programmes. The SO had some notable successes (see Box 1), but systematic capacity development and hand-over strategies for health and education were more problematic. The Ministry of Education took over the school feeding programme abruptly. WFP had a much more satisfactory relationship with the Ministry of Health, but joint planning for hand-over and exit was not launched until late 2012 and could not plausibly be completed during the remainder of the CP.

Box 1: Successful capacity development – support to the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry

The Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry is responsible for managing Timor-Leste's rice reserves and rice intervention policy. The evaluation found that WFP support to the Ministry's logistics capacity was successful for the following reasons:

- The Ministry was a willing partner that approached WFP for help in solving an urgent logistics problem.
- WFP's swift and effective response to this problem encouraged the Ministry to request a longer-term programme of capacity development.
- WFP adopted a systematic approach, with identified individual and organizational learning objectives, to put in place the necessary skills, systems and infrastructure.
- WFP focused on developing logistics capacity, in which it excels.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

27. The main components of the portfolio were all broadly relevant at the time the PRRO was launched in 2008. The subsequent challenge for the country office was balancing and adapting these different components in a dynamic and constrained environment. WFP also deserves credit for the connectedness of its “working with Government” approach.
28. As regards efficiency and alignment, working with nationwide government systems limited WFP's ability to target specific groups or geographical areas. However, the evaluation considered that WFP made appropriate trade-offs in seeking to work through, and to influence, government systems, while respecting government ownership. A more serious constraint to efficiency was the chronic underfunding of the portfolio. WFP mitigated this by prioritizing school feeding and MCHN over FFW/A.⁸ By working with the Ministries of Education and Health – both with nationwide coverage – WFP aligned with local priorities, supported state building and avoided pockets of exclusion, consistent with the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States. Restoration and maintenance of the education system is seen as an important part of post-conflict recovery, and a way of supporting state legitimacy through effective service delivery. Local production of *Timor Vita* was intended to increase efficiency by simplifying logistics and reducing the sharing of food. It was also intended to increase government ownership, thus making supplementary feeding programmes more sustainable. This initiative may have been justified, but there should have been a more rigorous assessment of its cost-effectiveness against the alternative of an imported FBF.
29. Regarding effectiveness, in most respects, WFP appears to have implemented the portfolio components competently, and its FFW/A activities and emergency support were broadly effective in providing targeted support to food-insecure communities. The Government has adopted a similar modality to support rural road works. The PRRO evaluation assessed the school feeding programme as effective, but after the Government's takeover it experienced implementation difficulties and remained seriously underfunded,

⁸ The PRRO evaluation recommended the expansion of FFW/A as a food security intervention. However, it also supported the country office's decision to prioritize the school feeding programme over FFW/A when funds were scarce, because continuity of delivery is more critical for school feeding.

compromising its effectiveness. There is strong evidence that the food component of the MCHN programme provided an incentive for increased attendance at health services, but much less evidence that it achieved its primary aim of improving the nutritional status of intended beneficiaries. There were some notable successes in capacity development, such as in the SO's support to warehouse management by the Ministry of Tourism, Commerce and Industry, but the challenges of achieving sustainable capacity improvement across service delivery sectors remained enormous. The unplanned transition in 2011 from a school feeding programme assisted by WFP to one run solely by the Ministry of Education prevented a satisfactory hand-over process. A systematic hand-over of the MCHN programme to the Ministry of Health was initiated late, and cannot plausibly be completed before the CP's end date of December 2013. The requirements for satisfactory hand-over are a recurring theme in the evaluation's recommendations.

30. The portfolio's capacity-development objectives are central to its sustainability and long-term impact. This is an area that all agencies have found difficult – the debate in Timor-Leste echoes a global one. For WFP, the following lessons can be drawn from the Timor-Leste experience: i) it is more effective to work on areas such as logistics where WFP has acknowledged expertise; ii) effectiveness depends on having a willing partner; and, iii) even in favourable contexts, there are endemic difficulties linked to WFP's funding model, the constraints on its staff and staff aptitude for capacity-development work.
31. The evaluation's overall assessment is that the country office's incorporation of gender in its work was weak. The evaluation found little evidence that WFP's corporate commitments on gender were incorporated into programme design, monitoring and reporting, or advocacy.⁹ This deficiency was linked to the relatively small size of the country office – and the associated limited staff capacity – and to a lack of support for gender mainstreaming from the regional bureau and Headquarters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

32. Recommendations are linked to WFP's prospects in Timor-Leste. The prevalence of undernutrition is among the highest in the world, making a strong case for WFP to remain engaged in the country. However, any WFP involvement has to be funded and based on demand as well as need. The primary demand for any future WFP presence has to come from the Government. The Ministry of Health is currently WFP's principal partner, but the Ministry of Finance should also be involved, to assure the necessary medium-term funding for the Ministry of Health's strategy, with or without WFP involvement. The Ministry of Health's strategy should be linked to the government's medium-term expenditure planning based on sustainable commitments of petroleum fund revenues. WFP's existing and potential short-term funders should also be engaged in reviewing WFP's trajectory. WFP programmes are, rightly, intertwined with those of the Government and other development partners in relevant sectors. Recommendations are therefore addressed to the Government and other stakeholders as well as to the different levels of WFP.

⁹ Based on this evaluation's overall gender assessment against WFP corporate commitments for capacity development, accountability, partnerships, advocacy and research and gender mainstreaming in operations.

