

WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME



OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Full Report

**of the End-of-Term Evaluation of the
Pakistan Country Programme**

1994 - 1998

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Rome, September 1999

Acknowledgments

The mission visited Pakistan from 22 November to 12 December 1998. It represented a multi-agency team and included Mr. I. Sobhan (FAO, Investment Centre) Mission Leader, Ms. Ute Meir (UNESCO) Education Specialist, Ms. Barbara Reed (WHO) Health Specialist, and Ms. Jane Brown (FAO) Natural Resource Specialist. The mission was joined in the field by Rolf Huss from the Office of Evaluation of WFP.

The mission would be failing in its duty if it did not emphasise the considerable support it received from all the staff of the WFP Pakistan Country Office.

Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report and its annexes rests solely with the authors. Publication of this report does not imply endorsement by WFP of the opinions expressed.

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I. Introduction

WFP's operations in Pakistan are anchored in a strategy set forth in a Country Strategy Outline (CSO). Reflecting the adoption of the programme approach, the Country Programme Document (CPD), outlining the specific interventions supporting the strategy, was to be prepared on the basis of the findings of the CSO and be consistent with the planning cycles of both the Government and the UN system. The Pakistan Country Programme (CP) reflects the first attempt by WFP to reformulate its operations and make them more integrated, coherent, focused and flexible. It represents a distinct departure from the piece-meal project oriented approach of the past. The Pakistan CPD was retroactively approved in October 1996, on the basis of the CSO of December 1994. This full report reflects the result of the Evaluation undertaken at the end of 1998.

This full report is structured as follows: the second section gives a brief overview of the different elements that constitute the Country Programme; the third section provides a discussion of the achievements of the different elements of the Programme; the fourth section evaluates the Programme under a number of broad categories and the final section provides some recommendations. The report is supported by detailed Annexes on the three different sectors included in the Country Programme.

II. The Country Programme

The Pakistan CP consists of interventions on two dimensions. Interventions cover activities under the Social Action Programme (SAP), specifically for interventions in health and education, and for activities in natural resource management (NRM).

The social sector interventions in health aim at encouraging the attendance of expectant and nursing mothers to health centres. They also include the promotion and increased use of primary health care facilities. The programme was implemented in selected districts of the Provinces of Punjab, Balochistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Sindh as well as in Jammu and Kashmir. The areas were chosen largely on the basis of low social and economic indicators.

Interventions in the education sector aim at increasing enrolment, improving attendance and reducing drop-out rates of girls at primary schools. Additional objectives include the reduction of teacher absenteeism in schools. The education sector programme was implemented in selected districts in the provinces of NWFP and Balochistan and may soon be extended to Sindh and Punjab. Districts were largely chosen on the basis of the lowest participation rates of girls in primary education.

The incentive in both social sector programmes has been the distribution of a single high-value food commodity - edible oil. In schools, for each month of "full attendance", teachers and students received one 5 kg tin of edible oil per person. In the health sector, a total of four tins was distributed for specific pre-natal and post-natal visits, including vaccination and immunization.

Five relatively separate exercises have been amalgamated to constitute interventions under natural resource management. They include: Pakistan 2451 - Assistance to Tarbela and Mangla Watershed covering four districts in the Hazara Division of NWFP, Pakistan 4003 Rural Development in the North East Area of Pakistan, Pakistan 4659 - Environmental Rehabilitation Project, Malakand Division NWFP, Pakistan 2309 - Rural Development and Environmental Rehabilitation in Southern NWFP and Pakistan 4377 - Rural Development Works in Baluchistan. All five projects had been operational before their adoption into the CPD. For all the projects, the assumed linkage between degraded environment and poverty had initially focused attention on the physical or environmental aspects such as the rehabilitation of soils, improvement of water percolation and control and the sustainable supply of woody biomass and grasses. However, during the course of implementation over the programme period there has been a shift in scope and focus. A social forestry approach with an emphasis on social organisation involving community management, self-reliance

and participatory decision making has been adopted to a greater or lesser extent as the general theme in all the interventions.

Two elements distinguish the interventions in natural resource management. The first one is that they have all been supported by supplementary financial or technical assistance from other agencies (UNDP and national NGOs, the Sarhad Rural Support Corporation and the Women Development Association) or from bilateral donors (Germany, Netherlands, Australia, and Italy). This has had an impact, allowing modifications to the design of some elements of the programme. The second element is that food support is provided through the mechanism of a food stamp programme aimed at providing incentives to beneficiaries. WFP-supplied wheat is converted into cash by the Federal Government, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MinFAL), at the port of entry, Karachi. The cash is used to purchase food stamps from Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), an autonomous Government body which implements the Government's own food stamp programme. The food stamps are delivered to project authorities for distribution to participants who, in turn, exchange them at face value for a variety of foods at designated food stamp stores at sub-district level. Shopkeepers redeem their full face value from bank branches designated by PBM. The advantage of the food stamp programme is that it avoids the payment of high transport, storage and distribution costs for moving commodities from port to beneficiaries, eliminates post-c.i.f. losses, and provides a diversified food basket for beneficiaries while limiting WFP's contribution to a single commodity.

A smaller, third level of intervention under the Country Programme includes the support for the operation of a safety net programme for the most vulnerable Afghan refugees. This follows the phase-out of the general refugee care and maintenance programme. The interventions cover activities for girls in primary schools, and support of vocational training for women.

The Country Programme (1994-98) anticipated a total delivery of food resources of about 50 million dollars, averaging some 10 million dollars a year, roughly equally divided between the SAP and NRM programmes. No anticipatory allocations were indicated for any refugee or emergency operations. Actual disbursements of WFP resources amount to a total of about 37.3 million dollars over the same period, divided almost equally between the two programmes: 18.3 million dollars for the social sectors (13.0 million for health and 5.3 million for education) and about 19.0 million dollars for NRM.

III. Sectoral Programme Achievements

Health (see Annex 1 for details)

The health programme was initially planned to cover a total of 650 Basic Health Units (BHUs)/centres; this was later extended to 980. Assistance covered all provinces and also Jammu and Kashmir and included 87 of 120 districts in the country. Within the districts, about 20-25 percent of the centres were assisted. What was significant, however, was the incompatibility between the quantum of oil delivered and the extent of coverage. Original estimates of requirements were based on an assumed number of beneficiaries without allowing for increases in attendance. With actual deliveries reaching about 66 percent of planned requirements, district officials were forced to adopt a variety of measures to stretch supplies, including adjusting the number of tins to be distributed per beneficiary. As a consequence, it has not been possible, for instance, to estimate the total number of beneficiaries. Based on data collected by an M&E study, assisted centres were without oil on average about one third of the time. Less than 10 percent of the women interviewed for the M&E study had received 4 tins as originally stipulated and nearly half (46 percent) had received only 1. While there is some evidence of increased attendance on the average for all centres, higher attendance and oil distribution were not consistently correlated for a single centre. The increased attendance could also have been attributed to a variety of other reasons. The extent to which the distribution of oil has contributed to meeting the objective of promoting attendance at health centres is questionable.

In addition to the objective of increasing attendance, the health intervention also aimed at promoting a variety of selected health services: pre-natal medical examination, TT vaccination, post-natal examination of infants, DPT vaccination and family planning services. The results based on the M&E study indicate that while more than half of the respondents had visited the health centres three or more times during their pregnancy and nearly all had received tetanus vaccinations, the use of infant services were poor. BCG vaccinations were received by a little more than half (54 percent) of the children and DPT1 by only 39 percent. Nearly half (44 percent) of the women indicated that their children had received no vaccinations or weight monitoring. Although there was a tendency to allude to the nutritional value of oil and to view it as food aid to support maternal nutrition, the programme had no nutritional objectives.

Education (see Annex 2 for details)

Programme intervention in education has expanded gradually. Starting with two districts in Balochistan and one district in NWFP, the programme currently covers ten districts in Balochistan and five in NWFP. While there has been occasional irregularities, overall programme deliveries have been at about 75 percent of planned deliveries. There have been difficulties with the Government's coverage of the full cost of transport and deliveries of the oil but there has been no evidence of schools missing their allotment altogether.

Overall, programme interventions have achieved impressive results regarding increase in enrolment at assisted schools. The total number of beneficiaries is estimated at about 53,300, resulting in a cost of about 100 dollars per beneficiary¹. At schools surveyed in the district of Dir, enrolment grew by 247 percent between 1994 and 1998, in Balochistan it grew by 197 percent from 1993 to 1998. However, looking at yearly enrolment trends, it is clear that the introduction of the programme resulted in tremendous increases in the first year which levelled off after two or three years. At the same time, there is evidence that the attendance rate of girls in assisted schools has improved. There has also been a reduction in teacher absenteeism. There is little doubt that the provision of food aid (oil) affects the economic factors that keep the girls out of schools. Poorer families are less likely to send their girls to school due to the higher opportunity costs faced by them. The income transfer helped them to defray indirect and direct educational costs. At the same time, offering families a substantial incentive for educating their daughters has overcome a lack of interest in female education. Once girls started to go to school, families became aware of the benefits of their education and was motivated to send the daughters to school and keep them there.

Natural Resources Management (see Annex 3)

Although packaged under the common heading of natural resource management, the five interventions reflect somewhat different objectives. However, the modality of providing WFP resources through the mechanism of food stamps and, to a lesser degree, the trend to gradually move towards more community development have provided some evidence of the adoption of a common approach. Actual programme deliveries were lower and more erratic than anticipated. Physical progress towards targets in terms of coverage of areas with tree plantations, number of nurseries established, kilometres of roads constructed and volume of earth dams built has been mixed. The total number of beneficiaries has been estimated at about 115,500, indicating a cost per beneficiary of about 165 dollars. The higher cost per beneficiary under this programme reflects the numbers directly benefiting from the interventions. The creation of common property assets as a consequence of NRM interventions implies that the total number of beneficiaries is considerably larger and corresponding costs lower. However, no such estimates were possible. What is significant is that there has been a definite awareness and focus on greater community involvement implicit in the social forestry approach that has been adopted by the programme. This has been reflected in a shift in focus currently packaged as Natural Resource and Community Development (NRCD).

¹ Cost per beneficiary figure indicated here are based on costs of WFP food input alone and does not include non-food item costs or the budgetary support costs provided by Government for transport and distribution as in the case of the SAP interventions.

However, the physical approach still dominates as the individual interventions demonstrate a disparity in the adoption of the new focus. Despite the attention to community based organisations and the development of women's groups, forest plantation activities and road construction dominate some of the programmes.

Cost per beneficiary figure indicated here are based on costs of WFP food input alone and does not include non-food item costs or the budgetary support costs provided by Government for transport and distribution as in the case of the SAP interventions.

IV. The Evaluation

Programme evaluation reviews the broader aspects of programme direction as well as elements of implementation. It has to be recognised that some of the parameters against which the interventions are being assessed might not originally have been explicit objectives of the interventions themselves. However, the flexible nature of the programme approach should have allowed the modification of the interventions over time. The assessment is presented under six broad groupings of Country Setting and Rationale for WFP Operations, Content and Design of Interventions, People Orientation - Targeting, Gender and Participatory Process, Impact and Sustainability, Programme Implementation, WFP and Government Performance and Conclusions and Recommendations.

A. Setting and Rationale for WFP Operations

Many studies of poverty in Pakistan indicate that substantial segments of the population are below the national average². Yet, while information on the considerable disparities within regions and between income groups³ is available, there is little firm data on the poverty profile or on the location of the poor. The critical element, from the perspective of establishing a rationale for food aid and WFP assistance, is the fact that **food is not at a premium in the country**. Food is generally available throughout the country and there are no clearly identifiable groups of the hungry poor. For poverty groups, **food security is more a function of incomes** and the inter-relationship between food security and other measures of poverty, such as high birth rates and high levels of maternal and child mortality, and low education levels. Consequently, the rationale for food aid should be seen from the perspective of an income transfer rather than as the provision of food directly for consumption.

In the context of the above, the income transfer approach towards targeted groups, implicit in both the social and natural resource management interventions, has been appropriate. In the case of activities related to natural resource management, an adapted income transfer approach has meant a revision of the direct distribution of a number of food commodities to the distribution of food stamps almost equivalent to that of cash. To its credit, the flexibility of the CP in adopting this approach not only brought the programme in line with the reality of food aid in Pakistan but also saved considerable resources.

The rationale for interventions in the social sectors, specifically the health and education of women and girls, is well placed. Within poverty groups, the condition of women, particularly rural women, is perhaps one of the worst in Asia. With extremely low levels of primary school enrolment (31 percent as opposed to the average of 66 percent for South Asia), low average life span, high incidence of maternal mortality and disease, and little decision making power, rural women in Pakistan remain in a precarious state. The rationale for support, therefore, is seen directly as part of the Gender Agenda of WFP operations

² There are a number of recent studies that indicate the proportion of people falling below a certain poverty line and between rural and urban areas. GOP, MinFAL, 'World Food Summit - Country Position Paper -Case of Pakistan', 1996; Mahbubul Haq & Khadija Haq, 'Human Development in South Asia', **Karachi 1998**; IFPRI, 'Poverty, Household Food Security and Nutrition in Pakistan' Research Report 96, 1993.

³ Thus, while the available food per capita for the country was estimated at 2,570 kcals per day in 1995-96, studies indicate that the proportion of people actually consuming less than 1,800 kcals per day varied from 33 of households in Dir, a targeted district, to 13 % of households in Attock, a district that is not targeted.

aimed at helping women to gain equal access to, and control of, the basic necessities of life. The provision of incentives, as a form of income transfer, to women who attend health centres and to young girls who attend schools is an appropriate vehicle for achieving the goal of economic and social development of the target groups.

In contrast, the rationale for WFP support in the natural resource management sector, as implemented, is weak and represents, to some extent, the weight of WFP's past association in this sector. Based on the assumption of a linkage between degraded environments and poverty, the overall initial objectives for the interventions were macro-level environmental goals. The interventions included the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, in particular the protection of major watersheds and dams, the conservation of bio-diversity and the production of fuelwood and grasses. The focus on the poor was perceived as a vehicle towards environmental rehabilitation and not as an end in itself. To the credit of the CP, however, there has been a transformation of the focus of natural resource management over the implementation period. Programme goals now emphasize a social forestry approach integrated with community management and described in terms of the self-reliance of local communities. Emphasis has been placed on social organization, the self-reliance of local people, their participation in implementation decisions, and the use of assets created. The adoption of these new goals, however, has not been uniform among the five area-based activities in this sector and the new approach requires more time and adaptation to local circumstances.

B. Programme Content and Design

Integration with Government Plans.

The Pakistan Country Programme is consistent and well integrated with the development objectives of the Government of Pakistan as outlined in its eighth five-year plan (1993-98). It also reflects the priorities established by the donor community in Pakistan as presented in the Country Strategy Note that has been approved by the Government. The eighth five-year plan accorded a high priority to the development of the social sector and the reduction of poverty. To achieve this goal, the Government adopted an ambitious Social Action Programme (SAP) to address the needs of the rural poor (particularly women and girls) in basic education, primary health, family planning and rural water supply and sanitation. A multi-donor consortium comprising the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, ODA/DFID, the Netherlands and, more recently, the European Commission and Canada, has supported SAP. In addition, there exists a Multi-Donor Support Unit which organizes a larger SAP consultative group including WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO and other nondirect SAP cash donors. The interventions supported under the CP, in fact, constitute the most direct assistance provided to the beneficiaries in the social sector, since SAP support is primarily aimed at the development of the institutional capacity of the Government, including the provision of physical infrastructure. WFP operations in the social sector have been renamed as Support to the Social Action Programme (SSAP), indicating a closer integration with the Government/donors national Social Action Plan.

The interventions in NRM are also well integrated and consistent with the goals and objectives of the Governments' National (and Provincial) Conservation Strategy and the Forestry Master Plan. The interventions are compatible with the reforms being undertaken in the forestry sector as part of the Forestry Master Plan. WFP is a founding member of the Forestry Donors Coordination Group for the NWFP composed of representatives of the Governments of Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany as well as the Asian Development Bank, IUCN, FAO, WFP and UNDP. The group has promoted a wide range of reforms in the forestry sector (in NWFP), including support to the Government's own institutional reforms process. Funding for support of the reforms process has been provided by the ADB, Switzerland, the Netherlands, IUCN and UNDP.

Linkages with Development Partners.

The provision of food aid, whether directly or as an income transfer, as the primary vehicle for financing, limits the objectives of the interventions themselves. Food aid alone as the only resource faces serious limitations in a broad developmental framework. Therefore, achieving the full impact requires action at a number of levels beyond that of the food aid interventions themselves. This implies the necessity of establishing linkages with other development partners both for supportive complimentary assistance as well as for technical assistance to ensure appropriate impact. The CP experience in this aspect is varied. In the social sectors, particularly in health, there is little association with other partners. As a consequence, the full impact of the intervention has been compromised. Thus, the objective in the health sector intervention should have been not only to attract women to visit health centres but also to ensure that they receive the kind of service that would encourage them to continue going there. The WFP objective to attract women to health services is complementary to the Government's objectives to improve these services, and it is clear that sustained attendance will depend on the quality of provided services. Yet, although the opportunities for improving service delivery exist through support provided under SAP, no **explicit linkages** have been established to ensure complete staff and physical infrastructure adequacy. **Project design must ensure that interventions are comprehensive** enough to have the desired impact. Taking a partial or niche view dictated by the extent to which WFP can provide support is inadequate, for it tends to miss the prospective synergy that can be derived from a more comprehensive approach. Consequently, it becomes imperative that **explicit linkages and partnerships be forged with other development agencies** in the same field to ensure the kind of comprehensive coverage that is necessary for the achievement of a sustainable impact. The objective of interventions in the education sector also suffered from a similar constraint of being limited to WFP operations alone.

In contrast, the interventions in resource management have been complemented by a number of different and supportive actions beyond those provided under WFP support. Explicit linkages have been established with a number of bilateral aid agencies (the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Canada, and Italy) and some NGOs as well as FAO/UNDP. This provides additional co-financing for complementary activities. However,, what is more important is that it also aims at providing critical technical assistance support. This complementary technical assistance support from other partners has helped in ensuring overall project impact. Although the partnerships have been dominated by a technical and forestry bias, and improvements are needed in the mix of interventions in resource management and in the exchange and coordination of information, the fact remains that an approach based on partnerships with other agencies has been achieved, contributing to a greater project impact.

Linkages within Sectoral Interventions.

There is little evidence that linkages in planning or **implementation within** the sectoral activities have been sufficiently considered. Despite some area overlap in the two activities in the social sector as well as the existence of a SAP coordination committee at the Provincial level, little effort was undertaken in this direction. The two interventions were implemented virtually independently of each other. Better coordination in the areas of policy, logistics and monitoring, strengthening WFP's implementation capacity, could have been achieved if explicit efforts were made. No attempts were made at establishing any linkage between the two interventions in the social sector.

Integration within Institutional Environment.

The established modality of working with the Government has implied that both intervention categories are well integrated within the different line agencies of Government: health with the Provincial Health Department, education with the Education Department and forestry with the Forestry Department. Among the line departments, only in the case of forestry has there been any strengthening of institutional capability, by means of a reasonably large training programme. Very little institutional support has been provided to the line agencies in the social sectors. However, the need for greater impact implies that

institutional arrangements should be developed with other development partners both within and outside the Government. This has been established to some extent in interventions in natural resource management. As a consequence of the technical assistance support provided to it, the Forestry Department has not only transformed itself to adopt a social forestry and community development orientation, but also established working level contacts with a few NGOs and local level village organizations that the interventions have helped to create. The involvement with this evolving institutional structure helps considerably in programme implementation, impact and sustainability.

In contrast, the institutional infrastructure for interventions in the social sectors is limited almost entirely to the Government line agencies. In the case of the health sector for instance, there is recognition that, since the intervention is breaking new ground in the cultural norms prevailing in the country, there is an acute need for an activist approach towards social mobilization. This has also been recognized by the Government, and a variety of measures are being proposed by it under SAP. Increasing acceptance through a substantive awareness creation programme, community participation through Village Health Committees, the involvement of the local community health workers and involving village elders, both men and women, NGOs or mosque committees would contribute to a wider acceptance of project interventions. A number of these measures are re-defining the institutional environment at the local level but little has been done to forge links with these evolving structures to achieve greater impact.

In the education sector, the sustained nature of the support provided under the project has had a significant positive impact on programme goals in terms of both increased enrolment and reduced absence of students and teachers. Nevertheless, a more comprehensive design of project interventions, by taking advantage of the SAP facility combined with a social mobilization programme and community participation, would have improved community ownership and overall programme sustainability. This has not been undertaken.

C. People Orientation: Targeting, Gender and Participatory Process

In the absence of specific information on the location and/or the profile of the poor, all the interventions under the CP have used geographic targeting based on the application of broad parameters. At a general level, this has understandably been a more practical approach. In the context of the social sector interventions, the identification of the backward districts on the basis of these broad parameters, particularly given the wide divergence between the national and district averages, was acceptable. However, this was not the case with respect to the NRM interventions. Project area selection was based on physical and environmental criteria and an assumed linkage between the severity of environmental degradation and the poverty of the people. Implicit in the adoption of the watershed management approach has been the creation of common property assets with the focus on the poor or landless as the primary beneficiaries. In actual fact, a good part of the benefits have accrued to people outside the target group⁴.

Interventions in the social sector have been explicitly gender discriminatory in favour of women. As argued earlier, the condition of rural women provides a strong rationale for support under WFP's Gender Action Plan (GAP). Interventions in resource management have made some attempts to direct activities towards women, and, in the context of the social environment, some progress has been achieved.

With respect to the adoption of a participatory process, the CP provides a mixed picture. The lack of integration with the local institutional/social environment referred to earlier in the social sector programmes, reflects an absence of any participatory process. In contrast, the resource management programme has been oriented towards the development of participatory processes and these have been implicit in the

⁴ A study undertaken by the Country Office found that in the NRM interventions, the VDCs (Village Development Committees) were dominated by landowners. Decisions taken by them were largely focused for their benefit, while others, such as the closure of project plantation sites reduced access for the landless to fuelwood, fodder and grazing land.

establishment and development of village/community level organizations such as Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Women's Organizations or Groups. These local level institutions are still in a fledgling state of development, yet what is important is that a beginning has been made in the recognition of a participatory process.

D. Impact and Sustainability

The full impact from interventions in natural resource management will only become evident in the long term. There is, however, some evidence to indicate that also in the short to medium term, benefits do accrue in the form of improved access in the case of tertiary level roads and some improvements to grazing and the availability of fuel wood supplies. However, there is also evidence to the contrary, i.e. that in some project areas there have been negative effects such as the loss of grazing lands and rights to firewood collection.

Similarly, while the full impact of improved attendance at schools will only be seen in the long term, evidence indicates that school enrolments have increased. This represents the first but crucial step towards realizing the longer-term benefits from education for girls. With respect to health, however, there is no consistent evidence that the project, as implemented, will have any sustained impact on attendance. In fact, there are some indications to the contrary. Part of this may be attributed to the inadequate supply of oil to centres to meet the full entitlements of women who already attend. It is probably also due to the lack of involvement of the whole community (e.g., men and older women) and the durability of inhibiting factors that can not be overcome simply by introducing women to the services (e.g. distance of travel, quality of services).

