

IMPACT EVALUATION SYNTHESIS

Synthesis Report of the Evaluation Series on the Impact
of Food for Assets (2002 – 2011)

And lessons for building livelihoods resilience

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Executive Summary

The report synthesizes the main findings from evaluations in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nepal, Senegal and Uganda that assessed the impact of WFP's food for assets (FFA) activities and identified lessons on how to improve the orientation of food for assets towards achieving livelihoods resilience objectives.

The evaluations covered a period of organizational change. In 2011, WFP introduced new policies and guidance documents related to FFA, including a new disaster risk reduction and management policy and the Food for Assets Guidance Manual. The evaluations assessed activities carried out in 2002–2011, which were designed and implemented under different guidance and objectives. While focusing on assessing the medium- and longer-term effects and sustainability of these past efforts, the evaluations also provided lessons on how FFA activities could be better aligned with new policy and guidance.

The evaluations addressed the following key questions:

1. What positive or negative impacts have FFA activities had on individuals within participating households and communities and on the natural resource base?
2. How could FFA activities be improved to increase or sustain impact?

They also analyzed critical factors affecting outcomes and impact.

Overall impacts from FFA are expected to occur over different timeframes. **Short term** benefits could include increased cash/food availability and food access, and the immediate effects of the asset – such as flood protection- which could result in an immediate reduction in vulnerability. **Medium term** benefits may include increased land productivity and agricultural production, greater income-generating opportunities, better physical access to markets and social services, etc.; **Long term benefits** could include reduced vulnerability, improved livelihoods, and increased resilience, although on-going operations and maintenance are needed to ensure that the asset remains functional and useful.

Evaluation methodology included:

- quantitative household surveys
- secondary data analysis;
- focus group discussions,
- interviews
- technical asset appraisal,
- social and institutional analysis.

Change/impact assessed through household surveys taken in both participant and comparison populations (from the same communities, different communities or both).

Findings

The evaluations found that in the short term, WFP was effective in providing food and employment to people in underserved communities during periods of civil unrest and natural disaster, and built useful assets in the process. Different types of crises were reported by communities including slow and rapid onset, human and natural caused,

cyclical and non-cyclical. Household surveys confirmed that participants in all countries faced multiple shocks during the reference period. WFP was often one of the few organizations to have operated at scale in remote or dangerous areas.

Some respondents reported that food was not always delivered in a timely manner relative to shortages, or that the amount of food provided was inadequate to address the needs. FFA activities were often underfunded by up to 65%, and funding was variable and unpredictable.

Asset survival is a pre-condition for medium-term impact. The evaluations found that for all but one asset type, more than 50% of assets were fully functional. Strong evidence from household survey reported increased land productivity, agricultural production and income generating opportunities. The evaluations confirmed modest changes in incomes, assets and employment. There was plausible quantitative and qualitative evidence of positive income effects associated with asset creation in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal and Senegal. In Uganda, positive but small effects were reported over time on savings, income and standard of living as a result of asset creation. In Guatemala the differences in land asset and associated incomes between participants and comparison households were not statistically significant.

Some assets delivered multiple benefits to livelihoods or resilience, for instance flood protection dykes in Bangladesh protected land from siltation, thus increasing productive land, though the primary purpose was to create a physical barrier to protect against the immediate flood risk. In Guatemala the size of the agricultural productivity effect was positively correlated with the number of asset types in place, suggesting a compounding effect. In Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal, survey respondents and focus group participants linked gardens and agroforestry to diversification of production which was in turn linked to improved dietary diversity and income-generation.

Ethiopia's was the only programme planned specifically to address longer-term livelihoods resilience and all programmes predated WFP's 2011 resilience-oriented policies and guidelines. Nevertheless, a striking positive finding is that FFA activities contributed to significant improvements in livelihoods in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal, and limited improvement in Uganda. Improvements in social cohesion were reported by focus groups and survey respondents in Bangladesh, Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda.

However, overall improvements in longer term food security and dietary diversity were limited.

Women benefited significantly from FFA activities through employment and access to resources; and the creation of assets targeted to women that subsequently remained under their control. Improvements were seen in women's position in the community and households, including in budget management, with the increased social connectivity and freedom of movement that resulted from food-for-assets activities affecting women's roles more broadly in the household and society.

The evaluations found substantial confusion about responsibilities for asset maintenance and there were few asset maintenance plans found although user committees were often in place.

Except in Ethiopia, the evaluations found limited evidence of a comprehensive, community-led approach to asset planning and the delivery of a comprehensive package of assets that balanced short-, medium- and long-term risk reduction, or of complementary programming with other agencies. Communities did not always fully understand programme modalities, including payment norms and selection criteria. The evaluations noted that planning for a more comprehensive approach was recently started in Bangladesh, Nepal and Guatemala.

Interventions were based on geographical targeting of communities most at risk of food insecurity, but did not always identify communities at most risk of disasters and who could gain most in terms of resilience-building. In many cases, WFP aimed to reach the largest number of people across all areas facing food insecurity, which when combined with budget shortfalls and capacity gaps led in some cases to short duration, small and scattered interventions.

All of the evaluations reported weak monitoring systems.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The theory of change that guided the evaluations in the series predicted impacts to address short term, medium term and long term objectives. The evaluations found that in the short term, WFP was effective in providing food and employment to people in under-served communities in periods of both civil unrest and natural disaster, and in the process useful assets were built. There was evidence of some of the expected medium and longer term positive impacts; however, improvements in longer term food security were limited.

These findings are significant considering that, with the exception of Ethiopia, none of the programmes evaluated were operationally oriented towards achieving resilience objectives, although stated goals were broadly aligned.

The findings confirm the appropriacy of FFA as a mechanism to contribute to delivery of WFP's 2011 corporate policy on disaster risk reduction and management and the Strategic Plan (2014-2017) with its focus on resilience. The directions set in the 2011 FFA Guidance manual, updated in January 2014, are in line with the evaluations' findings concerning factors important for achievement of impacts, but more needs to be done to ensure that this guidance is consistently applied. To address these issues the synthesis made five recommendations, summarized below.

Recommendation 1: WFP country offices, supported by regional bureaux and Headquarters, should commit to bringing FFA programmes into line with current policy and guidance, to maximize the opportunities for FFA to contribute to protecting and strengthening livelihoods and resilience. Dedicated funding will be needed to ensure adequate support to country offices. Specific areas for action and funding are discussed in the following recommendations.

Recommendation 2: More attention should be paid to the strategic positioning of FFA in country offices where FFA can appropriately be used as an approach to improve livelihoods and resilience; building on WFP comparative advantages complemented by those of partners; ensuring sustainability of efforts; and building partners' commitments for financial and other resources.

Recommendation 3: WFP should strengthen its efforts to support and provide guidance to regional bureaux and country offices by ensuring that the FFA guidance manual is

updated to address issues raised in the evaluations and then rolling it out more completely. This should include providing training and technical assistance to country offices.

Recommendation 4: WFP should carry out two special studies to further explore issues raised by the evaluation: impacts of FFA activities on women, particularly their nutrition and health and on opportunities for additional linkages with nutrition generated by a focus on gender issues; and in-depth analyses of the food security of FFA participants to increase understanding of how FFA activities could make a greater contribution.

Recommendation 5: WFP should review the lessons that arose from the evaluations related to FFA baselines and monitoring; update corporate monitoring and reporting systems as needed; and ensure funding and staffing are available to meet M&E requirements.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1. Food for Assets (FFA) activities are one of WFP's largest areas of investment over time¹. Measured by food tonnage equivalent, and programme expenditure from 2006-10, FFA activities were the second largest of WFP's food distribution modalities, after General Food Distribution.

2. WFP considers FFA activities as having the potential to generate impacts on immediate food security temporary employment and incomes through the provision of cash or food as compensation for short term employment on labour intensive projects. In addition the assets created and the work done to create them are thought to protect and promote livelihoods, economic growth and development. Furthermore, there is growing international interest in their potential contribution to empowerment and building resilience to crises and shocks.

3. International evidence has sometimes critiqued food for work type programmes on the grounds that:

- Poor quality infrastructure or assets may be created, that rapidly become non-functional;
- Benefits derived from the assets created may disproportionately benefit the non-poor;
- Focus may be on immediate needs over sustainable poverty reduction;
- Low level skills may be developed through asset creation activities, that are not marketable;
- Difficult manual labour in exchange for low levels of food or cash payments may have an overall negative effect on health and wellbeing.

4. A recommendation from the 2009 strategic evaluation of the Effectiveness of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions, in which the Executive Board expressed particular interest, was for further analysis of the impact of food assistance in recovery processes on people's own efforts to build stronger livelihoods. Issues raised included how the amount and duration of food assistance provided by FFA activities, linkages between FFA activities and other livelihood interventions and the quality of assets created through FFA activities relate to sustainable asset creation and livelihoods.

5. It is important to note that the evaluations covered a period when WFP was undergoing significant organizational change. Several new policies and guidance documents related to FFA were developed in 2011, including a new WFP disaster risk reduction and management policy and the FFA Guidance Manual. The evaluations assessed activities carried out between 2002-2011, which were designed and implemented under different guidance and objectives. The evaluations provided an opportunity to assess medium and long term effects and sustainability of past efforts.

¹ The terminology used for FFA has changed over time. In 2011, the new terminology "food assistance for assets" was adopted to reflect the use of food, cash or vouchers for asset creation. However, during the evaluation reference period country offices were still using "food for assets" or "food for work".

They also provided an opportunity to assess how past efforts contributed to new objectives and provided lessons on how FFA activities could be better aligned with new policy and guidance.

6. To address these issues a series of impact evaluations was included in the WFP’s Office of Evaluation 2012-13 work plan.

7. Five evaluations were carried out in the series in Bangladesh, Guatemala, Nepal, Senegal and Uganda. Countries were selected based on number of years of consistent FFA programming, regional balance, opportunity for learning and country interest. A sixth evaluation of the Managing Environmental resources to Enable Transition to More Sustainable Livelihoods (MERET) programme in Ethiopia, which was commissioned by the Ethiopia country office in 2012 used a similar methodology. The evaluations included in the synthesis are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluations included in the Synthesis

Country	Region	Evaluation Reference Period	Executive Board
Bangladesh	Asia	2008-2011	November 2013
Ethiopia	East Africa	2003-2011	Not presented to EB
Guatemala	Latin America/Caribbean	2003-2010	February 2014
Nepal	Asia	2002-2010	November 2013
Senegal	West Africa	2005-2010	February 2014
Uganda	East Africa	2005-2010	February 2014

1.2 Objectives of the Synthesis

8. Like all WFP OEV evaluations, this evaluation synthesis serves accountability and learning purposes, with a focus on learning, which reflects the emphasis of the entire series. An important objective was to document the intended and unintended outcomes and impacts achieved by the FFA activities on livelihood resilience. The synthesis provides policy and strategy level evidence to inform strategic choices on FFA programming as a tool for livelihoods resilience, and on operational level evidence to inform how FFA activities can be organized in order to best meet livelihoods resilience objectives. The evaluations and the synthesis are highly relevant since FFA is one of WFP’s main implementation modalities and is recognized for its potential contribution to the wider resilience agenda. The most immediate relevance is for countries where WFP is carrying out FFA activities. The report may have relevance to other organizations implementing similar programmes.

1.3 WFP’s Corporate Approach to Food-for-Assets

The 2011 disaster risk reduction and management policy linked WFP’s work on food and nutrition security to resilience and capacity building of the most vulnerable people, communities and countries, reducing disaster risk and protecting and enhancing livelihoods. WFP could contribute to resilience-building through interventions that meet immediate food and nutrition security needs while

strengthening the ability of food-insecure people and countries to manage future risks and withstand the adverse effects of natural and man-made disasters. The policy focused on natural disaster risk, but recognized that many of the principles also apply to conflicts and other human-caused disasters.

12. In this policy context, WFP's FFA activities not only provide food, but also restore or build specific assets that contribute to livelihoods improvement², resilience³ and food security. The DRR policy defines resilience as the ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation of its essential basic structures and functions.

