

# Protracted relief and recovery operation in Somalia

## WFP assistance to Somalia

Somalia has had no central government since the fall of President Siad Barre in 1991 and the ensuing destruction of the social and economic infrastructure. In January 2004, representatives of 22 Somali groups agreed to establish a 275-member Federal Transitional Parliament in Nairobi – the fourteenth attempt to resolve the crisis through political negotiations. However, all regions continue to suffer from sporadic insecurity and recurring low-level conflict, clan rivalry, revenge and crime, new waves of displacement (as a result of conflict and natural disasters) and unmet humanitarian needs. WFP, NGOs and other UN agencies operate in a climate of high permanent insecurity and often very limited humanitarian space, and with severe operating restrictions.

The three-year US\$48 million protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 10191.0, “Food Aid for Relief and Recovery,” began in January 2003 and followed a three-year PRRO that was launched in July 1999 when relatively peaceful areas of the country were beginning to emerge. The operation aimed to contribute to improved food security for 2.9 million people affected by natural disasters and civil unrest. The objectives were to: (i) ensure the minimum dietary requirements for vulnerable people through food aid; (ii) improve the nutritional status of vulnerable people, especially women and children; and (iii) support the capacity of vulnerable populations to create productive assets and resources that enable them to improve their livelihoods.

## Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The evaluation took place in June–July 2005 and focused on the relevance and effectiveness of intervention strategies and activities as well as general issues of transition from relief to recovery, targeting, gender, protection, coordination and partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The evaluation team held discussions with staff from WFP, donors, non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and local authorities in Nairobi and Somalia. The team also visited sites in WFP’s three operational areas and met beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, local authorities and community representatives.

## Key Findings and Conclusions

### Amount of food used for WFP activities

The disparity between planned and actual food allocations demonstrates the extent to which implementation was affected by conflict, insecurity and access. For example, in 2003 actual food used for relief activities was only 17.8 percent; for social support activities 76.2 percent; for food-for-work (FFW) and food-for training (FFT) 78.1 percent; and for School Feeding (SF) 50.0 percent.

### Crisis vs post-crisis activities

The range of WFP activities is aimed at post-crisis recovery and so is not ideal for protecting livelihoods in times of crisis.

For example, panic selling of livestock – a last effort to recover value from weakened animals that are likely to die – leads to flooded markets, reducing prices even further. The result is that pastoralists sell off livestock at extremely low prices and on poor terms of trade. Subsequently, many cannot restock when the situation improves. WFP’s range of activities does little to address this critical issue. New approaches are needed.

### Providing food as incentives for work

Providing beneficiaries with food as incentives or payments for work reduces dependence on free food distributions. For other food-insecure groups closer to recovery, the benefit of individual or community-owned assets is a stimulus to reducing vulnerability; food aid contributes as a means of payment for labour. The food security of both categories must be kept in mind to prevent the inclusion of too many food-secure households to the detriment of intended beneficiaries.

### Problem analysis and supporting livelihoods

WFP programme staff have tried to avoid food-driven projects and to ensure that rehabilitation activities help to improve or support livelihoods. However, the selection process focuses on whether a proposed project falls within WFP’s usual range of activities rather than on problem analysis with communities to maximize the achievement of recovery objectives. This focus has most likely constrained the development of innovative and effective approaches. Given the likelihood of a transition from relief to rehabilitation activities among drought-affected

pastoralists in the north, it is essential to link sound problem analysis, activity design and objectives into the next PRRO.

### Innovative activities

Despite a tendency to replicate previous WFP projects, several innovative activities were undertaken. For example, the Community Cereal Reserves pilot project attempts to address indebtedness brought about by food-insecure households having to repay food borrowed from the market during the lean season with three times the quantity during the low-price post-harvest season. Support of salt production in Berbera and informal training in marketable skills in Garowe are other examples.

### Community-level vs. broader livelihood projects

The Country Office is making a transition from a large number of community-level projects to a small number of larger livelihood projects (the number of projects in 2005 was 25 percent of those in 2003). This is advantageous in terms of programme management and of maximizing WFP's support for the livelihoods of food-insecure households. It also highlights the effectiveness of partnering with other agencies.

### School feeding and increased enrolment/attendance

School feeding contributed significantly to increased enrolment rates and more regular attendance. In the eight schools covered by the evaluation, the increase was approximately 50 percent, rather than the expected 15 percent. On average, girls' enrolment increased by 70 percent. In addition, some unintended positive outcomes were noted, including: positive change in parental attitudes towards girls' education, which contributed to increased enrolment/attendance; improved nutrition status of the children, as stated by parents and teachers; and improved learning performance and higher scores in examinations.

### Targeting the most vulnerable

Targeting rehabilitation activities to the most vulnerable and most food-insecure areas is hampered by conflict and consequent lack of access, which are causally related to food insecurity – for example, conflict and insecurity often result in the displacement of populations. As a result, rehabilitation interventions by various agencies are concentrated in accessible and secure areas. Thus, areas of coverage are limited, and the total humanitarian capacity falls far short of humanitarian need.

### Redistribution of relief food

The issue of redistribution of WFP relief food has raised concerns about inclusion errors. Redistribution of food by beneficiaries represents a repayment to those who supported them in the past and can ensure that these sources of support remain open in the future. Redistribution also reduces tensions among recipients and non-recipients, which is particularly important in the context of Somalia. Evidence suggests that redistribution on the basis of equity rather than vulnerability is widespread. This does result in inclusion errors, but the benefits of redistribution in terms of enhanced social safety nets and social capital outweigh any negative connotation.

## Recommendations

### Strengthening the impact of nutrition-related activities

In order to enhance understanding of the causes of malnutrition, improved beneficiary profile information needs to be generated, and staff technical capacity to interpret and use nutritional data needs to be strengthened.

### Focusing on objectives rather than activities

The project approval process should assess projects in terms of their specific contribution to PRRO objectives, in addition to local problem analysis. This will serve to refocus activity design on objectives rather than activities, and eliminate projects that do not contribute to these objectives.

### Extending duration of school feeding

Given the success of school feeding activities, WFP's commitment to individual schools should be for a minimum of three years, unless a suitable agency is identified to take on the management and support of this activity.

### Defining the target population

When defining target groups, particular attention should be paid to sources of livelihood and a more refined definition of status, with indications of social capital, social networks and social position in the potential target groups' current location and as they relate to their ability to access market credit and community support mechanisms in times of crisis.

### Strengthening protection

Agreements with local partners should include specific reference to secure and safe delivery to the most vulnerable and state that their safety, security and dignity are not placed at risk as a result of food aid.

### Improving monitoring and evaluation

The capacity of long-term staff needs to be developed, rather than relying on consultants and short-term junior professional officers and focal points whose other responsibilities prevent them from adequately engaging in monitoring and evaluation. Technical staff at the Country Office should be allocated to advise on data collection and analysis and to evaluate impact.

### Maintaining programming flexibility

Given the likelihood of natural and man-made disasters in the coming years, WFP programming must remain flexible so that targeted food assistance can be delivered rapidly in response to drought, flood or conflict, even during a recovery operation.

**Reference: Full and summary reports of the Somalia PRRO 10191.0 evaluation are available at: <http://www.wfp.org/operations/evaluation>**

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