The issue of sustainability in resource management measures is linked with that of **benefit distribution**. Some of the benefits from afforestation/social forestry measures will only accrue in the distant future (40-70 years). Since a major portion of the areas being planted are commonly accessed but remain private lands, it is not clear that the owners would not exercise their complete ownership rights once the trees reach maturity and it becomes evident that they represent a substantial source of wealth/income. Benefit sharing agreements arrived at between the owner and the village based organizations, the VDCs, at the beginning of the management measures, currently do not have any legal standing since the latter are not recognized as legally constituted bodies. There is a need for providing a legal status to local village level organizations if sustainability in resource management measures is to be assured. Confirmation of the legal standing is required not only for benefits accruing in the future (trees) but also for shorter term gains and for the operation of any savings and loans schemes.

Provisional evidence in the education intervention indicates that progress made in enrolment and retention of students may, at least partly, be maintained also after the incentive has been withdrawn. Rural people, particularly mothers, have become more aware of the benefits of education and are thus likely to continue sending their daughters to school also after the withdrawal of the incentive. In some cases, this has even led to a demand for education for girls beyond the primary school level. At the same time, it is clear that sustainability of educational achievements made under the CP, let alone progress beyond the current objectives (i.e. moving towards the goal of full education for all girls) will depend on many factors outside WFP's influence. These would include, among others, improvements in the supply and quality of educational services and the empowerment of women and girls in society.

The current structure of the health programme raises some concern about its sustainability. **There is a need to reassess the programme objective, scope, contents and operation modality.** Given that the indicators of child and maternal health in Pakistan are extremely poor - especially when compared to countries of similar levels of development - it would seem important that WFP continues to support this sector. A key element promoting the sustainable use of health services is client satisfaction with services, and not enough attention has been given to assuring an acceptable level of services before or while the incentives were provided. There is evidence that the erratic and inadequate application of incentives has

contributed negatively to women's opinion of the primary caregiver (i.e. the lady health visitor) and could even discourage long-term use of services. Also, the current mode does not address the need to raise women's and children's health issues to become community concerns, not women's problems. Nevertheless, it is commendable that WFP is providing support directly to women and children. Most of the support provided by others under SAP is at the institutional level.

E. Programme Implementation

Supply Delivery and Allocation Flexibility.

Programme implementation was compromised by an erratic and reduced supply of both wheat and oil. While this was largely due to WFP's inability to provide adequate resources, delayed delivery also contributed to the shortfall. The impact of this reduced supply was somewhat compensated for by using alternative sources, that is, from PRO activities related to the Afghan Emergency Operation. In the aggregate, there was less of a shortfall in both the annual and total supplies of oil for the social sectors than for wheat for the natural resource management sector. Flexibility in the use of resources, under the programme approach, would have been greater had all the programmes used the same commodity. The provision of two commodities, wheat and oil, compromised this advantage since the shortfall in one could not be compensated by the other.

The impact of this reduced supply meant that programme implementation, particularly in the natural resource management and health sectors, had to be compromised. There is little doubt, however, that the programme approach did enable WFP to respond to variations in the total availability (supply) of food aid in a rational manner. By allowing decisions to be taken closer to the scene of action, WFP was able to vary allocation within and among programmes in response to performance.

Programme implementation in the health sector has been particularly poor because, apart from the effects of the overall shortage of supply, there were shortcomings in design since more centres had been included than could adequately be supported with planned resources, also without an increase in attendance.

Operational Plans and Administrative Requirements.

The beginning of the CP coincided with the abandonment of the Plan of Operations (PLANOPS). This implied that there were no comprehensive documents that spelt out the goals, implementation modalities and WFP/Government obligations to the individual activities. Resources allocated to WFP were subsequently apportioned to the sectors and different provinces on the basis of annual work plans established in consultation with the different line agencies of Government. The approach has provided WFP with more authority over the use of resources within the country. However, the Government, represented by the line agencies of the Provincial Government, has been unable to demonstrate the same flexibility. Counterpart funds are allocated through the Provincial Government's revenue budget or its Annual Development Plan (ADP) through a pro-forma, PC-1, appraisal process. Operating line agencies are averse to and find it difficult to process annual PC-is to reflect the variable annual WFP allocation. Discussions within the current WFP and Government line agencies management structure indicate the need for processing one of two alternatives, either a yearly "umbrella" PC-1 covering all provincial PC-is (all sectors), or a PC-1 for each sector for the entire five-year programme period. The current situation is confusing and covers the entire spectrum of annual, five-year, or, in the case of Punjab, no PC-1 approval - most likely in contravention of Government policy. There is, therefore, a critical need for a resolution of this requirement so that a uniform approach can be adopted and programme implementation does not become contingent on the speed of the PC-1 approval process.

Institutional Relationships.

WFP's institutional relationships with the Government do little to facilitate the implementation of the CP. Its primary counterpart is the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MinFAL), whose involvement in WFP's programmes is marginal. It is important for WFP to find an appropriate institutional berth within the agencies of Government. The structure of Government, where the federal Government only acts as a coordinating agency and the Provincial Government plays a more important implementing role, implies that WFP, from the perspective of the federal Government, is primarily a source of external assistance. It would consequently be more appropriate for WFP to establish a new counterpart in the Government either with the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) of the Ministry of Finance or with the Planning Commission. This same recommendation was also made in 1994 in the evaluation of WFP in Pakistan undertaken by the Chr. Michelson Institute, Norway, but no action was taken.

At the same time, WFP's working relationships with the Provincial Government need to be strengthened. This implies not only the establishment of closer links with the implementing line agencies of the Provincial Government, but also a closer link with the Provincial Planning and Development (P&D) Departments. It would not be enough to leave that role to the provincial offices established by WFP. WFP Islamabad should establish direct and regular programming relationships with the P&D Departments, effectively the equivalent counterpart to the EAD at the federal level.

F. WFP Performance

The adoption of the programme approach implied a more important and active role for the Country Office not only in managing the flow of food inputs and the inevitable problems in their scheduling and delivery but also in ensuring that the overall objectives of the programme was maintained or modified, whenever changes in the policy environment made this necessary. Overall programme implementation, however, has been less than satisfactory. Although labelled as a programme, the interventions were implemented almost as discrete projects. The CPD itself lacked any overall description of goals to help in designing the interventions. Implementation of the different elements of the programme was carried out independently and there was little qualitative change from WFP's own perspective after the introduction of the programme approach. Despite the retrospective adoption of the interventions under a CP (almost midway through the programme period), no attempt was made by WFP to review progress at "mid-term".

In addition, the absence of a full-time Country Director resulted in inadequate attention to overall programme implementation. To its credit, the Country Office effectively managed the delivery delays and shortfalls in the level of WFP resources, but its contribution towards resolving difficulties originating on the Government's side was insufficient. This arose principally because of a lack of contact at a sufficiently senior level between the Country Office and the Government due to the evolution of a situation whereby the role of the Country Director was combined with that of the Regional Director. In addition, the expectation that benefit monitoring and impact assessments would provide mid-course corrections to programme interventions failed to materialise and the information generated from M&E was not adequately utilised for programme adjustment⁵.

G. Government Performance

As already discussed in the section on Institutional Relationships, MinFAL is the WFP counterpart for all the activities, also those related to the social sector, i.e., health and education. As this Ministry is not otherwise involved in these sectors, programme implementation has been affected, in particular with regard to staffing issues. Government counterpart contributions have also been delayed. Performance on this front

⁵ Thus, for instance M&E personnel for the health interventions were recruited two to three years after the programme began implementation.

has, however, varied between provinces. Although allocations in the social sector should be protected from reductions due to budgetary revisions according to the Government's policy guidelines, this has sometimes not been so. A recent directive from the Federal Government has confirmed that WFP-supported interventions are protected from such downward revisions in the same manner as the SAP supported programmes.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

As the first in a series of efforts by WFP to move into a programme approach, the Pakistan Country Programme has achieved some efficiency in the allocation and utilisation of resources. In the light of a varying overall resource availability, this was commendable. The components of the Programme were also well integrated within Government plans and donor programmes. However, in terms of the Programme's overall target orientation, impact and sustainability, the results have been variable. While the full impact of interventions in natural resource management will only become evident at a later stage, also the immediate effects are not very clear. Despite some indications of increased availability of firewood and fuelwood, studies indicate that the NRM interventions had been dominated by land owners. As a result, it is difficult to establish that benefits from the creation of common property assets would accrue to, and continue to benefit, the primary target group - the poor and landless.

In contrast, while the full impact of improved attendance at schools will only be seen in the long term, evidence indicates that school enrolments have increased. However, with respect to health, it is doubtful that there has been any sustained increase on levels of attendance at health centres. Thus, there is a need to reassess the health interventions in terms of programme objectives, scope, contents and operational modalities. Programme impact would have been better if efficient linkages with other development partners had been forged. This was particularly important for the social sector interventions. Programme implementation would also have been considerably improved if more active and direct relationships could have been established between WFP and the concerned line agencies in the Provincial Government.

The first recommendations reflect those that have a bearing on the overall Country Programme and are, therefore, related to the sectoral interventions. The concluding recommendation focuses on aspects concerning the specific activities.

1. **Intervention Design and Partnerships.** Programme interventions need to be considered in a broader context, not necessarily limited to WFP's role alone. As a consequence, a proactive effort is needed to establish partnerships with other donor agencies to support WFP operations. Efforts need to be made so that the appropriate overall impact from the interventions is achieved. Consequently, interventions need to be somewhat more comprehensive in their objectives. There is a need to look, in the case of the social sectors, beyond the immediate objectives of attracting students to schools and women to health centres, and consider also the improvement of the quality of services provided.
2. **Community Participation.** There is need for greater **community involvement and participation.** This implies that programme interventions must include an advocacy campaign aiming at better integration with the local and evolving institutional environment. Thus, efforts should be undertaken to **inform and involve**, where available, village and district health committees, local mosque committees, parent-teacher associations, women's committees, etc.
3. **Targeting.** Geographic targeting should be refined to allow selection of district subdivisions or tehsils (administrative units). To support this, the VAM Unit of the Country Office must gather and maintain more precise information.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** M&E needs to include monitoring and analyses of progress towards the objectives of project interventions. It should include strengthening linkages with information collected by other agencies such as HMIS in the case of health and EMIS in education. WFP field monitoring

should be strengthened through recruitment of additional female staff and greater use of standardized checklists and the identification of appropriate performance indicators.

5. **WFP Operational Relationships.** As a funding agency, WFP's counterpart at the national/federal level should be the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance or the Planning Commission. The current linkage with the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock needs to be changed. Operational relationships (annual programming and review exercises) need to be established with the Provincial P&D Departments. The establishment of a close relationship with these units would also allow the formulation of five-year PC-is to reflect the degree of flexibility in resource allocation that the programme approach implicitly requires.
6. **Phase-out conditions:** Given the limited capacity of WFP and the Government, and in order to avoid creating dependency, each intervention should be time-bound. Specific targets need to be established, and withdrawal decisions should depend on achievement of, or failure to demonstrate progress towards, stated objectives.

Appendix

Summary of WFP Deliveries, Utilization, Beneficiaries and Counterpart Funding (NRM Sector)

Project 4659-Environmental Rehabilitation in Malakand Division -NWFP (Swat, Buner, Chitral)

Year	Planned Deliveries (MT)	Actual Deliveries (MT)	Actual Utilization (MT)	Beneficiaries (Nos)	Value in Million \$	Government Budget (million \$)	Non food items	
							Items	Million \$
1994-95	2300	0	200	6 030		0.04	Volvo trucks	0.047
1995-96	5000	5346.76	7788.889	13400	0.90	1.35	Computer	0.388
1996-97	9000	4520	5085.391	9122	0.76	0.97		
1997-98	8400	13145	2600	2950	2.21	0.54		
Total	24700	23011.76	15674.28	31502	3.87	2.90	Total	0.435

Project 2451 - Assistance to Tarbela and Mangla Watershed (Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kohistan, Haripur, Boner)

1994-95	10400	7500	376	2230	1.26		0.07
1995-96	10000	9656.24	8081	13570	1.62		1.29
1996-97	10000	5100	7915.58	14222	0.86		1.39
1997-98	10200	14900	6000	13913	2.50		1.16
Total	40600	37156.24	22372.13	43935	6.24		3.9

Project 4003 - Rural Development in North-East (Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Kotli, Mirpur, Bagh)

							Trucks	0.0455
1994-95	1900	0	1 104	1472		0.28	Nissan pickup	0.047
1995-96	5000		9373	10579		2.18	Hand drill machine	0.18736
1996-97	10000		5739	6788		1.47	Equipments	0.10497
1997-98	11984	17604	5567	9093	2.96	1.57	Computer	0.00318
Total	28884	17604	21783	27933	2.96	5.5	Total	0.388

Project 2309-Rural Development Works in NWFP (Kohat, Karak, Bannu, Lakkhi)

1994 95	17845	0	0	0		0.00	Volvo trucks	0.1365
1995-96	5000	0	902.22	2100		0.11	Pickups	0.072
1996-97	8000	0	517.39	850		0.07	Tractor + Tanker	0.02635
1997-98	7000	9338	750	1500	1.57	0.11		
Total	37845	9338	2169.614	4450	1.57	0.301	Total	0.23485

Project 4377 - Rural Development in Balochistan (Quetta, Pashin, Loralai, Q. Saifullah, Q. Abdullah, Musa Khel)

1994-95	2500		610	813		0.24	Pickups	0.04777
1995-96	2500		5616.667	4585		1.99		
1996-97	5000		673.913	1250		0.26		
1997-98	6000	4600	500	1000	0.77	0.21		
Total	16000	4600	7400.58	7648	0.77	2.7		0.04777

Project 4256- PRO (The deliveries were transferred to NRM)

1996-97		10000	10000	10000		Transferred to NRM
1997-98		11500	11530	11530		Transferred to NRM
Total		21500	21530	21530		

1996-97	10000	10000	10000	Transferred to NRM
1997-98	11500	11530	11530	Transferred to NRM
Total	21500	21530	21530	

Total				Beneficiaries	WFP m\$	Govt.m\$	Total (+NFI)m\$	\$ per Beneficiary
1994-95	34945	7500	2290	10545	1.26	0.618	1.231	116.745
1995-96	27500	15003	31762	44234	2.52	6.924	11.839	267.633
1996-97	52000	19620	29931	32232	3.30	4.164	7.242	224.695
1997-98	55084	71117	26947	28457	11.95	3.594	6.099	214.316
Total	169529	113240	90929	115468	19.03	15.301	26.411	228.727

*Beneficiaries are notional estimates.

Summary of WFP Deliveries, Utilization, Beneficiaries and Counterpart Funding (SAP Sector)

Project-2237/03 - Assistance to Primary Health Care

	Planned Deliveries (MT)	Actual Value of Oil Deliveries		Actual Utilization (MT)	Actual Beneficiaries (New cases) (No.)	Government* Budgets US\$	Non-food items
		(MT)	US\$				
1994-95	1,935	1,544	1,698,400	500	n.a.	335,092	100,000
1995-96	3,565	3,051	3,356,100	1,700	n.a.	352,642	
1996-97	4,500	1,679	1,846,900	2,300	n.a.	306,068	
1997-98	4,500	3,073	3,380,300	2,450	n.a.	272,768	
1998-99	4,500	2,500	2,750,000	2,500	n.a.	271,061	
TOTAL	19,000	11,847	13,031,700	9,450	-	1,537,631	100,000

Project 4185 - Promotion of Primary Education for Girls

	Planned Deliveries (MT)	Actual Value of Oil Deliveries		Actual utilization (MT)	Incremental Beneficiaries* (School Girls/ Teachers)	Government* Budgets US\$	Non-food items
		(MT)	US\$				
1994-95	683	662	728,200	275	12,000	26,227	330,000
1995-96	662	592	651,200	608	7,500	60,675	
1996-97	1,600	1,044	1,148,400	1,017	11,000	77,141	
1997-98	1,672	1,050	1,155,000	900	10,800	81,585	
1998-99	1,810	1,500	1,650,000	1,100	12,000	107,959	
TOTAL	6,427	4,848	5,332,800	3,900	53,300	353,587	330,000

ANNEX I

**TECHNICAL REPORT OF THE HEALTH SECTOR
PROJECT 2237 (Expansion 3)**

**FROM THE EVALUATION OF THE WFP PAKISTAN COUNTRY
PROGRAMME**

OEDE REVISED DRAFT

August 1999

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Annex: Estimating demands for oil at assisted centres

1. INTRODUCTION

In November-December 1998 a mission was sent to Pakistan to evaluate the WFP Pakistan Country Programme (CP). The present report covers project 2237 (Expansion 3), a component of that programme included in the evaluation.

A variety of documents were assembled by the Country Office for the mission's use. Among these, the 1996 *Progress Report of Project Pakistan 2237 (Exp. 3)* (with the new project definition), *A Mid-Term Report On Health for SAP Mission (Sept 1998)*, a report of a household consumption study conducted by Dataline Services (PVT) Ltd. in July 1998, *Evaluation of the World Food Programme: Case Study - Pakistan 1994*, prepared by the Chr. Micheslen Institute and maps prepared by the WFP Pakistan Country Office Vulnerability and Mapping (VAM) Unit.

In September-October 1998, as preparation for the Evaluation mission, the WFP Country Office M&E Unit collected qualitative and quantitative data from 45 assisted centres. Data were assembled using district, centre, female health worker, and beneficiary level questionnaires. This study is referred to as the "M&E study" in this document.

The mission visited five assisted health centres in two districts of NWFP - Swat and Dir - and one district in Punjab Province -Kasur. These visits focused on discussions with the Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) at the centres. Also, Lady Health Workers (LHWs) or trained Dais (Traditional Birth Attendants) accompanied us during home visits to present and former project beneficiaries.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The CP stated that WFP development interventions would focus on improvements of access of mothers and children to primary health care. Targeting was to be based on geographic mapping of poverty and food insecurity which were said to correlate closely with gender disparities in health indices.

Under the original plan of operations, Project 2237 would supply a food basket of five commodities for nutritional support to women and children beneficiaries. Before implementation of Expansion 3 in 1995, because of difficulties with project operations, the project was redesigned. The new design simplified distribution and reduced transport costs by limiting the food basket to a single high-value commodity - edible oil. Objectives were modified to focus on the promotion of key MCH services. The number of assisted health centres was reduced.

The project objectives were therefore:

Long-term: To assist the Government of Pakistan in its efforts to promote primary health care in rural areas and urban slums.

Short-term: i) to promote the attendance of poor expectant mothers at health centres and ii) to promote the use of specific primary health care services.

Mother/infant pairs were the beneficiaries of the project. Women could be registered as beneficiaries when pregnancy was confirmed. Women were entitled to 2 tins (4-5 kg) of oil before delivery and the mother/infant pairs to 2 more tins after delivery. A woman was eligible for her first tin when the pregnancy was confirmed and a tetanus vaccination (TT1) had been given, if needed¹. She would receive a second tin after the sixth month of pregnancy when a second tetanus vaccine (TT2) was given, if needed¹. The third tin

¹ After 5 correctly spaced TT vaccinations a woman has lifelong immunity.

was due after delivery when the infant was weighed and received a BCG vaccination. The fourth tin was to be received when the infant was given DPT protection.

The project was "redesigned to use food aid as an investment in the development of human resources" to achieve the objectives stated above. Oil was to be transferred to women as an incentive (income transfer) in support of food security at the household level. The timing of oil distribution was linked to periods of maximum nutritional risk, but the project had no nutritional objectives.

According to the 1996 Progress Report, selection was to include rural areas and urban slums where public health conditions were poor and attendance of women at health centres was low. Within targeted areas selection of individual centres required that they had available basic PHC services: EPI, family planning, and a female staff member to provide MCH services. Every pregnant woman who attended an assisted centre and received the required services was entitled to register for WFP oil. No criterion for withdrawal of assistance from a centre was defined.

Planned oil deliveries by WFP to the port in Karachi were based on the costs of the five commodities originally committed to the project. According to the 1996 Progress Report this was a total of 19,000 tons over five years: 1,935 tons in 1995, 3,565 tons in 1996, and 4,500 tons during each year 1997-1999. Notable is that the schedule of commodity supply did not allow for growth in attendance during these years.

The Provincial Governments had responsibility to move the oil from Karachi to Provincial stores, District offices, and health centres. At the federal level Governmental staff was to include a full time Deputy National Project Director and Assistant Director (from the Ministry of Health) who would coordinate among provinces and provide logistic support. In each province, there would be a Provincial Deputy Project Director. At the District level the District Health Officer (DHO) was to be responsible for supervision of the project, and a full time storekeeper was to receive oil from the Provincial stores and disseminate it to the centres. At the health centre a trained female staff member - either a Lady Health Visitor (LHV), Female Medical Technician (FMT) or Woman Medical Officer (WMO) - would manage the oil stock and distribute oil to beneficiaries when they received MCH care.

With the implementation of the new strategy, monitoring of the project was to be strengthened with the establishment of a SAP (Social Action Programme) unit staffed by a programme manager and five field officers, one based in each province, and two monitoring and evaluation officers. WFP took responsibility for project support, including training of counterpart personnel in the new strategy, project implementation, recording and reporting systems, and food management. When the 1996 Progress Report was prepared, a system for beneficiary contact monitoring (BCM) had already been instituted to assess project impact and M&E workshops for project authorities were underway to review monitoring results, strategies and future plans.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Targeting

The redesigned project was initiated in 650 centres during 1995. In 1996 more centres were selected to bring the total to 980. Assistance was extended to all four provinces and in Jammu and Kashmir and included 87 of the 120 districts in the country. Within districts 20-25 percent of centres were assisted. At the time of the mission, the Country Office, in cooperation with the Provincial and District Governments, planned to reduce the number of assisted districts and to increase coverage of centres within district. This change was intended to reduce the geographic area to facilitate monitoring.

Most WFP-assisted centres were Basic Health Units (BHU), the lowest level of health care centres. According to the WFP Country Office, selection of BHUs helps to refine targeting to the neediest population

in selected areas because only the poorest use these services. Those who were better off would use private services. However, in order to maintain a presence in districts where no BHUs had services sufficient to meet selection criteria - particularly female staff members higher level facilities, such as Rural Health Centres (RHC) or Civil Hospitals, were selected. The catchment populations of these centres is many times larger than that of BHUs. The one RHC visited by the mission was in a relatively well-off community. In this document "health centres" is used generically to refer to all types of health service centres that were assisted by WFP.

Geographic:

The 1998 Mid-Term Report stated that targeting was primarily to rural poor areas. Urban slums, which were included in the targeting description in the 1996 Progress Report, were not mentioned. The Mid-Term Report described the selection of project areas as being based on the extent of "backwardness in terms of level of socio-economic development". As part of the M&E study, District Project Directors (DPDs) reported that poverty was the main criteria for selection, tempered by the need to meet implementation criteria: female staff, low use of the health facility, availability of EPI, and physical accessibility for transport of commodities.

Using a VAM map showing districts that were supported by WFP health activities, 60 of the 87 assisted districts were identified. Using a second map that showed Food Security Zones, these districts were listed under each of the different categories of food security. More than half of the districts came from zones classified as food secure: about one third of the districts (21) were in rainfed, semi-arid zones, 10 districts were in zones of sufficient food production and 3 fell in zones of food surplus.

