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EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 3

For consideration



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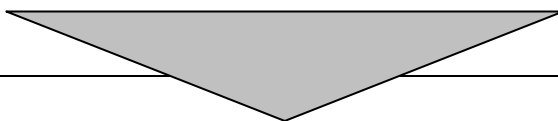
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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MID- TERM EVALUATION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME — BENIN (2000–2003)

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Note to the Executive Board



This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff focal points indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

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Executive Summary

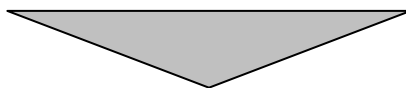
The 2000–2003 country programme conforms to the National Strategy Note and the draft Common Country Assessment (CCA) published in 1999. The first United Nations Development Assistance Framework should be available in 2003 and come into force in 2004. However, combining the two activities selected should facilitate the preparation and implementation of the next cycle of activities. This cycle, in accordance with the programming of United Nations organizations as a whole, will cover a five-year period (2004–2008). Lastly, the evaluation was conducted bearing in mind the new strategy for utilizing WFP food aid as set out in the Enabling Development policy.

Procedures for preparation and implementation of the country programme have, as a whole, been respected. After the programme was approved, its start was considerably delayed by changes in the regional division and by the updating of procedures and directives as a consequence of the new programme approach. A logical framework should be prepared when the next project document is formulated. The steering committee should be set up immediately and be provided with the requisite instruments including simple indicators to monitor results and manage the unified project as necessary. Availability of budgets needed by the national directorate should be secured before the start of any intervention. As regards the budgets of country offices, these should be stabilized on a durable basis with a view to improving their budget planning.

Targeting regarding support to basic education was satisfactory according to data available at the time of preparation of this report. A recent vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) survey as well as critical analysis of updated enrolment rates will help improve it further. Maintaining or increasing measures in support of school-feeding, and setting up a monitoring and evaluation system, appear to be priorities. Closer collaboration with the relevant services of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the clarification of the mandate of the national directorate and of departmental units are also needed. As regards the informal sector, WFP will continue to provide support to children and young people from needy families through the charity organizations already involved. They are well equipped to provide quality services, but at the same time the Ministry for the Family, Social Welfare and Solidarity should be more closely involved. It is proposed that the share of food allocated to vulnerable groups be increased by bringing in new partners. WFP must make sure that government authorities can finance the national directorate and enable it to carry out its logistical obligations.



Draft Decision*



The Board notes the recommendations contained in this evaluation report (WFP/EB.2/2003/3) and notes also the management action taken so far, as indicated in the associated information paper (WFP/EB.2/2003/INF/5). The Board encourages further action on these recommendations, with considerations raised during the discussion taken into account.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.



SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

1. The evaluation mission¹ visited Benin from 7 to 30 October 2002. Its main objective was to study to what extent the country programme approach adopted by WFP in 1994 was proving effective in designing, planning and implementing WFP development activities in Benin. The evaluation attempted to establish whether the new approach helped obtain better results than those achieved by implementing piecemeal projects.
2. The mission's analysis and recommendations are therefore not to be considered as a detailed evaluation of the country programme's basic activities but concentrate on the application of the programme approach. Given the importance of WFP's new strategy of food aid utilization as set out in its Enabling Development policy,² the country programme's activities were also analysed in respect of that policy. The overall aim of the policy is to create favourable conditions for poor households and communities exposed to food insecurity to carry out investments, principally in human terms where Benin is concerned, and thus obtain direct, long-term benefits.

OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

Rationale for WFP Food Aid

3. A small West African country, Benin is classified as a low-income, food-deficit country (LIFDC). It occupies 184th position out of 207 with a per capita gross national product (GNP) of US\$380³ in 2001. Growing at the rate of 3.2 percent a year, Benin's population was estimated at 6.4 million in 2001.⁴ Population density—57 inhabitants per km²—fails to reflect regional disparities. There are fewer than 20 inhabitants per km² in some northern areas while the level rises to over 300 in the south. Density in cultivated areas is even higher, rising to over 500 inhabitants per km² in the three coastal departments. While food self-sufficiency may be attained at global level, areas of precarious food security subsist. The incidence of poverty has not changed significantly over the past five years⁵ and at present, as mentioned in the CCA, "almost a third (roughly 30 percent) of the population can be considered as poor". In 1999–2000 the highest rates of poverty were to be found in rural areas, about 31 percent as compared with 25 percent in urban areas.
4. With a Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of 158th out of 173, Benin's population is characterized by a life expectancy of 54 years, a high rate of adult illiteracy (62 percent of people over 15) and clear disparities between boys and girls (80 percent illiteracy among girls and 61 percent for boys). Some 31 percent of children under 5 show signs of stunting, 11 percent of them severely so; 23 percent of children under 5 are

¹ The evaluation mission included a head of mission and rural development specialist, a specialist in basic education and an Evaluation Officer (WFP/Rome).

² Enabling Development, Policy Issues, Annual Session of the Executive Board, 1999 (WFP/EB.A/99/4-A).

³ Unless otherwise specified, all monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.

⁴ Forecast by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Analysis (NISEA).

⁵ United Nations System - Benin. *Common Country Assessment*; page 7. January 2002.



underweight, five percent of them severely so.⁶ Overall, 82 percent of those aged between 6 and 59 months suffer from anaemia, 51 percent moderately and 9 percent severely. Nor is the nutritional condition of mothers much better: in Benin, 11 percent of women are rated as critical in terms of body mass index (BMI) and also exhibit a chronic calorie deficit. Almost two-thirds of women suffer from anaemia, 22 percent of them moderately so and 2 percent severely.⁷

The Country Programme and Its Basic Activities

5. The country programme was prepared in accordance with the Government's National Strategy Note and the needs identified by the first version of the CCA in 1999. Approved in October 1999 at a direct operational cost of US\$11.8 million and 17,640 tons of food, the current programme only effectively began operating in October 2001. The programme document specified that activities should be centred on those regions where food security was most precarious and, in terms of support to the education component, those with the lowest enrolment rates.
6. WFP assistance to Benin began in the mid 1960s. Initially, WFP favoured multi-sector development projects focusing principally on reforestation and community infrastructure projects over the country as a whole. Subsequently, a project in support of education was added to the rural development component. A long-standing history of support to projects in two sectors of intervention largely explains why formulation of the current programme represents a continuation of previous projects, albeit in a new form, rather than a really new programme. When the country programme was formulated many of the current procedures and directives for programme preparation were not yet in existence.
7. At the time of formulation the country programme included three basic activities:
 - (i) development of primary basic education and assistance to education for girls (61 percent of food resources); (ii) assistance to vulnerable groups and alleviation of the effects of malnutrition (19 percent);⁸ and (iii) rural development (20 percent). The country programme's strategic orientations aimed at:
 - combating food insecurity and malnutrition;
 - promoting the educational and social aspects of development;
 - supporting vulnerable groups and victims of social problems; and
 - offering development opportunities to the poorest economic areas and communities.
8. Because of difficulties encountered in the execution and monitoring-evaluation of the multi-sector rural development programme, which preceded the country programme's rural development activity, and given the WFP trend at the time apparently giving priority to supporting social sectors, that part relating to the third basic activity was reduced considerably during preparation of the country programme. When the programme was due to be implemented, a policy change on the part of a former key rural development partner combined with lack of donors forced the Country Office to suspend the rural development activity.

⁶ NISEA. Second Demographic and Health Survey in Benin, 2001.

⁷ NISEA. SDHSB II, 2001.

⁸ Interventions under Activities 1 and 2 of the country programme were formerly grouped inside the same project (DEV BEN 5208).



