

Evaluation Brief



Uganda: an Evaluation of WFP's Portfolio (2009-2013)

Context: Uganda is a low-income country of 37.6 million inhabitants (2013). Annual economic growth of 6 to 10 per cent over the past 15 years has enabled Uganda to reduce its poverty prevalence, yet Uganda remains a poor country, ranking 164th of 187 countries in the 2014 human development index, with 35 percent of the population undernourished. Economic benefits have not reached the most vulnerable groups, and wide regional disparities exist, with the north-eastern Karamoja region as the poorest. The evaluation period was one of stabilization and peace consolidation, with significant reductions in the long-term, inter-ethnic and regional conflicts affecting Karamoja, but environmental degradation and natural disasters remain a concern.

Scope and Evaluation Focus

This evaluation covered WFP's portfolio in Uganda from 2009 to 2013 under the 2009–2014 country strategy and the five operations implemented: a country programme (CP), and two emergency (EMOPs) and protracted relief and rehabilitation operations (PRROs), respectively. The operations in the portfolio reflect the country strategy priority areas of: emergency humanitarian action (EHA); food and nutrition security (FNS), and; agriculture and market support (AMS).

Serving both accountability and learning purposes, the evaluation focused on the standard questions for country portfolio evaluations: i) alignment and strategic positioning; ii) quality of and factors driving strategic decision-making; and iii) performance and results. As the country portfolio evaluation covered the first WFP country strategy, a fourth issue evaluated was the added-value of the country strategy.

Key Findings

Alignment and Strategic Positioning: WFP interventions, recognized for their substantial scale and coverage, were appropriately focused on providing food assistance to vulnerable populations in Karamoja and to refugee populations across the country. EHA and FNS interventions reached an average of 1.2 million people annually, with only the Government's interventions achieving similar coverage. WFP enhanced its engagement and alignment with the Government, which acknowledged crucial support in two main areas: establishment of regional grain trade standards, and research in micronutrients and fortification.

Strategic Decision-Making: WFP programme (design and targeting) reflected both context and

direction of the country strategy, and was based on comprehensive needs assessment and analysis, with evidence of periodic reviews. The evaluation found that the historical perception of WFP as the “food and logistics” agency was changing, although food distribution is still considered WFP's core competency.

Performance and Results: **EHA:** General food distributions reached more beneficiaries than planned, yet with small rations and with less distribution cycles per year, reaching its volume target only in 2011. The community-based approach introduced by the country office increased coverage of the supplementary feeding programme in Karamoja from 53 to 71 percent from 2009 to 2011; however issues of efficiencies were raised with weak implementation of the eligibility (age) criteria and uninvestigated readmissions. **FNS:** WFP's support to the Government in implementing comprehensive nutrition interventions to address under-nutrition were partially effective. School feeding appeared to have a positive effect on enrolment and attendance in Karamoja. The short-term relief approach to FFA activities however undermined effectiveness in the medium to long term. **AMS:** AMS activities were having effects on policies and markets, showing a potential for scaling-up.

Value-added of the country strategy: The country strategy enhanced possibilities for coherence and linkages between short-term and longer-term interventions and objectives, and strengthened WFP's role in advocating for pro-poor policies. However, implementation was not always as coherent as the strategy, partly because strategy targets were aspirational and did not lend themselves to measurement. Moreover, whilst WFP made high-level investments in the initial development and communication of the country strategy, underinvestment in programme design and implementation capacity prevented full realization of the objectives.

Gender and Protection: WFP's interventions ensured women's inclusion but made insufficient effort to assess the potential impacts on gender roles and dynamics within households and communities, or on protection.

Overall assessment and Recommendations

Relevance and Strategic Positioning: WFP's country strategy set an appropriate strategic direction and the portfolio was closely aligned with Uganda's evolving priorities and policies, and with needs of the vulnerable communities. Despite budget cuts, WFP

achieved extensive coverage in the targeted geographical areas. WFP used evidence to inform the redesign and targeting of interventions and increase relevance. In most cases, WFP worked with government and other stakeholders to ensure activities were coherent and addressed critical needs not met by others.

Effectiveness and efficiency: Technical and field staff capacity did not match the country office's strong strategic and analytical capacity, and the strategy's objectives were inadequately translated into implementation and delivery of results. WFP's monitoring and reporting remained input/output-based, and outcome-level progress was inadequately tracked. Recurrent pipeline breaks jeopardized all activities, undermining the adequacy and predictability of EHA transfers in particular. Influencing factors within WFP's control – such as weaknesses in WFP's secondary transport and logistics arrangements - were not adequately addressed by the country office.

Sustainability: Hand-over strategies for safety net activities were limited and uncertain in all areas. However, the Government demonstrated strong ownership of the grain quality standards initiative and the development of market infrastructure. The Satellite Collections Points (SCPs), although far from self-sustaining, attracted significant participation from farmers, with reasonable prospects for greater ownership by farmers' organizations.

Recommendations

R.1: WFP's positioning - The country office should continue to focus on the three priority areas identified in the country strategy, and:

- i. scale up nutrition and social protection interventions in partnership with UNICEF and the Government, while engaging in the development of national policy;
- ii. advance joint programming by developing an action plan for the 2013 Karamoja resilience strategy and – specifically – an integrated approach for agricultural and smallholder-related work with FAO; and
- iii. where AMS is implemented, use SCPs and farmers' organizations as a pivot for scaling up and exploring integration of WFP's food-for-assets (FFA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions with its Village Saving Loans Associations, using a long-term planning perspective.

R.2: Sustainability - The country office should maintain a dual approach of advocacy and service delivery in Karamoja, continuing to support:

- i. extremely vulnerable households and refugees, while advocating for predictable and adequate safety nets; and
- ii. school feeding, while engaging with the Government and the World Bank, communities and schools to ensure that they take over responsibility for the programme incrementally.

R.3: Country strategy document - Headquarters and the country office should make the next country strategy a results-based document, and take actions to:

- i. enable tracking of impacts and changes, with reporting of measurable targets in the country overview section of standard projects reports;
- ii. translate country strategy aims and outcomes into action plans that can be systematically monitored; and
- iii. revise the corporate system to integrate country strategy outcomes in annual reports, in the longer-term.

R.4: Resilience and DRR - Headquarters, the country office and the regional bureau should continue to implement the recommendations of the 2014 FFA evaluation and the recent FFA guidance for the country office, while improving the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of resilience and DRR interventions by:

- i. hiring a specialist to work with sub-offices and ensure that activities are implemented together with relevant technical partners;
- ii. developing joint operational plans in Karamoja with FAO and UNICEF; and
- iii. using multi-year plans to advocate with donors.

R.5: General food distributions - Under EHA, the country office should:

- i. resolve the secondary transport problems facing deliveries to refugee settlements, through more efficient management of transporters' contracts and enhanced monitoring of deliveries;
- ii. complement the current outsourcing of post-distribution monitoring with regular, tracked joint monitoring plans by WFP field staff and contracted partners; and
- iii. record and investigate causes of readmissions to supplementary feeding programmes.

R.6: AMS -To enhance the security of farmers' savings, the country office should support the government in developing an appropriate regulatory framework and operational procedures for VSLAs.

R.7: Protection and gender - The country office and regional bureau should:

- i. provide staff and cooperating partners with training and practical orientation on WFP's protection policy; and
- ii. develop staff capacity for integrating gender analysis into programme design and implementation, and verification check-lists to ensure that standards are respected.



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