Health services

With regard to compliance with criteria for basic PHC services at selected health centres, among the 44 centres monitored for the M&E Study, in Sindh two of the ten centres did not have family planning services and in Baluchistan two of the nine centres did not have EPI services.

Individual beneficiaries

All eligible beneficiaries had not received the oil to which they were entitled - even when there was oil in the centres. At project start-up, because some district offices realized that the quantities of oil they were sending to the centres could not serve all eligible women, LHVs were instructed to limit distributions to 30 tins per month, while, based on 1994 registration rates, approximately 80 tins (4 tins/woman X 20 women per distribution step²) should have been distributed from each centre per month - before there were any increases in attendance. To limit beneficiaries to 30 or to make stocks stretch, LHVs often added selection criteria to limit the number of beneficiaries: women's relative need, stage of pregnancy (promoting return visits near delivery), number of visits, "first come, first serve" basis, and, presumably sometimes irrelevant prejudices (e.g., family/village ties).

3.2 Oil supply and delivery

WFP Supply

Quantities of oil shipped to Karachi for the project never reached the planned figures. During the period of operation (1994-1999) only about 66 percent of the planned oil deliveries reached Karachi. Also, the tins delivered were often not convenient for the project (tin sizes ranging from 3.7 kg to 10 kg). According to

² The average monthly registration of new pregnancies per centre during 1994 was 20.

plans, each beneficiary should receive four unopened tins of 5 kg each. Only about one third of the total quantity came in 5 kg tins.

Government delivery

The Provincial Governments allocate and release funds for the transport of the oil from the Provincial stores to the District offices. The funds allocated have not been sufficient and their release has been slow. Consequently, until 1998-1999, the oil that reached the Provincial stores was not moved to Districts and health centres in a timely fashion. In the past year, for the first time, the Government was able to deliver all of the oil received.

Over-commitment

The number of centres selected for assistance was not consistent with project plans. With the implementation of the project in 650 centres in 1995, the quantity of oil needed to meet the entitlements of pregnant women who were already attending the centres in 1994 (approximately 240 women/centre/year) was 3,120 tons, but planned deliveries were only 1,950 tons. When the number of centres increased to 980 in 1996, pre-project registrations projected a minimum demand for 4,700 tons of oil - i.e., even before the intended growth in attendance. Planned deliveries were less (3,565 - 4,500 tons). Based on registration rates in centres that were part of the M&E study, by 1997 the demand for oil for 980 centres had reached approximately 12,200 tons. The appendix provides more detail about calculations of the project's oil needs.

The failure on the part of WFP and the Government to deliver planned oil quantities exacerbated the over-commitment. Consequently, assisted centres had no oil for much of the time. During the period from project implementation through June 1998, based on data collected from 39 centres in the M&E study, assisted centres were without oil, on average, about one third of the time - in spite of quotas and the strategies used by LHVs to stretch supplies. None of the health centres visited by the mission had oil in stock at the time.

Distribution to beneficiaries

Less than 10 percent of the women interviewed for the M&E study had received four tins; nearly half (46 percent) had received only one. Most of the beneficiaries contacted by mission members had at least once attended the health centre and not received any oil, even though they were eligible. This was probably due to shortages of oil at the health centres.

Some LHVs have complained of the additional work generated by the WFP project. Based on conversations with LHVs during mission field visits, the complaints did not concern the additional work generated per client, but rather, in the number of clients they saw per day -particularly in the first weeks following the arrival of a new shipment after a longer period without any oil.

3.3 Non-food items

Under earlier expansions, WFP provided adult and child weighing scales to monitor weights of mothers and children. Under the redesign, scales were no longer provided. WFP provided a poster to the participating centres. It was intended as a guide and check list for the LHV as she received the beneficiaries. Some inconsistencies should be noted between the distribution schedule described in the 1996 Progress Report and that implied by the poster: the poster does not indicate that the second tin should be given after the sixth month of pregnancy; the poster indicates distribution of the fourth tin after a single DPT-1 vaccination while a series is needed for the infant's protection.

3.3 Staffing

Government counterpart

Government employees who work for the project are permanent staff. No monetary or material compensation is given to project workers. Government staff is assigned to the project as planned at National, Provincial and District levels. In particular, District Health Officers monitor the movement of oil, select health facilities for assistance, monitor health centre operations and supervise health centre staff.

MCH services in most assisted centres are provided by a LHV³. In some (about 20 percent) of the assisted centres, a WMO, FMT or nurse provides MCH services. Since the start of the project the relevant posts have been vacant in assisted centres, on average, 2-5 months per year. The female health worker distributes the oil tins to the beneficiaries when they come for their examination and maintains the oil stock records.

Originally the MOs at the health centres had no role in the project, but they have been enlisted to mediate between the female staff member and the community, e.g. when problems arise concerning beneficiary eligibility. They now also review and sign the LHVs' monthly reports so that they are aware of the status of oil stocks and can confirm to the community when stores are empty. Suspected cases of mismanagement or poor quality of services have been referred to the National Deputy Project Director Office to be dealt with according to Government procedures.

The biggest complaint about Government staff heard from the WFP staff was the rapid turnover at the District level. At the level of the BHU, turnover is less frequent. The M&E study reports that in the studied centres, the LHVs who were interviewed had worked, on average, three years in the same post.

WFP

As planned, a SSAP (Support to Social Action Programme) Unit was established in the WFP Country Office, Islamabad. It deals with both the health and education components of the CP. A male field monitor works from each of four sub-offices located in the Provincial capitals. The fifth field officer, a woman, operates from the Islamabad office. There are plans to hire two more female field monitors for the SSAP Unit.

3.4 Linkages

To the Government health system

The health policy of the Government of Pakistan emphasizes preventive health care and the promotion of its use. Achieving the project's objectives depends on the accomplishment of the aims of the Government's Social Action Programme to improve the quality of first level health care facilities, particularly the improvement of preventive services encompassing immunization, maternal and child health services, family planning and the Lady Health Workers programme.

The health system of Pakistan has evolved during the operation of the most recent expansion of Project 2237. Notable is the implementation of the Lady Health Workers programme approximately two years ago. LHWs are female lay workers recruited and trained to serve in their own communities. Each LHW makes monthly home visits to women and provides an important link to the women in the community, particularly where homes are remote from the BHUs. They are equipped to monitor growth of preschoolers, to provide

³ *The Lady Health Visitor is a staff member that works from the health centres. She does not, as her title suggests, visit homes except rarely. Services she provides in homes - e.g., assistance to home deliveries - are not considered part of her regular duties, and she will generally expect payment from the household.*

family planning advice and devices, to dispense basic medications and supplements, and to make referrals as needed. Their activities in the communities have efficiently served and informed women, many of whom, living in *pardah*, get little information from outside their home. In some centres, LHVs and LHWs have formed powerful alliances to promote MCH services. LHWs encourage pregnant women to come to the health centres to register, check on registered women who do not show up for appointments, and facilitate attendance by accompanying women to the health centres or minding children at home so that the women can move. It seems that this programme has had an impact on women's attendance at health centres that is independent of the WFP oil distribution. Indeed, the LHW programme was not operational when the redesigned project began and, therefore, this activity was not included among selection criteria for centres.

Data from the Mother Health Registries kept at health centres include names of all women who received MCH services - regardless of whether or not they received oil. These data are entered into the Government Health Management Information System (HMIS). WFP staff regard these data as unreliable and of questionable validity. Consequently, although they would be useful for monitoring and interpreting changes in attendance at assisted BHUs and for choosing districts and BHUs for assistance, they have not been used by WFP.

Other agencies

The Government of Sweden provided some trucks and pickups to facilitate transportation of oil and project monitoring in NWFP. Generally speaking, in the implementation of this project, there have been no operational links to activities of other UN agencies or NGOs. A major reason for this may be that WFP's geographic coverage is broader than any other agency's work area.

3.5 Community participation

Project 2237 does not include any provision for informing or enlisting the community at large in the project. Yet, there are several reasons why educating and gaining the support of the larger community would be advantageous to the project's outcome and operation:

In most of Pakistan, either a woman's husband, her mother-in-law or both, are critical to her freedom to travel to health units. Not convinced or unaware of the importance of pre-natal care, other family members have no motivation to facilitate women's attendance. Therefore, once the oil incentive is withdrawn, attendance is not likely to be sustained.

Relying on an approach to change social attitudes through young women is inefficient since these women have little influence in most Pakistani communities. Informing and educating the community, in particular religious leaders and other respected members, of the importance of MCH care should more rapidly influence social attitudes, and the current project would have greater chance of success.

In some communities distrust and bad feelings toward the LHVs developed because the community did not understand the strategy for oil distribution. The enlistment of the Chief MO to support the LHV to deal with the community has helped to reduce this problem, but informing the general community before trouble occurs would be more effective. A well-informed community would also be an effective tool for reducing leakage and misuse of oil.

Quality of services

Relevance of service quality

Statements in the 1994 *Evaluation of the World Food Programme* emphasized the important relationship between the quality of health services and their use. In the BCM reports collected for the M&E study, only

40 percent of the 432 respondents responded to a question about why they did not attend the nearest health centre. The 173 women who responded gave 268 reasons.

Nearly half (130) of these reasons related to the lack of availability of services or the absence of or dissatisfaction with health centre staff. Another 34 responses indicated that women were asked to pay for services, which should have been free. Problems of transport to or distance from the centres accounted for the next largest category of responses (95) with time demand being an infrequent response (3).

Delivery of health messages

At each stage, the mother should receive relevant health education messages concerning breast feeding, immunization, child health and nutrition, and family planning. The women should be encouraged to seek early registration of pregnancy to benefit from preventive health care. BCM from the M&E Study included a question asking beneficiaries what special advice the LHV gave them during their visits. More than one-third (36 percent) of them did not remember hearing any special advice. Among the other 64 percent, most remembered advice about vaccinations (54 percent), diet during pregnancy (39 percent), and family planning (28 percent). Less frequently they remembered advice about iron supplements (15 percent), breast feeding (15 percent) and child feeding (6 percent).

Mission discussions with the LHVs about health messages showed a similar pattern in emphasis. The undersupply of oil to the health centres has apparently undermined the acceptance of health messages delivered by the LHVs. Some of the LHVs who spoke with the mission members said that their inability to deliver tins as promised had damaged their credibility with clients and the community at large.

EPI Services

The national programme director for EPI said that vaccinators were the biggest barrier to success of the EPI programme. Nearly all vaccinators are men and, consequently, women are not permitted to use the services of the mobile teams due to social and family constraints. As an experiment in Sindh, LHWs have been trained as vaccinators to take the services to the women.

The success of LHW vaccinators had not yet been completely evaluated. There had been some problems with abscesses resulting from poor injections. LHVs have more education than do vaccinators, but their normal training does not include giving injections. Some have requested and received such training. The national director felt that the EPI programme could finance the training for LHVs if they requested it.

Adequacy of resources for MCH services

To check the capacity for performance of MCH services at assisted centres, the M&E study asked for subjective opinions about levels of supply of relevant vaccines and iron tablets. Vaccine supplies were considered by the LHV as satisfactory in most cases. DPT supplies were most problematic in the Punjab. There were no iron tablets at nearly half of the centres. None of the centres visited by the mission had iron supplements in stock. Anaemia is prevalent in Pakistan, affecting about 45 percent of pregnant women. The posters were missing and scales were missing or were not working in about a quarter of the centres.

Training of health service providers

Topics of WFP-sponsored training have been limited to project objectives, reporting, distribution strategies, and identification of the type of health messages to be passed. The content of health messages and other technical training, e.g. about pre- and post-natal examinations, birthing, infant feeding, maternal diet, immunization, and family planning, were to be accomplished under the Government's SAP. WFP does not monitor project staff members' attendance at such training. The relevant knowledge of the LHVs encountered by the mission was variable. As examples of

the differences: one could not accurately read the infant weighing scale while another had created educational posters that were more informative than those provided by the Government.

Supervision

The Chief MO at the centre is the LHV's immediate supervisor but this supervision appears to be passive. Monitoring of the quality of centre services is the responsibility of the DHOs, who are hampered by lack of funds for transportation. In some districts the LHVs gather at the district health office monthly for supervision.

3.6 Reporting

WFP provided LHVs with ration cards for the beneficiaries, a registry for recording the names of beneficiary women and the reason for receiving the oil (i.e., registration, TT2, BCG, DPT), as well as forms for monthly reports of stock levels and the total number of each type of tin distributed. The centre MO verifies and signs the LHV's monthly reports before they are sent to the district office. The reports from the health centres are summarized at the district level with quarterly and annual reports to Provincial Government offices and WFP sub-offices. Deliveries to and from the districts during the year are also summarized in the same report. From the WFP registry and reports it is impossible to know how many women are beneficiaries or how many tins are received per beneficiary⁴.

3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

Established processes of M&E

The project relies on the Government health system to monitor and supervise the quality of the services at the BHUs. The M&E Unit in the WFP Country Office has developed and supported processes for monitoring project implementation. The system relies on data collected from centres during visits by WFP field monitors. Report forms for district, centre, and beneficiary level monitoring for use by field monitors on these visits were recently revised, and a questionnaire for LHVs was added. The new forms expand the information collection, particularly at the LHV and beneficiary level.

Weaknesses of this system are that, BCM, by definition, excludes women who are eligible but do not benefit. Thus, the current approach does not provide information about why some women do not attend or how often non-beneficiaries attend or use MCH services. Also, consistent with the absence of consideration of the broader community in the project design, monitoring processes do not include interviews with LHWs, men or older women, which could give additional insight to household and community factors that foster or deter project performance and progress towards objectives.

There has never been a comprehensive examination of progress towards project objectives, nor has any system for regular monitoring of progress been initiated. The few evaluations have been based on special studies of selected centres.

Centre-level indicators useful in progress monitoring or evaluation could be derived from the Government's HMIS Mother Health Register (e.g. average number of pre-natal visits per beneficiary, registered pregnancies with deliveries assisted by a trained attendant, average number of post-natal visits, etc.). However, based on the HMIS registries at the few centres visited by the mission, data records are incomplete, particularly with regard to information about delivery, birth outcomes and post-natal care. Also,

⁴ Beneficiaries' names are entered each time that they come. There is no way of showing on the registry whether a woman has ever received a tin before.

data entry and delivery in a digital form to WFP may take too long to be useful for routine monitoring. No available data for monitoring the delivery of family planning devices was identified by the mission.

Due to the culture, beneficiary monitoring must be done by female staff. At the time of the mission WFP relied on female staff based in Islamabad (including the M&E staff) to go to the field when called by the district field monitors. With the planned addition of the two female field monitors, WFP estimates that at most 40 percent of the assisted centres from 1999 would be visited annually. There was no systematic approach to choosing which centres were monitored, so it is likely that there has been a selection bias in favor of centres that were most accessible.

4. PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES

4.1 The incentive value of vegetable oil

According to a recent household consumption study that sampled 1,200 rural and 600 urban households⁵, a fat source is regularly purchased in 96 percent of rural households. Thus it can be presumed that cooking fat is a useful and desirable commodity to households⁵. The M&E study's BCM reports that most of 429 beneficiaries (94 percent) used the oil they received in their homes, and 38 percent reported that the receipt of oil was their primary reason for visiting the centre. This was consistent with reports from beneficiaries interviewed by the mission spoke. However, comments from beneficiaries and LHVs indicate that once the oil incentive is withdrawn, women will not attend.

4.2 Objective i: Promoting women's attendance

Based on the numbers of tins distributed at the four different steps, oil has less power to draw women to the health centre during the post-natal period. Muslim women normally observe a 40day confinement period after delivery, from which only a very strong motivator could draw them.

The BCG should be given to infants immediately after birth, so the third tin could be given during the first week after delivery. Because they respect the confinement period, some LHVs will give the third tin to any person who brings the infant with proof of a BCG vaccination. Thus, the mother does not attend. Even though the DPT-1 is given six weeks after delivery, beyond the 40 day confinement, some LHVs nevertheless will give the fourth tin to anyone who brings the infant. In most areas women do not have to come to the health centre to have their infants vaccinated because another family member can bring the infant to the mobile teams.

The mission used data collected by the M&E study to look for relationships between oil distribution and attendance rates. Registrations of pregnant women for MCH services was the indicator chosen from these data for this examination. Among the 44 centres studied there were 23 that had continuous registration data from 1994 through June 1998. Average monthly registration in terms of the percentage of expected pregnancies was calculated for each calendar year. Looking at the averages for all centres together there has been a rise in attendance. However, when attendance at individual centres was examined, higher attendance and oil distribution were not consistently related. Therefore, the observed overall increases may be due to other factors - such as the addition of female staff, the activities of the LHWs in the communities, or other general improvements in PHC services - and not to the oil incentives.

⁵ *Pakistan household consumption study for iron and vitamin A fortification and supplementation, Draft final report prepared by Dataline services (PVT) Ltd, for Social Marketing Pakistan, July 1998*

4.3 Objective ii: Promoting selected health services

Based on the timing and key educational messages identified by the WFP poster and stated in the progress report, the specific services to be promoted are presumably: pre-natal medical examinations, TT vaccination, delivery with a trained attendant, BCG vaccination, post-natal examination of the infant, infant DPT vaccination, and receipt of family planning devices. There are notable weaknesses in the current design for promoting some of these services:

Pre-natal examinations: If a woman who has not received enough TT vaccine to have immunity (the majority) registers early in pregnancy (i.e., month 4 or 5) and receives her TT-1 and TT-2 four weeks apart, according to recommendations, she has received both tins well before delivery, and may not return for critical examinations during months 7 and beyond.

Attended delivery: No oil incentive encourages delivery with a trained attendant. Only health messages support this practice, and these may be interpreted by beneficiaries as an attempt by LHVs to promote their own income since LHVs and trained TBAs nearly always expect (or demand) payment for services provided away from the health centre.

DPT immunization: The oil incentive covers only the initiation of the DPT series, not the "protection" of the infant, which requires the completion of the series.

Family planning: Allowing oil incentives to women during two or three closely spaced pregnancies confounds the message of family planners by "rewarding" pregnancy.

From the M&E study BCM from 273 mothers included information about their use of the PHC services during their period of entitlement. More than half (55 percent) had visited the health centre three or more times during pregnancy, and nearly all (97 percent) had received tetanus vaccinations. Most women (69 percent) delivered with a trained attendant - a trained dai, a LHV/WMO/FMT, or a doctor. The remainder (31 percent) were attended by an untrained dai or a relative.

The reported use of infant services was poorer. BCG vaccinations were received by a little more than half (54 more) of the children and DPT1 by only 39 percent. Forty-four percent of the women said their children had received no vaccinations or weight monitoring. The mission had no data to compare these rates of usage to those in other health centres that were not assisted by WFP.

To examine changes in PHC usage associated with oil distribution, an exercise similar to that done with registration could be done with EPI data and other indicators such as the rate of deliveries assisted by trained attendants, or average numbers of pre- or postnatal visits. 4.4 The value of oil as an instrument of income transfer

Using recent market prices, the value of a 5 kg tin of vegetable oil was 250-300 Rs (per WFP Country Office staff). However, vegetable oil is consumed in the beneficiaries' homes, not converted to cash. It presumably replaces ghee, the most commonly used fat source, in some preparations. In this case the household savings is the cost of the ghee, which is slightly higher. From the household consumption study, 78 percent of rural households annually purchase Banaspati ghee (commercially produced), which costs 300-340 Rs for 5 kg, and 16 percent purchase desi ghee (locally produced), which costs even more.

Therefore, the distribution of four 5 kg tins over a six month period (from 4th month of pregnancy to 40 days post delivery), contributes the equivalent of 165-225 Rs/month. Based on an assessment presented in the 1996 Progress Report, this amounted to 8-10 percent of the monthly income of poor families at that time. However, most of the oil received has been packaged in tins holding 4 kg or less. Four 4 kg tins over six months equate to a transfer of about 135-180 Rs/month.

4.5 A note about nutrition

This project has no nutritional objectives. Yet, among WFP and Government staff, there was a tendency to allude to the nutritional value of the oil that is distributed and to view the food aid as a support to maternal nutrition. Given the high rates of low birth weights (25-30 percent), maternal anaemia (45 percent), IDD (72 percent of new-borns with low levels of iodine), and underweight under-5s (34-45 percent) in the country⁶, the need for nutritional intervention is defensible, but the current project design does not address these problems. The previous design was more useful for promoting nutritional improvements, but it proved unmanageable.

There would be a nutritional advantage to using wheat instead of oil as the single commodity for income transfer: the energy content of an income equivalent of wheat is 2.6 times that of oil. A beneficiary's entitlement of oil used over a 180 day period (the approximate period over which the four tins should be distributed) provides only 250 kcal/day, while the income equivalent of wheat would provide 650 kcal/day. Also, a beneficiary's entitlement would provide 17.2 kg of protein (96 kcal/day) while oil provides none.

However, to provide the current income transfer using wheat instead of oil, tonnage would have to be multiplied approximately seven times. The cost to WFP would be only 21 percent more than provision of oil since wheat is less expensive, but the transportation costs paid by the Government of Pakistan would increase dramatically. Also, health centres would need larger and better food storage facilities.

According to the Dataline household consumption study, about 42 percent of rural households purchase all of the wheat they consume and another 15 percent purchase part of their household consumption. The rest eat only wheat they produce or receive as payment for work or as charity. Wheat, therefore, may have less general incentive value. On the other hand, the use of wheat as an incentive might be a means of improving targeting the food aid to those who are truly food insecure.

5. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General discussion and recommendation for new assistance

The selection of too many health centres for assistance and shortfalls on the part of both WFP and the Government of Pakistan in meeting commitments for oil delivery have left assisted centres grossly under-resourced. Therefore, the potential effectiveness of food aid as an incentive to increase women's use of PHC services at health centres in rural Pakistan can not be accurately judged.

The mission used data from 21 assisted centres to look for relationships between oil distribution and rates of registrations of pregnant women. Judging from pooled data from the centres, there has been a rise in attendance at centres since project implementation. However, when data from individual centres were examined, higher registrations and periods of oil distribution were not consistently related. Therefore, the observed overall increases may be due to other factors.

Anecdotal evidence, including beneficiary comments, indicate that unless communities are made aware of the need for pre- and post-natal care for women and their infants, and women are satisfied with the service they receive at the health centres, any promotional effects of oil incentives are not likely to be sustained.

Activities to increase men's knowledge of women's health and to alleviate social constraints to women's attendance at health centres are generally missing from both the WFP project and the Government's health plan. Men are important contributors to household decisions about whether or not women attend health centres and use PHC services. Social attitudes influence both men's and women's decisions.

⁶ Indicator values taken from *Women's Health in Pakistan, Fact Sheets, prepared for Pakistan National Forum on Women's Health, 1997*

Improvements in the PHC delivery at the health centres are needed. All health staff need on-going training and consistent supervision, and more female health workers are needed in the Basic Health Units (BHUs). WFP does not have the expertise to technically support improvements to health care but could facilitate supervision and technical training for staff from assisted centres by Government, UN or NGO bodies.

The recent (1996) addition of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) in communities has provided a vital communication link to women at home. In some centres LHV and LHWs have formed powerful alliances to promote MCH services. It seems that this programme has had an impact on women's attendance at health centres that is independent of the WFP oil distribution, and it shows promise of sustaining motivation and providing support to women so that they continue to attend.

