

Evaluation Brief



The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): An evaluation of WFP's Portfolio 2009-2013

Context

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is both a low-income, food-deficit and a least-developed country. Over the last two decades, DRC has had two major wars linked to instability in North and South Kivu in the East following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the arrival of approximately 1.2 million Rwandan refugees. Dozens of armed groups have sprung up in the region. The evaluation period was characterized by repeated movements and returns of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North Kivu, South Kivu, Province Orientale and Katanga. More than half of the current 2.7 million IDPs are in North and South Kivu.

DRC also presents serious challenges with security and communications infrastructure for the humanitarian actors assisting large numbers of people affected by protracted conflicts and chronic food insecurity.

WFP's portfolio in DRC

DRC has one of WFP's largest portfolio of operations. From 2009 to 2013, WFP implemented three protracted relief and recovery (PRROs); five emergency operations (EMOPs), including an immediate-response EMOP; and two special operations (SOs) for logistics augmentation. In 2013, programme activities were grouped under PRRO 200540 to provide greater flexibility in the use of resources to implement WFP's strategy. Direct expenditures by WFP over the evaluation period were approximately \$134.3 million USD for the EMOPs, \$927 million USD for PRROs, and \$52 million USD for the SOs, confirming the dominance of emergency programming in DRC.

Given the protracted humanitarian situation in the East, WFP focused on Strategic Objective 1. Activities implemented included general food distributions (GFD), in-kind and/or with cash and vouchers (C&V); nutrition interventions; school feeding; and asset creation. WFP also provided support through a Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, local purchases for programme activities and technical assistance in developing early warning policies and strategies. An annual average of 3.5 million beneficiaries received 462,870 metric tons during the CPE period.

Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

Covering the period 2009–2013, the country portfolio evaluation (CPE) assessed the performance of WFP DRC's portfolio as a whole, focusing on: i) strategic alignment and positioning; ii) factors driving strategic decision-making; and iii) performance and results.

Key Findings and Conclusions

Alignment and Strategic Positioning

The evaluation found the portfolio broadly relevant and aligned with the needs of women and men and with government policies and priorities. The main components were all broadly appropriate but, with needs outstripping the capacity to supply them, the country office (CO) had difficulty in finding an appropriate balance among the components and did not always adapt to the

dynamic environment or participate adequately in coordination mechanisms. While WFP is still considered an essential actor in

DRC, its strategic position in some areas deteriorated during the CPE period. Recent measures have laid the basis for restoring stakeholder confidence.

Factors Driving WFP's Strategic Decision-Making

WFP's decision-making was affected by a vicious circle in which financial constraints limited the CO's engagement in interagency coordination, strategic institutional mechanisms and the identification of creative solutions to challenges. The narrow range of technical expertise constrained WFP's effectiveness, particularly in policy dialogue on the transition from emergency to development. WFP's capacity to respond to needs on time and proportionately was also weakened by the absence of a strategy adapted to the volatile context, clear operational guidelines and flexibility, with negative effects on WFP's positioning in some areas and on donor support.

Portfolio Performance and Results

WFP's **emergency response** was generally focused on areas of easier access and/or where international or local NGO partners were already operating, despite great needs in other areas. WFP's was also unable to respond quickly to arising needs. WFP deliveries arrived between 45 and 90 days after the first rapid response to population movements (RRMP) mechanism non-food items – when the acute phase was over.

Targeting based on household vulnerability in the Goma camps was not introduced during the evaluation period, although three surveys conducted between 2011 and 2014 found that 31–44 percent of IDPs living in the camps were not vulnerable. There is no medium-term strategy for this type of targeting. The mechanisms for identifying nutrition or education needs did not provide WFP with an aggregate picture. Analysis of nutritional needs was incomplete and the scope of nutrition targeting was limited. WFP is not well equipped to identify educational needs.

The performance and results of the portfolio were measured mainly through output-level data and showed a heavy emphasis on relief assistance during the portfolio period. WFP provided in-kind **GFD** for 3.4 million people, or 82 percent of total portfolio beneficiaries, in 2009, dropping to 1.3 million (42 percent), in 2012 and 2013. This reduction resulted from resource shortfalls affecting the pipeline. GFD was also affected by increases in other portfolio activities, particularly school feeding. However, WFP could reach more GFD beneficiaries than planned – averaging 143 percent – by reducing individual rations and calorie intake. At 9 percent of GFD in 2013, the use of **C&V** was marginal compared with its potential; about USD 6 million was distributed through C&V programmes in five provinces.

School feeding coverage grew to 3.5 times its original size during the CPE period, requiring additional resources. With less tonnage available, the ration size and number of feeding days were reduced. Nonetheless, as corroborated by school statistics enrolment and retention rates for boys and girls were improved in targeted schools. WFP also encouraged national authorities to

include school feeding in their education policies. As WFP is the only actor in a weak institutional environment, integration into the country's educational strategies is difficult, but central government's awareness has increased and there are limited commitments at the provincial level.