On the Immediate Transition Strategy for Timor-Leste (WFP Headquarters, Regional Bureau and Country Office)

33. **Recommendation 1: WFP should extend the CP so as to enable the country office to follow up on the transition strategy set out in the Concept Note of November 2012.** A systematic approach to hand-over of MCHN responsibilities, based on joint WFP-Ministry of Health assessments of financial and capacity requirements, was only recently put forward. Satisfactory hand-over will require engagement by the Ministry and other main stakeholders. The present CP was itself intended to allow a hand-over period, but the necessary planning has only recently begun, and a responsible exit – or a properly planned continuation of WFP support – therefore requires more time. An orderly exit that minimizes reputational damage to WFP will require an extension of the CP by at least a year beyond the current end date of December 2013; a more effective transition will require more time (see recommendation 2).

On Hand-Over/Exit Strategies in General (WFP Headquarters)

34. **Recommendation 2: WFP should ensure that hand-over strategies are developed in a timely fashion, recognizing that effective hand-over requires a timeframe of at least two to three years.** Hand-over strategies should include relevant benchmarks and milestones against which progress will be measured, and WFP Headquarters must engage the country office in a realistic assessment of the internal capacity required to ensure that a responsible and sustainable hand-over process is implemented and, where necessary, should develop a strategy for building the internal capacity required for this.
35. WFP will face similar hand-over situations in other countries in the future. Ideally, therefore, WFP Headquarters should use Timor-Leste as a pilot for the development of a credible exit strategy. To do this satisfactorily would imply securing predictable and flexible non-food-based funding to support an extension of the CP for at least two years, with associated commitment from the regional bureau and Headquarters to ensure that the country office has the internal capacity required for a credible transition/exit. The transition process should involve increased engagement with other development partners supporting the Ministry of Health and should build in lesson learning for wider consumption.

On Strategy for MCHN In Timor-Leste (Ministry of Health and other Health and Nutrition Stakeholders Including WFP)

36. **Recommendation 3a: There is urgent need for a joint review of SISCa's role in health service delivery and its corresponding requirements for support.** Health stakeholders should jointly draw up plans to tackle the issues facing SISCa in a sustainable manner.

37. **Recommendation 3b: The Ministry of Health and WFP should discontinue targeted supplementary feeding for children aged 24–59 months and provide targeted supplementary feeding for children aged 6–23 months and pregnant and lactating women.** This is linked to the SISCa review and echoes earlier recommendations, such as those of the PRRO evaluation,² based on current understanding of effective practice in such nutrition interventions. If supplementary feeding is to continue and be effective, it must be on a scale that the Ministry of Health can sustain, both financially and in terms of organizational demands on scarce capacity. Sustainability on both criteria is more likely if the programme is able to rely – wholly or predominantly – on the domestic production of FBF (see recommendation 4) and if the programme design is as straightforward as possible.
38. **Recommendation 3c: Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation, both of programme delivery and of its results, to meet the minimum standards required for assessing programme delivery and results.** The evaluation has provided detailed comments on gaps in existing data collection, but there must be resolve at all levels of WFP to ensure that basic monitoring – including post-distribution monitoring – is treated as essential, even when capacity gaps make this more difficult.
39. **Recommendation 3d: There is need to support longer-term, country-specific nutrition research such as a nutrition causality study and analysis;** this is a joint responsibility of all stakeholders and should be adequately reflected in the forthcoming (revised) national nutrition strategy.

On Local Production of Fortified Blended Food (WFP, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance)

40. **Recommendation 4: WFP and the Government should jointly undertake a rigorous strategic review of the future role for *Timor Vita*.** At present, the country office plays a crucial role in supervising production of *Timor Vita* on behalf of the Government. The review should include analysis of the medium- and long-term viability of the factory, and the cost and logistics implications if more targeted supplementary feeding is linked to provision of *Timor Vita*. It should include attention to future responsibilities for the monitoring and technical support currently provided by WFP, as well as the independent audit of performance.

On Timor-Leste's School Feeding Strategy (Timor-Leste Government with its Partners in Social Protection and Education)

41. **Recommendation 5: A comprehensive strategic review of the school feeding programme should be undertaken to map out a sustainable approach.** It would be appropriate for the Government to lead this review, in collaboration with partners who support the education and social protection sector strategies of Timor-Leste. It is not appropriate for WFP to lead such a review because WFP is not seen as a disinterested party, but it is important to adopt an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach so as to map out a sustainable approach that partners can buy into.

On Capacity Development (WFP Headquarters)

42. **Recommendation 6: WFP Headquarters needs to do further work on developing indicators and practical guidance to assist country offices in designing and implementing effective capacity development strategies.** WFP Headquarters needs to consider how it can also provide more hands-on support to country offices' design and implementation of capacity development strategies. As part of this focus, WFP Headquarters must engage country offices in a realistic assessment of the internal capacity required for effective capacity development initiatives and, where necessary, should develop a strategy for building the internal capacity required for this.

On Gender (WFP Headquarters)

43. **Recommendation 7: WFP Headquarters needs to do further work on developing indicators and practical guidance to country offices for implementing effective gender mainstreaming strategies.** WFP Headquarters also needs to consider how it can provide more hands-on support to country offices to enhance gender analysis and implement gender mainstreaming. WFP Headquarters should focus, in particular, on the needs of country offices without dedicated gender staff.

ANNEX**TIMOR-LESTE DISTRICTS**

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its frontiers or boundaries.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CP	country programme
DHS	demographic and health survey
FBF	fortified blended food
FFW/A	food for work/assets
GFD	general food distribution
MCHN	mother-and-child health and nutrition
NSD	National Statistics Directorate
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
SISCa	Integrated Health Services at the Community Level (<i>Serviço Integrado da Saúde Comunitária</i>)
SO	special operation