The original project design had nutritional objectives, but the implementation proved too difficult. Nevertheless, rates of low birth weights, stunting, and maternal and child anaemia, are higher in Pakistan than in neighbouring countries at similar levels of economic development. Poor access to food-economically or logistically - by segments of the population and detrimental dietary practices are important underlying causes.

Recommendations:

- Before renewing this project, there should be a thorough assessment of different ways in which food aid could be used to support the health and nutrition of women and children in Pakistan. This assessment should:
- Consider whether, given changes in PHC delivery - particularly the introduction of the LHW programme - the current project objectives to promote the use of MCH services are still appropriate;
- Consider nutritional applications of food aid in conjunction with or instead of promotion of health care use;
- Consider how food aid could be used to enhance other Government, NGO or UN agencies' projects that support health and nutrition;
- During 1999, critically examine changes in attendance and service usage following an improved implementation of the current project - looking for evidence of progress that can be attributed to the effects of the oil incentive and identifying characteristics of communities in which food aid incentives are most and least effective.

Recommendations concerning the implementation of project 2237

Implementation shortfalls have handicapped project 2237. These problems largely stem from the failure to maintain adequate oil supplies at the assisted health centres. To compensate for the shortage of oil, Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) have deviated from beneficiary selection criteria and distribution schedules. Few beneficiaries have received their full entitlement, even if they attended according to schedule. LHVs' inability to deliver oil as promised has reduced their credibility and created bad feelings in the communities they serve. Peaks in attendance that follow the arrival of oil have overburdened the LHVs and affected their delivery of health messages.

There are also other implementation problems unrelated to oil supply, e.g. inconsistent and weak health messages.

The mission examined the evolution of registration rates before, during, and after periods of oil availability at assisted centres. There was no consistent evidence that the project has increased attendance significantly, or that increases would be sustained after withdrawal. Based on impressions of project and M&E staff and observations in the field, oil incentives may be least effective in communities where women must travel long distances and transportation is expensive, especially if there are also strong social traditions against women

traveling alone. Incentives may be more effective where it is primarily ignorance that prevents women's attendance at the centres.

Conclusions and recommendations, presented by categories of implementation, are summarized as follows:

5.1 Commodity choice

Oil appears to be a good food commodity to serve as an incentive in rural Pakistan. The use of iron-fortified wheat flour as an incentive would provide greater nutritional support to mothers and their unborn children during pregnancy and to lactating women (more **energy, protein and iron** supplementation). Significant disadvantages of a wheat ration are the heavier transport and storage demands associated with its supply, and its potentially lower general incentive value.

Recommendation:

5.1.1 Continue to use oil as the incentive commodity until a reassessment of how food aid would be most effectively used in the health sector of Pakistan is accomplished.

5.2 Commodity supply and delivery

Given planned oil deliveries, too many centres have been selected for WFP assistance - more than four times the number that could be adequately supplied. Real and anticipated attendance rates have not been given adequate consideration. Further exacerbating the problem, is the fact that not all planned oil supplies were delivered due to failures on the part of WFP or the Provincial Government.

Recommendations

5.2.1 The number of assisted centres should be reduced to align with anticipated oil deliveries. (probably < 200 centres).

5.2.2 Distribution of the oil among the assisted centres should be based on the expected number of pregnancies (four percent of catchment population), current attendance, anticipated increases in attendance, and attendance goals. District Health Officers (DHOs) and District Storekeepers should be trained to calculate the resources needed at individual centres and should distribute oil among assisted centres accordingly. If less oil than planned is delivered to a district office, they should be prepared to rationally adjust the number of centres so that all assisted centres receive an ample supply.

5.3 Targeting

The selection of some assisted districts is questionable in terms of socio-economic levels and food insecurity. The inclusion of health facilities at a higher level than BHU is questionable. Adherence to minimum requirements for PHC service availability at selected centres has not been 100 percent. No criterion for withdrawal of assistance from a centre was defined.

At assisted centres not all eligible women have benefited from the project, and those who have benefited have not received their full entitlement. This was because the health centres were not supplied sufficient quantities of oil.

Recommendations:

- 5.3.1 As part of the reduction in the number of centres, stricter adherence to existing targeting criteria and known problems should be enforced (e.g. zones of insufficient food production or food surplus, BHUs, basic service requirements, lowest attendance rates, low turnover of project staff).
- 5.3.2 Only BHUs where there are active LHW programmes should be selected for WFP assistance.
- 5.3.3 Criteria for withdrawal from individual centres should be established (achievement of, or persistent failure in meeting attendance and service usage goals, maximum time period).

5.4 Distribution method

The placement of the responsibility of the distribution at BHUs appears to be an effective means of targeting poor women, but the current distribution schedule does not seem to include tins at times that would effectively promote women's attendance near delivery or encourage deliveries with trained attendants. The intended distribution of the third tin at the health centres less than 40 days after delivery conflicts with traditions of postpartum confinement.

Recommendation:

- 5.4.1 Modifications of the distribution schedule should be considered: to assure that pre-natal visits extend through the third trimester, to promote delivery with a trained attendant, and at least one post-natal visit following the 40-day confinement period. Using four tins, a schedule that may more effectively promote the services is to provide one tin:
 - when the woman registers during the second trimester (4-6 months),
 - when she completes a total of three visits during the third trimester,
 - when delivery is assisted by a trained attendant and her infant is vaccinated against BCG,
 - when the child's DPT series is initiated.

A fifth tin could be added when the infant has completed the **DPT and OPV** series. This should be about six months after delivery -a good time to reinforce family planning messages and to discuss complementary feeding. For even greater impact, both parents could be required to attend and receive family planning education in order to get the fifth tin. The WFP poster should be modified to reflect changes.

5.5 Staffing

The performance of Government staff is diminished by rapid turnover. New personnel cannot immediately be capable of supporting the project optimally. District Government staff do not have logistical support to carry out regular supervisory duties at the assisted centres. LHWs are now the primary liaisons between the health centres and women in the communities, and their effectiveness in promoting MCH care appears to be substantial. The nearly exclusive staffing of EPI teams with men is a barrier to women's use of EPI services. LHWs would be welcomed by the EPI Programme to receive training to give vaccinations.

Field monitoring by WFP is not regularly or systematically performed in all assisted centres. Even with the planned addition of two female field monitors and the planned reduction of geographic coverage, visits to less than 40 percent of assisted centres were anticipated annually.

Recommendations:

- 5.5.1 To alleviate problems related to rapid staff turnover, printed instructions for oil distribution, registration and reporting should be supplied and maintained for easy reference at each unit assisted by WFP (as a stop-gap measure until training for new staff can be scheduled).
- 5.5.2 Coordinate with the EPI programme to encourage LHVs at assisted centres to receive training for giving vaccinations.
- 5.5.3 Include LHWs in project training so that they are well informed of the project's operation.
- 5.5.4 A systematic plan for monitoring from each WFP sub-office should ensure that each assisted centre is visited at least once a year. With the reduction of the number of assisted centres to less than 200 and the planned addition of two female field monitors, even two visits per year per centre should be possible.

5.6 Linkages

The objectives of the project are in line with the Government's health policy and Social Action Programme objectives. The Government aims to improve rural health services while WFP aims to increase their use. Informational links, however, are weak. For this project WFP has no operational links with any other UN or NGO activities.

Recommendations:

- 5.6.1 When reducing the project coverage, give priority to areas where the Government or other agencies have worked or are engaged in improving health services - as long as they also meet WFP targeting criteria.
- 5.6.2 Investigate linkages with social marketing groups in Pakistan to disseminate by radio or TV messages aimed at men and women that promote the use of MCH services.
- 5.6.3 In conjunction with WFP project training, solicit and coordinate input and services from the Provincial Health Offices, UN agencies, and NGOs to conduct relevant health training sessions for DHOs, LHVs, LHWs, and Mos.
- 5.6.4 Arrange for Government training in HMIS data recording and reporting in conjunction with WFP project training.

5.7 Community participation

A significant deficiency of the project design is the absence of planned activities to inform and involve the communities served by assisted BHUs. Negative community attitudes about women travelling to health centres are a powerful detriment to attendance. Education about the importance of pre- and post-natal care that is directed solely to women cannot be expected to efficiently change social attitudes since women's social status is low.

Recommendations:

- 5.7.1 Components should be added to the project to inform and educate the community (especially, men, older women and adolescent girls), including as a minimum: project objectives, why they are important, and the protocol for oil distribution. Possible methods include: have the Chief Medical

Officer inform and remind village members in general meetings, have mobile EPI teams convey reminders of the need for MCH care at sites away from the centres, post information at key gathering points (e.g. mosques, schools), or disseminate radio or TV messages.

5.8 Quality of MCH services

The availability and quality of health services and the quality of interaction between health workers and clients appear to be important determinants of women's willingness to attend health centres.

Based on BCM from an M&E study, the high rate of repeat attendance of WFP beneficiaries during pregnancy indicates a certain level of satisfaction but the inability of more than one third of beneficiaries to remember even one general topic of advice given to them by the LHV is discouraging. Based on the M&E study, most centres had working scales and satisfactory vaccine supplies, but few had iron supplements. Supervision at the centres was infrequent (lack of logistical support for visits) .

Recommendations:

- 5.8.1 For continued support to assisted centres, the DHO should annually be required to present evidence of efforts taken to improve the quality of health care services at each centre, e.g., reports of LHV and LHW attendance at relevant training sessions and feedback from supervisory/training visits.
- 5.8.2 WFP should coordinate broader training for all project staff. Whenever staff are brought together to receive training about project objectives and operations, training in other relevant areas should also be provided (e.g. HMIS data, pre- and post-natal care, maternal diet and infant feeding, family planning, infant growth failure and underlying causes).

5.9 Reporting

Reports do not allow count of beneficiaries or the number of tins received per beneficiary. This makes it impossible to evaluate individuals' response to the project or to measure the consistency of beneficiaries' attendance during the period of entitlement.

Recommendation:

- 5.9.1 Registry and reporting processes should be modified to allow the enumeration of beneficiaries and the number of tins received per beneficiary.

5.10 Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E Unit has devised a system for monitoring that will provide consistent information about project implementation. However, this system relies solely on field visits by WFP field monitors. The annual coverage of health centres has been poor (< 40 percent). There has been no systematic approach to choosing which centres are monitored, so selection has probably been biased in favor of centres that were most accessible. There has been no process developed for general monitoring and evaluation of progress towards objectives. The Government's HMIS allows for collection of data that would support such a process, but WFP staff do not feel that these data are valid or reliable.

Recommendations:

- 5.10.1 WFP M&E staff should develop procedures for routinely monitoring and evaluating the short range and sustained effects of the incentive project on attendance and PHC service usage.

- Goals for attendance and service usage should be established in terms of indicators (e.g. number of: expected pregnancies registered, pre-natal visits, beneficiaries' infants that complete DPT vaccination series, deliveries assisted by a trained attendant, beneficiaries that accept family planning devices).
- Links to the HMIS should be strengthened to assure that registration data from assisted centres is received regularly. WFP monitoring should include examinations of **HMIS** registries. LHVs should be trained to fill the registries completely and accurately.
- Analyses should look for common characteristics of communities and health centres where oil incentives have the greatest potential for accelerating progress toward and sustaining objectives and those of communities where progress is slow. Results should be used to inform future targeting of resources.

5.10.2 WFP sub-offices should follow the processes developed by the M&E Unit to continually monitor attendance and service usage at individual centres.

Appendix: Estimating demands for oil at assisted centres

At project redesign:

According to the Country Office, when the project was redesigned, a registration figure of 20 expectant women per month per centre was estimated. In Pakistan, a figure of four percent of the population is used for planning purposes as an estimate of the expected number of pregnancies annually. Based on an average catchment population of 7,000-10,000 per BHU, the Country Office believed that there were approximately 360 new pregnancies per centre annually, or 30 per month. Using these figures, to provide a full entitlement to the women already attending the centres, 4.8 tons of oil are needed annually per centre (20 women/month X 20 kg/woman X 12 months). The 1,935 tons planned for delivery in 1995 could have met the existing demands for about 400 centres (1,935 tons/4.8 tons) and the 4,500 tons planned for 1997-1999 could have met the demand for about 935 centres. These calculations do not allow for any growth in attendance.

Based on data from the M&E study:

Reviewing population figures and HMIS data for registrations in 23 WFP-assisted centres during 1994⁷, the year before the project was initiated, the average monthly registration was 24 (20 percent of 118), close to the estimate used at project redesign. However, the calculated average catchment populations was not 7,000-10,000 as believed, but rather, more than 35,000. Thus, approximately 1,400 new pregnancies per centre could be anticipated annually. Oil requirements to serve all of these women would be 28 tons annually per centre. Given 100 percent registration, the maximum planned annual delivery of oil for the project - 4,500 tons - could serve approximately 160 centres.

Actual deliveries of oil, due to shortfalls on the part of WFP and the Government, have reached approximately 2,500 tons annually. In 1997 there was, on average, registration of 44 percent of expected pregnancies. Thus plans should include at least 12.5 tons of oil annually per centre (118 pregnant mothers X 44 percent registration X 12 months X 20 kg/registration) to meet the current demands. About 200 centres could be adequately served at current rates of oil delivery.

To accommodate growth, however, even more oil is needed at each centre. For example, to allow for 50 percent growth to 67 percent registration, planned deliveries should increase to 19 tons/year/centre, and only 132 centres could be adequately served by current deliveries.

Future planning:

Selections of districts and centres should be based on reasonable expectations of the amount of oil that will be delivered. Catchment populations, percentages of pregnancies registered and anticipated growth should be used to calculate individual centre's needs, and annual deliveries should be made accordingly.

Oil supplies at individual centres are reported monthly. District storekeepers should regularly monitor usage and make projections for usage. There should be some mechanism for storekeepers to report to District, Provincial and WFP offices when projections show that centres will end the period with either a shortage or excess of oil. If possible, movements within districts or provinces from excess to shortage areas should be made. Each year's deliveries should be based on the demands of the previous year and allow for growth.

Goals for registration are needed. 100 percent registration is probably too high. Perhaps something in the vicinity of 70-75 percent would be more reasonable. WFP and the Government health officers should together establish goals, and withdrawal from individual centres should be based on achievements of these goals. For example, BHU Bandai passed 100 percent expected registration and was dropped from the

⁷ These 23 centres were those among the 44 used in the M&E Study for which at least 7 months HMIS registration figures were available for 1994. On average registrations for 11 months were available.

project. BHU Sann would be another candidate for withdrawal if registration rates were sustained throughout 1998

ANNEX 2

TECHNICAL REPORT ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR

OEDE REVISED DRAFT

August 1999

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 - 5.2 Recommendations relating to educational activities for Afghan refugees

ACRONYMS AND LOCAL TERMS

ADEO	Assistant District Education Officer
BCM	beneficiary contact monitoring
Chowkidar	caretaker
CO	Country Office (WFP)
CP	Country Programme (WFP)
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
DEO	District Education Office/Officer
kacchi	first grade of primary education (corresponds to pre-school level)
NER	net enrolment ratio
NGO	non-governmental organization
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
pardah	segregation of post-pubescent women from all men outside their immediate family
SCP	Sub-Committee on Projects (WFP); now replaced by the WFP Executive Board
SAP	Social Action Programme
SAPP	Social Action Programme Projects
tehsil	sub-division of a district

1. Introduction

This report was prepared in the context of the evaluation of WFP's Country Programme in Pakistan and complements the full report of this evaluation. It is based on findings and information collected during field visits to Dir and Buner districts and Peshawar town in NWFP as well as Quetta district and town in Balochistan province. This included discussions with students, parents, teachers, district and provincial education officials as well as meetings with several other Government representatives. In NWFP, the mission visited one primary school in a settlement for Afghan refugees. In Islamabad, meetings were held with representatives of several UN and bilateral aid agencies. The report reviews the implementation and achievements of the educational activities carried out under the Country Programme and examines their relation with certain thematic issues which guided the work of the evaluation team on the whole.

2. Country setting and educational context

Despite relatively good economic growth, Pakistan has a very poor record in social development. Almost every social indicator ranks amongst the lowest in the developing world, even when compared to standards in South Asia which is in itself amongst the socially and educationally least developed regions. It is estimated that in 1995 only 31 percent of primary school age children were enrolled in school¹ (average for South Asia: 66 percent), and the adult literacy rate currently stands at 38 percent (South Asia: 49 percent).

The report of a 1995 UN inter-agency mission on basic education to Pakistan calculated that there were at least 8 million primary school age children in the country not enrolled in school. With an annual population growth rate of 2.8 percent this figure will rise further unless determined efforts are made to increase enrolment. Sheer access to schools thus remains a key issue in Pakistan. At the same time, even those children who do enter school are at risk of dropping out prematurely. Although there is a lack of reliable data on drop-out and completion, it is estimated that currently less than half of primary school students complete the full cycle. According to the UN inter-agency mission, only a quarter of primary school age children receive complete primary education, but even they may not all have acquired full functional literacy.

The reasons for the inefficiency of the education system include the lack and inadequacy of learning materials, overloaded curricula, poor qualification of teachers, high teacher absenteeism and poor educational management on the part of the government. The system would also greatly benefit from increased decentralization and involvement of local communities.

Gender disparities in education

Women in Pakistan suffer the most in terms of the existing social and human deprivations. Almost every educational indicator shows significant gender gaps and confirms Pakistan's position at the lowest end of the scale of female education amongst developing countries:

¹ This is the primary net enrolment ratio (NER), i.e. the number of primary students of official primary school age as percentage of the total primary school age population. The NER does not take into account over- and under-aged students.

Table 1: Gender gaps in education - comparative data

	Pakistan	South Asia
Primary NER, boys (1995)	36 %	76%
Primary NER, girls (1995)	25 %	56
Adult literacy rate, men (1995)	50 %	63
Adult literacy rate, women (1995)	24 %	37
Mean years of schooling, male (1992)	2.9	3.5
Mean years of schooling, female (1992)	0.7	1.2

Sources: UNESCO, 1996;
U1 Haq, Mahbub and Khadija Haq: Human Development in South Asia; Oxford University Press, 1998

There is some indication that female education may even have regressed over recent years; for example, the share of girls in total primary enrolment decreased from almost 42 percent in 1990 to 31 percent in 1995/96. The need to simply get children into schools is thus even more of a concern amongst girls than amongst boys. At the same time, drop-out rates for girls are also higher, and the overall completion rate for girls is reported to be half of that of boys (1995 UN inter-agency mission on basic education).

Educational opportunities for women and girls are particularly restricted in rural areas in general, and even more so in the provinces of Balochistan, NWFP and Sindh. For example, in rural Balochistan in 1996/96 only 8 percent of women could read and write, and only 11 percent in NWFP. In Balochistan, four in five school age girls were not enrolled in primary schools.

This situation can be explained by a number of factors. For example, in many rural areas there is a lack of girls' schools close enough to their homes (many parents do not want their daughters to walk long distances to school), existing school facilities are not adapted to the special needs of girls (e.g. existence of boundary walls, separate latrines, potable water supply, basic furniture) and schools often lack female teachers (most parents do not want their girls to be educated by men, particularly as they get older). Much of this is related to religious/cultural traditions which restrict the mobility of girls outside their homes (purdah). These traditions also place less value on female education, thus limiting the motivation of parents to educate their daughters. Parents also tend to withdraw girls from school when they reach puberty. This picture changes significantly where parents are themselves more educated, suggesting that gender gaps are highest amongst less educated parents (i.e. in rural areas and amongst the poorer population groups).

Demand for female education is also much more vulnerable to economic factors. A recent World Bank report² showed that poorer families are much less likely to educate their daughters than their sons since they rely more on the girls' labour at home. Amongst the lowest income groups in Balochistan, there are six boys enrolled for every girl, whereas in Pakistan as a whole this ratio is 1.5 to 1. Consequently, the report recognizes that "a strong case can be made, on both efficiency grounds (high social returns) and equity grounds (opportunities for boys and girls) for subsidizing education for girls in Pakistan."

The availability, qualification and presence of female teachers are recognized as key factors in enhancing the education of girls. However, the share of women in the primary teaching force dropped from 33 percent in 1990 to 25 percent in 1995, about half of female teachers are untrained and girls' schools often remain closed because of teacher absenteeism, particularly in rural areas. Such absenteeism is itself linked to the limited mobility of women in the context of purdah³, the difficulties of women in accepting rural postings (unless they are themselves from the area; however, there is still a lack of educated, rural girls who can

² Pakistan: Improving Basic Education - Community Participation, System Accountability and Efficiency; The World Bank, 1996

³ Teachers should preferably live at reasonable walking distance to school. Having to use public transport is not only cumbersome and against cultural norms but also represents a financial burden.

become teachers), low morale of teachers and their insufficient supervision through government officials. Greater involvement of parents in school affairs would also contribute to more supervision of teachers.

Regional differences in education

Education in Pakistan is largely decentralized, and each province has its own Education Department and budget. The federal Ministry of Education is mostly concerned with coordination and developing overall education policies.

Educational achievements in the provinces are very uneven, with Balochistan and NWFP generally being the least developed and showing the biggest gender gaps. There are also significant differences between rural and urban areas.

Educational policies and strategies

For many years, the development strategy of Pakistan was mainly directed at achieving economic growth with the idea that such growth would automatically "filter down" to the population and lead to social development. No clear strategy existed for education, and national development plans lacked focus in the education sector.

The National Education Policy (1998-2010) has set the following goals for primary education:

- raising the gross participation rate to 90 percent by the year 2002-03 and to 105 percent by 2010;
- enhancing retention and completion of the primary education cycle up to 90 percent of students (both boys and girls) by the year 2010;
- ensuring achievement of a minimum level of learning for up to 90 percent of students by the year 2010;
- meeting the basic learning needs of the child in terms of essential learning tools as well as the basic learning contents.

Regarding the role of gender issues within national policy documents, there is a mixed picture. The National Education Policy does not give particular attention, nor does it define specific strategies for education of girls and women, although the document recognizes that "education and empowerment of girls and women are key factors contributing to social development" and sets the goal of "reducing existing disparities to half by the year 2010". The 8th Five Year Plan (1993-98) Approach Paper includes amongst its goals "affirmative action for women and other disadvantaged groups". It defines a three-tier hierarchy of programme objectives, of which the first are "essential nutrition, health and education needs of the mother and the girl child, and the health, education, vocational training and employment needs of young . . . and older women."

A turning point came in 1992-93 with the launching of the Government's Social Action Programme (SAP). SAP is a multi-sectoral approach to improving the poor status of the social sector in Pakistan, focusing on education, health, rural water supply and sanitation and population welfare and planning. The goal is to improve the coverage, quality and effectiveness of services provided in these sectors. SAP is targeted at the most disadvantaged areas and groups of the population and gives highest priority to elementary education (which received 65 percent of expenditure under SAPP-I) and female education. The first phase of the Programme ended in 1996, and an extension (SAPP-II, covering the period 1997-2002) is currently being finalized, which will essentially maintain the scope and priorities of SAPP-I.

SAP receives significant support from many donors, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DFID (ODA) of the UK and the Netherlands who, together, disbursed some Rs. 13 billion, or 23.2 million dollars⁴ during the first phase of SAP. Nevertheless, the implementation of SAPP-I has been fraught with many problems and achievements have lagged behind targets.

