

Evaluation Brief



Sudan: An evaluation of WFP's Portfolio 2010-2012

Context

The Sudan portfolio has been one of WFP's largest and most complex portfolios with high security risks, limited access to affected populations, restricted operating environments and severe logistics challenges.

The portfolio was implemented during a time of considerable change in Sudan, with the separation of South Sudan in 2011, insecurity and access restrictions in border areas and increased insecurity in Darfur during the latter period. The evaluation reference period was 2010–2012, but the evaluation team did not consider any work undertaken in the areas now located in South Sudan.

WFP's Portfolio in Sudan

WFP was the largest humanitarian actor in the Sudan with more than 40 % of the total consolidated appeal (CAP) request every year from 2010 to 2012. The portfolio was characterized by relatively good funding, with limited shortfalls and over 80% coverage of planned beneficiaries in each of the three years.

The portfolio comprised three emergency operations (EMOPs), six special operations (SOs) and one country programme (CP). Direct expenditures by WFP over the portfolio period were approximately \$1.2 billion USD for the EMOPs, \$132 million USD for SOs, and \$1 million USD for the CP, confirming the dominance of emergency programming in Sudan. The SOs provided UNHAS and logistics support to humanitarian partners.

Portfolio activities provided humanitarian food assistance through; i) general food distribution (GFD); ii) food-based nutrition programmes; iii) food for assets (FFA), including food for work/recovery (FFW/FFR) and food for training (FFT); and iv) school feeding.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation assessed the performance of WFP Sudan's portfolio as a whole, focusing on: i) strategic alignment and positioning; ii) factors driving strategic decision-making; and iii) performance and results.

Serving accountability and learning objectives, the evaluation was timed to correspond with the 2009-12 WFP Country Strategy and associated United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF); and to provide recommendations for the design of the new WFP Sudan operation planned for 2014.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Alignment and Strategic Positioning

The evaluation found the portfolio broadly aligned with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, albeit in a manner complicated by the role of the Government of Sudan as host government to the UN agencies and party to the conflicts within WFP's operating areas. The evaluation noted that WFP was active in negotiating access to

insecure areas in order to conduct food security assessments and deliver food assistance. However, WFP's restricted access, including its very limited access to non-government held areas, excludes some food insecure populations.

The operational scope was broadly relevant to humanitarian needs. In Darfur, WFP provided life-saving food assistance and has begun piloting a number of recovery and livelihoods oriented projects. Though project scale was small for these pilot activities, the evaluation found them well-received by beneficiaries and in line with longer-term needs. The persistently high levels of malnutrition in the Central, East and Three Areas (CETA) regions warrants increased focus in future operations.

The portfolio was coherent with the government's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, its 5-year Strategic Plan 2008-2011, and Agricultural Revival Programme 2008-2012. However WFP's planning cycle, through one-year EMOPs, did not align with the 2-5 year cycles of government instruments, which some stakeholders saw as potentially limiting WFP's ability to contribute strategically to longer term improvements. WFP was also found to have contributed to the national HIV and nutrition strategies through the Ministry of Health and built capacity within the Ministry of Agriculture for food security assessments. These efforts, often reliant on individuals, could have been strengthened through stronger institutional links.

Factors Driving WFP's Strategic Decision-Making

Funding was a significant factor in determining the direction of, and flexibility in, WFP's portfolio. The number of individual donors declined from 22 to 14 between 2010 and 2012, and the significant percentage of in-kind contributions (60-70% of annual funding) limited options to shift food assistance away from in-kind general food distribution. Overall development and humanitarian funding to Sudan began decreasing in 2009, and donor contributions began shifting toward recovery-oriented activities as early as 2007/8.

The initial improvements in security in 2010, prior to the border conflicts of 2011/12, contributed to an improved food security situation on the ground. However the required support for returnees, primarily in West Darfur, newly displaced households in North Darfur and the poor rains of 2011 meant that the requirement for humanitarian assistance had not diminished in the Darfur region in the latter part of the evaluation period.

WFP assessments, conducted through Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping (VAM), Comprehensive Food Security Assessments (CFSAs), the Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) framework and Emergency Food Security Assessments (EFSAs), were found to be used extensively in decision-making by WFP and others. In 2011, FSMS assessments showing improved food security and provided the justification for a downwards budget revision, reducing the size and duration of the GFD ration.

The evaluation found that WFP possessed well-recognized technical expertise in monitoring and assessing food security, but less capacity in other sectors. The narrow range of technical expertise may constrain WFP's effectiveness, particularly in policy dialogue on transition from emergency to development.

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework and

¹ Portions of the 2010 and 2011 EMOPs covered activities in what is now the Republic of South Sudan; the evaluation used disaggregated data to isolate only those activities implemented in Sudan.

associated reports were primarily used for corporate and external reporting rather than to inform programmatic decision-making. There remains considerable scope to improve the use of M&E data in programme planning and decision-making and for one-off assessments in specific areas, in addition to further collaboration with partners on outcome level data collection.