13. WFP's 2011 FFA Manual (a new version was developed and launched early 2014 following completion of the evaluation series) presented three principles to guide decisions about FFA programming:

- Adherence to WFP's Strategic Plan and overall programme design guidance processes
- Livelihood-based approaches for physical, environmental and natural resource management
- Using experience and partnerships: building upon what works and consensus-building processes
- Focusing on people, communities and systems development to deliver resilience outcomes

Within this framework, FFA was positioned to:

- i. Support immediate access to food and protect livelihoods at times of crisis;
- ii. Protect and enhance livelihoods during and after protracted emergencies for early recovery, and/or;
- iii. Enable development opportunities that offset future shocks and strengthen resilience.

14. FFA activities that focus on building resilience and reducing disaster risk should also directly address food security needs, and food access in particular. FFA in disaster-prone areas often aims to protect communities from the effects of (or limit damage from) natural disasters, while contributing to increased capacity to rebound from shocks and reducing overall vulnerability. FFA activities that aim to improve the environmental base upon which people depend for agricultural and forestry related livelihoods can help strengthen the ability of food-insecure people to manage future risks and withstand shocks. Not all food transfers conditional on work are asset building. Some do not create durable productive assets, but rather

² A livelihood comprises a household's capabilities, assets and activities required to secure basic needs - food, shelter, health, education and income. Assets can be human (including health, education), social (such as community networks), financial, physical (productive tools, livestock), or natural (water, soil fertility). A livelihood is *sustainable* if it can successfully manage and mitigate the effects of external stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide for future generations. (WFP Comprehensive Food Security & Vulnerability Analysis Guidelines, 2009)

³ Resilience refers to the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation of its essential basic structures and functions (Policy of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management WFP/EB.2/2011/4-A).

address the immediate food insecurity of the participants by providing food for a non-asset producing activity⁴.

15. The FFA Manual recognizes the distinction between FFA activities that focus on lighter activities or simple repair of assets (such as in the case of low-technology, low-risk interventions) and higher –technology, higher risk interventions. The latter must be carefully planned using more sophisticated and integrated approaches that bring in the necessary technical capacity on the ground.

16. WFP’s approach to FFA has changed over time, with an increasing emphasis on creating durable assets intended to contribute to sustained poverty reduction, in line with WFP’s Strategic Plan⁵. Under current policy and guidance, any WFP activity that is labeled FFA (whether food and/or cash based) is a labour-based conditional transfer for the restoration, rehabilitation or creation of assets that impact people’s food security and livelihoods. The evolution from food for work to food for assets reflected a strategic shift from a focus on the work towards assets and their contribution to livelihoods.

17. Since 2012 WFP’s Resilience and Prevention Unit of the Policy, Programme and Innovation Division has also embarked in training regional bureaux and country offices in the use of the new tools related to FFA and resilience building. This effort is undergoing and expanding in a number of countries which include all countries subject to this evaluation.

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 FFA Logic Model

18. Impact evaluation is methodologically challenging in terms of attributing a causal relationship between an intervention and a particular effect, especially in the fast-changing and complex situations in which WFP operates. Furthermore, WFP works in data-poor and difficult, evolving circumstances and its intervention is usually just one contributing factor amongst many that will affect outcomes.

19. In this context, a logic model helps establish plausibility by presenting a framework against which results are evaluated, including assumptions that must be met in order for results to be achieved. The ‘plausible association’ exists between the interventions and the outcomes and impact when:

- there is a logical connection between the ‘problem’ and the activities, outputs and outcomes
- the intervention has been implemented in a way consistent with this logic
- evidence from different stakeholders shows that the outcomes have been achieved and that there is a strong likelihood of continued positive long-term impacts
- assessment of factors external to the programme conclude that those interventions were the main contributing factor to the observed changes and few if any, other major factors account for the changes.

⁴ Some governments refuse unconditional food transfers to able-bodied people.

⁵ 2008-2013 WFP Strategic Plan: From Food Aid to Food Assistance.

20. Drawing on programme documentation, a logic model summarizing the intended links between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact and the assumptions that underlie expected achievement of impact was applied to the five evaluations in the series (Annex 2). Overall impacts are expected to occur over different timeframes. **Short term** benefits from FFA include increased cash/food availability and food access, and the immediate effects of the asset – such as flood protection- which could result in an immediate reduction in vulnerability. **Medium term** benefits may be realised when the asset continues to provide protection and leads to increased land productivity and agricultural production, greater income-generating opportunities, better physical access to markets and social services, more land cover etc.; **Long term benefits** could include reduced vulnerability, improved livelihoods, and increased resilience, although on-going operations and maintenance are needed to ensure that the asset remains functional and useful. How the activities were carried was expected to affect the attainment of results, with strong contextual analysis, participatory planning and integration with other sectors being among the important factors for achieving expected impacts.

21. The evaluations focused on natural resource assets (soil, water, agricultural and forests) because of the fundamental importance to sustainable livelihoods of enhancing or maintaining the productive resource base. However, the evaluations also recognizing the contributions of infrastructure and access assets to livelihoods resilience.

22. The evaluation methodology applied across the five countries in the evaluation series included :

- Quantitative household survey⁶
- Focus groups with community members and leaders
- Technical appraisal of assets and associated biophysical changes
- Key informant interviews
- Social and institutional analysis

23. Secondary data e.g. national household level surveys, census data and WFP monitoring data on inputs and activities complemented primary data collected. Ethiopia was not a part of the series but used a similar methodology.

24. In addition to analysing results against a logic model, comparative data were sought in areas where WFP did not intervene in order to provide a comparison of “with and without”. A strict “difference in difference” methodology was not possible because WFP’s programmes evolved over time and baseline data was either not available or not suitable for comparison purposes in these evaluations.

25. Methods were adapted in each country as needed to respond to contextual variation. Findings were generated from data triangulated from different sources. Data was collected and analysed by gender where possible.

26. Limitations in the country-level evaluations included:

- Lack of baseline data

⁶ A new survey was not undertaken in Nepal, rather the evaluation team used data from an endline survey done in 2010.

- Incomplete food basket and post distribution monitoring data
- In complete or inaccurate data on assets developed and their locations
- Inconsistent indicators applied to the same activities between projects and years of implementation
- Lack of information about which specific households received support and participated in FFA activities
- Reliance on participant recall
- Difficulty in distinguishing FFA-related effects from other programs operating in the same geographical area

2.2 Synthesis Method

27. Following current good practice for syntheses and oriented towards fulfilment of OEV's dual purpose of accountability and learning, the synthesis involved systematic analysis of evaluation reports and annexes to derive cross cutting findings and lessons; engagement and reflection with WFP stakeholders; and reports and other communication products, primarily the synthesis report, which will be presented to WFP's Executive Board. The methodology of the synthesis is presented in more detail in the TOR, included as Annex 1.

28. The limitations faced by the individual country evaluations also affected the synthesis, however some specific limitations to comparing across countries included:

- Different asset classification schemes in different countries
- Diversity of contexts for FFA within and among countries
- Country specific modifications of data collection tools, although fully justified as necessary in each country context, limited the comparability of data particularly for quantitative survey data.

2.3 Evaluation Questions

29. The evaluations addressed the following key questions:

1. What positive or negative impacts have FFA activities had on individuals within participating households and communities and on the natural resource base?
2. How could FFA activities be improved to increase or sustain impact?

30. They also analysed critical factors affecting outcomes and impact.

3. Findings

3.1 Country Context

31. There was a substantial amount of diversity among the countries included in the synthesis, which affected programming and realization of impact. All countries except Guatemala are low income countries. Poverty has been reduced in recent years in Bangladesh, Nepal and Uganda, although it remains high, and not all members of the population in all geographic areas have benefitted from the reduction. In spite of its ranking as a middle income country, Guatemala has one of

the highest levels of income inequality in the world, and approximately 50% of Guatemala's population lives in poverty, which is concentrated among indigenous people and in some geographic areas. Gender inequality exists in all countries, but it was noted specifically in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Nepal.

32. Active conflict or post-conflict transition was a significant factor affecting the participating populations in Guatemala, Nepal, Senegal and Uganda during the evaluation reference period. Conflict resulted in internal displacement of people in Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda as people fled their homes to escape violence, resulting in severe disruption of livelihoods. The evaluation report of Uganda noted that the loss of livestock, modification of coping strategies and social upheaval during the Northern Uganda conflict changed livelihoods irreversibly.

33. Rapid and steep increases in food prices were reported to have been a factor in all countries except Bangladesh. In addition to the human caused shocks, populations in all countries faced natural disasters including slow onset such as drought, and rapid onset such as cyclones. Land degradation was reported to have been a factor in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Uganda. Climate change was raised as a risk factor in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Uganda.

34. There was also considerable diversity in the implementation of FFA programmes in the countries as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. FFA Participants and Programme Support Overview

Country	FFA Participants	Evaluation reference period	Programme support
Bangladesh	55,000 total for evaluation reference period	2007-2011	2 year Country Programme of 90-95 working days for 6 months and 5-6 days of training for 6 months
Ethiopia	1,310,800 direct and indirect beneficiaries	2003-2006	Country Programme Community Based Participatory Watershed Development Approach
	1,741,004 direct and indirect beneficiaries	2007-2011	Country Programme Additional income-generating activities added
Guatemala	From 2,224 to 34,778/year	2003-2005 2007-2010	Country Programme and PRRO Lean season rations based on work norms complimented by training
Nepal	From 1,273 to 218,075/year	2002-2010	Country Programme and PRRO 40-70 working days
Senegal	From 37,000 to 209,000 in a given year	2005-2010	Country Programme and 2 PRROs Combination of food and other incentives (training, seedlings) based on negotiated work norms
Uganda	329,000 total for evaluation reference period	2005-2010	2 Country Programmes and 2 PRROs Up to 90 days of rations provided

3.2 Short term benefits

35. The FFA activities evaluated provided important immediate benefits by providing food and employment to over 3 million food insecure people affected by natural and human caused shocks that threatened their livelihoods and food security. Different types of crises were reported by communities including slow and rapid onset, human and natural caused, cyclical and non-cyclical. Household surveys confirmed that participants in all countries faced multiple shocks during the reference period. WFP was often one of the few organizations to have operated at scale in remote or dangerous areas.

36. Some respondents reported that food not always delivered in a timely manner relative to shortages or that the amount of food provided was inadequate to address the needs. FFA activities were often underfunded by up to 65% and funding was variable and unpredictable.

3.3 Medium term benefits

37. Asset survival is a pre-condition for medium-term impact. As shown in Table 3, the evaluations found that for all but one asset type, more than 50% of the assets were fully functional. Each country has a different range of asset types constructed e.g. home gardens, agroforestry, mangrove rehabilitation, small infrastructure etc. On average in Ethiopia 100% of the assets observed were functional; in Bangladesh 86% were functional; in Nepal 72%; in Guatemala 71%; and in Uganda 65% were functional. Senegal reported asset functionality in a different way, using a rating score of location, quality and maintenance. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being excellent, reforestation assets were rated 2.9, lowland rehabilitation assets rated 3.8 and community gardens rated 4.1.

Table 3. Functionality by type of asset

% functional	Type of Asset
90%	Flood protection
87%	Agriculture soil stabilization
82%	Water management
77%	Access infrastructure
73%	Forestry
72%	Community infrastructure
67%	Sanitation
65%	Fuel efficient stoves
60%	Agroforestry
57%	Gardens
55%	Household infrastructure
40%	Fish ponds

38. Strong evidence from household survey responses reported increased land productivity, agricultural production and income generating opportunities as shown in Table 4. This is consistent with the types of assets developed 76% of which were

directly or indirectly related to agricultural production i.e. agriculture 28%, forestry or agroforestry 15% and water management 33%.

Table 4. Medium Term Impacts

	Increased Land Productivity	Improved Agricultural Production	Higher Income Generation Opportunities
Bangladesh	✓	✓	✓
Ethiopia	✓	✓	✓
Guatemala	✓	✓	✓
Nepal	✓	✓	✓
Senegal	✓	✓	✓
Uganda	No data	✓	✓

39. Comparable quantitative data was not always available, however the evaluations confirmed modest changes in incomes, asset and employment. There was plausible quantitative and qualitative evidence of positive income effects associated with asset creation in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal and Senegal. In Guatemala the differences in land asset and associated incomes between participants and comparison households were not statistically significant. In Uganda, where no comparison group could be identified, positive but small effects were reported over time on savings, income and standard of living as a result of asset creation.