⁴ At an exchange rate of US\$1 = Rs. 56

Educational financing

The ambitious goals defined in the National Education Policy will require mobilization of significant resources. However, Government funding for education has traditionally been rather limited. Educational expenditure as a share of GNP fluctuated between 2.2 and 2.6 percent over recent years, falling back to 2.3 percent in 1997-98. This is significantly below the average for South Asia (3.5 percent in 1993/94) and developing countries on the whole (3.6 percent in the same year).

According to many analysts, the strong emphasis on national defence appears to have taken up significant chunks of the national budget, at the disadvantage of education and other social sectors. There are some positive signs, however. The importance given to education under more recent Five Year Plans has increased, with the exception of the last one. Within the education sector, primary education was given growing importance (25 percent of total education expenditure in the 5' Plan against 61 percent in the 8t' Plan); this educational level also seems to have been increasingly protected from the budgetary cuts which have affected the implementation of all plans.

3. Review of project WFP/Pakistan 4185 "Promotion of primary education for girls in Balochistan and NWFP"

3.1. Project description

The first initiative for this project was taken in Balochistan where the provincial government approached WFP for support in developing primary education for girls. Subsequently, the Government of NWFP also showed interest in such support. An identification mission in 1989 reviewed the initial project proposal and introduced the idea of take-home food rations (none of the schools had the required infrastructure for preparation of meals and the expected role of food aid was limited to that of an incentive).

The project was approved in May 1991 but became operational only three years later, in May 1994. The long delay - apparently a common feature of WFP development projects in the country was largely due to the Government's difficulties in setting up the implementation structure for the project and securing the necessary funding (lengthy processing of the Government's internal planning and budgeting document, the "PC-1"). During this period, several changes were also introduced in the original project design. These included the following:

- revising the ration (vegetable oil replacing the original ration consisting of butter oil, pulses and tea because of high cost of transport and difficulties in ensuring regular availability of all three commodities at all schools);
- increasing the value of the ration from 2.50 dollars to 6.70⁵ dollars to enhance its incentive effect and reducing the target number of beneficiaries by 75 percent as a result of the higher cost of the revised ration⁶;
- introducing the project in a phased manner in recognition of the limited implementation capacity of the Government and to gain experience with this new type of activity;
- dropping support to female teacher training institutes in Balochistan (this was seen as too complicated and less relevant);

⁵ Figures taken from the Progress Report on the project, presented to SCP15 in 1995. For current calculations regarding the local value of the ration please refer to section 3.7.

⁶ In this context, support to primary sections at girls' middle and high schools in Balochistan was dropped.

Further changes were introduced following an "annual review" after the first year of project implementation, such as: the introduction of an additional component in Balochistan (provision of an extra ration per year to students scoring well in the year-end examination); the granting of food rations to school chowkidars in NWFP⁷; the withdrawal of support from students in the lowest grade (kacchi class) of schools in Balochistan (due to increased pressure from parents who wanted to enroll even under-aged children in order to obtain the oil ration).

Following recent requests, the project was extended, on a pilot basis, to one district in Sindh and two districts in Punjab. Further expansion into the northern areas has been discussed but seems unfeasible given the difficulties in transport.

It should be noted that the project's original Plan of Operations, signed in April 1992, was never amended to reflect the significant changes made since then. There is thus no official document comprehensively reflecting the project in its current state.

According to the Plan of Operations, the project was intended to achieve the following immediate objectives:

- increase enrolment, improve attendance and reduce drop-out rates at girls' primary schools⁸ in Balochistan province and in selected areas of NWFP;
- reduce absenteeism and improve performance of female teachers at assisted schools.

No written objectives have been formulated for components introduced in 1996, after the annual review, i.e. support to chowkidars and to girls scoring best at year-end examinations (top three "position holders"). However, as regards the latter, the idea seems to have been to increase the overall academic performance of students by encouraging girls to study harder during the year.

Food aid was expected to provide an income transfer, and thus act as an incentive, for female students (incentive for enrolment, attendance, retention and performance) and teachers (incentive for attendance) at assisted schools.

Currently, each student attending class for at least 20 days per month and each teacher attending for 22 days a month is entitled to receive one 5 litre tin of vegetable oil per month. Chowkidars receive the same ration as students and teachers. Students in each class achieving the top three positions in the year-end examinations obtain one additional 5 litre tin of oil per year.

3.2 Project relevance to country needs

According to the 1998 report on "Human Development in South Asia"⁹, at least one third of Pakistanis suffer from food deficiency and lack of access to a minimum income to satisfy their basic needs. The World Bank estimates that 34 percent of the population live below the national poverty line. Poverty and hunger in Pakistan have many origins and facets, including under- and unemployment, a very uneven distribution of land and wealth and high population growth (Pakistan's annual population growth rate of 2.8 percent is amongst the highest in the developing world). Education, particularly education of girls, is relevant to these issues in several ways:

⁷ there was evidence that chowkidars had already been "unofficial" beneficiaries since they felt entitled to the same benefits as teachers and many help with the unloading and distribution of food; it was thus seen easiest to include them officially in order to avoid distortions of the project;

⁸ In Pakistan government primary schools are separate for boys and girls.

⁹ U1 Haq, Mahbub and Khadija Haq; op.cit.

- it reduces population growth and improves family health standards;
- it raises the self-confidence and assertiveness of girls and enables them to play a more active role in their community and society in general; this, in turn, contributes to overcoming traditional attitudes, behavior and systems which prevent social and economic development;
- it increases the chances of girls to find employment or self-employment (this was clearly expressed by many parents as one of the key reasons for sending girls to school).

To quote from the 1995 World Bank Pakistan Poverty Assessment: "...without sustained improvements in the health status, educational levels and work skills of its population, Pakistan will not be able to achieve a sustained improvement in labor productivity and standards of living the education of girls is the most deficient element of Pakistan's human development strategy." Another World Bank document states that "female education may well have the highest returns of any investment available to Pakistan." (Pakistan - Improving Basic Education; op.cit.). By concentrating on girls' education under this project, WFP thus addresses a key issue in the Pakistani development context.

3.3 Project implementation

Project coverage

In Balochistan, the project was initiated in Quetta and Mastung districts in March 1994. Following a review which demonstrated positive results, three more districts (Loralai, Killa Saifullah and Chagai) were added in 1995. In 1996, five more districts were added (Kalat, Sibi, Musakhel, Bolan, Kharan) and one more district (Jafferabad) in 1997. Two more districts are to be added in 1999, whereas Mustang district has been excluded from the project as of 1996.

In NWFP, the project was started in one district (Kohistan) in October 1994. Following an internal review in May 1995, and given the very encouraging results, the project was expanded to Dir district in that same month. Following another review, two more districts (Tank and Battagram) were added in May 1996.

Project management

In each province, the project is implemented by the provincial Education Departments (Director, Primary Education is the official project manager) and, within the districts, by the District Education Officer/Female¹⁰ and her staff. For all, the work related to the project is in addition to their normal tasks; no extra staff was hired to work on the project. While this reduces the project costs to the Government, it puts considerable strain on the concerned officials, particularly the DEOs and ADEOs. The mission found that they often personally accompany the trucks during food deliveries to the schools. While this no doubt greatly helps the project implementation, and the mission did not hear any direct complaints, it cannot be considered ideal since it takes too much time away from the many other tasks a DEO and ADEO have to perform. At the same time, the heavy schedule of DEOs also sometimes affects the functioning of the project, as recognized in the recent WFP study on the project.

At schools, the headmistress keeps attendance registers and supervises the distribution of the food. If food is received during school hours, distribution takes place immediately; otherwise the food is kept at the school until the following day. There is thus no need for storage at schools. The mission found that the entitlement of each student is correctly checked on the basis of the monthly attendance registers before she receives the food. As regards the entitlement of teachers (compliance with the rule of 22 days monthly attendance) this is more difficult to control since teachers themselves note their daily presence in a register. The mission was informed that DEOs/ADEOs verify this aspect during their school visits, and questions about teachers'

¹⁰ Each district has separate administrations for boys and girls schools.

attendance are also put to parents during WFP's BCM exercises. Nevertheless, the difficulty in adequately monitoring teacher attendance is certainly a weakness of the project.

Food management and logistics

WFP food is transported from Karachi port to the provincial and district headquarters. Transport to the province is usually contracted to private transporters and paid for by the provincial administration. Transport to and within the districts is organized and financed by the DEO. WFP supplied 18 pick-ups and 16 small trucks at the beginning of the project to facilitate logistics.

The mission was informed that food deliveries to schools represent a considerable effort on the part of the District Education Offices. Since only one truck is available to each of them, and given the often difficult terrain, it usually takes more than a month to cover all assisted schools in a district. In NWFP, deliveries are supposed to be carried out each month. In actual fact, however, many schools receive the food only every second month or even less frequently. While this represents no loss to the beneficiaries (in this case, the double ration is distributed) it creates confusion amongst parents and teachers who never know when they will receive their ration. It would therefore seem better to officially adopt a system of bi-monthly distribution as it is already practiced in Balochistan.

Despite the irregularity of deliveries, the mission did not find any evidence of food deliveries to schools having been skipped altogether (with the exception of the first half of 1998 in Balochistan). Teachers and parents also confirmed that they always received the correct ration, albeit delayed.

In this connection it should be mentioned, however, that there is some confusion regarding the official ration scale. While several official documents claim that a single ration consists of 5 litres of vegetable oil per month, WFP staff admit that the oil is often packaged by the donors in ways which preclude distribution of correct rations (e.g. in tins of 9, 9.5, 4.5 or 3.75 litres). The monthly rations actually received can thus vary considerably. Beneficiaries did not seem to have noticed this. Nevertheless, if variations in ration size do not have negative effects on project results, and if smaller rations can produce the same results, WFP might be able to make some savings and thus possibly expand project coverage.

Since Pakistan is not an LDC, the Government is expected to cover the full cost of internal transport, storage and handling of the food. As mentioned above, these costs have been reduced to the minimum (transport from Karachi to the province, fuel for transport within the province, maintenance for vehicles and travel allowances).

Nevertheless, the situation with regard to Government funding for the project seems less than ideal. In NWFP, for example, the mission was informed that transfer of funds from the provincial headquarters to the districts often occurred only at the end of the academic year, obliging DEOs to take loans and advance money from their own pockets. In addition, the amounts received did not always cover the needs. In NWFP in 1996-97, for example, the shortfall was 43 percent of actual expenditure.

Since the beginning of the project (i.e. over a period of five years), the Government has spent a total amount of 353,587 dollars on the project; this represents only seven percent of the total value of food supplied by WFP¹¹. The mission could, however, not obtain comprehensive data on Government's financial contributions under the project as against obligations.

¹¹ This includes preliminary figures for 1998/99.

Project implementation by WFP

On WFP's side, overall project implementation is supervised by a Programme Manager based in Islamabad (also looking after the health project). Day-to-day operations are handled by the provincial sub-offices in addition to their work on other projects. Most of these sub-offices are staffed with one officer (only Peshawar has two staff). Further support is provided, as required, by WFP's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in Islamabad.

WFP deliveries to the project since its beginning amount to 4,848 tons of vegetable oil at a value of 5,332,800 dollars. This represents 75 percent of planned deliveries. Of these, 3,900 tons, or 80 percent of deliveries, were utilized.

WFP also financed a series of training courses for teachers and Government project staff to familiarize them with the objectives and functioning of the project.

Monitoring and evaluation

The current monitoring system of the project is another reflection of the concern to keep project implementation as simple as possible in recognition of the limited capacity of Government and school staff. Preparation of regular reports between schools, DEOs, provincial project management and WFP has been reduced to a minimum and concerns largely food movements (commodities delivered, received and utilized). Monitoring of all other aspects, including achievement of immediate objectives, relies almost exclusively on data collected during field visits (yearly, consolidated reports from the province to WFP contain figures on enrolment and number of students and teachers assisted, but no other information on project results). School visits by Government staff are limited in frequency, due to limitations in staffing of the District Education Offices¹², and serve many purposes. Field monitoring is thus largely the responsibility of WFP, with significant staffing implications and shortfalls. According to an internal WFP working paper, a total of six full time field monitors would be needed for the health and education projects (plus an additional three monitors for other activities), about half of whom have to be women. Currently, the CO has seven full-time monitors.

To make up for the shortfall, WFP has carried out several special exercises in the past in order to assess the project's results. The first such exercise was the "annual review" after one year of project implementation which involved WFP and Government representatives but also UNICEF, the World Bank and CRS. The close coordination with other donors on this occasion was a very positive. The second, intensive study was implemented just before the mission's visit. One very positive point in the CO's approach to monitoring is the emphasis on direct beneficiary contacts.

Despite the limitations in regular monitoring, particularly of immediate objectives, it appears that not all possibilities for obtaining information are used. The Education Management Information System (EMIS), for example, which collects detailed information from all schools at least once a year, does not seem to be used. Much of this is relevant to the project (e.g. information on enrolment, drop-out, performance), and information for project schools could easily be extracted.

3.4 Achievement of immediate objectives

Most of the findings in this section are based on a recent WFP study on the project which collected detailed qualitative and quantitative information from a sample of assisted schools in three districts, one in NWFP (Dir) and two in Balochistan (Quetta, Killa-Saifullah). For comparative reasons, data were also obtained for

¹² In NWFP, for example, the mission found that many District Education Offices/Female have difficulties in recruiting candidates for existing positions (e.g. those of Learning Coordinators) because of the limited mobility of women (candidates should preferably be women since men usually cannot get access to girls schools). Female DEOs are thus often more understaffed than male DEOs.

boys' schools in all three districts as well as for some girls' and boys' schools in a non-assisted district in NWFP (Buner) which shows very similar conditions to Dir district.

Increase enrolment

The project has achieved impressive results regarding increase in enrolment at assisted schools. At schools surveyed in Dir, enrolment grew by 247 percent between 1994 (last year before the project) and 1998. During the same period, student numbers at boys' schools in Dir grew by only 3.7 percent. Enrolment at non-assisted girls' schools in Buner actually dropped by 31 percent, whereas boys' schools in the same district experienced a student growth of 13 percent. In Balochistan, where the project started in 1994, enrolment between 1993 and 1998 increased by 197 percent.

When looking at yearly enrolment trends it becomes clear that introduction of the project first resulted in tremendous leaps in enrolment, often reversing previous negative growth which was observed at surveyed schools in both provinces. However, after two to three years, the annual increase leveled off. This could mean that the project rapidly attracts big numbers of those out-of-school girls in the areas around the school who respond most to the incentive. Once these girls are enrolled, the project mostly helps to stabilize and maintain enrolment growth at a more reduced pace, and prevent drop-out.

Food aid seems to address economic factors which keep girls out of school. As mentioned before, poorer families are less likely to send their daughters to school since they face higher opportunity costs. The income transfer resulting from provision of the oil ration helps to defray these indirect, as well as direct educational costs (see also under 3.7).

Also, by offering families a substantial incentive for educating their daughters, WFP assistance appears to have been able to overcome a lack of interest in female education. Once girls started to go to school, many families became more aware of the benefits of their education and more motivated to send their daughters to school and keep them there. WFP assistance has thus contributed to creating a demand for and "kicking off" female education in the areas where the project operates. This was borne out by all interviews conducted by the mission and under the WFP study. For example, the mission met several families where older girls had been kept at home, whereas their younger sisters had started to go to school after the project was introduced. Mothers confirmed that education of their daughters had now become a top priority; in most cases, their male family members were said to have become supportive, too. Interviews with men confirmed this trend.

Lastly, WFP assistance may indirectly have contributed to increases in enrolment, namely by improving teachers' presence at schools and helping to ensure that schools were open and operational throughout the academic year.

Improve attendance of students

The table below shows achievements of the project regarding improvements in student's attendance:

Table 6: Students: Percentage of days attended during the month of October of each respective year, by district

	1993	1994	1996	1998
Dir (assisted)	62	74	63	85
Quetta, Killa-Saifullah (assisted)	52	64	68	78
Buner district, NWFP (non-assisted)	22	32	49	45

Clearly, attendance is far more regular at assisted schools. Moreover, attendance rates at assisted schools improved since introduction of the project, although some improvements in attendance rates can also be observed at non-assisted schools in Buner district.

Reduce drop-out rates of students

Under the WFP survey, detailed data were collected on grade-wise drop-out rates at assisted and non-assisted schools before and after introduction of the project.

In Balochistan, introduction of the project seems to have reduced the relatively high drop-out rates experienced before, and even resulted in high "drop-in" during the first years of the project. The figures also compare well with drop-out at boys' schools.

In Dir district, the situation at assisted schools during the last two years was actually worse than before the introduction of the project, and there is no significant difference with boys' schools in this district (with the exception of 1997-98 when drop-out rates for girls were lower than for boys). However, when comparing girls' schools in Dir (assisted) to those in Buner (non-assisted), project schools fare significantly better. Comparison of drop-out rates in Buner between boys' and girls' schools show generally higher drop-out for girls. Against this background, the relatively small difference in drop-out rates between boys and girls in Dir could be interpreted as another positive result of the project (closing of the gender gap in drop-out).

Reduce teacher absenteeism

The table below summarizes data collected under the WFP study on teachers' attendance without and with WFP assistance.

Table 8: Teachers: Percentage of days attended during the month of October of each respective year (assisted schools), by province

	1993	1994	1996	1997
Balochistan	93	95	84	90
NWFP	98	93	100	99

These figures have to be interpreted with care, however, since they are taken from teacher attendance registers which are kept by the teachers themselves. The study, therefore, used additional means to assess possible changes in teacher attendance resulting from WFP assistance. At schools in Dir (assisted) and Buner (non-assisted), comparisons were made regarding the part of the yearly school programme which had been completed since the beginning of the academic year. Schools in Dir were clearly more advanced than the control schools. This can be taken as an indirect indication of the fact that teachers in Dir had been more present at their schools than those in Buner.

In the case of teachers, food aid seems to address two issues: poor motivation and discipline, and absence due to the problems of transport for non-local teachers (food aid as budgetary support helps to defray the cost of transport). Nevertheless, these problems could be addressed in different, more direct ways with possibly equal results: by providing free/subsidized transport for female teachers, particularly in rural areas (as is already the case in Balochistan), by reviewing the qualification criteria for teachers to facilitate recruitment of local candidates in rural areas (this practice has also been introduced in Balochistan) and by improving teachers' morale (e.g. through improved training and professional backstopping) and supervision. Clearly, these options have financial implications for the Government but would provide more longer-term and sustainable solutions to the issues.

In the case of teacher attendance it should also be mentioned that factors other than the provision of oil may have significantly contributed to improving their presence at school, namely increased supervision through DEOs (on the occasion of food deliveries) and parents (who are keen on making sure that the programme is not interrupted).

Improve academic performance of students

No information could be obtained by the mission on results of the provision of oil rations to "position holders" in year-end examinations in Balochistan. This component of the project is also very recent and has been applied only twice so far. Nevertheless, WFP and the Government should attempt to collect information on examination performance at assisted schools in order to assess the relevance of this component.

Additional project benefits

The project seems to also have yielded some unintended benefits, notably with regard to the general condition of women in the project areas. For example, about one third of women interviewed for the "FP study said they now pay occasional visits to the schools to enquire about progress of their daughters or explain reasons why the girl was absent from school. In a society where many women are still strictly confined to their homes¹³, even such relatively small achievements should not be underestimated. Most of all, they represent a capital on which WFP and the Government should build further as a way to gradually enhance women's status in the communities. For example, during school visits, contacts and discussions with mothers could be intensified (to encourage them to get involved in school affairs, or to keep their daughters at school even when they get older); special discussions, information sessions or even educational and training programmes could be organized for women in assisted communities; women could be helped in setting up women's groups, or "mothers associations" for the school; income-generating activities for women could be started; etc. WFP's experience with women's groups established under the Natural Resources Management programme, despite the limitations of these activities, could serve as inspiration in this area. At the same time, WFP's own possibilities for such activities are limited, and they would thus have to be organized in cooperation with other donors.

3.5 Relevance of project achievements and overall goals of WFP assistance

As mentioned above, ATP assistance has contributed to increasing access to primary education for girls and to generally enhancing demand in this area. These are important achievements in a context where female education, in many parts of the country, is still at its very beginning. Anecdotal evidence abounds about food aid having convinced even the most reluctant and orthodox of parents to send at least one of their daughters to school, or how education of girls has now almost become "fashionable". Food aid has also helped to increase the retention of girls at schools. All this is in line with Government priorities for the education sector. The first, important step towards equal educational opportunities for girls has thus been taken. However, food aid alone cannot achieve full access to education for girls, nor can it ensure that they complete the full primary cycle. This would require further improvements in the supply and quality of education (since the perceived quality of education also impacts on parents' willingness to educate their daughters) - provision of more adequate school buildings (including for middle and high schools), provision of more and better trained teachers, improving the availability and quality of educational materials, etc.

A more detailed analysis of the "pull factor" of the oil ration, as opposed to other factors influencing enrolment, would require calculation of participation rates in the catchment areas of assisted schools (to assess what percentage of school-age girls are now enrolled in school) and of the factors which possibly still exclude some of the girls. This was not possible during the mission's visit.

At the same time, the success of the project has been mitigated by the unfavourable institutional environment in which it operates. This concerns, on the one hand, the limited efforts by the Government for project implementation (which affect project performance and coverage). On the other hand, the project encourages girls to attend schools which are often of rather poor quality and where only limited learning is likely to take place (as mentioned before, learning achievements are a general concern in Pakistan). To some

¹³ In most areas covered by the project, purdah is still strictly applied. One woman interviewed by the mission described her life as "living in a cave, not even knowing what lies beyond the road outside the village".

extent, the project has actually contributed to creating problems and to lowering educational standards, notably by increasing student/teacher and student/classroom ratios to very high levels. In some of the schools visited, one teacher had to look after more than 60 students. The Government has often been unable to allocate additional teachers to such schools (officially, there should be one teacher for every 50 students) or cope with the need for construction of more classrooms. This clearly has a very negative effect on learning and needs to be addressed.

One might argue that it is actually detrimental for girls to attend such poor quality schools, or that the learning benefits achieved do not justify the effort to get the girls into these schools. However, withdrawing girls from existing schools (or stopping WFP assistance in order not to "perpetuate" the problem) would mean to lose all the gains made with regard to creating demand and awareness and establishing a tradition for female education. It would also mean depriving girls of whatever learning does go on at schools, along with all other likely benefits of being able to experience a new environment outside the home. Setting quality criteria for schools at too high a level involves a risk that girls would have to wait for a long time before being able to attend school at all. On the other hand, creating educational opportunities for girls should not be limited to ensuring their physical presence in a school building, regardless of what education goes on at the school. The way forward, therefore, seems to lie in a realistic combination of efforts to increase access to schools with those to improve their quality.

At the same time, this argument also points to the question of the overall objectives of WFP assistance under this project. WFP cannot remain indifferent to the serious quality concerns at schools where it operates. However, expanding the overall goals of WFP assistance in this way means to go beyond what food aid as a resource, and, in many respects, WFP as an agency can achieve on its own. WFP, therefore, needs to coordinate and establish linkages with other donors, and negotiate more firmly with the Government, in order to obtain inputs such as additional classrooms and teachers, more educational materials, basic school furniture, latrines and potable water at schools or training programmes for teachers. There is recognition that such efforts for coordination have not been sufficient in the past (see also under 3.6 below).