EVALUATION OF COUNTRY PROGRAMME RESULTS

Design

9. Substantial funds from headquarters were used to finance a number of technical consultations which, with the participation of WFP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), facilitated preparation of the country programme and provided a detailed description of activities. Despite the support received at the time of formulation, however, the country programme lacks both a logical framework and monitoring and evaluation indicators covering the overall programme and the basic activities it offers. This leads to difficulties in establishing cause-and-effect links between the various sets of objectives. Nor are objectives coherent in terms of the Country Strategy Outline (CSO) and the country programme or between the latter and the summaries of activities and operational contracts. It should, however, be noted that short-term and medium-term objectives are clearly defined in the summary of the first activity and its operational contract.
10. The present country programme represents a transitional document halfway between the project and programme approaches and its activities should have been closely coordinated so as to address a common, clearly identified objective. Failure to execute the rural development activity and splitting off the initial project in support of the educational sector—which until recently included much of the two other activities—strengthen the impression that the Programme Approach has not been well assimilated in the Benin context.
11. Given that the Benin country programme now only includes two activities—formerly grouped under the same project—it would be desirable to select a form of intervention bearing in mind the scarce resources available to the country office for implementation. While retaining specific norms and technical partners in both components, that approach would offer greater flexibility and effectiveness in implementation. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education would be responsible for the formal educational sector while the Ministry for Family Affairs, Social Welfare and Solidarity would oversee the informal sector. However, with a view to continuing efforts made so far to harmonize the programming cycles of the various United Nations organizations, it would be preferable to keep the length of the single project at five years, from 2004–2008.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Intervene in the framework of a single, five-year (2004–2008) project to include two separate components for formal and informal education instead of two basic activities as under the country programme.
- ⇒ Formulate a logical framework and define simple and realistic monitoring indicators when formulating the next project document in respect of both the formal and informal education components.

Targeting

12. Preparation of the country programme was not supported by VAM as the process was not used systematically at the time. An initial selection of geographical zones of intervention did take place, however, on the basis of the FAO's Comprehensive National Food Security Programme and of SECAL food security project maps published by the



World Bank. The data were used to re-centre interventions in support of school canteens onto areas characterized by a combination of food insecurity and a low level of enrolment in primary schools prior to the country programme getting properly underway. As for the selection of interventions for the second activity, this was dictated by the need to work with highly motivated partners having qualified human resources and the necessary financial means needed to make the best possible use of WFP assistance.

13. In the light of data available at the time of formulation, geographical targeting appears satisfactory. But the programming of interventions in support of school canteens could be improved while the selection of target populations might be refined by taking account of the recent VAM findings and of recent trends in enrolment rates.⁹ The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is already producing annual statistics which could help analyse those rates further.

Coherence

14. A national directorate of activities supported by WFP is provided by the Ministry of State for the Coordination of Government Activities and of Planning and Development and will liaise between the Government and WFP. As the operational arm of the Ministry of State, the National Directorate's mandate is to oversee the implementation of activities in collaboration with the technical ministries concerned. Its specific functions are principally: (i) to manage food aid; and (ii) to provide monitoring of activities and track the movement of commodities and of results obtained on the basis of a limited number of simple indicators. Monitoring conducted to date has only covered food and the number of beneficiaries broken down by gender. The national directorate is thus focusing on strictly logistical aspects.
15. The Interministerial Steering Committee mentioned in the operational contracts has never met and as a result the local WFP office has relatively distant relations with existing partners. This accentuates the piecemeal nature of activities as they are implemented and makes it difficult to integrate basic activities or their individual components. Furthermore, coordination of the technical ministries involved and decision-making to ensure that activities progress remain a problem. The committee's mandate should include the achievement of greater synergy between the technical ministries and their partners and its role should focus mainly on the strategic supervision of food aid.