40. Some assets delivered multiple benefits to livelihoods or resilience, for instance flood protection dykes in Bangladesh protected land from siltation, thus increasing productive land, though the primary purpose was to create a physical barrier to protect against the immediate risk of inundation. In Guatemala the size of the agricultural productivity effect was positively correlated with the number of asset types in place, suggesting a compounding effect. In Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal, survey respondents and focus group participants linked gardens and agroforestry to diversification of production which was in turn linked to improved dietary diversity and income-generation.

3.4 Longer term benefits

41. Ethiopia's was the only programme planned specifically to address longer-term livelihoods resilience and all programmes predated WFP's 2011 resilience-oriented policies and guidelines. Nevertheless, a striking positive finding is that FFA activities contributed to significant improvements in livelihoods in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal, and limited improvement in Uganda. Improvements in social cohesion were reported by focus groups and survey respondents in Bangladesh, Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda. Impacts on social cohesion are important considering that many of the countries evaluated had faced conflict either during the evaluation reference period or before it and were recovering from conflict, which breaks down social cohesion. In Uganda for example FFA was implemented with internally displaced populations and refugees who had experienced civil conflict and violence, in addition to poverty, drought and environmental degradation.

Table 5. Improved livelihoods and social cohesion

	Improved Livelihoods	Improved Social Cohesion
Bangladesh	√	√
Ethiopia	√	Not assessed
Guatemala	√	√
Nepal	√	√
Senegal	√	Mixed Effects
Uganda	Limited	√

42. The evaluations found mixed results on longer term food security or dietary diversity at the time of the evaluations. Significant improvements in food consumption scores and dietary diversity scores between participants and non-participants were reported only in Ethiopia. Senegal reported significant improvement in number of meals and in some food items consumed but not in others. Nepal reported a small improvement in food consumption scores among FFA participants compared with non-participants. Guatemala reported improvements in numbers of meals and in consumption of beans, but no improvement in consumption of other food items.

43. Qualitative data reported the following differences when comparing participants or beneficiary communities with non-beneficiaries:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No difference in household ability to provide three meals per day • No difference in dietary diversity |
| Ethiopia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased fruit and vegetable production intended mostly for sale • Significant improvements in food consumption scores and dietary diversity scores but substantial periods of food shortage still exist • Comparison households more likely to borrow food than beneficiaries |
| Guatemala | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiary diet contains more beans • Most households reported insufficient food or means to purchase food, regardless of programme participation • Small improvement in food consumption score among participants |
| Nepal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter lean season • Better security of crop yields • Improvements not seen in terms of structural chronic food insecurity • Beneficiary diet contains more fruit and meat |
| Senegal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in beneficiary households consume more meals per day • Adults in beneficiary households eat fewer meals per day but of better quality (more fruits, more meat) |
| Uganda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to food related resources (seeds, water, fish) |

44. Positive benefits from indirect factors related to food security were reported in increased agricultural production and production diversification; increased access to agricultural inputs and markets from road construction; and increased awareness of nutrition and gardening from training. However, even in countries where improvements were seen in the food security proxy measures, significant periods of food insecurity still exist.

3.5 Impacts on Women

45. All countries reported that the position of women in the household or society improved as a result of FFA. In all cases, women were specifically targeted by FFA activities and their participation increased their access to food and/or income. On average across all countries and projects, 48 percent of participants were women, with a low of 28 percent in Guatemala and a high of 80% in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh country office demonstrated the effect that a concerted advocacy effort with national partners can achieve, having increased women's membership in participants' committees from 20% in 2007 to 75% in 2009-11.

46. Significant short and medium term impacts on women were seen in all countries, and in some countries on women's empowerment and overall community level gender dynamics in terms of control over assets and resources.

Table 6. Benefits to Women

	Assets providing direct benefits to women	Higher women's capacity & empowerment	Improved women's status	Women in supervisory & managerial positions
Bangladesh	Mostly flood control assets not specifically controlled by women	✓	✓	✓
Ethiopia	Small-scale or backyard agriculture	✓	✓	✓
Guatemala	Home gardens	✓	✓	✓
Nepal	Drinking water	✓	✓	✓
Senegal	Community gardens & nurseries	✓	✓	No Info
Uganda	Productive woodlots	✓	✓	No Info

47. Women benefitted directly from the assets themselves if assets were controlled by them and selected specifically to satisfy their needs and interests, such as in Guatemala, Nepal and Uganda. (e.g. woodlots, home gardens; drinking water sources). The main factor for this success is that these are assets that women had more control over.

48. Indirect benefits from participating in asset development programmes reported in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Senegal included more access to financial resources or participation in household budget management, broader social networks, stronger role in community decision making and increased freedom of movement. Where women were targeted for asset and food management roles, additional skills gained enhanced the empowerment effects.

49. Beyond the benefits to women themselves, the evaluations reported that FFA activities targeting women contributed to an improvement of women's roles in

society. Examples include higher participation and involvement of women in household and community affairs; increased participation of women in productive activities; greater financial independence and resulting improved status within the family. Quantitative data from Bangladesh about social empowerment of women is shown in Table 7 below. In Ethiopia, improvements in women’s position were linked more strongly to overall changes in the society than to the asset programme. In Bangladesh, where 70% of participants were women affects were reported to have been significant enough to be considered a contribution to transforming women’s position in society. In both Bangladesh and Ethiopia such changes were seen in the context of broader changes in society.

Table 7: Perception of FFA effects on social empowerment in Bangladesh

Perceived effect of WFP/FFA project on...	Participant	Non-participant	Difference
Improving women’s status in society (%)	85	82	3.2
Women making greater social contribution (%)	75	51	24.2***
Women’s access to microfinance program (%)	75	50	25***
Women taking greater household decisions (%)	83	61	21.6***
Women taking a lot more decision on HH finances (%)	37	11	25.7***
Women taking greater social decisions (%)	44	23	20.3***
Women taking a lot more decisions on community asset management (%)	14	2	12.7***

Source: Bangladesh Household survey – 2013 n 1500; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

50. Some shortcomings were reported from targeting women in FFA interventions:

- Trade-off with workload distribution between FFA activities and childcare and home duties
- Security-related problems with women traveling to more remote areas

51. Concerns were raised about the compounding effects of difficult manual labour on women with poor food security and nutrition, in light of the increased nutrition demands of pregnancy and breast feeding. Furthermore in Guatemala and Nepal WFP’s goals for women’s participation not met. Guatemala aimed for 42% women participants but achieved 34% on average, and Nepal achieved between 27 – 51% women participation on management committees, against a target of 50%. Obstacles to women’s participation included traditional gender norms, limited opportunities for women to participate in community organizations and decision-making, women’s greater workloads and lack of time for other work, and the demanding physical labour required by many FFA activities.

52. In spite of the benefits to women, in all countries except Ethiopia for some indicators, women-headed households were in worse condition than households headed by men. The migration of women is often restricted, and thus women carry an increased burden in countries where men migrate away from villages for work (this was raised as a significant issue in Nepal, Bangladesh and Guatemala).

4. Factors Affecting Outcomes and Impact

53. This section presents explanatory factors that build understanding of the impacts found and reported in the previous section. The logic model developed for the evaluations presented expected factors likely to influence the results, and evaluation teams also documented unexpected factors identified in the course of the evaluations. Factors included those more under WFP's control to influence and factors external to WFP, which are outside of WFP's direct control but nevertheless affect WFP's performance.

Asset Maintenance

54. Functionality was more closely associated with type of asset, ownership, degree of asset completion and smooth programme implementation (e.g. meeting delivery schedules, availability of needed materials and supplies etc.) than age of asset. Some types of assets require more technical capacity and/or specialized materials or equipment to maintain than others. If these exceeded the capacity of the community or outweighed the perceived benefits, assets were not as well maintained.

55. In most cases, (e.g. Guatemala and Senegal), private assets (e.g. homestead raising, gardens/nurseries) had higher survival rates than community assets or purely public assets (e.g. roads). In Uganda however 79% of all assets were community assets (school woodlots and teacher houses) and assets associated with schools had the most successful maintenance arrangements.

56. The evaluations found substantial confusion about responsibilities for asset maintenance and there were few asset maintenance plans found although user committees were often in place. In three cases (Bangladesh, Senegal and Uganda), maintenance was found to be successful when user groups had specific responsibilities for asset maintenance. In Ethiopia community participation in problem identification and solution development was emphasized, which led to high levels of awareness and positively affected asset maintenance.

57. Those maintenance plans that did exist were mostly associated with assets associated in large institutions such as schools and roads in Uganda which were integrated into the Government of Uganda maintenance programme, but such plans were often not fully resourced or adequate. There was less confusion about responsibility for maintenance of private assets, although in some cases, individuals expected that WFP or another entity would maintain private assets.

Immediacy of Risk Reduction

58. Where assets provided immediate and substantial benefits in protecting lives, land and possessions, communities were willing to assume their maintenance. Slow onset risks such as land degradation required a combination of assets and a longer time horizon before risk reduction results became evident. For example, forestry projects such as those in Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal may address risks from climate change or land degradation, but forests are slow to grow and require ongoing protection. Agricultural activities aimed at soil stabilization or soil or production improvement could take multiple growing seasons to realise benefits, and thus address risks on the medium term. Flood protection measures on the other

hand generate benefits immediately after their construction. Effective systems to identify appropriate assets for the context, and technical support for asset planning and construction are essential but were not often in place. In Ethiopia, FFA was well integrated into government programmes and technical protocols, with strong processes for community engagement in priority-setting and decision-making.

59. Assets that require longer periods of time to generate risk reduction benefits require long term maintenance that must be sustained before benefits are realized. Communities at risk and with resource constraints may not be able to maintain resources for long term maintenance of assets that do not deliver risk reduction benefits in the short (or medium) term. In Ethiopia awareness raising and training to build understanding of the root causes of environmental degradation was a high priority that complemented the asset development and thus built commitment to asset maintenance.

60. A combination of asset types that generate short, medium and long term risk reduction benefits could be appropriate, but a comprehensive package of such assets would need to be developed and implemented with communities, as was done in the case of MERET in Ethiopia. Except in Ethiopia, the evaluations found limited evidence of a comprehensive, community-led approach to asset planning and the delivery of a comprehensive package of assets that balanced short-, medium- and long-term risk reduction, or of complementary programming with other agencies. Communities did not always fully understand programme modalities, including payment norms and selection criteria. The evaluations noted that pplanning for a more comprehensive approach was recently started in Bangladesh, Nepal and Guatemala.

Gender sensitivity

61. Factors affecting gender impacts include strategic targeting of assets to women's needs, gender sensitive worksites and flexibility to respond to women's competing demands. Bangladesh and Nepal proactively addressed issues associated with women's participation in FFA by creating worksites adapted to women's needs (separate sanitation facilities, child care services, shade for resting, and secure overnight facilities). Guatemala reduced the size of food bags so women could carry them more easily. In the case of illness or competing demands on their time, women were often able to send other family members to replace them in FFA activities. Men participants were less likely to send replacements than women. The absence of men who had migrated was mentioned as a significant factor that has negative effects on women-headed households in Bangladesh, Guatemala and Nepal.

Partnerships

62. The following partners played important roles in FFA planning and implementation, to different degrees in the countries evaluated:

- Participant committees
- Community leaders
- Local and district government
- National government
- NGOs

- UN, other international organizations or bilateral ODA organizations

63. Different types of partners played different roles from strategic positioning, funding and policy through to field level planning and targeting, project implementation, asset design and construction, maintenance and sustainability (uptake into government or community systems).

64. Most programmes lacked partnership strategies that coherently identified which players would provide support at different stages of the programming process, from strategic positioning, developing supportive policies or securing funding to field level planning and targeting, project implementation, asset design and construction, and maintenance and sustainable uptake by government or community systems. Partnerships were often based on personal relationships rather than strategic agreements. The types of partnerships that were most often missing were sufficient technical support to asset construction and institutionalization of assets into government plans. Most evaluations also found an absence of complementary programming to maximize the benefits and longer-term impact of FFA on sustainable livelihoods and resilience-building.