3.6 Linkages with activities of other donors and with SAP

As mentioned before, cooperation with other donors would be a key condition to enhance the project's impact beyond the achievement of immediate objectives, by improving the learning environment at assisted schools. At the very least, collaborative efforts should focus on providing sufficient teachers and classrooms to assisted schools. Efforts to enhance community participation in the project, particularly that of women, would be another priority area and would also offer a "competitive edge" for WFP (unlike many other donor programmes in education in the country, the WFP-assisted project is more "grassroots"-oriented by reaching directly out to the schools and communities; see also under 3.4 and 3.9). Other important quality issues to be addressed would be teacher training, availability of educational materials and adaptation of school infrastructure to girls' needs.

Improvement of educational quality has been recognized as a key issue in the sector, and generous donor assistance is provided to address this problem. The existence of SAP and its multi-donor support mechanism should have provided a framework within which WFP assistance could have been integrated to facilitate coordination. The Country Programme document, in fact, presents the project as having been "conceived primarily as supporting multi-donor efforts to improve the quality of primary education, as well as expanding and improving classroom facilities in conservative rural areas with no previous tradition of sending girls to school."

There was, however, limited evidence of joint programming with another donor to secure inputs to the project which WFP cannot supply. The recent WFP study on the project mentions SAP support in NWFP for construction of some additional classrooms and other school infrastructure, as well as in the upgrading of primary to middle schools. But all these activities appear to be at the planning stage.

On the whole, WFP's involvement in donor coordination mechanisms in the social/education sector appears limited. For example, WFP does not participate in the regular, multi-donor SAP review exercises. The problem seems to be a dual one: insufficient efforts on the part of the Government for donor coordination and for approaching WFP to participate in such efforts, on the one hand, and a lack of "assertiveness" on the part of WFP to play its role as an important donor in the priority sector of SAP, namely female education, on the other hand. There is also certainly scope for WFP to approach individual donors.

3.7. Project design

Relevance of project design to issues observed and intended results

On the whole, the constraints to increasing access to primary education of girls, and the role of food aid in alleviating these constraints, had been correctly identified when the project was designed. An exception has to be made for the support to female teacher training colleges (see also under 3.1). The initial project design also suffered from an overestimation of Government's implementation capacity and an inappropriate food basket. Both have since been corrected.

At the same time, the project design correctly took into account the fact that "positive discrimination" of female primary students and teachers over males is acceptable at village and Government level. The fact that the female and male education systems in Pakistan are clearly separated certainly plays a key role in this context.

Relevance of the food ration

The mission observed that food aid largely acts as income transfer to the beneficiaries. While most families were reported to use most of the oil for cooking, the money which would otherwise have been used for purchase of oil becomes available for other purposes. In some cases, a part of the oil is sold. A good part of the money generated seems to be used to purchase school equipment or other related items. In fact, students at assisted schools were observed to generally "look better", to be more likely to wear school uniforms and possess more educational materials. The money generated through WFP support thus seems to be spent in ways which are productive for the family; this is most likely due to the fact that oil is handled by the women.

The official ration used under the project (5 liters of oil per month) has a local value of between 280 and 300 Rupees (5.00 to 5.40 dollars¹⁴; figures obtained for NWFP for urban and rural areas) and 325 Rupees (5.80 dollars; calculated for Balochistan based on local cost of vegetable oil). Teachers' base salaries start at 2,000 Rupees and can reach almost the double for trained, senior staff with allowances. An occasional labourer earns about 100-150 Rupees per day but often only finds work for a few days in a month, if at all. At least 30 percent of families interviewed were from the poorest strata of the society. Many families receive double or triple rations since they send more than one girl to school. The value of the food aid to the beneficiaries is thus considerable.

The mission also examined whether food aid could be replaced, such as by direct cash incentives/scholarships. However, it seems quite clear that a programme distributing cash would be much more vulnerable to misuse and corruption. As mentioned above, since food is handled by the women it is used in a more productive way than could be the case with cash support. Moreover, mothers confirmed that they much prefer the oil which is a key household ingredient (WFP supplied oil is also of better quality than what most families usually buy).

¹⁴ Exchange rate: US\$ 1=Rs.56

3.8 Gender orientation

The project is fully in line with WFP's Commitments for Women by concentrating on education of girls and targeting exclusively female beneficiaries, with the exception of the small number of chowkidars, most of whom are male.

3.9. People orientation

Appropriateness of targeting mechanisms in reaching the most needy

As mentioned earlier, Balochistan and NWFP show the lowest levels of educational achievement and highest degree of gender gaps in education. Concentration of the project on these two provinces is thus justified.

Selection of districts within the provinces was based on several considerations, including educational need (low participation rate of girls, high gender gap), accessibility to transport, security in the district, need for contingency of assisted districts (to facilitate logistics and monitoring) and a need to ensure balance between districts populated by different tribes (particularly in Balochistan). The fact that not all assisted districts score lowest in terms of educational deprivation¹⁵ and poverty can be explained by the need to take into account the other factors mentioned above.

As regards selection of schools within districts, in Balochistan all rural girls' primary schools are supported. In NWFP, where there are more schools in each district, such "blanket" coverage would have exceeded implementation capacity. Schools were therefore selected on the basis of the following criteria: low student/teacher ratio, accessibility and cost-efficiency of transport, rural areas, functioning Government schools (in Pakistan, there are many "ghost" schools which are not operational although teachers are supposedly posted there and receiving salaries). While these criteria represent another compromise between concentration on highest need and practical considerations, this selection left out the issue of contingency of assisted schools. This has not only resulted in transfers of students towards assisted schools but also in confusion amongst the population to whom selection criteria are not clear. A better approach for targeting within a district may be, therefore, to select tehsils (sub-division of district) on the basis of educational need and accessibility and then to assist all rural schools within this area.

Community attitudes towards and involvement in the project

As mentioned before, the project has contributed to creating awareness and motivation for education of girls. The economic support through supply of oil is also highly appreciated by the families. The purpose and objectives of the project were clear for most people interviewed by the mission, including girl students.

A weakness is, however, the limited overall community participation in the project. Such participation could contribute to improving the overall functioning of the schools and of the project as well as the sustainability of project results (parents actively participating in the school are less likely to withdraw their girls when food aid is stopped). Under SAP, efforts are made to set up Parents-Teachers-Associations (PTAs); however, these do not yet exist in NWFP. Interaction between teachers and parents at assisted schools thus needs to be further strengthened. This could be done through more regular contacts and meetings with mothers and fathers during field visits (WFP's emphasis on BCM is a very positive point in this context) or by encouraging more schools to set up PTAs. Competent NGOs exist in many districts to assist in the implementation of such activities.

¹⁵ In Balochistan, of all currently assisted districts, only half are below the provincial average regarding girls' primary participation rate and difference between male and female primary enrolment. Two assisted districts rank above average in both indicators, whereas 9 districts scoring below average in both indicators are not assisted.

3.10. Sustainability

The question of what will happen when the food incentive is withdrawn has been rather prominent in the minds of WFP and the Government since the project started. The mission was informed that the limited duration of the project had been stressed right from the beginning in contacts with schools and families. Nevertheless, most mothers interviewed were (understandably) worried about a possible withdrawal of the oil subsidy, given its importance to the family budget.

In Balochistan, the parameters for withdrawal were said to be for the district to have reached the provincial average regarding gender gaps in primary enrolment and primary participation rate of girls. The recent WFP study of the project mentions the criteria as "student/teacher ratio" (probably meaning that a district should be withdrawn when this ratio becomes too high; in this case, it would seem more relevant, however, to increase the number of teachers).

None of these criteria seem to be strictly applied, however. The main reason for limiting the duration of support to a district seems to be the limited capacity of the Government (and, possibly, of WFP) to support more than about 10 districts at any given time. At the same time, no district is to be left out altogether (mostly for political reasons) and support is thus to be rotated.

It should be mentioned that this strategy, although probably correctly recognizing the existing limitations, fixes the overall target of the project at a rather low level, namely to bring all districts in line with the overall educational standards of the province. The fact that these standards are still very low¹⁶ is left out in this context.

Teachers, Government staff and parents gave varying prognoses on the likely effects of withdrawing food, ranging from "no change at all" to "half of students will drop out". On the whole, the general impression was that termination of WFP assistance would result in losing some of the educational gains made, but that enrolment and attendance would not drop to the low levels observed before the project began. The project has indeed contributed to increasing motivation and interest and establishing a tradition for girls' education (see under 3.4). These gains can be expected to be maintained also after termination of WFP assistance. At the same time, where food aid addresses economic obstacles to girls' education, girls are at risk of dropping out when the assistance is withdrawn.

4. Review of educational activities carried out under the WFP "Safety Net" programme for Afghan refugees

When the general care and maintenance feeding of Afghan refugees in Pakistan was terminated in 1996, there was a concern to continue assistance to the most vulnerable refugees. Under this "Safety Net" program, WFP decided to replicate some of its development programmes in the refugee settlements. While the health programme was discontinued after some time, due to unsatisfactory results, support to education is still on-going. In addition to providing oil incentives at primary schools for refugee girls there is also some support with oil incentives for practical/vocational training for women in the settlements.

The primary schools are largely financed by UNHCR and operated by NGOs. UNHCR describes its efforts in education as part of a strategy to "provide the community with skills and knowledge that will be useful during their exile in Pakistan and also after their eventual return to Afghanistan." (UNHCR Fact Sheet on "Assistance activities for Afghan refugees"). In 1998, there were 340 schools in three provinces (NWFP, Balochistan, Punjab), attended by some 100,000 children of whom 21 percent were girls. Just two years ago, girls represented only 11 percent of enrolment. Overall, the number of Afghan girls attending primary

¹⁶ In 1997, the primary participation rate in Balochistan was 44 percent for boys and 23 percent for girls; there were about twice as many boys enrolled in primary schools as girls.

schools has tripled in the past three years. This is a vivid testimony to the effectiveness of WFP's support to the schools. UNHCR puts particular emphasis on the quality of education at the schools; this includes teacher training, recruitment of more female teachers and development of curricula relevant to the real needs and interests of the refugee population. One refugee school visited by the mission was indeed far above the standards of Government schools.

Education for refugees is certainly important in its own right and in the perspective described by UNHCR, and WFP assistance in this area appears to have been very successful. UNHCR also drew the attention of the mission to the fact that shrinking resources increasingly jeopardize the continuation, let alone further expansion of educational programs for the refugees. The mission is, therefore, in favour of continuing WFP assistance in this area. However, the relevance of such a program in the context of the "Safety Net" support can be questioned. It should be mentioned that neither WFP nor UNHCR have a clear definition of just who the vulnerable refugees are, nor are their number and location known. For these reasons, WFP recently carried out an Economic Household Survey of refugee families in order to shed more light on this issue. Its findings should be useful in revising the strategy of the "Safety Net" programme.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Recommendations relating to project Pakistan 4185

Food rations

It is recommended that WFP carry out an exercise to identify the minimum ration size necessary for the oil to have a sufficient incentive effect for students and teachers. On the basis of these findings, the current official ration could possibly be reduced.

WFP should urge its donors to provide oil in adequate, standardized packing in order to avoid fluctuations in actual oil rations given to beneficiaries.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of achievements regarding immediate objectives needs to be strengthened. This should include the following:

- Production of a standard checklist to be used during field visits; the checklist should be developed in consultation between WFP and Government project staff and pre-tested before finalizing it. As much as possible, the checklist should be used for all school visits. Completed checklists should be kept centrally, accessible to all for easy reference. Generalized use of a well-designed checklist could replace the current narrative field visit reports, at least partly.
- Greater use should be made of data available from the Education Management Information System (EMIS).
- Introduce monitoring of the effects of providing extra oil rations to top "position holders". This can be achieved by collecting data on examination performance at assisted schools (available under the EMIS). To the extent possible, data should also be obtained for the years before this component was introduced, to measure the effects of food aid in this respect.
- Improve monitoring of teacher attendance at assisted schools. Such monitoring should not rely on teacher attendance registers but use indirect means and questions to obtain information (ask parents, check if student absence was caused by teacher absence, check progress made by teacher in a given school in covering the school programme, visit schools without prior notice, etc.).

WFP and the Government should continue monitoring of phased-out schools to obtain more information on the effects of WFP withdrawal. Figures on enrolment and drop-out at these schools can be extracted from EMIS data; information on student and teacher attendance could be obtained through occasional school visits.

Project management

The provincial educational departments should endeavour to ensure that project funds are made available to district education offices in sufficient amounts to cover actual needs and in a timely manner.

Targeting

In NWFP, the possibility of targeting by "tehsil" or sub-division within a district should be explored, in order to ensure greater contingency of assisted schools.

Community involvement in the project

WFP should strengthen its efforts under the project to work with communities, particularly with women. This could include organization of discussions or of practical, educational sessions with groups of women, setting up of women's groups similar to efforts undertaken under the Natural Resources Management programme, setting up of mothers' organizations for the school or awareness raising efforts regarding girls' education (which should be directed at both women and men). Given WFP's own limitations in carrying out such activities, linkages with competent partners should be sought.

Linkages with other donors involved in education

WFP should more actively approach other donors to coordinate its own activities in the education sector with complementary programmes, particularly those aimed at improving educational quality and learning outcomes at school.

5.2. Recommendations relating to educational activities under the "Safety Net" programme for Afghan refugees

WFP and UNHCR should continue their efforts to identify the most vulnerable Afghan refugees as well as appropriate ways of supporting them.

WFP should continue supporting educational programmes for refugees, aimed at improving their capacity and skills needed during their stay in Pakistan as well as after the eventual repatriation to Afghanistan.

ANNEX 3

PAKISTAN

**EVALUATION OF THE WFP COUNTRY PROGRAMME
TECHNICAL REPORT ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

OEDE REVISED DRAFT

August 1999

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. A WFP mission¹ visited Pakistan between 23 November and 13 December 1998 to evaluate the WFP Country Programme. The present report is part of this evaluation. It reviews the implementation and achievements of WFP interventions in the natural resource management (NRM) sector. During 11 days, the forest economist visited in and around project sites within the projects 2451, 4003 and 4659 (see below). Due to time and security restraints the other two projects in the NRM sector - 2309 and 4377 - were not visited.

1.2. Discussions were held with the project participants and beneficiaries and other villagers within the project areas visited (including people who may perceive that they have been negatively affected by, or received dis-benefits from the project), the concerned Government officials, representatives of some of the related technical assistance programmes, and WFP Country Office staff. The physical assets created by the project were assessed, and the documents provided to the mission were reviewed.

1.3. The differences between the five projects are recognised, especially in terms of their different social conditions and their technical partners. These differences are described. However, given the requirement to undertake a *programme evaluation*, to the extent possible the projects are considered as one programme - or sub-programme - of activities, and the similarities or crosscutting issues are given prominence.

1.4. Project 4659 "Environmental Rehabilitation Project, Malakand Division in North West Frontier Province" is considered an important source of data for this evaluation. The project is viewed as being at the forefront of new orientations, and the North West Frontier (NWFP) Province is at the forefront of innovations and reforms in the forestry and NRM sector. Also, the complex and very traditional social conditions in Malakand division provide useful illustrations of the constraints faced in trying to introduce new interventions into rural Pakistan which necessarily involve the integration of land management, environmental enhancement, income generation and social change.

2. BACKGROUND TO WFP INTERVENTIONS IN THE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SECTOR

2.1. WFP has been supporting projects in the natural resources management sector for more some 25 years. The projects have been located in NWFP and Balochistan and also in Jammu and Kashmir.

2.2. The national average of forest, range and agricultural land is just under 0.4 hectares per capita. The rapid growth in population², compounded by stagnant economic and industrial development has led farmers and villagers to make increasing demands on natural resources, especially the resources on "communal" and "state" forest lands. There have been overall declines in the size of the forest areas as well as in the quantity and quality of the growing stock. Villagers have also converted formerly forested slopes into agricultural lands. And the simultaneous increases in numbers of domestic animals have put further pressure on grazing lands, in particular on the so-called 'community' lands. Given the unsuitability of these lands for such intensive uses there has been considerable degradation and erosion of hillsides and rangelands.

2.3. In Pakistan, as in many other countries, there is a correlation between the poverty of the people and the areas that have become marginalised in terms of their natural resources. Historically, it has been this linkage between degraded environments and poverty that has provided the rationale for the WFP-assisted projects. Thus the goals of the earlier projects were expressed in terms of their contributions to such natural

¹ The mission was composed of Mr. I. Sobhan, Mission Leader (FAO), Ms. U. Meir, Education Specialist (UNESCO), Ms. B. Reed, Health Specialist (WHO) and Ms. J. Brown, Forest Economist (FAO).

² The population of Pakistan has increased from some 61 million in 1970, when the WFP-supported projects in NRM were first initiated, to about 133 million to-day. The current population increase is around 2.7 percent per year

resource management objectives as the rehabilitation of the soils, improvement of water control and percolation of water, and the sustainable supplies of grasses and woody biomass. The means of reaching these goals were expressed in terms of the people who were to participate in the project activities. These were to be the people living in and around the project areas, who were poor and should benefit from the employment provided as well as the achievement of the projects' short and medium term objectives, such as the increased production of grasses and wood. The environmental improvements were expected to benefit considerably larger populations; and in some cases, such as the protection of the major dams, the national interest was involved.

2.4. The proposed programme delivery of commodities (wheat and oil) for the core development activities of the Pakistan Country Programme (1994-1998) was calculated at 50 million dollars, averaging 10 million dollars a year. In the latter years of the programme, an annual supply and take-up of around 13 million dollars was calculated. Around 45 percent of the resources would go to the social action programme and 55 percent to the natural resources activities.

2.5. The projects that, at present, constitute WFP's assistance in the NRM sector had all been operational when the current Country Programme was designed. They are:

- Pakistan 2451 "Assistance to Tarbela and Mangla Watershed", within the districts of Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kohistan and Buner in Hazara division of NWF;
- Pakistan 4003 "Rural Development in the North-East Area of Pakistan", this is sub-divided into two sub-projects; one of which is located in three separate areas: Kotli, Muzaffarabad, and Rawalakot districts, and the other in Suketar district; and
- Pakistan 4659 "Environmental Rehabilitation Project, Malakand Division in North West Frontier Province", covering part of the districts of Buner, Chitral, Dir and Swat.
- Pakistan 2309 "Rural Development and Environmental Rehabilitation in Southern NWFP"³, located in Kohat, and Bannu districts; and
- Pakistan 4377 "Rural Development Works in Balochistan", located in the districts of Quetta, Mastung, Loralai, Pishin Quila Saifullah, Quila Abdullah and Ziarat.

3. PROJECT DESIGN

Goals and objectives

3.1. The original design of all five of the projects were reflections of the experiences of previous projects in the NRM sector, in particular those supported by WFP. The projects in NWFP and in Jammu and Kashmir are located in forests of national importance. The goals of these earlier projects relate to the protection of two large dams, the Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs. These dams are very important sources of water for hydro-electricity and national irrigation systems for agricultural production, particularly of wheat and cotton (a major export) on the plains of Punjab and Sind. Similarly, the objectives of the project in Balochistan were originally stated in terms of rehabilitating some of the underground irrigation systems, known as *karez*s.

3.2. Problem analyses were expressed in terms of environmental problems. The people are viewed as one of the main problems, rather than as the focus for assistance of the interventions. Hence, overall objectives

³ Project 2309 was originally designed (1991) to be implemented through Union Councils, which were the lowest level of elected Government. However, these councils were disbanded in 1993 and the project was suspended for three years. A redesigned project was started in early 1996.

were macro-level environmental goals, while the rationale, and the means to achieve this, was that poor people should be provided with the opportunity to participate in the projects, and hence gain employment and food-wages. Other factors considered during the design stage included the local population's meagre agricultural landholdings and their lack of offfarm employment opportunities, but these were either secondary goals or means to achieving the stated major goals. Available data at time of project design allowed for the matching of the project areas with the poorer districts, and for identification of the required number of labourers to be drawn primarily from the poorer sections of the population, namely from the landless and tenant households.

3.3. Project documents also refer to the short to medium term benefits that should accrue to some of the poorer people, in particular the increased availability of fuelwood and grasses. It should be recognised that watershed management projects, if well designed, should take people as the starting point of project design. However, at the time of the design of these projects it is acknowledged that the people-centred approach of watershed management planning was not well developed in the NRM sector and, historically, the emphasis was on the physical or environmental aspects of the interventions, not the socio-economic considerations. The projects were not specifically based on a poverty targeting exercise or on the identified needs of the people participating in the projects and/or expected to benefit from the interventions. Considerations of food (in)security were not included in the formulations and justifications of the projects.

3.4. Consequently, the original goals and long term objectives of the projects are described in terms of physical or environmental achievements. The communities should benefit and participate in the activities to the extent that these goals should be reached.

3.5. These projects, as designed, were consistent with the long-term plans and policies of the Government, i.e. with the National Conservation Strategy and the Forestry Master Plan (FMP), under preparation. These were also reflected in the state and provincial level policies. The projects were focused on environmental goals and in particular the protection of the major watersheds and dams and the conservation of biodiversity. The IMP covered also the supply and demand of fuel, wood, timber and other forest products, and also the alleviation of poverty through forestry. Its main focus is the restoration of the forests through "realising the full potential of forestry in social and economic development." It must be stressed that the goal was the environment, in a rather narrow sense, and the means were the poorer, local people.

3.6. However, during the implementation of the projects it is apparent that some important changes have taken place; there has been a reversal of roles and functions. In summary, the gradual introduction of the 'social forestry' approach, involving a shift from the target-driven approach towards more demand orientated planning and the integration of 'community management', concepts have transformed the projects. It now seems that the focus and the overall goals are described in terms of the self-reliance of local communities; the emphasis is on social organisation, the self-reliance of local people, and their participation in decisions on the implementation of the projects and use of the assets created. The environmental rehabilitation and watershed activities should then serve as a means to achieving this self-reliance.

3.7. Clearly the projects do not demonstrate uniformity and adoption of the new approach is observed to be at various stages and to have been adopted to a lesser or greater degree within the different projects. But the trend seems to be quite marked in some projects. It is most evident in project 4659 in Malakand division, NWFP. The project design has evolved from the traditional environmental and forestry goals (to be achieved *through* community participation) to the typical social forestry goals of self-reliance (to be achieved *through* rehabilitation of the environment).

3.8. Similarly, in project 2451 the first long-term objective is now given as "...create awareness and self-reliance in the local population regarding forest management and environmental conservation." (Revised PC-1 of November 1997). This may be compared with "...reduce soil erosion and flood hazard by treating 155 acres of private land through plantation, check dams, treatment of gullies, stone protection wall,

prohibiting access to livestock. "(Project Summary, 1993). Likewise, in project 4003 which is virtually two separate operations, known as the Suketar project and the Integrated Land Management (ILM) project in Kotli, Muzaffarabad, and Rawalakot districts, the project documents reveal a shift towards the social forestry approach.

3.9. However, it is nowhere apparent that the changes in the overall orientation of the projects have been thoroughly discussed and agreed upon among the various parties, including Government officials, project staff and the donors. Hence, there is not always agreement on what constitutes success or achievement of objectives - and common indicators to measure progress do not exist. Appropriate qualitative indicators of achievement are not available for the individual projects, let alone for the set of projects or sub-programme of NRM projects.