Recommendation

- ⇒ To set up the Interministerial Steering Committee with a view to facilitating coordination between the principal actors including the technical ministries on the one hand and WFP and its partners on the other. That would enable every member to better understand the supervisory role they have. The committee would then be able to ensure the reorientation and progress of the unified project.

Flexibility

16. The programme approach offers no greater flexibility than did past projects, with commodities identified at the time of departure on the basis of their waybill numbers. Requests for resources are made by regional bureaux and country offices in collaboration with the Programming Service (ODP) and list the quantities needed, the activities

⁹ Indicators selected in the basic education sector are: (i) attendance rates; (ii) drop-out rates; (iii) rates of examination passes; and (iv) rates of pupils going up a class.



concerned and the extended delivery points involved. When a contribution is confirmed by the Resources Mobilization Service (REE), ODP makes out a purchase application generating a request to the Purchasing and Contracts Branch (MSP) for the issue of a purchase order. If the contribution is in kind, the Ocean Transportation Service (OTS) issues a purchase order to cover transport costs. Commodities are sent out together with a waybill which OTS issues even in the case of local purchases as it allows WFP to track the distribution of the goods. Waybill numbers also make it possible to establish the share of funds corresponding to internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) as specified in the budget. This type of numerical commodities identification by activity was very similar under the previous project approach and essentially links all future utilization of the aid to a specific activity.

17. Commodities movements from one activity to another are always considered as loans rather than transfers. A ceiling of 10 percent of the value of the food involved in transfer from one activity to another is calculated on the basis of the smallest tonnage. Thus flexibility can affect only 10 percent of the smallest quantity of commodities initially allocated to one of the two activities in question, and this could result in operations being less flexible. As far as Benin is concerned, however, the fact that the rural development activity failed to start and that food requirements for the other two activities were only covered in part meant there was no need to carry out transfers between them.
18. In order to track commodity movements electronically it has proved necessary to store food according to waybill numbers, which implies scrupulous warehouse management and the organization of separate batches. Warehousing management therefore often requires laying down separate lots of the same product, and sometimes of the same consignment or cargo. More physical space to store goods is thus required and, more important, the sheer spread of goods on the ground complicates their rotation, which should in principle reflect the time food spends inside the warehouse rather than how fast activities use it. The rate at which commodities are consumed invariably differs from one activity to another independently of how long food has been warehoused. A low commodities consumption rate, involving longer storage periods, can pose a problem in the long run. Finally, existing warehousing regulations run counter to the flexibility sought under the programme approach. They also enhance the separation of activities and slow down implementation, resulting in a loss of efficiency and in a duplication of efforts.

Implementation

19. A review of the start of country programme implementation showed that there had been a major delay. Approved by the Executive Board in October 1999, the country programme only started being implemented in November 2001. The following may be cited as among the main causes of the delay: (i) the change of WFP's country director in August 2000; (ii) frequent changes concerning approval of logistics costs and budgets; (iii) the absence of an effective programme unit in WFP's regional office in Abidjan, to which Benin reported, followed by its closure in mid-2001; and (iv) further difficulties in finding the support needed to prepare the ITSH documentation and the budgets needed for the preparation and signature of operational contracts, which was finally completed only in June 2001. Thanks to the initiative of the Cotonou bureau, initial targeting of beneficiaries was, however, carried out as early as the autumn of 2000, in line with the country programme's recommendations.
20. Various factors contribute to WFP's budgetary resources being limited, although such resources would allow for greater flexibility in programme execution. Heavily dependent on the quantities of food effectively received, the operational budget is globally extremely limited in a country like Benin, where resources forecast for the overall country



programme are just under 18,000 tons. Since the beginning of 2002 the budget, which is calculated in dollars, is worth some 10 percent less after conversion into the national currency, the CFA Franc,¹⁰ whose value is linked to the Euro's fluctuations against US dollars. Added to the difficulties arising from the limited budget, which allows almost no room for manoeuvre, are delays of four or five months in funds being disbursed: ITSH funds earmarked for food shipments delivered in mid-2001 were for example received only in November and those relating to shipments during May 2001 in September. Lastly, there is uncertainty from one year to the next as to the allocation of funds to meet direct operational costs on which the renewal of United Nations Volunteer (UNV) contracts depends, as well as many other services essential to the execution of the country programme on the ground.

