

Evaluation Brief



Rwanda: An Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2006-2010)

Context

Rwanda has a population of 10.3 million, with an annual average growth rate of 2.7%. It has one of the highest population densities in the world and land is scarce. In 2000, Rwanda's GDP was 8%, rising to 11% in 2008. An estimated 57% of the population is living below the national poverty line. Agriculture is the backbone of the Rwandan economy. Despite the recent gains in food security, high levels of chronic malnutrition have persisted for the past 10 years. Literacy rates for 15 – 24 year olds increased from 57% to 77% between 2000 and 2005/06 and net enrolment rates (primary) from 72% in 2000 to 93% in 2009. 54,000 refugees, mainly from DRC, live in camps. Rwandans have continued to return from neighbouring countries and have been resettled.

The WFP portfolio in Rwanda

WFP has been present in Rwanda since 1972. For this evaluation the Rwanda portfolio is defined by five operations, valued at US\$ 207 million, two development (22% of total budget) and three relief and recovery operations (78%) undertaken between 2006 and 2010. Other activities include the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CSFVA) conducted in 2006 and 2009 (with a nutrition survey) and the pilot Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme, started in 2009. The main activities include food for education through which 50% of the 526,000 beneficiaries were assisted; food for work and food for training (25%); general food distributions, mainly for refugees and returnees (GFD) (9%); support to HIV patients on Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) and their families (7%) and supplementary feeding for refugees (6%) and mother and child health and nutrition (MCHN) support (3%).

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning. It enabled the Rwanda country office to make informed strategic decisions for its next country strategy and to improve ongoing operations.

The evaluation was conducted by a team of 6 independent consultants, with field work taking place in November – December 2010.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Alignment and Strategic Positioning

WFP's portfolio in Rwanda has demonstrated a high level of alignment with the Government of Rwanda's policies and strategies. Participation by WFP, in the UN's Delivering as One (DaO) pilot initiative UN theme groups and Government-led committees in agriculture and health and education sectors, ensures excellent alignment and strategic partnership. The DaO initiative supports Government policy objectives and WFP has undertaken joint activities with other UN agencies supporting school based agriculture and health.

WFP's analytical work provided government and Development Partners with information on the hunger and food security situation; and it has been followed through with the Food Security Monitoring System.

WFP is the key strategic partner of the government and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in providing food rations to 54,000 refugees and in assisting Rwandan returnees to resettle.

WFP's food for work, assets and training (FFW/FFA/FFT) are programmes coherent with the national agenda focused on increasing arable land, soil conservation, and water management.

WFP's school feeding programme, implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education, aligns well with the focus on increasing attendance, reducing dropout rates and improving learning.

WFP's MCHN activities are appropriate to the country's current needs and serve to increase access to community based nutrition and health services and are aligned with government policies.

P4P has strong synergies with government programmes supporting enhanced agriculture productivity and marketing.

Making Strategic Choices

Overall, WFP has made major contributions in collecting and analysing information on the national hunger, food security and nutrition situation. WFP has based its interventions on clear priorities set by the government, which strongly leads donor coordination efforts. Within the UN Country Team, WFP's comparative strengths in relief, education, nutrition, HIV and agriculture sectors have permitted greater synergies with other UN partners.

WFP's switch from a regional to a Rwanda-specific operation permitted greater alignment to the needs in the country.

WFP has been able to take advantage of synergies between projects where they coincided in the same geographic areas. In general, however, interventions are too thinly disbursed, with few synergies.

WFP's support to school feeding far exceeded its support to nutrition. There is a trade-off as clearly the WFP-supported MCHN activities tackle malnutrition whereas the school feeding programme has mainly educational objectives pointing to a need for renewed emphasis on activities addressing, with partners, the causes of chronic malnutrition.

In 2009, WFP phased out food assistance (in-kind) for the widespread land development activities previously undertaken with FFW/FFA/FFT due to funding shortfalls. It has been taken up by the government's own strategy for agriculture development, however there are still unmet gaps. WFP's P4P project is timely as it opens up markets for small-scale holders.

WFP has been able to leverage its support to education to assist the government in its expansion of primary education and to use schools for community based activities. WFP's transition strategy was slower than planned, mainly because of insufficient preparation of the government and communities.

Portfolio Performance and Results

The portfolio reached between 450,000 and 580,000 beneficiaries (50% were women and girls) ranging from 59-100% of its intended beneficiaries. Food distributed ranged from 35-76% of planned whereas expenses vs needs was around 50%. There was no strong difference in the performance of the various activities, although some performed slightly better such as support to refugees, FFW/FFA/FFT and school feeding.

