

Mid-term Evaluation of the WFP India Country Programme (2003–2007)

WFP assistance to India

Since 1963, WFP has provided over **US\$1 billion** in food and development assistance to India, including **US\$345 million** to the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**, and supported over **70 development projects**. WFP has also provided food through **14 emergency programmes** and two protracted relief and recovery operations (PRRO). Over the past decade, the two main programme activities have been support to forestry and to supplementary feeding programmes, with a geographical concentration on rural areas.

The 2003–2007 Country Programme (CP), WFP's second in India, was designed to play a catalytic role in the country's efforts to reduce vulnerability and eliminate hunger and food insecurity amongst the targeted hungry poor. The design represented a major shift for WFP – from an operational to an advocacy, model-building and capacity building role. The CP focused on: improving the nutritional status of women and children through the ICDS; improving food security through disaster mitigation and preserving and creating assets through Food for Work (FFW) in partnership with other entities; and investing in Food for Education (FFE), through the provision of a micronutrient-fortified mid-morning snack to school children. The advocacy role was primarily at the national level, with a focus on food security and included the production of two major publications, one of which (the Food Insecurity Atlases) was jointly produced with the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation provided WFP India with an external view of progress made by the CP towards expected results. Specific objectives included an evaluation of:

- WFP's catalytic role in supporting India's effort to reduce vulnerability and eliminate hunger and food insecurity amongst the targeted hungry poor; efforts to promote and demonstrate models that provide immediate and longer-term food security in the most food-insecure areas; and advocacy in support of the Government of India's (GoI) objective of a hunger-free India.
- The relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of CP activities and selected pilots.
- The evaluation also assessed progress towards achieving WFP Strategic Priority 5 – to help governments establish and manage national food assistance programmes.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Fortified food initiatives through the ICDS

One of the most significant achievements has been the uptake of micronutrient fortified blended food in the ICDS programme in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Uttaranchal, with the

uptake of fortification outside of WFP supported Districts having been quite substantial. Millers have also increased their capacity to fortify food. WFP has tested different fortification models to determine which are the most appropriate at the State level.

ICDS has increased enrolment for women and lowered the proportion of underweight children. The GoI and other partners recognise the importance of Indiamix (a micronutrient fortified blended food) for the ICDS. WFP needs to ensure that the most food-insecure households are those that consume Indiamix, however.

Food for Education

In partnership with the government, development agencies and local organizations, the FFE programme planned to design and implement innovative institutional models to be used to leverage policy and resources. Successful models of food assistance were to be documented for advocacy through national and international workshops, media and publications.

FFE objectives are on target, but community participation and health related elements have been less effective. Enrolment has increased in schools receiving long-term assistance, but not in new schools. Results from the Country Office (CO) self-evaluation of FFE are mixed in terms of outcomes.

Food for Work

The FFW programme provides limited resources for relatively small number of poor people. The FFW's generated fund component has provided some sustainable community assets. Community participation was greater in the component run by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The evaluation team findings suggest that limited attention appears to have been given to scaling up innovations attempted in FFW programming through the Forest Department and that the potential was limited.

Advocacy

As noted above, the advocacy emphasis of the CO has been on increasing national awareness of food security issues. WFP receives greater credibility for its advocacy work because it is also working in some of India's poorest districts. While the technical quality of a number of other advocacy products has been high, and there have been some significant innovations, several advocacy products did not appear to be well-known or in use as intended. While national level advocacy has been strong, it was recognized that State level advocacy needed improvement and measures were being taken in this respect.

Recommendations

The evaluation formulated the following recommendations:

ICDS: Continue working on fortification, ensuring that this is complemented by analysis of social exclusion and promotion of inclusion of the most food-insecure households. Strengthen programming in key areas identified in the CO self-evaluations, such as attendance levels of children, receipt of supplementary nutrition by women, prevalence of nutritional deficiencies among women, coverage of severely malnourished women and children, and nutrition and health education.

FFE: Undertake a lessons learned review of the strengths and weaknesses of FFE and develop lessons for future CP activities.

FFW: Phase out FFW through the Department of Forestry by the end of the current CP, with a focus on ensuring that community-based work is handed over to NGOs, and that poor households are not put at risk by the phase-out. Expand work through IFAD, focusing on developing replicable models for support to sustainable livelihoods of the most food-insecure households.

Advocacy and policy dialogue: Increase advocacy at State level, making a clear link between advocacy and policy and programme implementation. Define users and intended impacts of advocacy products (such as the Food Security Atlases) more clearly, develop dissemination plans, and track results of efforts, concentrating on fewer, better-targeted advocacy products.

Strategic planning: Activity plans for the remainder of the CP should include further work on targeting, monitoring and participatory programming.

Model building: Review the current staffing profile, ensuring capacity in advocacy and model building in relation to targeting, monitoring and programming. Undertake fewer but more explicitly planned pilots, for which scaling up should be discussed from conception in terms of likely government interest, funds available, and partnership and coordination possibilities with other agencies. Develop realistic objectives for scaling up that include results statements at outcome level, indicators and timeframes. Ensure that lessons learned from past pilots are used to develop new pilots. Implement at least two core activities in the same community to determine if WFP's models are replicable.

General and geographical targeting: Re-focus targeting on food insecurity, socio-economic and institutional indicators. Include the following criteria for the selection of States for programme implementation: State government capacity, potential for partnership with other agencies, levels of food insecurity, and gender inequality. Phase out smaller programmes by the end of 2007.

Social targeting: Undertake a participatory Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) assessment of social exclusion to determine whether WFP's target group is included in programming, and to identify ways to overcome social exclusion.

Some Key Lessons

Transition from programming to technical assistance role: COs need guidance on realistic expectations of a new kind of programme. WFP could facilitate inter-country learning between COs that are moving to a technical assistance model.

Balancing technical and social approaches: WFP has considerable technical expertise in food fortification and procurement, but this must be balanced with social expertise on targeting and participation in the India context.

Reference: Full and summary reports of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the WFP India Country Programme (2003–2007) are available at: www.wfp.org/operations/evaluation/ and are listed in the reports section under the year 2007.

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