Recommendation

⇒ It is advisable to calculate the budgets of small countries on a long-term basis and to stabilize them, including real costs, considering not only the overall tonnage of commodities involved but also the number of sites and partners on the ground. The complexity of operations and the counterpart's real capacity to contribute should also be borne in mind.

21. As regards the transport and management of commodities, a number of measures were taken recently in collaboration with the logistics specialist at the Central Africa sub-regional office in Yaoundé. They are aimed at ensuring greater efficiency and include: using a private shipper/transporter paid directly by WFP to forward the goods from the dockside to departmental warehouses or extended delivery points (EDPs), and the signature of a contract with a firm specialized in fumigation. Although they have little to do with the programme approach as such, the measures are intended to help WFP exercise greater control over the resources needed to implement its interventions. But in practice the changes have done no more than to pass on responsibility to departmental level for fundamental difficulties arising from management failings on the part of the national directorate and from the scarce financial resources made available to that body by the Government. As the government counterpart, the national directorate benefits from fuel advances and from assistance in maintaining its trucks. The landside transport, storage and handling (LTSH) subsidy is settled once deliveries have been made and verified.
22. Many school canteens were not operational at the beginning of the school year, specially in the north, because of a lack of logistics and financial means. The national directorate gives priority to the south in distributing food in order to fill the needs of a maximum number of beneficiaries as quickly as possible. Management of food in departmental warehouses and their onforwarding to final delivery points (FDPs) could be improved as considerable delays in delivering commodities from departmental warehouses to schools and other structures are occurring and are impairing the programme's operations. In a number of cases those responsible for distribution are obliged to personally organize transports of food from extended delivery to FDPs.

¹⁰ CFA: the joint currency of a number of African countries. In October 2002, US\$1 was equivalent to about CFA 670. In January 2002 it was worth about CFA 745.



Recommendations

- ⇒ Starting WFP interventions should be conditional on the availability of budgets from the national directorate. That would help improve transport from departmental warehouses to schools and other institutions so that food aid can reach beneficiaries on a timely basis.
- ⇒ WFP should re-examine the national directorate's financial requirements and assess where those funds should in theory originate from. Both government contributions and WFP advances and reimbursements should be taken into account, and this so as to establish the national directorate's real ability to offer logistics services to the WFP project.

EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME'S OBJECTIVES

Development of Primary Education and Assistance to Education for Girls

23. Since the 1992–1993 school year, the Government of Benin has been undertaking a vast reform of its school system, especially in the primary sector, thanks to the support of various donors including the World Bank, the French Embassy's Service for Development and Cultural Activities and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Despite the efforts made in a number of fields, Benin's educational system remains characterized by insufficient access to schooling and by a high drop-out rate. Girls are specially affected by such shortcomings. In order to help the Government of Benin meet the challenge, most of the country programme's resources are being devoted to the education sector in the framework of the first basic activity.
24. That basic activity has two components: (i) support to formal education through school canteens and food assistance to certain primary boarding schools in rural areas and to secondary institutes for girls from impoverished families living far away from post-primary schools; and (ii) distribution of dry rations to the families of girls living in the most impoverished areas of the Atacora, Donga and Couffo departments where communities are unable to start canteens and where enrolment rates for girls are very low. The assistance aims at improving access to primary education and to reduce the number of drop-outs.
25. Particular attention is being given to girls. Educational establishments and communities where the enrolment rate is particularly low are favoured by the selection criteria relating to schools that have a canteen or families receiving dry rations. The objectives thus correspond to the country's educational needs and reflect the Government's priorities in the education sector. The average number of beneficiaries receiving WFP commodities during the first three terms of the country programme amounted to some 50,000 pupils, of whom about 40 percent were girls. It should be noted, however, that the number of food aid beneficiaries is more than was expected. At the same time the number of rations distributed is sometimes less than that recommended. In some schools pupils have to share insufficient quantities of food and the problem is exacerbated by the delivery snags mentioned above.
26. At the time of formulation, targeting of priority intervention areas took account of low enrolment rates within the most vulnerable zones from the point of view of food security. The ground distribution of the 442 institutions benefiting from the programme does not,