Most resilience activities were implemented in North and South Kivu and 46 percent in Katanga. Although **Food Assistance-for Assets (FFA)** increased from 44,000 beneficiaries (1 percent) in 2009 to 296,000 (8 percent) in 2013, the deteriorating security situation in late 2012 prompted WFP to focus on relief, delaying plans to shift towards recovery and resilience.

Nutrition interventions were effective but their coverage was low, except in North Kivu. WFP opted for institution-based service models and provided insufficient support to community-based management. WFP assists the National Nutrition Programme for the Management of Acute Malnutrition (PCIMA) through health structures, requiring a development approach to improve performance of the health system, in partnership with other actors. **MAM treatment** stabilized at approximately 300,000 cases per year, based on capacity rather than needs. The programme contributed to improved attendance at health centres by pregnant and lactating mothers, but improvements in malnutrition rates and other outcomes have not been documented. WFP also assisted **HIV** patients undergoing ART, reinforcing their adherence to treatment and improving their nutrition status.

Cross-cutting issues including **gender, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**, protection and security, the environment and do-no-harm were not consistently addressed.

Logistics support to WFP operations combined an appropriate structure with solid support from sub-offices and the regional fleet in Kampala, and the use of four supply corridors, a fleet of all-terrain trucks and the Forward Purchase Facility. As well as supporting WFP operations, WFP's logistics services for the humanitarian community met genuine needs.

WFP purchased 6,000 mt of commodities locally in 2013 – including 246 mt through P4P – meeting 11 percent of its needs. Despite numerous challenges, there is potential for more **local purchases** providing that a suitable strategy is formulated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

Relevance, coherence and appropriateness. WFP activities were relevant and appropriate to the complex and difficult environment, but geographical coverage and allocations of resources were not always proportional to needs across regions or among activities.

Portfolio activities were aligned with corporate objectives, DRC strategic frameworks and national policies. However, insufficient efforts were made to identify synergies with other actors, particularly in activities where integration would have improved results, and considering the structural factors and protracted nature of needs.

Efficiency and effectiveness. Despite chronic underfunding, WFP has implemented nutrition and school feeding activities effectively. The targeting of vulnerable groups for nutrition interventions was satisfactory, but efficiency and effectiveness could be improved. GFD activities would have benefited from systematic analysis of their relevance and costs versus benefits as a basis for selecting appropriate assistance modalities.

WFP's capacity to respond to new needs on time and proportionately was weak. The slow introduction of targeting based on vulnerability assessments in camps weakened the

effectiveness and efficiency of GFD.

Logistics support was relatively good. WFP is in a strong position to play a progressively larger role in inter-agency logistics services.

The monitoring system needs improvement, with WFP exploring options such as third-party monitoring.

Connectedness and sustainability. There were few opportunities for developing strategies with national authorities given the fragile institutional environment and WFP's weak capacity to participate and position itself in recovery and development-oriented frameworks. The policies, dialogue and coordination frameworks now in place improve WFP's prospects for developing partnerships and synergies, particularly with other UN actors.

School feeding is not sustainable in its current form. The lessons learned from approaches developed in the provinces where local government showed interest could facilitate decentralized programmes.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The CO should develop a preparedness plan for different scenarios focused on improving the rapid response capacity for emergencies and population movements in the East of the country.

Recommendation 2. The CO should develop an implementation plan to increase the use of alternative methods of food assistance transfers in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of WFP assistance.

Recommendation 3. WFP HQ, RB and the CO should collaborate to fill the gaps in human resources in order to reinforce the capacities of the CO and Area Offices. The CO should also improve communication with donors regarding plans, operations and its operational involvement as it moves from a food aid to a food assistance strategy in DRC.

Recommendation 4. The CO should begin the transition to a Country Programme (CP) to complement the humanitarian modus operandi. This development-oriented programme should focus on an integrated management of acute malnutrition (PCIMA, MCHN, HIV and TB) and on school feeding to ensure sustainability.

Recommendation 5. The CO should improve the quality and use of performance monitoring; and establish a recommendations registration, management and monitoring system to fully use recommendations based on WFP missions and evaluations.

Recommendation 6. The CO should strengthen inter-agency logistics management and clarify roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 7. The CO should develop a clear, more ambitious local purchase strategy to improve the effectiveness and timeliness of food deliveries and support local production.

Recommendation 8. The CO supported by RB should improve the integration of cross-cutting issues (gender and SGBV, Do-no-Harm and protection, SAFE and environment) and respect of humanitarian principles throughout the project cycle and; take measures, in line with WFP policies.



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