Portfolio Performance and Results

The number of actual beneficiaries decreased over the portfolio period from over 6 million in 2010 to 3.5 million in 2012, a reduction of 41%. The tonnage of food distributed similarly reduced by 42%. The use of vouchers expanded over the portfolio period, from 1% of total food (tonnage equivalent) distribution in 2010 to 13% in 2012.

Food for Work/Food For Recovery (FFW/FFR) interventions were a minor portion of the overall portfolio. Implementing partners and beneficiary communities acknowledged that assets created helped communities to rebuild their asset-base and start livelihoods regeneration. However, the evaluation did not find an overall strategy guiding activity/asset selection in each area, nor risk assessment, technical support, partnerships or maintenance and repair plans.

Food for Training (FFT) was found effective in the case of SAFE projects, with direct benefits to female participants including increased savings, reduced firewood wastage, and better protection. Very limited results of agri-business centres and tree nurseries had been recorded to date. While the Farmers to Markets (F2M) programme reached most of its planned beneficiaries it was unclear whether the beneficiaries of F2M would ultimately be food-secure small farmers.

The number of planned blanket supplementary feeding programme (BSFP) beneficiaries declined by 33% between 2010 and 2012, while the planned number of supplementary feeding programme (SFP) beneficiaries declined by 67% over the same period. These declines were primarily due to funding shortages.

Prior analyses^{2,3} of WFP's BSFP in North and South Darfur in 2011 showed very little improvement in child nutritional status, although it may have contributed to reducing seasonal hunger peaks. Integrated-BSFP, piloted in Kassala in 2009/10, showed a significant decrease in global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence and appears to be an effective, if resource intensive, intervention. SFP, implemented to treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) through both community and facility-based approaches, was reported to generate recovery rates between 71% and 95%.

For school feeding activities, available data indicated relatively stable retention rates in WFP-assisted schools over the evaluation period, a stable enrolment gender ratio in CETA, and a slight increase in girl enrolment in Darfur. However, further data are needed to correlate these trends to WFP interventions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

WFP has been the largest humanitarian actor in Sudan, unmatched in size of operations and geographic coverage, food assistance and food security assessment capacity, covering over 25% of the needs reflected in the United Nations Humanitarian Work Plan. WFP's on-going shift in strategy from food aid to longer term food assistance was found broadly coherent with the strategic framework of the government and the UNDAF in

Sudan. WFP has made an effort to move away from in-kind GFD, but newly occurring emergencies and in-kind contributions limit the extent and pace of this shift.

Recommendations

R1: The country office must improve its partnerships and coordination with United Nations and other development actors in the Sudan.

- The Country Office should strengthen its role in inter-agency mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Country Team and the food security and livelihood sector mechanism at the federal and state levels.
- WFP should establish long-term, formal partnerships with United Nations agencies to ensure appropriate selection and sustainable implementation of recovery activities.
- WFP should move from six-monthly to annual field-level agreements with more field partners, to increase efficiency and effectiveness through longer-term planning and support.

R2: In the next country strategy, beneficiaries and development actors should have a greater role in identifying the mix of emergency, relief and recovery activities, and activities should be oriented towards improving self-reliance.

- The portfolio and its operations should be designed with longer-term objectives wherever possible. Planning cycles should be more aligned to those of United Nations partners and the Government.
- The school feeding strategy should be revised and aligned with those of partners, and new ways of increasing the possibility of Government ownership should be explored.
- The portfolio should include more activities for developing the self-reliance of communities and the emergency preparedness capacities of the authorities.

R3: With support and guidance from Headquarters and the regional bureau, the country office's M&E framework and system must be thoroughly reviewed and enhanced, with a shift in emphasis from counting beneficiaries and food tonnage to measuring results, outcomes and impacts achieved.

- Data collection should be expanded, focusing on outputs, coverage, outcomes and impacts.
- Dissemination of M&E information to all partners should be structured and regular, with accountability established for the application of standardized data collection methods and the consistency of data reporting.
- One-off assessments should be conducted to fill major knowledge gaps.

R4: Further improvement of targeting.

- The optimal use of limited resources should be ensured by further refining targeting, continuing the verification exercises, and expanding regular community profiling so that the most vulnerable people in prioritized communities are reached.
- More regular engagement with communities should be planned, and feedback used to refine the targeting of food assistance.

² Woodruff, B.A. 2011. *Analysis of Anthropometric Data for May-September 2009 on the Cohort of Children in North and South Darfur*.

³ WFP Sudan. 2011. *Effect of Seasonal Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme on Nutritional Status of Children 6-59 Months of Age in Greater Darfur*.



Reference

Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at www.wfp.org/evaluation
For more information please contact the Office of Evaluation WFP.evaluation@WFP.org