

Evaluation Brief



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

Context

Indonesia is one of the most natural disaster prone country in the world. It is a diverse country with 250 million people living in 33 provinces. It has made impressive development progress and is now classified as a low Middle-Income-Country (MIC). Some provinces however, like NTT or NTB, are significantly poorer than the national average. Despite some improvement, nutrition is still a major concern (37.2% stunting in 2013). The Government of Indonesia (GoI) is still fragile, lacks capacity and has high staff turnover. With development gains came falling official development assistance to Indonesia since 2010.

The evaluation assessed the performance of WFP portfolio in two context of changes; Indonesia no longer posed the conventional challenges, needs and opportunities, and WFP also was changing : from logistics to capacity development and from needing mainly technical skills to needing as many strategic and institutional skills

Scope and Evaluation Focus

The evaluation covered WFP's portfolio in Indonesia from 2009 to 2013 and the five operations implemented with a planned budget of USD 172.3 million: a protracted relief and rehabilitation operation (PRRO), an emergency operation (EMOP), two special operations, and a country programme (CP). This evaluation focused mainly on the PRRO and the CP, and the 2011-2015 Country Strategy that guided formulation of the CP and realigned the portfolio overall.

Serving both accountability and learning objectives, the evaluation focused on the standard questions for country portfolio evaluations: i) alignment with country needs and strategic positioning; ii) factors influencing and quality of strategic decision-making; and iii) performance and results.

Key Findings

The evaluation findings are specific to the Indonesia portfolio and can also be instructive to

WFP's understanding to partner with governments in MICs.

Alignment and Strategic Positioning:

The Country Strategy (CSD) proposed using prototypes and identified three priorities in strengthening Indonesia capacity. The portfolio's shift upstream with emphasis on capacity development was found highly relevant to Indonesia's food and nutrition security challenges.

Steady progress was made towards alignment with the 2009 Jakarta Commitment. The CO, severely underfunded, was better at achieving formal alignment, complementarity with partners, than at genuine collaboration and synergy – which required substantial time to build deeper relationships.

Rightly introducing the concept of prototypes as a way of working on a small scale while supposedly influencing policy and practice on a larger scale, the CSD and the CP however failed to explain how successful prototypes would be scaled up.

Evidenced by a USD 2.8 million contribution over four years, WFP strengthened its working relations with Indonesia, which became a major source of food for WFP operations. The CO also made important progress in building funding relationships with the private sector, for example in Unilever's support for school feeding in NTT.

Factors driving Strategic Decision-Making:

Preparation of the CSD and CP represented a significant advance in the quality of strategic decision-making, with open recognition of the rapidly changing country context. However like a super tanker that takes time to turn, WFP strategic thinking lagged behind developments, and the need for new skills to achieve the planned focus on capacity development and advocacy was underestimated.

The commodity-focused format and content of Standard Project Reports were found to be poorly suited to report on WFP work in a country like Indonesia.

Introducing the concept of prototyping, the CSD recognised that WFP's direct interventions would be on a small scale, facilitating primarily the GoI to achieve food and nutrition security.

Performance and Results:

The CO had to face substantial funding shortfall, which inevitably impaired performance. The evaluation found the portfolio's performance mixed: WFP's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) contributed directly to the production of Food Security and Vulnerability Atlases, replicated by Indonesian authorities in 20 provinces. School Feeding approaches enhanced children's concentration. Acknowledging that responding to emergencies is disruptive when managing strategic shifts, Emergency Preparedness & Response (EPR) however did not tackle appropriately the political and institutional challenges. By 2013 these challenges were addressed with a better skill set and a clearer understanding of capacity building and institutional development needs. Prototyping opportunities to link local MCN implementation with national strategy were not systematically grasped. Although FFA activities indicated positive short-term results, the evaluation did not find sufficient evidence indicating more than transient benefit.

Accurate targeting of capacity development efforts were hindered by the lack of adequate capacity assessments and a comprehensive advocacy strategy. However by the end of the review period a more systematic approach improved the planning for capacity development.

Overall assessment and Recommendations

Relevance and Strategic Positioning: Despite being severely under-resourced, the CO managed to strengthen the portfolio's relevance to the country's humanitarian and development needs and increasingly aligning it with the national agenda and policies.

Effectiveness: The important strategic progress made by the CO was not supported by strong effectiveness in all programmes. The central challenge in adjusting operations to match strategy was in using prototypes to link small-scale field implementation, through advocacy, to large-scale adoption. The portfolio showed limited effectiveness, with insufficient technical, capacity development and advocacy efforts to achieve this vital linkage.

Sustainability: The CO made progress towards strategic sustainability in areas of its portfolio where it engaged in multipartner efforts and underpinned its advocacy with technically competent implementation (e.g. WFP collaboration with local food companies on nutrition interventions, and VAM effort). However, the little impact of prototypes on the national agenda compromised sustainability.

Resourcing problems put at risk WFP's ability to maintain the minimum capacity needed for a credible profile and performance in the new directions that it was rightly taking.

Recommendations

R.1: To clarify the structure and rationale of its portfolio in Indonesia, the CO should plan and implement its work in 2 categories: institutional capacity development and prototypes.

R.2: The CO should articulate a comprehensive capacity development strategy for each of its VAM, EPR, MCN and school feeding sectors.

R.3: The CO should articulate a comprehensive advocacy and awareness-raising strategy for each of its VAM, EPR, MCN and school feeding sectors.

R.4: With support from OMB and HQ, the CO should commit as much effort and as many resources to its school feeding work in Indonesia as it does to its MCN activities.

R.5: The CO should seek funds, with support from the Private Sector Partnerships, for further research to identify enhancements to its MCN strategy, based on evaluation of the impacts of approaches used so far.

R.6: HQ should enhance its monitoring and reporting systems to make them more relevant to WFP's work in Indonesia and similar countries.

R.7: For as long as it maintains a CO in Indonesia, WFP should ensure and sustain a basic minimum operating presence.

R.8: Except in Level 3 emergencies, WFP should not supply or distribute food in Indonesia.

R.9: With support from the Policy, Programme and Innovation Division and OMB, the CO should carry out an urgent, thorough assessment of its FFA work to determine the cost-effectiveness, sustainability and replicability of the approaches it has pursued and to decide whether continuation of FFA activities is justified.



Reference:

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

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