

# Evaluation Brief



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

### Context

Senegal is prone to natural hazards, compounded by epidemics, coastal erosion and soil salinization. Senegal's population of 13.6 million was affected by cumulative shocks throughout the evaluation period including the Casamance conflict, the 2008 food price crisis, and floods in 2009. WFP responded to a national emergency situation by reorienting its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) - originally focussed on recovery and stabilisation in Casamance - to cover 13 of Senegal's 14 regions, merging the PRRO and Country Programme (CP) operations. This resulted in scarce resources being distributed widely across the country and, ultimately, in lower-sized food transfers to originally targeted beneficiaries, including FFA participants.

### Food for Assets in Senegal (2005-2010)

The evaluation covered the FFA components from 2005-2010 within three projects: CP 10451.0, and two PRROs 10188.1 and 10612.0. These FFA components reached up to 209,000 participants per year, across 14 departments, 7 regions and 6 livelihood zones, representing expenditure estimated at \$7.62 million.

FFA's national geographical targeting was supported by food security analysis, while community level targeting was locally decided by WFP and field partners. Participants' selection, using the self-targeting principle<sup>1</sup>, was left to partners and/or village authorities. Participants received a combination of food and other incentives (training, seedlings) for asset construction during the lean season, based on negotiated work norms.

### Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation assessed the outcomes and impacts of WFP's food-for-assets programming in Senegal and was part of a series of five evaluations on the impact of WFP's food-for-assets activities on livelihoods resilience (including Bangladesh, Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda). A synthesis of the series 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?

With a focus on natural resource assets, a theory of change-based approach was applied to assess intended short, medium and long-term impacts, namely: biophysical, food security, livelihoods and resilience. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were used including: document review; a survey at household level covering participant and comparison villages; village profiles, gender disaggregated focus groups; semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders; and direct asset assessments.

### Key Findings

Three asset categories were observed:

- a) reforestation (nurseries, assisted natural regeneration (ANR), mangrove regeneration) – 35% of assets verified;
- b) lowland rehabilitation/flood protection – 40% of assets;
- c) community gardens/associated nurseries - 25%.

The evaluation found 95% of assets still in use. FFA provided short-term food security benefits, as perceived by 85% of respondents.

Medium-term impacts were confirmed, linked to assets providing income-generating and food production opportunities such as gardens, dykes and mangrove regeneration, in terms of:

- biophysical change (agricultural production, vegetation cover, soil stabilisation, water access) – with 82% of respondents reporting improvement;
- agricultural productivity (fruit and vegetable gardens, improved pastures and yields), and;
- greater livelihood options, as perceived by 88% of beneficiary respondents (increased yields, surplus and income).

<sup>1</sup> FFA was expected to attract the able-bodied poor within a community with entitlements presumed insufficient to attract others

The evaluation dietary analysis found significant differences in the food consumption patterns, to the benefit of participant households.

FFA was less successful in longer-term impacts such as social cohesion and resilience-building, with 78% of respondents reporting no important change. At village level, FFA food distribution processes and work norms were not always clear, consistent or respected, resulting in perceived inequities. Positive spillover effects into neighbouring villages were noted with the more popular assets (low-land rehabilitation and gardens).

Geographical targeting at the national level was adequate but less so at village level where implementation inadequacies and transparency problems were widespread. Other factors affecting impact included funding and operational capacity, partnerships and technical capacity for design, implementation, community sensitisation, and monitoring. Weak reporting systems and lack of relevant indicators to track progress were also noted.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### Overall Assessment

WFP FFA overall successfully contributed to short-term hunger gap alleviation, as well as to medium-term impacts on food security, biophysical change, agricultural productivity and income opportunities particularly for women. Despite concerns over targeting and transparency effects, social cohesion benefits were also recognized by beneficiaries, partners and agencies concerning mobilisation for collective action, and improved women's participation in decision-making. The evaluation team concluded that evidence on productivity, livelihoods, and community cohesion has, combined, positively enhanced community resilience and ability to face shocks. Strengthened coping strategies acquired - diversified diets, land recovery techniques and income opportunities contributed to food security and enhanced livelihoods - considered by respondents as important domains of resilience.

External contextual, and factors within WFP's control such as weaknesses in programme strategy, operations, monitoring systems and community communications limited the potential positive impacts, affected ownership and sustainability of assets, and heightened the risk of conditional transfers affecting incentives for longer term community action on resilience.

FFA must remain a simple workable tool for village populations and WFP should build on the model of FFA activities that have worked well in the Senegal context, avoid building complex resilience models and clearly communicate how FFA is its primary resilience building tool.

### Recommendations

**R. 1** [CO] - Develop a focused, multi-year, FFA-based resilience approach linked to the Government's policies, strategies and decentralization processes, ensuring that local development plans are used along with corporate FFA guidance, and supported by a funding strategy and adequate monitoring systems.

**R. 2** [CO, with HQ and RB support]– Implement WFP's disaster risk reduction policy and corporate guidance for FFA programming by ensuring that WFP field staff are appropriately trained to apply corporate guidelines and provide technical assistance to partners and communities; and providing WFP guidance and best practices in French, adapted for partners and community audiences.

**R. 3** [CO] – Strengthen implementation accountability and transparency through: i) comprehensive and mutually accountable annual programme agreements with implementing partners; and ii) community-level participatory action plans that set clear roles and responsibilities for WFP, technical partners and community members in achieving and implementing agreed objectives, outputs and activities.

**R. 4** [CO] – Develop an FFA education and communication strategy for community mobilization and enhanced transparency.

**R. 5** [CO] – Over the medium term and in collaboration with partners, the country office M&E unit should support the establishment of a government-led comprehensive framework for FFA M&E that integrates interventions with national and local development plans; facilitates the monitoring of results; and involves all stakeholders (government, partners, communities).



**Reference:**  
Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at [www.wfp.org/evaluation](http://www.wfp.org/evaluation)

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