65. In contrast, Bangladesh's network management model was highlighted as a good example of strategic mobilization of different types of partners. The Bangladesh evaluation emphasized that involving different actors in the planning and decision making added transparency and mutual accountability that built trust, minimized leakages and distributed power. Ethiopia's MERET programme works in close partnership with government authorities and includes national capacity development and national and regional technical training in addition to its community activities. Some of MERET's principles and practices have been adopted by the public works component of the Ethiopian Government's Productive Safety Net Programme. Nepal addressed the technical assistance issue by partnering with an independent engineering surveillance team to develop a technical monitoring system for asset quality assurance and technical guidelines on asset quality monitoring.

66. The strong emphasis in Ethiopia on community participatory planning was linked to MERET's positive impacts by building community ownership, capacity and responsibility for assets.

Funding

67. The evaluations in all countries except Bangladesh reported funding problems⁷. Project records indicate that FFA activities were up to 65% underfunded and funding was variable and not predictable. Predictability of funding also affected asset completion, as communities did not always continue to work if rations were not provided on time as planned, or assets were not completed if materials and supplies were not available as needed.

⁷ In March 2014, the country office indicated that Bangladesh was also experiencing significant budget shortfalls for its FFA activities.

Planning

68. The evaluations found little evidence of comprehensive strategic plans covering FFA. In the face of budget limitations described above, country offices prioritized small short term projects covering as many people as possible, an approach that limited impact potential. The pattern of FFA activity was often geographically scattered, FFA activities were carried out in isolation from one another and from other types of interventions (either by WFP or other actors), with little evidence of integrated local-level planning aiming towards outcome level change. Ethiopia's MERET programme is an exception to this with its integrated community watershed planning approach. Bangladesh has also identified a small number of flood protection assets well targeted to reducing flood risk and damage.

Targeting

69. Targeting issues raised included selection of communities, people within communities and types of assets. Interventions were based on geographical targeting of communities most at risk of food insecurity, but did not always identify communities at most risk of disasters and who could gain most in terms of resilience-building. Interventions were planned with more of a short term food security orientation, rather than a resilience orientation. In many cases, WFP aimed to reach the largest number of people across all areas facing food insecurity, which when combined with budget shortfalls and capacity gaps led in some cases to short duration, small and scattered interventions.

70. Most programmes adopted a self-targeting approach to engaging participants within the communities, whereby compensation was set at a low level that would only attract participation from people with very limited alternative livelihood options. This approach did not provide sufficient confidence that the interventions reached the poorest and most excluded groups. Some assets (e.g. land improvement assets, irrigation and drainage assets) benefit in the first instance those who hold land, whereas poor people may only benefit indirectly through possible employment as farm laborers. Other assets, such as drinking water systems were accessible to and benefit all.

Monitoring Systems

71. All of the evaluations reported weak monitoring systems. Main areas of weakness were:

- Data tracking changes over time (between and within projects for the same activity)
- Ability to link information to the impact pathway
- Appropriate household and hamlet level information
- Food basket monitoring and post distribution monitoring
- Financial information (by activity within a project)
- Missing information on processes (community participatory planning for example)
- Missing information on geophysical condition and change

72. Tracking change over time was hindered by changes in indicators over time and variability in programme delivery (variable assets and variable target populations). In addition, data was often lost or difficult to retrieve for past work due to changes in hardware, staff turnover, lack of centralized archiving systems or information hand over processes to capture information from departing staff. WFP's increasingly delegated field level responsibility for monitoring to NGO partners or user committees which created challenges in terms of ensuring adequate capacity for and supervision of data collection and creating mechanisms for aggregating field level data at country office level. Precise geographic locations of assets were not captured a country office level thus hindering the ability to track assets over time.

73. Asset programmes are highly diverse even within the same country. Examples include diversity of asset types, diversity of livelihoods, diversity of risk and shock. The diversity effectively results in different impact pathways within the same programme or even within the same community, requiring different outcome level indicators and monitoring systems.

74. Food basket monitoring and post distribution monitoring could provide reliable household level or beneficiary level data. However these were not systematically collected, data was not always of sufficient quality, time series data was not usually collected and data were not digitized or adequately archived.

75. Financial information was found to be held in different systems, but there was a lack of coordination between the systems for cost/benefit analysis. Financial data do not link food or finances to specific activity areas, especially in PRRO. Contribution based project management meant that donors may fund only part of the work required to deliver against the entire impact pathway.

76. Country offices sometimes introduced innovations in monitoring, for example the community-level participatory monitoring in Nepal. But these efforts were not supported adequately at the corporate level.

5. Conclusions

77. The evaluation series confirmed that in the short term, WFP was effective in providing food and employment to people in under-served communities, in periods of both civil unrest and natural disaster. In the process, useful assets were built. Medium and longer term impacts were seen in many areas including some aspects related to resilience (overall livelihoods, income generating opportunities, land productivity, social cohesion, and gender dynamics). However, improvements in food security were limited.

78. Results were achieved in the face of severe contextual constraints, including disruption of the social fabric due to violent and/or long standing conflicts, recurrent disasters, and often with incomplete funding and resources (including technical assistance). Asset interventions reached people in need, most of whom were in isolated communities that received little other assistance.

79. These findings are significant considering that, with the exception of Ethiopia, none of the programmes evaluated were operationally oriented towards achieving resilience objectives, although stated goals were broadly aligned. These

findings confirm the appropriacy of FFA as a mechanism to contribute to delivery of WFP's 2011 corporate policy on DRRM and the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017 with a focus on resilience. The directions set in the 2011 Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) Guidance manual (a new version has been released in January 2014) are in line with the evaluations' findings concerning factors important for achievement of impacts, but more needs to be done to ensure that this guidance is consistently applied.

80. Women benefitted significantly from the FFA activities evaluated, not only through direct benefits of employment and access to resources, but also through assets targeted to them that once created, fall under their control. Impacts on gender dynamics were also seen, with improvements seen in women's position in the community and households (including budget management), increased social connectivity and freedom of movement that spilled over from the FFA activities themselves to women's role more broadly in society and the household. Benefits to women were enhanced when work programmes were designed specifically with women's needs in mind; where assets created were directly linked to women's specific concerns; and when women were engaged not just in work, but also in planning and management of the FFA activities.

81. More information is needed to increase understanding about why more improvement was not found in food security indicators. FFA is only one of many factors likely to affect food security in a community. How FFA is conducted, for instance the level of community participation and the inclusion of training or awareness raising, is likely to affect food security. In depth periodic assessment of FFA's contribution to agricultural production, market access, and their relationship with food consumption could help build understanding and position FFA appropriately in the larger context. Such analysis would have to capture the contribution of different types of assets in different contexts.

82. Strategic planning for FFA's appropriacy, coordination and complementarity should be given a higher priority. Linkages between types of assets and complementarity between different types of assets and higher order goals should be sought so as to enhance resilience-building objectives. Limits of funding and capacity would mean a focus on fewer and better concentrated activities.

83. Strategic planning that establishes the links between FFA and resilience would also help address the funding problems faced by many countries, by positioning WFP's work as relevant to disaster risk reduction, and linking with climate change adaptation and major regional and country specific resilience building efforts of interest to development-oriented donors and governments.

84. Many of the populations in the areas covered by the evaluations faced prolonged conflict and in that context, FFA made an important contribution to social cohesion. If projects were more explicit about resilience objectives in conflict and post conflict environments, the potential contribution to social cohesion and trust building in post conflict situations could be better planned for and strengthened.

85. In most countries WFP's geographical/community targeting approach was not sufficiently sensitive in highly differentiated communities. A more detailed analysis of the needs of individuals and households from different socio-economic groups would enable a better match with FFA interventions. A flexible approach is needed

to ensure that assets are targeted to the needs of different socio-economic groups and communities in different livelihood contexts.

86. Without clarity about maintenance responsibilities there is a risk that assets will fall into disrepair and will not be useful in the medium and longer term. Maintaining assets over the long term depends on a number of factors that need to be integrated into programme planning: ownership and use rights of the asset; assets well targeted to risk; and capacity of households, groups, communities, government or others to carry out maintenance. Lack of maintenance may also be due to a poor design or construction or incomplete construction that leaves an asset functioning poorly and not delivering its intended benefits. Specific arrangements for maintenance should be developed in the planning stage, that include budgets, partnerships and a process for formal handover and integration into existing systems with clear roles and responsibilities. More investment in community organization and planning can help ensure assets are well targeted to community needs so that communities develop ownership and responsibility for the assets.

87. Strategic planning for FFA should include an analysis of the partners and their roles, as well as a process of engaging and negotiating joint implementation agreements with partners. Partnerships are critically important to successful FFA programmes for roles that WFP could not perform, and that complement WFP's contributions. Particularly important and often missing are partnerships with technical line ministries and organizations with in depth technical knowledge of asset construction and quality control, in addition to partners with complementary programming expertise and resources for leveraging the longer term impact of FFA on sustainable livelihoods and resilience building.

6. Recommendations

88. The theory of change that guided the evaluations in the series predicted impacts to address short term, medium term and long term objectives. The evaluations found that in the short term, WFP was effective in providing food and employment to people in under-served communities in periods of both civil unrest and natural disaster, and in the process useful assets were built. There was evidence of some of the expected medium and longer term positive impacts, however, improvements in food security were limited. These findings are significant considering that, with the exception of Ethiopia, none of the programmes evaluated were operationally oriented towards achieving resilience objectives, although stated goals were broadly aligned. These findings confirm the appropriacy of FFA as a mechanism to contribute to delivery of WFP's 2011 corporate policy on resilience. The directions set in the 2011 FFA Guidance manual are in line with the evaluations' findings concerning factors important for achievement of impacts, but more needs to be done to ensure that this guidance is consistently applied.

89. **Recommendation 1: WFP country offices, supported by regional bureau and Headquarters, should commit to bringing FFA programmes into line with current policy and guidance, to maximize the opportunities for FFA to contribute to protecting and strengthening livelihoods and resilience.** WFP should make a corporate commitment to acquiring dedicated funding to ensure that country offices have the necessary support from regional bureaux and Headquarters to update their FFA programme plans and activities as

necessary. Specific areas for action and funding are discussed in the following recommendations.

90. Recommendation 2: More attention should be paid to positioning FFA appropriately to the context, building on WFP's comparative advantages, complemented by those of partners, ensuring the sustainability of efforts, and building partners' commitments for financial and other resources. In country offices where FFA is used to improve livelihoods and resilience, WFP senior management should carry out a process of strategic planning for FFA activities that focus on resilience and disaster risk reduction, involving the partners needed for design, implementation, maintenance and institutionalization. Such plans should be fully aligned with WFP's corporate guidance on FFA, WFP's country strategies, national frameworks, and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

91. Recommendation 3: WFP's Policy, Programme and Innovations Division (OSZ) should provide more support and guidance to regional bureaux and country offices by:

- a) reviewing the new FFA guidance to ensure that it takes into consideration issues raised by the evaluations, such as maintenance, social cohesion, gender and macro-level and household targeting, and update the guidance manual as needed; this should involve only refinement, as the recently revised guidance is already a high quality programme support tool;
- b) increasing training and technical assistance for country offices in the approaches introduced in the FFA guidance manual that address not just technical issues of asset design but also integrated contextual analysis, seasonal livelihood programming, community-based participatory planning, institutionalization, national capacity development and other relevant issues; and
- c) ensuring complete roll-out of the new guidance manual to WFP programme staff at country offices - including translation into Spanish and French - and further development of the knowledge and information system to capture and share good practices; this is especially important because of the different levels of progress in the new directions among country offices.

92. Recommendation 4: OSZ should undertake two special studies to address issues raised in the evaluations for which more information is needed. In partnership with WFP's Gender Office and Nutrition Advisory Office, OSZ should carry out a study on the impacts of FFA activities on women, particularly women's nutrition and health, and the opportunities for additional linkages to nutrition generated by a focus on gender issues. In-depth analyses of the food security of FFA participants are needed to increase understanding of how FFA activities could contribute more to food security. The studies should be carried out in countries that are adopting the new FFA approaches, to inform and refine tools and programme modalities. The studies should be aligned to programme cycles to inform programme design, and be carried out before 2016.

