Impact Evaluation of WFP’s School Feeding Programmes in Bangladesh (2001-2009)

Summary Terms of Reference

Overview

School feeding has been one of WFP’s programme areas since its establishment in 1963. By 1993, pre-primary and primary school feeding accounted for more than half of WFP’s development commitments. Between 2006 and 2008, WFP invested US$ 475 million (14% of its total budget) in some 70 countries, reaching an average of 22 million schoolchildren, about half of whom were girls. School feeding beneficiaries accounted for around 20% of total WFP beneficiaries.

Given the size of this investment, and its duration, a series of evaluations are being carried out in the 2010-2011 biennium to assess the lasting and/or significant social, economic, environmental or technical effects of school feeding on individuals from different gender and age-groups, households, communities and institutions.

Bangladesh was selected as one of five countries for school feeding impact evaluation from a systematic analysis of WFP’s school feeding portfolio using objective criteria. Bangladesh has been employing a micro-nutrient biscuit modality exclusively, thus it was included in the portfolio of school feeding impact evaluations to enable impacts associated with micronutrient fortification to be assessed, and to increase understanding of the benefits of biscuits in comparison with other delivery modalities.

Other school feeding impact evaluations are also being carried out in Kenya, Gambia, Cote d’Ivoire and Cambodia. This TOR builds upon experiences with impact evaluation gained in those countries.

Evaluation Objectives & Users

Like all evaluations at WFP, this evaluation serves accountability and learning purposes. It evaluates the outcomes and impact achieved so far in relation to planned educational, gender, and capacity development objectives and also any outcomes and impact related to WFP’s new nutrition and value transfer policy objectives (even though these were not explicitly included in the programme design).

The evaluation will also assess other unplanned positive and negative outcomes and impacts, and identify any changes needed to increase future impact and bring WFP operations more fully in line with the current WFP Strategic Plan and School Feeding Policy.

The main intended users of the evaluation are the WFP Bangladesh Country Office and its counterparts within the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. As co-implementing partners of certain aspects of the programme, UNDP (capacity development), UNESCO (non-formal education), WHO (de-worming) and UNICEF (concerning the Essential Learning Package) are expected to find the evaluation useful. Other WFP staff and management with responsibilities for school feeding programmes or policy are expected to find the evaluation useful to inform programming or policy decisions.

Key Questions

Two outcome or impact level assessments were conducted of WFP’s school feeding programmes, one in 2004 and the most recent in 2010. These studies showed that the school feeding programme had positive effects on 2004 enrolment and attendance and reduced drop-out rates; the fortified biscuits were largely in addition to children’s normal diet and improved their BMI. School feeding was found to be effective in retaining the already enrolled students in school, however, it did not increase the rate of school enrolment among school-age children.

The prevalence of anemia in FFE-assisted primary schools was less than half of the non-assisted schools. The BMI and worm infestation statistics suggest that the children from the entire program districts fare better than their counterparts from the control districts.
There was no clear evidence of the FFE impact on cognitive ability and rate of success in achievement tests for children in different grades of primary schools.

The evaluation will review the data from these previous studies to ensure that the evaluation does not duplicate surveys already conducted on core indicators, rather it is expected that the focus will be on deepening understanding of several aspects, as outlined in the key questions below.

Q1. Outcomes and impacts beyond primary education into secondary school, wider social benefits and other areas including: a) primary completion rate (and drop outs throughout the primary school years), b) transition to secondary education; c) greater success in secondary level education; d) nutritional status and health; and e) wider livelihood benefits.

Q2. Factors that have affected impact including a) the different types of schools (formal and non-formal, government and non-government) b) seasonal labor, economic strata of families, or/and gender aspects etc c) Essential Learning Package interventions d) other WFP interventions in the targeted areas such as mother and child health and e) class size (teacher/student ratio) and other factors related to education quality.

Q3. Alignment of WFP’s targeting strategy and school feeding modality with Government policy priorities and activities in the education sector (and other sectors), other WFP activities in Bangladesh, and activities of other partners.

Q4. Changes that could be made in strategy and programme design to address findings emerging from analysis in Key Questions 1, 2 and 3.

Scope and Methodology

The evaluation will not include WFPs work with refugees in the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations. Since Emergency Operations have shorter term objectives and were not covered by previous reviews or baselines, the Inception Phase will assess the feasibility of including EMOPs with the two Country Programmes or if the evaluation should focus on just the Country Programmes.

A mixed method approach will be used and findings derived from a triangulation of information from various sources. The body of existing data and research will be complemented by additional information from a desk review of project reports and other literature, quantitative survey(s), focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and observation. Some form of tracer study of previous beneficiaries is likely to be appropriate.

Evaluation roles and responsibilities

The evaluation is managed and funded by the WFP Office of Evaluation (total estimated cost USD $200,000). It will be conducted by a team of independent consultants composed of experts with a complementary combination of technical expertise in education, nutrition, value transfer, food security, livelihoods and gender. The team leader will be an experienced evaluator.

Timing and Consultation with stakeholders

The evaluation will start in February 2011 with the inception phase to be held in Bangladesh. Field based quantitative surveys will take place in March, and qualitative field work in April. At the end of fieldwork, a debriefing will be held in Bangladesh for interested stakeholders. The evaluation report is expected to be circulated for comments in June, 2011. The evaluation will be presented to the WFP Executive Board in November 2011. The report will be publicly available on the WFP website.