however, always reflect current enrolment and attendance rates nor the results of the VAM survey. Given the differences, changes should be made in the course of the next formulation.

27. As regards the implementation of the country programme and of its activities, WFP's requirements in respect of coordination and monitoring-evaluation are ill-defined in terms of a specific mandate, of human resources and of the necessary institutional machinery. Whereas the importance of logistics monitoring is established and understood by all, monitoring of results is much less appreciated. The head of the monitoring-evaluation service at the national directorate should play a crucial role and work in close collaboration with his or her colleagues from the statistics services at the Directorate for Programming and Planning at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The service has statistical data that would enable proper monitoring to take place on condition that requests are formulated by the national directorate and WFP. It should also be established that national and departmental directorates should not function as autonomous entities with regard to monitoring results. As mentioned above, the Interministerial Steering Committee described in operational contracts has never met.
28. Tight monitoring is all the more important given that the opening of a school canteen or the distribution of dry rations to girls' families can determine dramatic changes in teacher-pupil or pupil-class relations. Past studies¹¹ have shown that the number of girl pupils increased by more than 300 percent in two cases out of ten and exceeded 250 percent in two other cases in a single school year.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Ensure that the focal point at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has access to available statistical data and to the profile required to monitor and analyse a limited number of key indicators so as to evaluate the results of WFP support in the education sector and progress made towards the desired objectives.

29. In order to help parent-teacher associations (PTAs) manage the canteens and improve how they are run WFP has concluded a partnership agreement with an international non-governmental organization (NGO) with considerable experience and appropriate financial backing from a donor. The NGO provides training for the PTAs and shows them how to take over the management of their village school canteen. Once trained, most parents take their management responsibilities to heart and feel gratified by their new responsibilities. Partial surveys show that the PTAs supported by the NGO manage their canteens much more efficiently than at schools where no systematic training was provided. Despite initial reticence, some school heads now acknowledge that villagers can do the job and that the resulting decentralization of tasks frees them to undertake activities better suited to their field of expertise. Continuing such partnerships is warmly encouraged with a view to ensuring the canteens' durability.

¹¹ The summary table of attendance by girls at schools targeted by the dry rations project (1998–1999 and 1999–2000 school year) refers to ten primary schools in the Couffo department. In seven instances the number of girl pupils more than doubled from the beginning to the end of the school year when the dry rations were introduced: from 20 to 88 (Edah-Gbalahoué, Lalo sub-prefecture); from 25 to 105 (Dohodji, Toviklin sub-prefecture); from 19 to 71 (Gningbandjimé, Lalo sub-prefecture); from 8 to 28 (Alloya, Lalo sub-prefecture); from 25 to 68 (Tandji, Lalo sub-prefecture); from 21 to 56 (Dékandji II, Klouékanmé sub-prefecture); and from 25 to 53 (Ahodjinako, Lalo sub-prefecture).



Recommendations

- ⇒ A widening of partnerships should be sought by approaching other NGOs present in Benin with the required financial and human resources and with appropriate expertise.
- ⇒ In order to prevent undesirable effects stemming from over-enthusiasm for the canteens, training of PTAs and of canteen management committees should include discussion of the management of the human resources needed to meet increased demand at schools.