93. Recommendation 5: The Performance Management and Monitoring Division, in collaboration with the Office of Evaluation should review the lessons from evaluations that relate to baselines for

and monitoring of FFA, and update corporate monitoring and reporting systems to make them more effective for FFA outcome and impact monitoring. Regional bureaux and country offices should then ensure that funding and staffing are available to meet monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Annexes

Annex 1. Synthesis Terms of Reference

SYNTHESIS of Impact Evaluations Food for Assets for Livelihoods Resilience Terms of Reference Final 12 Dec 2013

Background

1. Food for Assets (FFA) programmes⁸ form one of WFP's largest areas of investment over time. Measured by food tonnage, and level of direct expenses between 2006-10, FFA programmes were the second largest of WFP's food distribution modalities, after General Food Distribution.

2. FFA programmes have the potential to generate significant impact in terms of food security, temporary employment creation and short term increases in participant's incomes through the provision of money or food in return for short term and often seasonal employment on labour intensive projects such as road building. In addition to providing a form of social protection, the assets created and the work done to create them are thought to promote livelihoods, economic growth and development. Furthermore, there is growing interest in the potential contribution of such programmes to increasing empowerment, building resilience to crises and shocks, for instance by increasing overall agricultural production or reducing environmental degradation.

3. Conversely, in the wider development literature and in WFP's own monitoring reviews and evaluations, FFA has been critiqued on the grounds that:

- Poor quality infrastructure or assets are created, that rapidly become non-functional;
- Benefits derived from the assets created disproportionately benefit the non-poor;
- Focus on immediate needs over sustainable poverty reduction;
- Low level skills are developed through asset creation activities, that are not marketable;
- Difficult manual labour in exchange for low levels of food or cash payments has an overall negative effect on health and wellbeing.

4. To address these issues WFP's Executive Board agreed to a series of evaluations which were carried out by WFP's independent Office of Evaluation (OEV) during 2012 and 2013 on the impact of Food for Assets on Livelihoods Resilience in five countries: Guatemala, Nepal, Bangladesh, Uganda and Senegal. Concurrently, a decentralized evaluation managed by WFP's Country Office was conducted using a similar methodology with an external evaluation team in Ethiopia of the MERET project.

⁸ Previously called Food for Work, this distinction is discussed in Section 1.2 of the evaluation series TOR available from www.wfp.org/evaluation.

5. The synthesis is a systematic process for analysis of findings from different evaluation studies. The synthesis will draw from all six of these evaluation reports and associated data and background information to identify areas of convergence in terms of strengths and weaknesses and lessons learned.

6. It strengthens the knowledge base related to FFA by identifying where findings are consistent across different studies conducted independently by different evaluation teams. It also provides information about how difference design, implementation and management arrangements within WFP's programme activity categories affect performance in the context of specific circumstances in individual countries, which may be useful as lessons for other countries facing similar circumstances. The lessons can inform the roll out of WFP's corporate programme guidance manual and be useful for future enhancement of the guidance and related policies.

Objective

7. Like all WFP OEV evaluations, evaluation synthesis serves accountability and learning purposes, with an emphasis on learning, reflecting the emphasis of the entire series Specific objectives are to:

- Compile information across all the evaluations related to outcomes and impact achieved (intended or unintended) by FFA on livelihood resilience;
- Identify changes needed to enable fulfilment of the potential impact of FFA on livelihoods resilience;
- Provide information about how WFP's FFA activities can be better aligned with current and future policies and guidance.
- Reflect on the monitoring and evaluation methodological issues raised by the evaluation series.

8. The synthesis will provide policy/strategy level evidence to inform WFP and others' strategic choices on FFA programming as a tool for livelihoods resilience, the appropriate forms and focus of FFA activities. The most immediate relevance is for countries where WFP is carrying out FFA activities, although the report may have relevance to other organizations which conduct similar activities.

1. Stakeholders and Users

9. Whereas the series' constituent country level impact evaluations focused on stakeholders within the specific country in which the evaluation took place, the synthesis focuses on WFP corporate level policy, programming, management and governance and the transfer of lessons from the countries evaluated to the larger set of countries in which WFP works. The main intended audience is policy and strategy makers within WFP who set WFP global direction and guidance, and country level programme managers who design and carry out FFA activities. Specifically targeted at HQ are those staff that have responsibility for monitoring and rolling out the Disaster Risk Reduction policy and for updating and rolling out the FFA Guidance Manual. Important audiences also include host governments, local implementing

partners, donor agencies and other relevant UN agencies⁹. More specifically, stakeholders include:

- WFP HQ Programme Innovation Service
- WFP HQ Rural Resilience Pilot (R4)
- WFP Policy and Programme Innovation Division
- WFP Policy and Programme Advisory Group
- Regional Bureaux programme staff
- HQ and Regional Bureaux monitoring staff
- WFP Senior Management
- WFP Executive Board members
- Managers and programme officers of WFP Country Offices and sub-offices, of particular interest are those Country Offices that participated in the evaluations
- UN agencies, especially Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) which is one of WFP's main partners in FFA activities
- Key donor, academic and other development agencies concerned with poverty reduction and livelihoods resilience

10. Team leaders of each of the evaluations included in the synthesis would have a special role to provide early feedback on key emerging issues. This feedback would be provided as a special session for team leaders during the Validation and Learning process using on line technology.

2. Overall Process

11. Following current good practice for syntheses and in fulfilment of OEV's dual objectives of accountability and learning, the synthesis will include both processes of document review to derive cross cutting findings and lessons; processes of engagement and reflection among WFP colleagues with interests and experience in FFA; and the production of reports and other communication products, primarily the synthesis report, which will be presented to WFP's Executive Board.

12. The synthesis process comprises four streams of analysis that contribute to a synthesis report, as shown below:

Stream 1: Content analysis and derived corresponding conclusions, lessons, and recommendations of the key evaluation documents (evaluation reports, associated annexes and background materials, including TORs and inception reports)

Stream 2: Quantitative analysis of the combined evaluation data sets

Stream 3: White papers from external expert reviewers, which covered the following topics:

- Theory of Change
- Nutrition and food security

⁹ The synthesis complements the individual evaluations, which are also expected to be useful, particularly in those countries where the evaluations were conducted, for partner governments conducting FFA activities and decentralized donor offices.

- Social networking

Stream 4: Interactions for validation and learning (virtual interaction with a larger number of WFP staff followed by face to face workshop event)

13. The Synthesis will be presented to WFP's Executive Board during its 2014 Annual Session, alongside WFP's Management Response. A summary of the Synthesis will be included in the Office of Evaluation Annual Evaluation Report 2013, which is also scheduled for the same Board session. In addition, both reports will be discussed at the Board's informal Roundtable on Evaluations, normally two weeks prior to the formal Board Session.

3. Outputs and Deliverables

- Knowledge base (matrix in excel) of qualitative findings, conclusions and recommendations
- Consolidated set of quantitative data and report of quantitative findings and challenges and lessons for quantitative data analysis
- External expert topic reports
- Validation and learning interaction plan and report(s)
- Annotated outline of Synthesis Report
- Final Synthesis Report in Word in English of 6,000 words plus annexes, including 1,500 word executive summary

Approach

14. A Theory of Change for FFA impact was developed during the planning stages of the evaluations and then tested and refined at the country level as each country evaluation was rolled out. The ToC will form the primary analysis framework that all four streams of analysis will follow. This will facilitate triangulation from different data streams and across countries. Within this common framework, each stream will undertake its own specialised analysis approach, each of which is described briefly below.

15. **Stream 1 Analysis of Qualitative Data:** Content analysis will be used to synthesise the qualitative finding of the 5 reports. An analysis matrix will be drafted and agreed between the consultant and the synthesis manager, based on the ToC. The matrix will then be populated with findings from in depth review of evaluation reports and associated materials. These will be complemented by quantitative data when available from the reports themselves. Synthesis analysis will include:

- Identification of patterns - similarities, divergences and contradictions in the findings based on the matrix
- Identification of findings not linked to the ToC but emerging from the evaluation processes
- Identification of limitations of data and lessons for future ToC revision and for corporate monitoring and evaluation systems
- Weighting analysis by frequency, intensity and significance of finding, and strength of evidence.

- Due consideration will also be given to findings' strategic importance, potential for leverage, fundamental nature)

16. **Stream 2 Analysis of Quantitative Data:** Quantitative data sets will be compiled and cross-country analysis carried out where possible based on key analytical questions derived from the ToC, and emerging from Stream 1 Qualitative Data analysis. Statistical analysis across the quantitative datasets may be limited due to data quality and diversity, but the potential will be assessed and analysis carried out where possible.

17. In addition to the analysis itself, an assessment will be made of the limitations of the data and recommendations made to improve quantitative data quality in future.

18. **Stream 3 Contributions from External Experts:** Three external experts were engaged in the evaluation series to provide expert inputs on three areas: the use of theory of change in impact evaluation; food security and nutrition issues; and social network analysis. Each of the three experts will review the final evaluation reports and provide an overall assessment of findings or conclusions relative to the topic area. The papers on food security/nutrition and social networks will carry out a content analysis of the evaluation reports with a focus on the particular technical area, and provide an expert analysis of the experiences of analysing the topic area, including recommendations for improving monitoring and evaluation. The ToC expert will focus on the use of the ToC in the evaluation processes and lessons emerging from the evaluations and the broader evaluation field related to the use of a ToC for such types of evaluations and suggestions for strengthening the FFA ToC. These papers will be made available as informal white papers to inform future improvements in programming and policy.

19. **Stream 4 Interactions for Validation and Learning:** A series of interactions including both virtual interactions open to a wider range and larger number of WFP staff and a smaller face to face workshop will be an opportunity to increase engagement of WFP staff in validating cross cutting findings, conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from Streams 1, 2 and 3 and stimulating learning and change in terms of improvements in programming and policy. Team leaders of each evaluation will be invited to provide feedback on key emerging issues in a special discussion session for team leaders. A workshop or second virtual interaction will be held to discuss the draft synthesis report which will be held shortly after the report has been circulated for internal review and comment. An expert consultant will be hired to facilitate the overall process, the first step of which will be a comprehensive plan.

20. The Synthesis Report will be based on a triangulation of the evidence and information from the four analysis streams, using the ToC as the main analysis and organizational framework. The following section provides an overview of the Synthesis Report structure.

Format and Content of the Synthesis Report

The **Synthesis Report** will be **approximately 6,000 words** in length with a 1,500 word executive summary. The Synthesis Report will draw upon all of the above sources and be structured as follows:

1. Introduction, including global policy and institutional context
2. Objective and purpose
3. Methodology
4. Summary analysis of the methodologies used, stated limitations, comparability between evaluations and the strength of the evidence.
5. Synthesis of findings by results area (derived from the ToC)
 - a. Impacts**
 - Asset existence and functionality
 - Biophysical changes
 - Food security and nutrition
 - Livelihoods
 - Empowerment
 - Resilience and Vulnerability
 - b. Explanatory factors**
 - External factors – outside the control of WFP (e.g. national, international and donor policy and institutional context)
 - Internal factors – within the control of WFP (e.g. implementation issues and project type)
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations

21. Conclusions and Recommendations will comprise both a synthesis of the conclusions and recommendations from the constituent evaluations and formulation of any appropriate over-arching conclusions and recommendations arising from analysis of all information derived from the synthesis process.

22. Annexes will include:
- TOR for the Synthesis
 - Summary matrices of comparisons on different analytical dimensions listed above and others that may be identified through the analysis process
 - Short narrative summaries of each evaluation
 - Lessons learned to improve corporate FFA monitoring and evaluation
 - Any other annex deemed appropriate

23. **The Executive Summary** will focus on key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Synthesis Team

24. The **overall manager** of the synthesis process will be Ms Jamie Watts, a Senior Evaluation Officer with OEV who has also been the overall coordinator of the FFA IE series. She has therefore an-in-depth knowledge of the processes and issues

associated with each evaluation. Ms Watts will also be the primary author of the Synthesis Report. Her capacities relevant to the assignment include:

- Ability to supervise a complex, multi stream process, including a high level of familiarity with qualitative and quantitative data analysis and interactive learning processes
- Excellent analytical skills and ability to identify larger patterns and divergences in findings and strategic implications
- Strong evaluation expertise and familiarity with WFP programming
- Excellent writing skills in English with ability to express synthesised/summarised messages accurately and simply .

