

Evaluation Brief



Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience in Uganda (2005-2010)

Context

The evaluation covers a period of civil conflict and violence, refugee influxes, large internal population displacements, as well as drought. It includes the transition from emergency to recovery, and the first implementation of WFP's formal shift to a food assistance strategy.

Food for Assets in Uganda

The evaluation assessed the FFA components from 2005 to 2010 within four of WFP operations in northern Uganda: Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) 10121.1 & 10121.2, and Country Programmes (CP) 10426.0 & 10807.0. Northern Uganda for the purposes of this evaluation includes the sub-regions of Acholi, Karamoja, Lango, Teso and West Nile. Up to ninety days of food rations were provided to an estimated 329,400 households over the period under review.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation assessed the outcomes and impacts of WFP's food-for-assets programming in Uganda and was part of a series of five evaluations on the impact of WFP's food-for-assets activities on livelihoods resilience. Other countries in the series include Bangladesh, Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal. A synthesis of all five countries will also be conducted. The evaluation emphasized learning by identifying lessons and changes for enhancing the impacts on resilience and aligning food-for-assets programming with WFP's recently adopted 2011 Food for Assets Guidance Manual and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy.

The evaluation addressed three core questions:

1. What positive and negative impacts have FFA activities had on individuals within participating households and communities?
2. What factors were critical in affecting outcomes and impacts?

3. How could FFA activities be improved to address the findings from the first two questions?

While the main focus of the evaluation series is on natural resources assets, this evaluation also considered infrastructure assets such as roads and schools. In the fluid and conflict-affected implementation context of northern Uganda, these were identified as particularly relevant to the food security and resilience of returning populations.

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach that included document and data review, key informant interview and focus group discussions in communities representative of typified contexts¹, direct asset assessment, and household survey.

Key Findings

Of the 200 sampled locations, 169 assets in 77 locations were confirmed as having been established within the evaluation reference period. Overall, surviving assets were found in 39% of locations. The majority of assets found were infrastructure (38%) and natural resource assets (34%). School woodlots and teachers houses comprised the majority of assets constructed. With the exception of fish ponds, most surviving assets were functional, with a user group for asset management, with school-related assets the most successfully maintained. WFP logistics and pipeline were critical to positive impact, and assets were maintained better where there had been fewer operational setbacks.

Assets were designed appropriately for the context, to address immediate problems of food security, employment and high priority needs such as access and planting materials, rather than longer-term goals. Roads contributed to increased accessibility to abandoned farm plots; woodlots to stabilizing environmental degradation; and

¹ The comparative case studies were typified as dynamic (Acholi, Teso & Lango); and chronic (Karamoja, West Nile) contexts.

teachers' houses to the reestablishment of the education system.

The most significant improvements reported by household respondents were: (immediate) food security and skills gained [21%]; social sector benefits [21%], namely in education and sanitation; and economic benefits [19%] in particular access to markets and services. Access to resources (firewood, water, fish, seeds) was also significant [16%].

Positive impacts for women were felt most in agro-pastoral communities because women carry most of the responsibilities for agriculture, (although control over resources remained with men), as well as in the benefits at household-level (in particular access to firewood).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

The evaluation found that WFP Uganda achieved significant short-term positive benefits for internally displaced persons through food assistance that bridged a hunger gap created by the dissolution of camps and the reductions in general food relief distributions. WFP is acknowledged as being one of the few organisations to have operated in the most remote and dangerous parts of northern Uganda, and one of the first to have shifted from emergency to recovery programming.

FFA activities were constructed in isolation from one another, and dependent on scarce technical partners, resulting in marginal livelihood gains linked to specific assets in defined locations.

Recommendations

R1. [HQ] - *WFP should carry out a corporate roll-out of the updated (2013) FFA programme guidance at country-offices level.* This investment in capacity development and dissemination of corporate guidance is important to mitigate the impacts of high turnover of field staff and address previously inadequate or lack of training and hand-over. The roll-out should include a corporate prioritized and budgeted plan for the short to medium term timeline to ensure relevance to country office programming needs.

R2. [CO Uganda] - *WFP Uganda country office should formally commit to carrying out the requisite follow-up actions to the FFA guidance*

roll-out for effective knowledge transfer and retention at field level, including through: i) participating staff's commitment to remaining in post for a minimum period to develop effective capacity in the country office; ii) linking the performance plans of participating staff to key areas of the guidance; and iii) planning adequate levels of country office FFA staffing and Headquarters technical support to sustain and extend FFA capacity.

R3. [CO Uganda with RB and HQ support] - *Jointly with complementary sector partners, develop a strategic FFA plan that ensures deployment of the necessary technical capacity, based on: i) a three-pronged approach to FFA in resilience-building efforts, comprising integrated gender and context analysis, seasonal livelihoods programming, and participatory community-based planning; ii) a common understanding of how WFP's FFA and other initiatives can complement each other in the transition from relief to development; and iii) a comprehensive analysis of the specific risks faced by communities that integrates gender issues, landownership and traditional resilience mechanisms.*

R4. [CO Uganda] - *Develop a multi-year operational FFA implementation plan that involves country office management, programming, operational and support units, and takes into account the seasonality of activities and the lead times for procurement and delivery.* This plan should enable implementation of WFP's corporate objectives in Uganda, preempt bottlenecks and include predefined mitigation strategies.

R5. [HQ & COs] - *Include in WFP's corporate FFA guidance, lessons learned for FFA in transition contexts, related to the early introduction in the recovery phase of vulnerability-based household targeting and of a community communication strategy that emphasizes the time-bound nature of conditional FFA transfers.*



Reference:

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

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