Activities

3.10. The social and physical targets and activities of the projects are set out in the Appendix. Despite the changes in approach, it remains the case that the alleged watershed projects are dominated by forestry plantation activities, and that road construction is a major component of two of the projects.

3.11. The changes in goals and objectives are reflected, to some extent, in the changes made to the planned activities. Examples are found within project 4659. Additional activity targets include: i) training of 850 Village Development Committee members and 50 key-farmers; ii) establishing/revitalising 85 VDCs and 30 Women Organisations; iii) establishing 120 *asher* (voluntary) plantations; iv) establishing 30 school nurseries (20 boys' schools / 10 girls' schools); v) implementation of Village Development Schemes. Similarly, in projects 2451 and 4003 the formation of Women's Groups and Village Development Committees has become additional targeted activities.

4. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT, WFP AND DONOR ORGANISATIONS

4.1. **Government:** the primary counterpart at Federal Government level for all the projects in the NRM sector is the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. MinFAL is to liaise for policy matters and provide co-ordination. At provincial and state levels, the Departments of Forestry are responsible for the watershed management projects and for project 4377 in Balochistan. The respective Departments of Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) are the responsible counterpart for the roads components of projects 4003 in Jammu and Kashmir and 2309 in NWFP. Operational implementation and supervision of the projects is the responsibility of the relevant provincial or state government department, which is also responsible for providing counterpart funds. An exception has been project 2451 "Assistance to Tarbela and Mangla watershed". The Federal Government is entirely responsible for the counterpart funds, given the national importance of the dams. A major component of the Government contribution of the projects is for payment of Government staff salaries.

4.2. **WFP:** the WFP staff specifically assigned to the NRM projects consists of a Programme Manager, who reports to the Country Office Adviser, and three Project Monitors who report to the Programme Manager. One of the Project Monitors is based in Peshewar; the remaining staff are located in the Islamabad WFP Country Office. The Programme Manager is responsible for day-to-day liaison with the Governments and the various bi-lateral and other collaborating partners as well as for normal guidance, monitoring and supervision of the projects. He also plays a significant role in procuring the various non-food items and training opportunities related to the projects, and in preparing the standard reports for WFP headquarters and bi-lateral partners.

4.3. Some two or three staff of the WFP monitoring unit allocate some of their time to the NRM projects. They have undertaken studies on the socio-economic aspects of the projects. The Regional Programme Adviser, also located in Islamabad, provides back-up guidance and support to the NRM sector, and to the qualitative monitoring of the projects.

4.4. ***Other donors and technical assistance:*** the earlier NRM projects supported by WFP - i.e. those implemented prior to the Country Programme under review, were of the traditional forestry plantations and target-driven approach. However they did serve to demonstrate that, technically, tree plantations could survive and that reforestation of the bare mountainsides - or 'wastelands' was technically and, to a certain extent, socially feasible.

4.5. This demonstration, despite the shortcomings of the projects, was apparently recognised first by the local people, who previously had been quite apprehensive. Many villagers had been reluctant to allow their 'shares' of community lands to be planted with trees. They were fearful that once planted they would lose the lands to the Forest Department. The mission was told that, based on their own observations as well as repeated reassurances from Forest Department officials, villagers no longer have this fear, and can believe that they will be the owners of the trees as well as retaining ownership of their lands. Discussions with villagers who had not participated in earlier projects confirmed this change in attitude.

4.6. Secondly, other donors and technical agencies, which had been sceptical about, or at best not interested in the feasibility of such interventions, became interested. It became possible for the projects to attract additional cash funding, and perhaps even more importantly, technical assistance. Indeed, all of the NRM projects in the current Country Programme are or have been linked with additional, co-financing and/or technical assistance; overall this has been beneficial. Other donors include the Government of the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Australia, and Sweden, a few NGOs and some multi-lateral assistance from UNDP/FAO.

4.7. The co-financing has ranged from the one-off supply of vehicles and equipment to more or less full-scale technical support and supervision. The Dutch technical assistance project in Malakand Division, which backstops project 4659, has attempted to provide a holistic project. However, as discussed above, there is some ambiguity concerning ends and means, i.e. whether environmental rehabilitation is the means to obtain self-reliance, or self-reliance the means for achieving environmental rehabilitation.

4.8. Also, the large size of the WFP supported projects, in terms of people participating and affected, e.g. up to about 35,000 in project 4003, as well as of geographical areas covered, e.g. more than 95,000 acres in project 4659, presents special problems for the design of any technical assistance package. These problems are compounded by the complexity of the different population groups and the very difficult and varied terrain found in each of the project areas.

5. PROJECT STRATEGIES, WORKING METHODS AND APPROACHES

5.1. The strategy of the earlier projects in the NRM sector was a top-down procedure based on the watershed approach. A watershed would be selected on the basis of its significance vis-a-vis the degree of degradation, the need for conservation of natural resources and protection of important national assets, such as large dams and hydroelectric stations. Once selected, the watershed would be rehabilitated to the extent possible. The Forestry Department would draw up a land use plan. The focus of such plans was primarily reforestation: planting of trees for protection, as well as some production purposes, and related soil conservation works, including regeneration of rangelands. The lands to be rehabilitated consisted almost entirely of quasi-private lands that constitute much of Pakistan's community lands⁴.

⁴ Land tenure systems in Pakistan are complex and vary from region to region. Hillside lands in NWFP and AJK are often referred to as both 'community lands' and 'private lands'. They are communal in the sense that they are owned by several people or families, who are usually living nearby; and they are 'private' in the sense that the individual families or related families have registered 'shares' in the lands, even though the lands are not demarcated.

5.2. Landowners were invited and encouraged to offer their lands for rehabilitation; they were assured that they would retain ownership of the land as well as of the assets and improvements created through the projects. As previously discussed, with time and through demonstration, many landowners came forward.

5.3. Labour would be employed to undertake the necessary activities: nurseries, plantation establishment, soil conservation works, forest roads etc. Food aid would be used as an incentive to the landowners and to the *chowkidars*⁵, who would protect the new plantations from animal and human trespass. The people employed as labour for the project would receive both food aid and cash wages. It was understood that the labourers, who were often from among the landless, were under- or unemployed.

5.4. As discussed above (see Project Design), during the life of the Country Programme there have been significant shifts in the overall design and approach of the NRM projects. This has come about primarily through the introduction of a people or community centred participatory approach, which has become known as "Social Forestry" in Pakistan.

5.5. The projects are still being implemented in areas of severe degradation. However, the focus is on the village or community. The basis of the new approach is the formation and functioning of community organisations, such as Village Development Committees (VDCs), Village Organisations (VOs), Women's Organisations (WOs) and Management Unit Committees (MUCs, which are associated with hamlets). These organisations are expected to be representative of the major sections and interest groups of the community. The committees' primary purpose is to provide a forum for participation: discussion and mediation on common or community issues. Eventually the committees should bring about consensus, in particular to provide a basis for planning and implementation of development interventions, and agreement on the distribution of rights, concessions and obligations.

5.6. International and national development agencies seem to be unanimous in the promotion of village organisations or committees. The existence of such an organisation is regarded as a prerequisite for initiating development activities, especially interventions related to natural resource management. Ideally a Village Development Committee undertakes a planning exercise sometimes referred to as a village land use plan (VLUP). A Village Committee, with the assistance of some outside expertise, establishes its programme of development activities, taking into account the needs of all sectors of the community as well as the economic, social and technical feasibility of the proposed activities. The framework and schedules for the implementation of activities and maintenance of assets created are also drawn up. Importantly, arrangements for the sharing of benefits are to be drafted at this stage.

5.7. It is asserted that up until the early 1970s traditional social control systems were still in place and that a balance between conflicting interests was maintained. Traditional village institutions of social coercion and sanctions were still functioning until the then Government declared that tenants and users (including nomadic grazers) should be regarded as land owners. The old system broke down, serious conflicts arose and there was widespread destruction of forests and abuse of "communal" lands. There are many pending cases of unresolved conflicts that resulted from these relatively recent clashes on land ownership and resource use. The 'social forestry' approach and its accompanying committees are, in part, an attempt to revive the traditional social institutions, with more equity and without the feudal connotations.

5.8. **Food aid:** In the earlier NRM projects the average food basket consisted of several items, including wheat, pulses, butter oil, sugar and tea, and its value was calculated at around half the daily wage for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. According to local surveys undertaken during this period, project participants found the food items acceptable, but the system did not work well. There were a variety of problems, on both the Governments' side, related to timely release of funds, and on WFP's side, mainly related to timely shipments. It proved nearly impossible to deliver all the commodities at the same time. It

⁵ A 'chowkidar' is a guard or watchman.

was also becoming increasingly costly to transport the low value, high bulk commodities within the country, especially to remote areas.

5.9. To address these problems the WFP Country Office formulated a food stamp system, whereby WFP supplied wheat is exchanged for cash, which in turn is converted into food stamps. After a trial period in late 1994, this system became the *modus operandi* of the projects in the NRM sector for the Country Programme period under review.

5.10. A summary description of the food stamp system follows:

- WFP provides wheat in the port of Karachi to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MINFAL) of the Federal Government, which provides the c.i.f. value (or 'import' price) of the wheat in cash. WFP then uses this cash to purchase food stamps from Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), the agency which implements the Government's own food stamp programme. WFP pays the face value of the stamps, plus a 4 percent charge for PBM's costs in administering the system.
- The food stamps are delivered to project authorities for distribution to the participants who exchange their stamps for commodities at designated food stamps stores. The PBM should nominate up to six grocers at each sub-district level. They will exchange commodities for the face value of the food stamps presented by project beneficiaries. Shopkeepers redeem the stamps at designated bank branches, in return for funds transferred to the branches by PBM.

5.11. This system should have the following advantages over direct distribution of food commodities: i) the Government avoids payment of high transport, storage and distribution costs for moving commodities from port to beneficiaries; ii) post-c.i.f. losses are eliminated; and iii) beneficiaries are able to select a 'food basket' of their own choosing from what is available at the food stamp shops.

5.12. During late 1997 and early 1998, the Government was late in paying for the wheat delivered by WFP during 1997. This led to delays of up to six months in paying the beneficiaries for work carried out, resulting in tension in some project areas. However, successful negotiations between the Country Office and the Government led to the removal of bottlenecks and the transfer of most of the funds due from MinFAL to WFP in April 1998. And it was agreed that future payments would be made promptly upon delivery of wheat in Karachi. To date there have been no further serious problems.

5.13. WFP supports five separate and rather different projects within the NRM sector in Pakistan. To the extent that the five projects all fall into the natural resource sector and all exhibit a gradual trend towards more community involvement in the planning and implementation of activities, they may be said to form a coherent package or sub-programme within WFP's Country Programme. Also, the projects have adopted a common modality for providing the WFP resources to the project beneficiaries, namely through food stamps. This common modality has allowed for flexibility in resource allocations between the five projects. However, the shortfalls in supply and the irregular pattern of deliveries have reduced the opportunities to make use of this flexibility.

6. GOVERNMENT AND DONOR POLICIES

6.1. The WFP supported NRM projects remain consistent with the goals and objectives of the Governments' National (and Provincial) Conservation Strategy and the Forest Master Plan. In the context of this plan, the Asia Development Bank (ADB) is funding a 58 million dollars "Forestry Sector Project" (FSP). This involves the Federal Government, the Government of NWFP, and a task force of professional, national foresters. The NWFP is held to be the most advanced region in terms of new approaches to forestry and natural resources development, and hence the FSP is considered a pilot project for the rest of Pakistan. The overall goals of this project are to develop new policy, based on devolution, and a new legislative

framework to allow for the implementation of an "enabling framework", and "for local communities to manage their own natural resource base." (1998, Alamgir Gandapur, Team Leader, Forestry Sector Project).

6.2. Concerned donors have formed a Forestry Donors Co-ordination Group (members include representatives of the governments of the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and of UNDP and FAO), through which they provide inputs to the Government's "Institutional Reforms Project" which is co-financed by UNDP and is closely linked to the Forestry Sector Project. WFP is a founder member of this group. As a pioneer in the change process and the reorientation of the forestry sector, WFP has an important role to play here. The group meetings also provide a forum for discussing the co-ordination of the various on-going donor supported interventions in the natural resources sector.

6.3. At the macro-level, the continued relevance of WFP assistance to the NRM sector may be questioned. An argument offered is that as the WFP projects now have overcome the initial reactions of apprehension from the villagers and indifference from other, cash-funding donors, perhaps it is time for WFP to move out and on to other sectors and activities. However, WFP's experience and pioneer efforts in the area of NRM are appreciated by the Forest Departments and other donors, its assistance is well integrated with the new approaches and there remains much to be done. Indeed, it would be wrong to view the NRM sector as being over-crowded with competing donors⁶.

6.4. In any case, it might be useful to consider developing further the concept of a sectoral approach. At a minimum the WFP Country Office could co-ordinate the sharing of experiences and information between the people involved in the projects or activities - the project authorities and the beneficiaries. Consideration could be given to standardising the projects' approach and design, and hence to standardise also the technical assistance required.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS

7.1. Physical progress - in terms of quantity and reaching targets of coverage of areas with tree plantations, numbers of nurseries established and operated, kilometres of roads constructed and volume of earth dams built - is quite mixed. All projects have been extended in time. This has been done in part because of the revised completion date of the Country Programme (to June 1999), and in part because of delays in implementation. And the major reason given for these delays has been failure by the Governments to provide adequate and timely counterpart funding.

7.2. One major component of the Government contribution to the projects is for materials, operational running costs of vehicles, and payment of Department personnel. This latter commitment has not been met on a regular basis. In fact there have been periods when Forest Department personnel have had to wait for more than six months for their salaries, (e.g. in Project 4659 in Malakand division). This, combined with the erratic supply of WFP resources, should obviously lower morale, as well as reduce output. The implementation of the roads components had been seriously delayed because of late and inadequate counterpart funds.

7.3. The quality of the forestry works, as seen by the mission was good. In most areas species selection was appropriate, and the nurseries were well maintained. But in some areas the *Chirpine* plantings remain a very high proportion of overall planting - more than 60 percent. This is too much, and it seems unlikely that such a mix is really representative of villagers' choices and needs. Most village women say that they prefer the fast growing *Ailanthus* and *Robinia*.

⁶ "... the total area covered by the WSM projects (i.e. the WFP-assisted Watershed Management or NRM projects) is only 3.8 percent of the combined watershed of Tarbela and Mangla catchments." Joint Evaluation of the World Food Programme, Working Paper, Case Study - Pakistan, 1994

7.4. In many areas too little attention seems to have been paid to the possibilities -or necessity of multi-purpose use of the project sites. The current 10 x 10 feet spacing of trees in the plantations is appropriate for timber production, but not for mixed use of the sites. In particular, too little attention is given to the possibility of grass production, and even grazing at a later stage. These opportunities would be enhanced if wider spacing were adopted, thereby extending the period of grass production prior to canopy closure, and allowing for either cut and carry of grasses or, once the trees are above critical height, grazing could be possible. Spacing of up to 20 x 20 feet should be considered, especially of multi-purpose broad leaf species, such as *Ailanthus* and *Robinia*.

7.5. Progress in range management activities is behind target and the value of these activities seems limited. The Social Forestry Project in Malakand-Dir (SFPM-D), which is a sister project to the WFP-assisted project 4659 in Malakand division and also funded by the Government of the Netherlands, recommended a shift from the costly, not very successful and non-replicable range improvement practises. Range improvements, even if successfully introduced, are extremely difficult to maintain, unless there are very attractive incentives and/or close supervision. Neither of these two conditions is to be found in the project areas.

7.6. The SFPM-D has recommended a shift towards controlled grazing. The project has carried out various small field trials to demonstrate the benefits of closures, cut-and-carry systems and stall-feeding. The research plots do indeed show the potential benefits in terms of increased grass production, but it is not apparent that such techniques and practices are attractive or successful everywhere in the project areas, in particular for the poorer landless people, including the nomadic people - the *gujars* and *ajars*. Little relevant work has been done on the socio-economic aspects of introducing these new techniques to the villagers - and nomads, or on how to integrate the new systems into current practices and traditions. In some areas where a project has been operating for several years, signs of conflict are emerging. One example is Malakand where the *gujars* were recently reported to be fighting with the settled farmers over grazing rights within the older project areas.

7.7. It has been observed in several other countries that omitting to give adequate attention to the needs of grazers and their animals represents a serious threat to the sustainability of the projects. It also reveals internal contradictions within the projects, in respect to the stated or at least implicit goals of equity and participation.

7.8. Range management and the related activities are essential components of sound natural resource management, and key elements to the success of the projects. Given the complexity and importance of these components of NRM, in terms of achieving sustainable supplies of natural resources, and of reaching peaceful co-existence within and around the village, due attention to finding the right expertise for introducing appropriate interventions and ensuring their adoption is crucial.

7.9. Soil conservation works such as check dams and field terracing appeared to have been well constructed and technically appropriate, in terms of matching the structure with the soil conservation problem. However, such works must be maintained if they are to be useful -in fact, if not maintained they may have a detrimental affect and actually cause, rather than alleviate, soil erosion (this is particularly the case with poorly maintained terraces). In some of the projects such activities have been kept to a minimum, and soil conservation activities are only carried out on critical sites. Given the high risk of poor or no maintenance, this minimalist approach is commended. If landowners are really interested in undertaking such activities, it is likely that they will be able to do so with minimal inputs, i.e. with technical guidance only.

7.10. Project 4003 in Jammu and Kashmir still has a significant roads component; although the reporting data show that some 88 percent of the roads have been constructed. In fact the majority of these roads are not completed. They were all started at more or less the same time, and the work was of an acceptable standard, but the project authorities are now waiting for the mechanised section of the LGRD (Local

Government and Rural Development) Department to provide the necessary equipment and materials for final surfacing. The counterpart funds have not been provided on time or in sufficient amounts. The roads have been quite well constructed and are being used but, given their unfinished state, are very vulnerable to erosion. There is virtually no concept of community participation and hence the future maintenance of the roads is in serious doubt.

8. THE "SOCIAL FORESTRY" APPROACH AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

8.1. It is acknowledged that traditional forestry projects, typically having a 'top-down' approach and designed to address deforestation and degraded watersheds as technical problems requiring technical solutions, are no longer tenable or sustainable. Such projects have not brought lasting benefits to the people living in the degraded environments. And the traditional approaches have proved to be too costly to implement on the scale required to address the increasing problems of natural resource degradation and impossible to maintain.

8.2. Globally, techniques and interventions are being developed to bring local people into the processes of environmental rehabilitation, to ensure that they eventually are fully involved, and that they are responsible for and in control of the management of their own resources. Typically, such interventions involve consultation with and participation of the local population, at various stages of the interventions. Ideally, participation would be from the initial stages of identification and planning of the intervention through to the maintenance of assets and planning of benefit sharing.

8.3. The WFP-assisted interventions have been evolving and are now at various stages in adoption of the social forestry approach. Initial efforts during the 1980s had focused almost exclusively on establishing tree plantations on privately held lands. The overall goal was the revegetation of the hillsides. These efforts were successful to some extent. Villagers and landowners were convinced that they would not lose their lands - actually their *de facto* rights were enhanced - hence more landowners were attracted. And the forest cover visibly improved. Other donors were impressed and became supportive.

8.4. The 'watershed approach' was the next initiative. An entire watershed catchment would be treated with various physical and vegetative measures, such as the construction of soil conservation structures, planting of shrubs and the development of pastures. Again a 'top-down' approach was used. Choices concerning activities and construction of assets were made for the people by project authorities and experts. The majority of the activities were forestry related.

8.5. Eventually, in the early 1990s, the role of the people themselves became recognised as critical, and hence the concepts of 'social forestry' came to the fore. This shift is considered positive and is welcomed. Moreover it seems that the NRM projects now more clearly reflect WFP's policies and priorities, which call for a people centred approach and the goal of selfreliance. And the apparent flexibility of the Country Programme to be capable of absorbing such evolution is commendable.

8.6. The basic concepts of 'social forestry', as practised in Pakistan, are that self-reliance and sustainable rural development is to be achieved through rural communities managing their own resources, including natural resources. These results are best brought about through the formation and operation of community organisations which are representative and have authority. The WFP Country Office in Islamabad is committed to this approach and apparently so are most other international development agencies, as well as national institutions, including the Forestry Departments. It was noted that the Country Office now refers to this sector as "Natural resource and community development" (NRCD), reflecting the shift of focus of the programme/subprogramme/projects.

8.7. This evaluation will not, at this stage, question these basic concepts. But experience has shown that some caution needs to be retained. The validity of the basic concepts is crucial to the success of the NRM projects, in particular in relation to ownership and rights. It is important that vigilance is maintained and that checks are made on whether the stated and implicit goals are actually being reached, through the proposed means, and that the original concepts remain valid.

8.8. Field trips and discussions revealed that some lack of clarity or ambiguity has emerged, and current project documents do not reflect all the changes that have taken place. More importantly, there is some confusion at the field level concerning the main objectives and the roles of village level participants. As a consequence, there is lack of understanding or agreement on what should constitute success and on what the indicators of success should be.

8.9. A more focused or co-ordinated approach from WFP should contribute to resolving some of these ambiguities and confusions. The Country Office could consider providing a common statement defining the present goals and objectives (in terms of environmental issues and people's socio-economic development.) of all the WFP-supported projects in the sector.

8.10. The role of the community organisations is not always clear. In some project areas, for example in project 4659, their original role seemed to be more or less limited to activities within the NRM sector (i.e. rehabilitation of the hillsides). And in this role they seem to have been quite effective: providing a forum for discussion and acting as a vehicle for resource mobilisation and project implementation.

8.11. However, as the VDCs have gained in experience and confidence, they have been able to take on other broader responsibilities such as resolving of land disputes and other conflicts. While the projects continue to support the VDCs, it is not clear to what extent the VDCs are sustainable in their present form. It is probably unrealistic to imagine that they can continue to exist for the sole purpose of natural resource management. But it is out of the scope of most of the technical assistance projects to offer appropriate assistance in other fields -although, paradoxically, the TA programmes depend upon the sustainability of the community organisations.

8.12. Other problems have become apparent: the VDCs lack full legitimacy since they are not yet registered with any legal organisation. Their truly democratic nature is questionable; membership is male only and is quite skewed towards the larger landowners, while the landless and nomadic people are poorly represented. There are as yet no well documented cases of any VDCs organising successful benefit sharing arrangements within the villages. There is a lack of transparency and of formal controls on the powers of the VDCs. On the other hand the fledgling organisations need to be protected from external, vested interests.

8.13. In project 4003, where the concepts of social forestry are only just beginning to be introduced, and VDCs are in their infancy, it is important that the experiences from other projects are used. Some forum should be identified where experiences and lessons learned concerning the VDCs can be shared. WFP could play a role in this.

8.14. Given the significance of the village organisations for the success of the projects, in terms of their stated roles in reaching self-reliance, it is essential that they are carefully monitored. The issues that need to be constantly reviewed include: i) legal status and hence legitimacy; ii) composition of village committee membership, representation and equity; iii) scope of activities, level of skills available; iv) communications with other organisations, line agencies, technical assistance projects, NGOs; v) degree of transparency; vi) arrangements for benefit sharing.

9. WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND GENDER ISSUES

9.1. The economic and cultural conditions of women living in rural areas and in particular in many of the project areas, are quite special. The system known as *purdah* is quite widespread and common in the project

areas, in particular in NWFP. This involves the seclusion and restriction of women, and their subservience to men. Gender-based segmentation of labour is the norm. Women's mobility and the activities outside the homestead in which they may participate are very limited. Degrees of mobility and the range of permitted activities vary and are related to class and economic status. Poorer women have relatively more mobility and are obliged to undertake more activities outside the house than the relatively better off village women. The poorer women's activities may include working on the family farm as well as collecting grasses and wood from the hillsides.

9.2. All women are responsible for the usual household work related to cooking, cleaning and caring for children. In addition, poorer women are responsible for looking after livestock such as cows and goats in and around the house. They also fetch water from outside and are responsible for the supply of fuel which usually consists of brushwood, dung and crop residues. A working day will be at least 14 hours long. The out-migration of men to large towns and cities or out of the country (estimated at around 30 percent of the economically active males in many of the project areas) has further increased the responsibilities and workload of some women. Female literacy rates in Pakistan are very low. It is estimated at less than five percent for NWFP. Women do not own land or property.

9.3. Since their inception, the projects have attempted to address the needs of women. Some of the outputs were expected to specifically benefit women, such as the increased production of fuelwood and grasses. Given the social constraints, women's participation in the project activities was not expected to be very significant; raising tree seedlings was identified as a possibility. Increases in firewood and grasses have come about; but according to recent surveys undertaken by the WFP monitoring unit, these benefits have not always been spread equitably. The mission's field trips revealed that while many village women report that firewood is in greater supply and more easily collected, others complain that they now have to buy what used to be free.

9.4. Perhaps the more important and perhaps impressive work that has been done in several of the projects relates to the formation of Women's Groups. This is particularly evident in the "Environmental rehabilitation project", Malakand division (Project 4659), where a rigid form of *purdah* is observed. Here and elsewhere, significant efforts have been made to involve women in natural resources development and other village level activities, including tree nurseries, small scale vegetable gardening and village shops, as well as micro-credit and savings schemes.

9.5. The progress has been quite limited and slow. But given the local and national conditions and women's very restricted degrees of mobility coupled with very low levels of education and literacy, the results are commendable. It is noteworthy that the women's organisations tend to involve poorer women (the very poor women are obliged to work in the fields and gather grasses and firewood). The staff closely involved in the women's programmes are very motivated and active and the projects have achieved some progress in creating awareness and providing training and employment opportunities to women.

9.6. It was, however, not clear to the mission what the primary purpose of the Women's Organizations was, and hence how they should be assessed in terms of effectiveness. They do provide a forum for women to meet and discuss their common concerns and hence seem to provide scope for increasing women's confidence and capacity. But linkages within the villages, i.e. between the WOs and the VDCs and the VLUP process are not yet well defined. Hence the effectiveness of WOs as a means of involving women in overall village development planning remains potential rather than actual. Also, the problem remains that for most poor village women their stated priority needs are not related to natural resource management, but rather to welfare and infrastructure, such as clinics and schools and clean water.

9.7. The project activities which women, to some extent, have been directly involved in, are tree nurseries and small areas of plantations. These activities have demonstrated that women can fully participate in the projects, provided they are given the necessary guidance and inputs - as is expected for the male participants.

9.8. The savings and loans schemes of the Women's Organisations are so far on a very small scale. They are concentrated in the ERP (Project 4659). As discussed in the evaluation (May 1998) of this project, it seems premature to try to expand this component until it has been allowed to operate for at least another year, and has been very carefully monitored throughout the period. To date, four food stamps saving and loan programme (FSSLP), involving nearly eighty women, have been established and have started internal lending programmes to selected members of their WOs (for small-scale productive enterprises, such as the purchase of a cow for milk and butter production).

9.9. These schemes seem to be attractive and may serve as a catalyst for further confidence building and group action. However, they also appear to be vulnerable to the same risks as other loans and credit programmes. Also, loan repayment is not a sufficient indicator of success. Repayments may be achieved at considerable cost to the individual (who may have been obliged to spend the loan on an emergency) and do not necessarily reflect good "productive" use of the loan. And "group pressure" for reimbursement may actually lead to dissension within the group. Notwithstanding the known risks, this component may have potential as one of several factors contributing to improvement in women's confidence and organisational skills through increasing their access to resources, as well as to increased incomes.

9.10. Most of the projects have attempted to sensitise staff about gender issues. The results have been mixed. Also, to-date there are no professional female staff in the Forest Departments. Some female staff have been recruited into some of the projects with wages paid either through the technical assistance project or through food stamps⁷. This is, however, not sustainable, and probably gives the wrong message on commitment to integration of women's issues into the main thrust of the Forest Departments' work.

9.11. Apart from the apparent benefits of the activities for women, there is concern over the sustainability of the Women's Organisations. The activities that appear to be most attractive to women are the individual, shorter-term income earning opportunities; there is little interest in the longer-term communal interventions. Money earned from the initial activity tended to be spent on immediate needs, e.g. medicines.

9.12. The projects are playing a limited role in linking women with sectors other than natural resource management, such as health (as well as other projects and agencies, including NGOs) In other productive areas, such as horticulture and agriculture, women extensionists could play an important role.

9.13. It is not immediately apparent that the NRM projects are the most appropriate vehicle for providing development assistance to women (since their stated priority needs are not related to natural resource management). However, the projects have provided a unique opportunity or window for reaching poorer, rural women. It is important that present momentum is not lost. Efforts should be channelled into monitoring what is being achieved with special attention paid to the savings and loans schemes. It is necessary to resolve ambiguities regarding the roles and functions of the Women's Groups and to better define their goals and priorities, and hence to identify the appropriate linkages and support needed.

10. TARGETING

10.1. As previously discussed, goals and objectives of the NRM projects were expressed in environmental and physical terms. The locations of the projects were also decided upon according to environmental criteria (degree of environmental degradation, major dams to protect, etc.). This notwithstanding, there was an assumed and actual fit between the areas of severe environmental degradation and the poverty of the people

⁷ In project 4659, the Women's Programme works quite well. The staff consist of one Co-ordinator (cum Range Officer) three Range Officers (RFOs) and 20 Female Forest Extensionists (FFE's). The RFOs initiate contact with the village women and the process of organising women into groups. Each HE covers two villages: her own and a neighbouring one. The FFEs assist in the formation and operation of the Women's Groups. The RFOs also have a role in providing a link for technical advice and in establishing linkages with other departments.

living in such areas (globally, poorer people live in areas that are more marginal in terms of natural resource availability and productive capacity, in a downward spiral of cause and effect).

10.2. Current maps provided by the VAM unit in Islamabad show a good match between the project sites and the poverty indicators, i.e. the projects are in the right districts. However, there are two issues to be addressed here. Firstly, given the size of the districts and the variation found within them, sub-district level data are needed to verify that the projects are actually targeting the poorest people within the poorer districts. Secondly, at present the poverty indicators used are assumed to approximate food insecurity indicators, i.e. it is assumed that poverty is a proxy indicator of food insecurity. This is probably correct, but should be verified with more specific hard data on both poverty and food insecurity. A survey should be undertaken by the VAM unit as soon as possible to identify the most food insecure⁸.

10.3. In addition, and although the poorer were expected to be the immediate beneficiaries of the employment and food aid provided, the projects - as originally designed - were in part skewed towards attracting the somewhat less poor and larger landholders. Most projects were based on the concept of villagers willingly providing their land for tree planting to be undertaken within the scope of the project. This, almost by definition, meant that the less poor and larger landowners, who were probably better informed and who could better afford to take risks, were more likely to volunteer their lands. As confidence in the projects increased, a somewhat more equitable distribution of the medium to long term benefits was reached. However, this automatically excludes the landless, nomadic people and women, who do not own land and are often amongst the poorest.

10.4. In fact, it needs to be recognised that the goal of addressing the most critical environmental problems is not necessarily consistent with WFP's mandate of involving the poorest in all stages of project implementation and benefit sharing. And it is not necessarily so that if WFP does not address the most critical environmental problem, some other agency will.

10.5. Indeed, if the projects or sub-programme requires a participatory and community approach, then probably the less poor people as well as the poorer should be allowed to participate. This seems particularly valid in Pakistan, where the village community organisations are at a rather early and precarious stage.

11. ROLE OF FOOD AID

11.1. Since implementation of the original projects, food aid in the NRM sector has primarily provided an incentive for people to participate in activities related to the rehabilitation of their natural resource base. In the earlier, more traditional style forestry projects payments were made in cash and/or kind for participating in all the project activities. These included plantation forestry on state and private lands, farm forestry and related range management and soil conservation activities. Gradually the communities have been contributing more of their labour or other resources to NRM activities. In particular, farm forestry is now no longer supported by the projects, and very few project activities are implemented in State forests.

11.2. The food stamp system as described above appears to be working smoothly now. The WFP Country Office in Islamabad is to be commended for the successful negotiations with the Government earlier this year. The value of one food stamp was initially set at 25 rupees. This corresponded to the average value of the food rations previously received. There have been incremental rises of five rupees, reflecting inflation and the increase in the daily wage. In October 1998, the value of the food stamp was raised to 40 rupees and that of the cash wage to 40 rupees also.

⁸ During the evaluation, some attempts were made to assess individual levels of poverty and food insecurity but such interviews do not substitute for a full survey. Typically, the villagers met had very small land-holdings, a few animals, intermittent wages from daily labour, irregular remittances from migrant labour and meat was eaten only occasionally.

11.3. Discussions with beneficiaries revealed no major problems with the food stamp system. All people interviewed responded that it was a significant improvement on the previous system of direct food distribution. Beneficiaries prefer to select their own foods (wheat, ghee, sugar and salt). None of the beneficiaries complained of artificially high prices in the food stamp stores. The other actors involved in the food stamp system, i.e. the grocers, the local banks and the project authorities, seemed to find the present arrangements acceptable. Grocers within the system reported that the system was a quite reliable source of income. Local banks benefit through receiving funds at the beginning of a quarter for distribution throughout that quarter. The service charge paid to Bait-ul-Mal has remained at three percent (except for Balochistan where it remains at the original four percent) since late 1994 to early 1995). This should probably be reviewed, and actual costs reassessed.

11.4. One of the major justifications for introducing the food stamp system was to reduce costs to the Government through the elimination of the extremely high transport costs. For example, it was estimated that a saving of some 30 million rupees would be realised in project 4659. None of these savings, which were committed funds at time of project approval, were reinvested into the projects, an action which might have been seen as a good gesture of co-operation between the Government and donor⁹.

12. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

12.1. All the projects within the NRM sub-programme have been or are linked with additional co-financing and/or technical assistance. To date some 10 organisations have been involved. Overall it is the Country Office which has been primarily responsible for co-ordinating these inputs into the projects. For this it is to be commended. This approach is consistent with WFP's current statements that food aid alone cannot achieve optimal developmental effects. However, it is not everywhere apparent that the technical assistance was the most appropriate or needed, and in any case such a proliferation of inputs require considerable resources if they are to be well monitored and managed.

12.2. There exists the dilemma that project managers wish to consult the villagers and have a participatory approach, but the menu of activities offered is very limited. This is in part because the projects remain somewhat target (number of trees to be planted/area) driven and in part because of the apparent need to revegetate the seriously degraded mountainsides, which itself may be a reflection of the technical assistance. The 'participatory' nature of the projects involves discussions with the villagers (including sometimes the women) on what tree species mix should be planted, but not on deciding on what are priority activities and schemes. Yet, it is clearly not apparent that forestry activities or even the eventual forest products constitute a real priority for the majority of villagers. In fact it has been noted through several surveys that water related activities are very often the first priority, especially for women. Frequently, as previously discussed, the availability of grazing lands is also a high priority, in particular for poorer, landless people.

12.3. The new focus and rationale of all the projects is the local level or village community organisations (male and female), but most of the technical assistance packages are weighted to the technical/forestry aspects. It is suggested that the orientation needs to be reversed: that the technical assistance packages should consist of skills in community organisation, social mobilisation and training, with smaller sub-components dedicated to the technical aspects of the project interventions. Given the common focus of the projects within the sub-programme, consideration could also be given to drafting a framework or outline for the critical inputs required in any technical assistance package to the projects.

12.4. The linkages and co-ordination among the projects and their sub-components are not marked (only ad-hoc visits to ATP-assisted project areas for beneficiaries, in particular women, arranged by the

⁹ Alternatively the funds saved could have been invested in "an adequate system to monitor the situation of household food security and poverty status in the project areas, and changes brought about through the use of food stamps and other project activities." as recommended by the evaluation mission of project 4659.

Programme). Significant opportunities to learn from the experience of other projects within the Country Programme are being lost.

12.5. As stated above, co-ordination between and among the governments and donors involved in the forestry/NRM sector does exist and is quite active at the Islamabad level, as well as in Peshewar, the capital of NWFP (e.g. Forestry Donors Co-ordination Group and the 'Institutional reforms project'). But it will be a few years before any significant effects are felt at project/programme level. There is scope for improved co-ordination and information sharing between the various donors of on-going projects in the NRM sector.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

13.1. The WFP Country Office, together with the project authorities, provides the required standard reports, such as the Country Office Project Reports (COPRs) on the progress of the projects, regularly and in good time. Some of the contributing partners also submit timely reports on progress within their spheres of operation. These reports tend to elaborate on the quantitative rather than the qualitative achievements of the projects. Hence, there has been a paucity of useful monitoring throughout the projects of the effects on the villagers and beneficiaries, and of progress made towards achieving self-reliance.

13.2. According to the evaluation of project 4659, for example, "quantitative monitoring and reporting of project activities and outputs was quite well covered, but the qualitative, socioeconomic effects have not been sufficiently scrutinised. Many of the assumptions upon which the project relies, for example that the project activities would necessarily provide benefits to all villagers, have not been reviewed. Similarly, there has been little monitoring of the processes by which the benefits were supposed to be distributed. The VLUP (village land use planning) process could lend itself to gather more information on the socio-economic aspects (e.g. social stratification and number of households per category; natural uses and aspirations per category)". That mission also noted that WFP's role in project monitoring was quite significant, but that there had been no systematic procedure established whereby the data acquired during visits could be used by or fed back to the project management. These comments may be considered relevant for all the projects. In addition, there are no processes for comparing and/or collating the data from the different projects.

13.3. Similarly, the findings of the mission to project 4659 on the need for M&E on benefits and beneficiaries are appropriate for all the projects. In mid-1996, the WFP Country office undertook a village level impact assessment of the WFP forestry/NRM activities in Pakistan (WFP had been supporting forestry/watershed management projects in Pakistan for some 20 years). The study represented the first organised examination of the effects of the WFP-assisted NRM projects on participants/beneficiaries. The major issues raised were that, in the VDCs, the proportion of landless members is very small. Hence the VDCs are dominated by the landowners, who have taken decisions for the entire village or community (e.g. closure of project plantation sites has reduced access for the landless to fuelwood, fodder and grazing land).

13.4. Project 4659 evaluation mission reported that the same critical issues concerning the actual beneficiaries and sharing of benefits continued to prevail and that more data were needed on who gains and who loses from the project, and on how the project benefits are distributed. The CP evaluation mission was pleased to note that the Country Office had accepted the recommendations of the earlier evaluation mission and was in the process of designing a benefits study of the NRM projects.

14. SUSTAINABILITY

14.1. The projects of the current Country Programme are evolving and are adapting to the new approaches. To this extent they are still in their infancy. More time is needed before it will be possible to accurately assess their validity or their sustainability.

14.2. Given the uncertainty of acquiring outside financial and technical support for the WFPsupported projects, it is important that communities and the Forest Departments do not become too dependent on the currently available assistance. There is a risk that projects may collapse after the departure of the technical assistance, if appropriate measures for handing over and withdrawal are not in place. The mission did not see much evidence of such planning for withdrawal. It might be useful to view technical assistance packages as essential, but time-bound inputs (even though projects are unlikely to be sustained through the Department of Forests' budget).

14.3. It seems, however, that some crucial elements for the sustainability of the projects have emerged. Given their pivotal role, the stability and legitimacy/legality of the village level organisations is obviously critical. That is, it seems that the projects should be sustainable to the extent that the community organisations themselves are valid and sustainable. It is important that maximum support is given to clarifying their role in local development as well as to strengthening such organisations.

14.4. Sustainability will also, to some extent, rest on the issues of targeting. In particular it is important that more data are provided on the poorest and the most insecure populations. As explained above, it would also be useful to resolve the possible contradictions involved in the targeting of the poorest and most food insecure versus the need to adopt community and participatory approaches.

15. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1. Project/Sub-programme design:

- the commendable shifts in goals and in focus of the projects, the actual, current objectives and indicators for success need to be agreed upon by all parties, i.e. the participants, the project managers and the donors; round table discussions should take place;
- in order to address the requirement of a sectoral or sub-programme approach of the WFP interventions in the NRM sector, consideration should be given to drawing up a framework which would provide, at a minimum, descriptions of the standard approach, goals and indicators of success;
- to the extent possible the internal contradictions concerning poverty targeting, the participatory approach and the watershed values should be resolved; at a minimum they should be acknowledged.

15.2. Technical assistance:

- given the crucial role of the local level institutions - the VDCs and WOs - technical assistance packages for supporting the NRM projects should focus on social mobilisation and training, and should include appropriate expertise;
- all the projects need to give more attention to the needs of grazers, and how to integrate animal husbandry/grazing lands/grass production into the projects; the technical assistance programmes need to recruit appropriately qualified and experienced people in these fields.

15.3. Co-ordination:

There is need for improved co-ordination at all levels of the projects, namely:

- at the field level where more visits should be arranged by the Country Office in a planned manner, whereby project staff and beneficiaries visit other NRM projects within the WFP Country Programme;

- similarly, there should be more information sharing between the WFP- supported NRM projects and those supported by other donors in the same sector - again the WFP Office could take the lead.

15.4. Institutions:

- since village level organisations, and in particular the women's organisations, are at a more or less embryonic stage, and still in need of outside support, WFP and the Government should, to the extent possible, seek to provide that assistance, whether through their own budgets, or from external technical assistance.
- there is a need to clarify the role(s) and scope of the village level organisations and the women's organisations, and hence how the projects relate to them.

15.5. NGOs: the projects should make more efforts to identify suitable NGOs; these could assist in project monitoring as well as with local level technical, and socio-economic issues.

15.6. Gender:

- while special attention is, and needs to continue being given to gender issues, it is important that sufficient caution is used in order to avoid: a) increasing the isolation and separateness of women, and/or b) creating 'women only' projects;
- there is a need to sensitise both men and women on gender issues; there should be emphasis on the positive benefits that should accrue to everyone if both men and women's needs are addressed, and if participation of both women and men is encouraged; again, WFP and the Government are requested to ensure that appropriate technical assistance is provided;
- the Government is urged to try to recruit female staff, on a regular basis as part of the fulltime staff of the Forest Department.
- the savings and loans activities of project 4659 should be very carefully monitored and assessed, as described in the evaluation of the ERP 4659 project, before expansion of this component is considered.

15.7. Targeting:

- the Pakistan WFP VAM unit should be requested to prepare more detailed poverty and food insecurity indicators in respect of the areas where the NRM projects are most feasible/desirable according to technical/watershed criteria;
- the issue of targeting of the benefits of the projects, as well as the project participants, needs greater attention (see M&E).

15.8. M&E:

- it would be useful to collate and analyse all the M&E work done to-date on the WFPassisted NRM projects, and to the extent possible relevant M&E data available from similar projects in Pakistan; the WFP Country Office should contract specialists to undertake this exercise;
- there is a need for much more effects and beneficiary monitoring; WFP, the Government and other donors need to know who the beneficiaries are and what benefits they are receiving from the project,

and, conversely, they need to know who is being excluded from the benefits, and who is suffering or receiving dis-benefits from the projects.

15.9. Sustainability: the sustainability of the projects rests on the validity and sustainability of the local level organisations, the resolution of project design issues and on the successful implementation of the above recommendations.

Social and physical targets and achievements of the projects

Item and Unit	Project Target	Planned (annual 97-98)	Actual (cumulative)	Percentage
Project 2309				
Road construction (km)	885	265	435	164
Village road improvement (km)	50	17	12	71
Irrigation schemes(km)	3,520	1,090	862	79
Drinking water (nos)	19,250	6,500	875	13
Metalled roads (km)	625	207	12	6
Cons. of wells/tanks (nos)	100	0	0	0
Instal. of hand pumps (nos)	100	0	0	0
Plants production (millions)	22	16	11	69
Private nurseries (nos)	48	23	15	65
Block plantation (acre)	14,000	55,000	2,150	39
Sowing (acre)	12,000	3,000	1,590	53
Roadside plantation (km)	680	160	0	0
Range management (acre)	10,000	2,000	0	0
Gabions (km)	4	2	1.3	65
Water ponds (nos)	100	56	25	45
Women programmes	60	60	58	97

Item & Unit	Project Target	Planned (97 98)	Actual (97-98)	Actual (cumulative)	Percentage
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Project 2451		(Main component)			
Plantation (acres)	77,100	15,000	20,399	37,532	49
Nurseries (acres)	566	112	101	258	46
Maintenance (acres)	454,500	112,300	113,487	219,707	48
Soil & water consrv: cut off drains (km)	100	27	21	34	34
Checkdams (acres)	25,000	6,000	4,060	7,210	29
Roads (km)	134	33	26	40	30
Paths (km)	252	72	38	51	20
Community activities					
Plantation (acres)	20,400	4,450	1,902	4,310	21
Nurseries (acres)	101	21	12.3	24.7	24
Local groups (VDCs)	80	20	8	8	10
Women's groups	32	8	2	2	6

Item and Unit	Project Target	Planned (cumulative)	Actual (cumulative)	Percentage
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Project 4003

Road construction (km)	350	330	290	88
Road improvement (km)	550	530	340	640
Schools (nos)	250	175	76	43
Reforestation (acres)	31,610	30,372	29,352	97
Plant production (millions)	24	22.1	21.64	98
Protection/Maintenance (acres)	121000	87690	76670	87
Forest roads/paths (km)	150	140	107	76
Checkdams (M.cu ft)	5.2	4.12	3.81	92
Terracing (M.cu ft)	5	4.6	3.416	74
Water facilities (no)	156	110	94	85

Item & Unit	Project Target	Planned (cumulative)	Actual (cumulative)	Percentage
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Project 4377

Sand dune stabilisation (ac)	12,000	5,625	4,225	75
Contour riding (M.cu ft)	56.11	30.23	19.32	64
Plant production (million)	2.6	2.24	1.12	50
Earth work (M.cu ft)	5.9	5.13	3.93	77
Checkdams (M.cu ft)	5.4	4.03	3.48	86
Karaz rehab (nos)	110	108	89	82

Item & Unit	Project target	Planned (cumulative)	Actual (cumulative)	Percentage
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Project 4659

VLUP (no)	85	85	89	104
VDC Formation (no)	85	85	89	104
Women Groups	35	35	42	120
Nurseries (ac)	538	538	589	109
Afforestation (planting) (ac)	60,000	60,000	48,656	97
(Sowing) (ac)	27,500	20,000	12,611	63
Inspection paths (km)	900	600	554	92
Soil conservation (100 cu t)	30,000	27,700	25,590	92
Terracing (ac)	2,150	830	974	117
Private nurseries (no)	95	300	387	129
Range management (ac)	42,500	34,000	12,407	36
Water channels (km)	85	68	19.9	29