Relevance. The projects were relevant to the needs of the people and appreciated by all beneficiaries interviewed. The relevance of the activities was affected by pipeline breaks, mainly due to insufficient funding.

Examples of participation in project selection and implementation and ownership were found in the WFP portfolio. The FFW/FFA/FFT activities were strongly owned and implemented by the Government and communities. The government has taken steps to move towards a community based school feeding programme and to assist the process WFP and partners implemented a number of pilot food security and health projects at school level and, at the national level, assisted with school feeding policy development. The government and community ownership are impressively high in the recently initiated P4P pilot.

WFP's analytical work pointed out the unresolved gaps in food security and chronic malnutrition. The President's multi-year and multiple sector malnutrition reduction plan suggests that addressing the chronic levels of malnutrition has now risen up the agenda. WFP projects to tackle chronic undernutrition should be supported as a matter of priority.

Efficiency was also affected by WFP's strategy of working throughout the whole country with activities taking place in 26 out of 30 districts, covering all 5 provinces. The school feeding, people living with HIV and MCHN activities were all thinly spread leading to a high logistic burden and reduced efficiency. The food was generally delivered on-time, however, all activities experienced delays and ration cuts.

The **effectiveness and impact** of programme activities were strongly affected by the funding shortfalls that curtailed some activities completely. The remaining activities had good results. Unfortunately the monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system had very few outcome indicators tracked systematically.

Nutritional surveys on the refugee populations indicate that GAM and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rates were within acceptable ranges, however, chronic malnutrition measured through stunting rates remained unacceptably high.

This evaluation team, reviewing the results some years after the FFW/FFA/FFT had ended, considered that people's lives had been radically changed, providing a secure livelihood and significantly reducing dependence and food insecurity. The evaluation team found that rural infrastructure was effectively rehabilitated and that terraces have been highly effective in curtailing soil erosion.

Regarding school feeding, in assisted schools attendance rates marginally improved from an already impressive 95% to 97% from 2006-2010 whereas drop-out rates have been reduced from 5% in 2006 to only 1.8% in 2009, a good achievement compared to the national drop-out rate of 14% in 2009.

The effectiveness of the people living with HIV activities was not demonstrated to the evaluation team regarding its objective for ART adherence. WFP gives the ration to buffer the ART side effects as well as to provide a nutritious food to start the long process of increasing weight and fitness to work. At the time of the evaluation data on patients' weight and other measures of nutrition, while collected in some cases, had not yet been

analysed by WFP or its partners.

This evaluation found the MCHN support to be highly targeted to the clinically malnourished and an integral part of a curative health programme; it also encourages good health seeking behaviour, a key element of the Government's health policy. Outcome data available show results that satisfy Sphere standards. Children did recover, but the level of re-entry into the supplementary feeding programme was average.

Sustainability. The assets created through FFW/FFA were generally well maintained and provided increased crop yields. The inclusion of school feeding in the Government's policy framework augers well for its sustainability but will require capacity development and financial allocations. The sustainability of the MCHN programme is supported through its inclusion in the MOH's health referral system and the recent prominence given to tackling malnutrition by the Government using a multi-sectoral approach.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

The Rwanda portfolio was well aligned with the people's needs and government policies and was well placed in the DaO pilot initiative. The portfolio performed very well, making the necessary adjustments required to cope with insufficient funding and an evolving operational context.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Recommendation 1. The funding be discussed with a view to scaling back or to seeking alternative sources for specific activities and that funding be made for a multi-year time horizon.

Recommendation 2. WFP seeks ways to devolve the data collected and conclusions drawn from the CFSVA (2006 and 2009) and from the FSMS into the district planning process.

Recommendation 3. The analytical work and process be institutionalised within the government and crop assessment data and price data be integrated into the analytical work reporting structure.

Recommendation 4. WFP, in discussion with Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees, develops a process and structure whereby the output from the FSMS can be regularly reported and discussed.

Recommendation 5. The school feeding programme be reoriented to the new policy, retargeted using the CFSVA 2009, and a phased closure of the current school feeding programme be considered once Government has assumed ownership.

Recommendation 6. A WFP capacity development strategy be developed to enable the government to build skills and systems related to food security monitoring, school feeding and nutrition.

Recommendation 7. The school gardens should continue, but all initiatives concerning livestock at schools should be closed.

Recommendation 8. WFP engage with government/partner processes to assess how the analytical work can be used to inform and to determine further support to nutrition that WFP can provide through the DaO pilot initiatives.

Recommendation 9. Enhance the M&E system through collecting and analysing both key implementation data and outcome data.

Recommendation 10. The people living with ART programme logistics be rationalised and better coordinated with other partners.

Reference:



Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at www.wfp.org/evaluation
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