25. Because the synthesis is based on existing evidence drawn from independent evaluations, the risk of compromise to independence by the use of a WFP staff member to manage the project and write the report is minimal.

26. The synthesis manager will be supported a team including:

- An analyst focused on qualitative data and providing overall evaluation management support
- A quantitative data analyst
- Three external subject matter experts (ToC, food security/nutrition, social networks)
- A validation and learning process facilitation expert

Timing

Activity & Outputs	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, validation and population of analysis matrix • Analysis of qualitative data • Analysis of quantitative data • Finalization of inputs from evaluation external reference group members • Finalization of plans for virtual and face to face interaction process with WFP staff 	1 December to 10 January
Draft synthesis of overarching messages (findings and conclusions)	11- 20 January
Virtual interactions with 1) Evaluation Team leaders and separately with 2) WFP staff	23-24 January
Submission to Director WFP/OEV D1 draft synthesis report	February 14
Clearance of D1 Draft and circulation to Internal Reference Group	February 20
Workshop (or virtual interaction/briefing) to discuss conclusions and recommendations	February 24-25
Senior Management Debriefing	February 26
Deadline for inputs D1	Feb 28
Submission of D2 Draft to OEV Director	6 March
Review and revision for finalization	10-20 March
Submission deadline for Executive Board secretariat	21 March
Presentation to WFP Executive Board Annual Session June 2014	June 2014

Budget

The Synthesis will be funded from the WFP Office of Evaluation's Programme Support Budget, as were the individual evaluations. The total budget for the Synthesis will be US\$ 25,000, including all costs implied above, excluding the cost of a workshop or OEV staff time. The workshop (currently not budgeted) will incur an additional cost of approximately \$50,000, which includes facilitation, facilities, travel and accommodation for staff traveling from field locations. If a virtual interaction is held in lieu of a workshop, approximately \$5,000 may be required for facilitation and write up.

Supervision & Communication

27. The work will be managed by the synthesis manager as described above, who will supervise the delivery of preliminary outputs. Second level supervision and quality assurance will be carried out by the Director of the Office of Evaluation, Ms Helen Wedgwood.

28. As described above, one of the four main streams of analysis will focus on validation and learning. The details of this will be worked out in a plan to be prepared by a facilitation expert who will be part of the overall support team for the synthesis process. However in broad terms, the main aspects of communication are shown in the following table.

Who	Role	Notes
Executive Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of results to EB Annual Session • Publication of EB Report and Brief 	
WFP Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate as able in and encourage virtual interactions • Participate in debriefing • Management response preparation 	Executive Management Group (EMG)
Internal Reference Group (IRG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed about TOR • Engaged during development of validation and learning plan • Participate in validation and learning activities, including virtual and face to face events • Review draft report and provide comments • Involvement in preparing the management response 	Based on country level evaluation IRGs. Include Programme and Policy staff at HQ, RB and CO levels
Visitors to the WFP web pages and WFP intranet	An evaluation page will be established on both OEV's site on WFPgo and WFP.org	General communications to a broader audience
Evaluation Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide feedback on emerging conclusions 	
OEV Evaluation Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be kept informed and involved throughout synthesis process • Provide inputs to major deliverables and processes • Participate in validation and learning events 	Including evaluation managers and research analyst from the overall series

Annex 2. Logic Model FFA

Inputs / Resources	Assumptions	Outputs / Activities	Assumptions	Short-term	Assumptions	Medium-term	Long-term
Risk & livelihoods analysis	<p>Correct identification of key constraints to food security and sustainable livelihoods</p> <p>Accurate analysis of role of natural resources in food security</p> <p>Identification of additional factors determining food insecurity among the most vulnerable – including social and institutional issues</p>	<p>Analysis carried out in collaboration with appropriate national and local expertise</p> <p>Analysis and planning engaged vulnerable members of the communities</p> <p>Documentation of analysis</p>	<p>Individuals, communities and local government are receptive and participating in risk analysis stages</p>				
FFA Activities	<p>Appropriate assets identified for construction/reconstruction</p> <p>Strategic selection of intervention sites in order to have anticipated livelihoods and geo-physical impacts</p> <p>Integration with local and national planning processes and sector priorities</p> <p>Scale of interventions appropriate to enable impact</p> <p>Asset design and quality of construction adequate</p> <p>Asset results in anticipated geophysical changes and increased productivity</p>	<p>Identification of potential strategic interventions by intervention type and context</p> <p>Selection of assets in collaboration with community and local planning staff</p> <p>Asset specification, design and construction</p>	<p>Communities are receptive and participating at design and implementation stages</p> <p>Predictable food/cash delivery schedules</p> <p>Capable & knowledgeable sustained local institutions and/or NGO present at field level</p>	<p>Assets are created which benefit the poor</p>		<p>Increase in land productivity</p>	<p>Reduced environmental vulnerability</p> <p>Reduced overall impact of disasters</p>
Inputs: Food and Non Food– tools, infrastructure material	<p>Adequate and appropriate material resources provided</p> <p>Sufficient resources available for capital inputs</p> <p>Timely provision of materials</p> <p>Food/cash delivered as planned and scheduled appropriately</p>	<p>Adequate and timely food/cash inputs made available</p> <p>Complementary non-food inputs provided on time and in the right combination to enable construction</p>	<p>No food or non-food pipeline breaks or delays</p> <p>Appropriate ration provided</p>	<p>Creation of assets has anticipated short term geophysical impact on water, soil, flood pattern, biodiversity, etc</p>	<p>Distribution of direct and indirect impact of assets and asset development (training, food or cash) benefit the poor</p>	<p>Household Asset Score improved (diversification of livelihoods, increase in labor demand)</p>	<p>Reduced food insecurity and improved livelihoods</p>
Technical assistance	<p>Relevant technical assistance available at appropriate level and required time to ensure quality asset construction</p>	<p>Technical assistance provided as required</p>	<p>Technical assistance is of high quality</p>	<p>impacts positively on food production activities among target population</p>	<p>Asset continues to be fit for purpose in the medium term</p>	<p>Community Asset Scores improved</p>	<p>SO 2.2 - Support & enhance resilience of communities to shocks through safety-nets or asset creation</p>
Training and capacity development	<p>Ensure adequate technical skills for implementation and management available at appropriate level</p>	<p>Technical skills development programme implemented</p> <p>User committee trained in community mobilisation, participation and asset management</p>	<p>Capacities of authorities, partners and communities are built and increase over time (post-shock)</p>	<p>Poor and vulnerable avoid negative coping strategies when faced with shocks and stress</p>	<p>Asset continues to confer benefits over time</p>	<p>Food consumption score</p> <p>Overall health status improved (MUAC)</p>	<p>SO 3.2 – Support the reestablishment of livelihoods and food & nutrition security on communities and households affected by shock</p>
Complementary WFP interventions	<p>Interventions such as income generation, micro-finance, marketing, agricultural extension etc. also provided to enhance impact of assets created on food security</p>	<p>Implementation of innovative complementary interventions</p>		<p>Creation of assets reduces immediate vulnerability to shocks and stress</p>		<p>Improved food security, access and type of food</p>	
Complementary interventions by other agencies	<p>WFP intervention integrated with activities of other agencies to ensure synergies and avoid duplication and competition. Complementary emergency and non-emergency interventions provided (therapeutic feeding, WASH, etc.)</p>	<p>Strategic integration of WFP assets with inputs from other agents</p>					
Local government/community ownership and maintenance	<p>Asset ownership agreed and responsibility for maintenance established, with budgets and plans for maintenance agreed and adhered to, to ensure ongoing asset functioning in the medium term</p> <p>User committee formed and working effectively over time, including giving voice to vulnerable members of the community</p>	<p>User committee functional</p> <p>Asset maintenance programme implemented</p>	<p>Sustained community and local authorities commitment for asset maintenance</p> <p>Assets appropriately sited and constructed to avoid excessive maintenance costs</p>				

Annex 3. Previous Evaluation Evidence

Evidence was reviewed from previous evaluations, audits and reports of FFA from a variety of WFP and external sources. Some positive findings include improvements in household income during the period of employment; short term food security; savings and household assets.

Natural resources management activities (i.e. terracing, half-moons, agroforestry, water harvesting and diversion, etc.) resulted in improvements in soil moisture content and depth, reduction in soil loss in treated areas and increased crop yields, vegetation diversity and cover¹⁰. Women benefited from the improved supply of water, fuel wood, and other tree products.¹¹ A recent study by DFID in five countries (Niger, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Bangladesh and Kenya) showed that building resilience (e.g. through natural resources management) is cost effective, with benefit to cost ratios of between 2.3:1 and 13.2:1, depending on the country¹².

On the other hand, transfers were sometimes too small or unpredictable to provide complete protection against hunger. Some communities stopped maintenance on public goods in anticipation of food aid payments for the same projects.

The wage transfer through FFA was not synonymous with the cash value of the transfer due to the opportunity costs of participation.¹³ Rather, the net income value of the wage was between 24-60% of the gross wage, once opportunity costs were taken into account¹⁴.

FFA could divert labour and other inputs away from local private production when FFA activities took place during the agriculture productive season and FFA net wages were above prevailing market rates¹⁵. However, there were other cases where FFA stimulated increased on farm investments when income gains were redirected into private agricultural investment.

Evaluations and audits found a number of implementation or management problems with WFP's FFA activities. Sometimes FFA activities started too late to deliver food in the period of peak food insecurity, materials and supplies were inadequate for construction and late delivery, short duration and unpredictability of support (often delivered through short term project extensions) affected the ability of FFA to meet livelihood protection/ recovery and income stabilization needs¹⁶.

WFP sometimes delegated most or all responsibility for the technical adequacy, safety and sustainability of assets built through FFA onto partners while focusing WFP's role on food delivery, which has risks considering partner capacity limitations,

¹⁰ Report on the Cost-Benefit Analysis And Impact Evaluation of Soil And Water Conservation And Forestry Measures (Draft) Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions to More Sustainable Livelihoods (MERET) WFP Ethiopia 2005 WFP Internal Working Paper

¹¹ Agroenvironmental Transformation in the Sahel Another Kind of "Green Revolution" Chris Reij Gray Tappan and Melinda Smale IFPRI Discussion Paper 00914 November 2009

¹² Department for International Development UK (DFID) The Economics of Early Response and Resilience – November 2013

¹³ Van de Walle, D. (1998) Assessing the Welfare Impacts of Public Spending. *World Development*, 26(3):365-79.

¹⁴ McCord A. and R. Slater. 2009. Overview of Public Works Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa. September 2009 Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

¹⁵ State of the Food and Agriculture 2006 Food aid for Food security? FAO

¹⁶ Strategic Evaluation of the Effectiveness of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions OE/WFP 2009

and in light of the potential importance of the assets to communities' livelihoods, the cost of building them and safety considerations.

Undertaking a wide range of different types of activities spread over many communities stretched capacity for food delivery, technical support for design and implementation and monitoring. A wider range of asset types required a wider range of partnerships in order to acquire the needed technical expertise and resources. And partnership alone did not deliver the needed technical capacity where it was lacking in WFP, government or implementing partner organizations¹⁷.

An internal review of WFP's water management activities¹⁸ emphasized the importance of tailoring the intervention to the physical characteristics of the area and to the socio-economic needs of the communities derived from community engagement processes, which requires a high level and range of technical capacity. In community led projects food assistance was sometimes spread across a larger number of participants and rations shared among non-targeted participants in the community in the interest of sharing the benefits as broadly as possible across the community.

¹⁷ WFP Internal Audit communication summarizing Internal Audit report findings from 2008-2011, provided May 2012

¹⁸ 2011 WFP and Water: A review of water management activities supported by WFP (internal document)

Annex 5. Evaluation Briefs

MERET Impact Evaluation Report Brief

Context

Ethiopia has been plagued by natural resource degradation for several decades. Land degradation is an acute problem in rural agricultural areas in all regions. Ethiopia is also highly vulnerable to natural disasters and weather-related shocks. These issues are integrally related to food security and livelihood sustainability. Environmental degradation affects agricultural productivity, which is poor compared to other countries in Africa and elsewhere.

Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transition to More Sustainable Livelihoods (MERET) is a long-standing programme implemented with its current new name since 2003 meant to help address these issues. It is managed by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) through the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) with support from WFP. MERET aims at addressing root causes of vulnerability and chronic food insecurity by rehabilitating natural resources and enhancing land productivity. It is implemented in 451 watersheds in 72 woredas of five regions (Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, Tigray, Somali) and Dire Dawa Administrative Council.

MERET provides food assistance through food for work (FFW) as a short-term means of enabling longer-term progress in agricultural development. Main activities are physical and biological soil conservation, reforestation, small-scale irrigation, road construction and maintenance, income generation activities, livelihood diversification, and soil fertility improvements. MERET has a strong emphasis on national capacity development, national and regional technical training, and community-based participatory watershed development.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Ethiopia Country Office and conducted by an independent evaluation team. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the impact of MERET in selected watersheds and woredas by examining impacts on the livelihoods of participating households, on the community, and on natural resource rehabilitation in various agro-ecological zones;
- Recommend options for ways forward that capture effective approaches utilized by MERET and sustain the positive impacts of its interventions.

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach that included secondary data review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with management committees, farmers, and landless households in MERET and non-MERET communities, and a household survey of 3600 households (of which 1800 were communities served by MERET and 1800 in “control” communities with similar social and economic attributes but not served by MERET).

Key Findings and Conclusions

Livelihoods, Income, Assets, and Food security

The evaluation found that MERET households have experienced increased incomes compared to households in control communities. MERET households attributed this change to increased agricultural production and productivity, which has benefitted from improved land management, reduced soil erosion, and increased water availability as result of MERET accomplishments.

In all regions, MERET households enjoyed more diverse and successful livelihood opportunities. 66% of MERET households perceived they have successfully escaped from poverty during the period in which MERET was functioning in their community, as compared to 46% of households in control sites.

Agricultural Production

MERET soil and water conservation activities had a strong impact on agricultural production. Terraces, bunds, check dams and other flood control, erosion control and water harvesting activities improved soil fertility, soil depth and moisture, and recharged ground and surface water. These in turn significantly enhanced land productivity and, therefore, crop productivity and yield over time. Agricultural diversification and productivity contributed to increased farmer resilience and reduced the consequences of flood and drought on crops and livestock. MERET households cultivate more land on average than do control site households.

Food Security

MERET interventions had positive impacts on food security, as evidenced by household diet diversity and food consumption scores. MERET households reported a more diverse diet and consumed “acceptable” diets compared to the “poor” diets of the control sites households.

Sustainable Land Management Practices

MERET’s land management activities increased land and water availability and improved soil fertility. Farmers have reclaimed previously unproductive land such as gullies and eroded hillsides, and returned land to production through the construction of check dams, bunds, terraces, and grass and tree plantings. MERET communities successfully implemented more physical soil and water conservation activities than control communities.

The evaluation found that the assets and physical structures were built according to guidelines and were of superior quality to those observed at control sites.

Household and Community Resilience

MERET activities mitigated the effects of flood and drought and enhanced the ability to manage shocks. The evaluation found that MERET households and communities were more resilient to shocks and employed a wider variety of preparation and adaptation strategies than control sites. In addition, MERET activities helped the poorest households to avoid negative coping strategies.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

MERET had a positive impact on the livelihoods and food security of the households in the survey areas. The MERET principles—a community-based participatory watershed development and a commitment to community capacity building—are viewed as a model for watershed development.

It was evident that the physical structures created through the soil and water conservation measures were of high technical quality and contributed to environmental improvements.

The evaluation also found that MERET households and communities were more resilient to shocks and employed a wider variety of preparation and adaptive strategies than in control groups. Generally, they experienced fewer shocks than control groups, and among those who had recently gone through a shock, MERET participants tended to meet their household food needs and cope better with shocks because they had a wider array of income sources and skills.

Despite these successes, MERET has continued to implement activities in a relatively small number of woredas, in many cases for more than 10 years, with little attempt to phase out of existing watersheds and scale up to new ones. Other programmes throughout the country have adapted the MERET principles.

Many MERET teams attempted to promote linkages with other sectors, although in some cases linkages were weak. MERET has faced a major challenge to measure impact. Given the long duration of MERET and the amount of money that has been invested in the programme, this lack of measurement has become one of the reasons for the decline in donor funding in recent years.

The evaluation concluded that MERET successfully contributed to positive changes and benefits and has pioneered soil and water conservation in Ethiopia; nevertheless, the budget has decreased drastically over the last decades and donor commitment has declined. Addressing these challenges is a critical consideration for planning a next phase and building a new strategy as a way forward.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Integrate MERET into a comprehensive natural resource management strategy. MERET should transition to become part of an integrated and comprehensive government and donor-supported natural resource management strategy that combines its activities with other natural resource management and sustainable land management initiatives and systematically integrates MERET principles.

Recommendation 2. Link MERET interventions to other technical sectors. To optimize the positive impact of any of the MERET structures, systems and services, there should be a more strategic link to other sectors outside of the MoA technical sectors so that environmental and livelihood changes derived from MERET activities do not have adverse effects on the health and wellbeing of the population.

Recommendation 3. Scale up promising cost-effective packages. An explicit scale-up strategy should be developed for each watershed area implementing MERET better practices to diffuse promising practices to adjacent watersheds.

Recommendation 4. Systematically document MERET impact on communities, households, and other programmes. MERET has successfully applied results-based monitoring to monitor performance, training MERET and other programme field personnel at the woreda and regional levels. However, MERET has not systematically documented the impacts of its programmes. MERET should conduct baselines in every new watershed in order to document adequately the natural resource management, food security and livelihood improvements and impacts. These monitoring and evaluation systems will use criteria to determine better practices that can be scaled up and used for phasing out of a watershed.

Recommendation 5. Strengthen knowledge management. Improving the monitoring and evaluation system will help strengthen knowledge management and transfer the successes of MERET programme. A unit should be created to document better practices in each region where MERET is operating. A forum of stakeholders should be established in each region to enable the sharing of better practices and experiences. These units should come together on annual basis to share information across regions and to plan cross visits between regions. This will facilitate the establishment of a system to ensure the diffusion and adoption of better practices generated in MERET watersheds.

Recommendation 6. Explore other modalities through which funding mechanisms are used to manage MERET. A potential model would be to mobilize resources to extend a basket of funding to the GoE, which then allocates funds to support MERET and other programmes within an integrated NRM programme. WFP technical staff would continue providing technical support and capacity building to government staff. This will entail developing a detailed intensive capacity development plan that can be implemented over the next two years.

Recommendation 7. Strengthen Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) from lessons learned from MERET. Lessons learned from MERET should be incorporated into PSNP programming approaches.

Recommendation 8. Develop an effective resource mobilization strategy. MERET's resource base has declined in recent years, affecting the programme's ability to accomplish all of the goals of the programme, including achieving scale. The GoE and WFP should work together to mobilize sufficient funding and resources to enable MERET to remain the development flagship in sustainable land management in Ethiopia.



The evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Ethiopia Country Office.

For further information please contact the Country Office at WFP.Addisababa@wfp.org

Evaluation Brief



Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience in Bangladesh (2008-2011)

Context

Although the incidence of poverty has declined and food security has improved in recent years, in 2012 Bangladesh ranked 68th of 79 countries in the 2012 Global Hunger Index, and 146th of 187 in the 2011 Human Development Index. The country is severely disaster-prone and at high risk of negative impacts of climate change.

Food for Assets in Bangladesh

The evaluation covered the food/cash-for-assets (FCFA) component of WFP's Bangladesh country programme 104100 (2007–2011). During the reference period, 471 FCFA projects were undertaken, involving 55,000 participants, 70 percent of whom were women, in 45 *upazilas* (sub-districts) of 13 districts.

Participants received a combination of food and cash remuneration for two years, based on 90 to 95 days of labour over six months a year, and training for five to six days a month in the remaining six months. Flood/tidal surge protection accounted for 61% of assets, access infrastructure for 34% and water management for 5%. Training topics included disaster risk reduction and preparedness planning, nutrition and hygiene, women's empowerment, income-generating activities and life skills.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation assessed the outcomes and impacts of WFP's food-for-assets programming in Bangladesh and was part of a series of five evaluations on the impact of WFP's cash-for-assets and food-for-assets activities on livelihoods resilience. Other countries in the series include Bangladesh, Guatemala, Uganda 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?

The lack of baseline and endline data made impact measurement problematic; thus a mixed method approach was used, including household survey (1500 respondents), focus groups, asset assessments, key informant interviews and participatory rural appraisal.

Key Findings

Asset functionality

330 assets were assessed, only three of which were found to be partially functional. The rest were functional and serving the purpose for which they were designed. However 13% were never completed. Approximately 25% of survey respondents did not know who was responsible for asset maintenance.

Biophysical Effects and Agricultural Productivity

Most assets were reported to deliver multiple biophysical effects including:

- reduced severity of flooding;
- reduced soil and riverbank erosion;
- increased vegetable production and increased agricultural productivity.

Over 80% of respondents reported that embankments enable an additional crop cycle. Roads contributed indirectly to agricultural production by increasing market access and access to inputs.

Livelihoods

Programme participation was negatively correlated with years of education, confirming appropriate targeting towards livelihoods resilience of the ultra-poor and disadvantaged groups.

The evaluation found positive impact on annual incomes of participant households, in the order of 5200 taka (US\$65) more than comparison households. Similarly, programme participation was found to increase the probability of accumulating savings by 26 percentage points, and was associated with size of accumulation.

In intervention villages, poor and extremely poor benefited most from all asset types and participants' ownership of land and livestock was greater than comparable non-participants. However, among participants, women-headed household outcomes were worse than for those headed by men.

Participants undertook more income generating activities than comparison populations, and training provided was found to have contributed to a greater diversification of income-generating activities.

Food security

Food distributions took place during periods of scarcity, and thus filled a short term food need. There was a 16 percentage point increase in the knowledge of participants' knowledge of proper methods for cooking vegetables and an average impact of 17 percentage points in knowledge of sanitation. Participants and all other local stakeholders unequivocally reported in interviews and focus groups that homestead raising as well as training had a positive impact in terms of promoting kitchen gardening and better nutrition. Interestingly, and despite the positive economic impacts noted above, there was no evidence of improvements in food security over the past 12 month period, in dietary diversity scores or food consumption scores.

Vulnerability and coping

64% of participant respondents received training in disaster vulnerability reduction and disaster preparedness and were more aware of disaster preparedness techniques than non-participants. However, coping strategy indices were not significantly different between participants and non-participants.

Women's empowerment

Women were specifically targeted and gender sensitive initiatives such as provision of childcare and sanitation facilities made the work environment more conducive to women's participation. FCFA activities increased household workloads, but women could send replacement workers if needed. From 2009 to 2011, 75% of participant's committee members were women, up from 20% in 2007.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

WFP Bangladesh achieved significant positive impacts through its FCFA activities. FCFA and training provided immediate short-term food security benefits to 55,000 participants, 70 percent of whom were women. Assets constructed were well targeted for disaster risk reduction and highly relevant to context.

Despite insufficient clarity on responsibilities and poor maintenance systems, most assets were operational and serving their intended purposes; those directly reducing disaster risk were better maintained than others. Impacts on the biophysical environment, agricultural productivity and economic/market access were confirmed.

There was compelling evidence of social transformation and women's empowerment, and significant impacts on income and savings; however, the evidence suggested that food security impacts were not sustained in the long term. The network approach to support project implementation was a key factor of success.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The office should continue to provide the Government with support in disaster risk reduction, building on the experience of the ER component in future programmes. (WFP country office).

Recommendation 2. The office should work with its partners to elaborate and institutionalize the network management model for FCFA, refining it to facilitate synergies among different actors, to enhance access to the complementary services that lead to improved household income and food security for the ultra-poor. (WFP country office).

Recommendation 3. Feasible asset-management plans should become an integral feature of the FCFA approach. (WFP country office, its NGO/government partners and WFP worldwide).

Recommendation 4. More robust monitoring systems should be developed to ensure that major intended outcomes can be measured. (WFP country office and NGOs).



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

Evaluation Brief



Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience in Guatemala (2003-2010)

Context

Despite its classification as a middle income country, Guatemala remains one of the poorest countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and has one of the world's highest levels of inequality. The chronic undernutrition rate among children under 5 in indigenous areas is the eighth highest in the world. Guatemala is prone to recurrent hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, landslides and droughts, and is highly susceptible to the effects of climate change.

Food for Assets in Guatemala

The evaluation covered the food for assets component of WFP Guatemala Country Programme 10092 (2003-2005) and the Guatemala component of the Regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 10444 (2007-2010). FFA beneficiary numbers ranged from a high of 34,778 in 2009 to a low of 2,224 in 2005.

Participants were supported with food during the lean season complemented by training. A wide variety of mainly individual household assets were built, focused on improving agricultural land stability and productivity. Training focused on disaster response, improving community organization, asset maintenance and women's ownership of assets.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation assessed the outcomes and impacts of WFP's food-for-assets programming in Guatemala and was part of a series of five evaluations on the impact of WFP's cash-for-assets and food-for-assets activities on livelihoods resilience. Other countries in the series include Bangladesh, Nepal, Uganda 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?

The lack of baseline and endline data made impact measurement problematic; thus a mixed method approach was used, including household survey (1200 respondents), focus groups, asset assessments, key informant interviews and social and institutional analysis.

Key Findings

Assessment of impact was constrained by lack of data, but comparative cross-sectional analysis indicated the following:

In the short-term food was distributed to approximately 90,000 people, 42% of whom were women, thus filling a food gap in the lean season. Lack of monitoring data constrained the ability to assess short term food security impact, but from household survey responses, there were **no significant differences in food consumption scores or dietary diversity** between participants and comparison groups.

Most assets, such as home gardens, forestry activities, composting and erosion barriers or terraces, remained functional. Household assets had **higher survival rates** than community assets. Larger infrastructure such as barriers or terraces achieved greater productivity and long-term potential, but were also more difficult to construct and maintain. Families have an important role in asset maintenance.

Highly significant **positive impacts on livelihoods** were reported with 77 percent of participant households reporting livelihood improvements in recent years against only 31 percent in comparison groups. Participant households also reported significantly **less migration** than comparison groups.

Positive **biophysical** impacts were observed, with most households reporting improved soil conservation, agricultural productivity and vegetation coverage.

Participants received training to improve organizational capacity and were more involved in community organizations than comparison groups.

WFP adjusted some activities to facilitate women's participation and women's empowerment reportedly increased, although 40 of women indicated the need to reorganize or reassign their daily activities to participate in food for asset activities. WFP did not always meet its targets for women's leadership in food distribution committees or for the percentage of women participants relative to the total.

Communities experienced a range of disasters in recent years. Self-assessed disaster preparedness was significantly higher among participant than comparison households. However, fewer than 30 percent of beneficiaries reported reduced disaster losses because of FFA activities, and community leaders reported that communities remain vulnerable and ill-prepared to face recurrent disasters.

Projects experienced shortfalls in budgets and commodities in most years. Interventions were short and delivered a wide range of assets, many of which were household-level demonstrations of practices such as home gardens and composting. These benefitted individual women and their households, but a more comprehensive, larger-scale approach would be needed to reduce overall vulnerability especially in light of Guatemala's vulnerability to negative effects of climate change. WFP needs adequate human resources and technical support to address this challenge.

WFP was seen as an active and fair player in Guatemala, and WFP interventions complemented government plans and priorities. However more binding and mutually accountable partnership agreements, including for maintenance would enhance sustainability. Reframing FFA as an effective mechanism for disaster risk reduction and response would bring activities into line with WFP's current policy and guidance and build on WFP's comparative advantages.

Recommendations

R 1: The CO should reframe its FFA programming towards disaster risk reduction and response. It should develop a strategy and action plan for its FFA approach and prioritize, design and align these to Guatemala's diverse environmental, risk and vulnerability contexts. It should include specific plans for enhancing disaster risk reduction and response capacity tailored to the community, municipal and national levels; establishing effective

partnerships to ensure the requisite technical skills; and developing staff capacity to enable WFP to play a leadership role with national government and international institutions.

R 2: The CO should concentrate its efforts on fewer, larger and longer-term interventions in fewer communities, with clear criteria for targeting communities at risk of food insecurity and disasters. The focus should be on selecting assets that are likely to help prevent disaster damage and maintain food security when disaster strikes; that are appropriate for the particular conditions of each area; and that ensure balance among short-, medium- and longer-term benefits.

R 3: The CO should develop a broad vision and framework for gender issues in FFA, focusing on household food and nutrition requirements during and after emergencies and taking into consideration women's needs, interests and roles in food and nutrition security. Rigorous analysis should be undertaken to identify barriers to women's empowerment and ways of engaging men in the elimination of these barriers. Women should be fully integrated into FFA decision-making processes to enhance the potential for empowerment.

R 4: The CO should develop longer-term and stronger partnerships at the national, municipal and community levels to ensure that assets are well designed, constructed and maintained. The CO should implement a strategy for the knowledge transfer of successful FFA interventions to government partners, emphasizing sustainability at the national, municipal and community levels. It should also develop a clear cooperation strategy for the municipal level and protocols for cooperation to clarify responsibilities for food delivery, technical assistance, and follow-up, maintenance and monitoring at the community level.

R 5: The CO should develop and implement a robust and systematic FFA monitoring and evaluation system to measure the intended biophysical and socio-economic effects and provide adequate data at the community/municipal level to facilitate ownership and sustainability.



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

Evaluation Brief



Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience in Nepal (2002 – 2010)

Context

Nepal has a population of approximately 31 million and ranks 157th of 187 countries in the United Nations Development Programme's 2012 Human Development Index. Despite improvements over the last 15 years, poverty, food insecurity and chronic undernutrition are still significant problems, with higher prevalence in the mountains and mid- and far-western hill regions and among certain caste/ethnic groups. The evaluation reference period has been characterized by conflict and post conflict.

Food for Assets in Nepal

The evaluation covered the cash and food-for-assets components of two WFP programmes in Nepal: Country Programme (2002–2007) and Protracted Relief And Recovery Operation (2007–2010). These provided 40 to 70 working days of support during the lean season. An average of 107,710 labourers participated each year, indirectly reaching approximately 603,178 people annually¹.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

This evaluation assessed the outcomes and impacts of WFP's food-for-assets programming in Nepal and was part of a series of five evaluations on the impact of WFP's cash-for-assets and food-for-assets activities on livelihoods resilience. 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. Other countries in the series include Bangladesh, Guatemala, Uganda and Senegal. A synthesis of all five countries will also be conducted.

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?

Evaluation methods included document and literature review, analysis of PRRO baseline and final household surveys, stakeholder interviews, and detailed qualitative fieldwork in 15 village development committees (VDCs) in five districts.

¹ based on an average household size of 5.6

Key Findings and Conclusions

Asset Functionality

Of 99 assets directly assessed by the evaluation 54% were fully functional, 33% partially functional and 13% were not functional. Functionality was lowest for water management and agroforestry assets; even controlling for date of construction, these types of assets tend to have complex ownership and management regimes.

Biophysical Environment

Notwithstanding the absence of baseline comparative data on the biophysical environment, the evaluation found qualitative evidence of positive biophysical impacts:

- Substantial increases in agricultural production (from 1 to 2 or 3 crops per year) as a result of terracing, irrigation and plantation work
- Diversification of cropping with introduction of new species (including vegetable production)
- Enhanced community water sources (ponds and/or drinking water) provided water for households, livestock and vegetable production
- Access infrastructure increased availability of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser, advice)
- Agroforestry increased the number and variety of trees on otherwise barren lands (although some species were more successful than others).

However, overall impact was limited, with interventions not sufficient to achieve watershed-level impact (small scale, scattered interventions). In addition, some unintended negative consequences were observed, such as land slippage from poor design.

Food Security and Livelihoods

For four months a year 2002 – 2010, FFA met short term food needs of between 47,000–218,000 households annually; and over the entire period almost one million participants and an estimated five to six million beneficiaries were reached. Compared with comparison households, more participating households reported improvements in:

- Severity of food shortage
- Acute malnutrition rate
- employment
- income
- living conditions
- Reduced out migration

Different types of assets provide different levels of

benefits to the poorest groups. Important in Nepal's socio-economic context of severe caste, ethnic, gender and geographic inequality, private or semi-private and agriculture-related assets tend to benefit land-holders.

Effects on women and girls

Women constituted 36-50% of project participants. Male headed households reported slightly higher incomes, living conditions and self sufficiency of food production than female headed households (who formed 13% of survey respondents).

Food was reported to benefit poorer households and women/children as compared to cash transfers. User Committee membership delivers associated capacity development and empowerment benefits, and 27-51% of members were female, against WFP's target of 50%.

Road construction, especially of larger or longer roads, presented particular challenges for women because it required that women work away from home. Conditions in workers 'camps' for those not able to return to their houses at night posed security problems for women and child care was rarely provided.

Contribution to Livelihoods Resilience

Roads and other assets had a number of positive effects such as helping to increase accessibility, agricultural productivity and access to water for both domestic and agricultural use. Improvements were seen in food consumption scores and evidence of improved resilience was observed, with participants having lower Coping Strategy Index scores, less reliance on credit to purchase food and less migration than non-participants.

Public assets made a significant contribution to building economic and social capital during and after conflict, although benefits were not always equitably distributed. Similarly, there is significant variation in distribution of benefits by type of asset with some activities targeting the poorest better than others.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

The evaluation found that FFA achieved significant short-term positive impacts through the rapid delivery of food aid to several million food-deficit beneficiaries during the evaluation reference period, which was characterized by conflict and post-conflict conditions and recurring natural disasters. WFP often operated in remote communities that received little alternative support.

Cash/food for assets was less successful in reducing chronic, structural food insecurity or providing long-term benefits for the poorest. WFP's short-term approach focusing on maximum geographical coverage within the limits of funding available was not conducive to long-term sustainable impact, particularly for the

poorest and most excluded groups. The evaluation found insufficient alignment with national systems and partners for ensuring the technical support, asset maintenance and complementary programming necessary for long-term impact.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. In collaboration with Headquarters, the country office should develop a funding strategy for the new CP that ensures a minimum three-year funding commitment from all sources, to deliver the long-term livelihood resilience impacts expected from C/FFA activities.

Recommendation 2. The country office should adopt a more flexible programming approach for C/FFA that is better adapted to Nepal's diversity and geography in site-specific operational contexts by employing the twin tracks of: i) wide coverage and short-term interventions focused, on meeting the immediate food needs of the greatest number of the poorest and most vulnerable groups; and ii) more focused longer-term programming aiming at building the livelihood resilience of vulnerable groups.

Recommendation 3. With support from the regional bureau and Headquarters, the country office should develop a theory of change that describes the intended results of C/FFA activities on short-term food insecurity and long-term livelihood resilience in varying operational contexts, for different household categories, and for different types of assets.

Recommendation 4. To ensure that the benefits of long-term C/FFA programmes reach the poorest, the country office should target specific households based on local context analysis and household wealth ranking.

Recommendation 5. The country office should undertake a partnership review, then develop and implement a strategy for partnerships that delivers the short- and long-term objectives of C/FFA.

Recommendation 6. To ensure that assets are built to maintainable standards and that long-term support is available to maintain them, the country office should identify – at the asset design stage – responsibilities and institutional arrangements at community, district and/or national levels for long-term maintenance.

Recommendation 7. The country office should reach agreement with the Government on the development of a functioning and sustainable government system for responding to food insecurity, to enable the eventual managed hand-over of C/FFA implementation.



Reference:

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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 principle¹, 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).

¹ 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:

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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:
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For more information please contact the Office of Evaluation WFP.evaluation@WFP.org

Acronyms

FFA	Food for assets
MERET	Managing environmental resources to enable transition to more sustainable livelihoods
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
NGOs	Non-governmental organization
ODA	Official development assistance
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction Management
OSZ	Policy, Programme and Innovation division
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization
ToC	Theory of Change
FFA IE	Food for Asset – Impact Evaluation
EMG	Executive Management group
IRG	Internal reference group
MUAC	Mid-upper arm circumference
DFID	Department for International Development
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
FFW	Food for work
NRM	Natural resources management
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
CO	Country office
VDC	Village distribution committee
CP	Country Programme
ANR	Assisted natural regeneration

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World Food Programme