Assistance to Vulnerable Groups and the Fight Against the Effects of Malnutrition

30. In the country programme the objectives of the second basic activity are defined as support to the Government and the population aimed at: (i) contributing to the security, growth and education of orphans, abandoned children and girls facing physical or moral risks and who are resident in institutions; and (ii) limiting the effects of malnutrition on the health of women and children, and reducing infant mortality.
31. Originally the two components selected to obtain the objectives consisted in: (i) support to nutritional screening through the organization of training and community awareness-raising sessions (weighting and vaccination sessions were excluded); and (ii) assistance to the direct treatment of acute or moderate forms of malnutrition by providing food to competent authorities, including welfare centres for abandoned children and orphanages as well as resident centres for at-risk or mistreated girls.
32. In practice the activity emphasizes social rather than nutritional aspects. The need for WFP to intervene with competent partners equipped with the appropriate financial and human resources limits the scale of the support which it can give in the area of nutrition. For similar reasons the community awareness-raising sessions on nutrition never took place. Organizing them does not fall under the direct responsibility of WFP and it proved impossible to identify a reliable partner to help implement them.
33. Within the activity WFP provides assistance to running the residential centres which feed and educate some 6,000 young people including orphans and abandoned children, girls facing dangers such as forced marriages, mistreatment and moral hazards, street children and runaways who have left home because they were neglected by their parents. Most of the centres are run by religious institutions which offer quality assistance and strive hard to make sure that their inmates attend schools in the case of children, or professional institutes in the case of girls and youths, thus giving them a measure of autonomy when they leave. To a more limited extent WFP supplies food to a number of hospitals and nutritional recovery centres.
34. The political will exists in Benin to combat child trafficking and the phenomenon of forced marriages. This was made clear in 1997 by the creation of the Ministry for Family Affairs, Social Welfare and Solidarity and of a specialized directorate at the Ministry of Justice with responsibility for providing legal protection to children and adolescents. The activity therefore provides support to these specialized government institutions as well as to NGOs and other charity organizations involved in the protection of women and children. It also represents a complement to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 1999–2003 programme which is undertaking concrete actions both in the field of prevention and in the protection of at-risk children.



35. The operational contract specifies that the centres to be supported will be put forward by the departmental technical services of the Ministry of State for Coordination of Government Action, Planning and Development, as well as by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Social Welfare and Solidarity and by associations already active in the field and present on the ground. Nonetheless, in practice most of the centres to which WFP provides assistance belong to the religious charity sector which is better equipped than are government organizations to offer complementary support and quality services.

Recommendations

- ⇒ Associate the Ministry for Family Affairs, Social Welfare and Solidarity with the annual programming of aid and keep its officials informed of the execution of interventions on a quarterly basis.
- ⇒ Conduct a systematic search to identify additional partners having the requisite technical and financial means in order to reinforce WFP's support in this field.

Gender parity

36. The country programme strongly underlines WFP's commitment on behalf of women. The activity targets vulnerable groups and girls are given special attention, specifically in the basic education sector, through the dry rations delivered to families sending their girls to school. The basic activity concerned also provides for food to be supplied to families taking in girls from impoverished rural families who are doing well at school. However, support to the secondary sector only represents a small part of food aid. Disparities between boys and girls are increasing. A recent reform by the Government of Benin in the field of education is soon due to integrate the first cycle of secondary education into basic education.

Recommendation

- ⇒ Increase support to encourage girls to go to secondary schools so as to reduce gender disparities which are more evident in the secondary than in the primary sector.

APPLICATION OF THE ENABLING DEVELOPMENT POLICY

37. The country programme shows no major contradictions in respect of the new Enabling Development policy although it was formulated before the latter's official publication.
38. The country programme conforms to two of the five objectives¹² of that policy. Most of the directives concerning geographical targeting of activities have been respected. Whatever the basic activity, food aid represents an effective tool to combat food insecurity on a temporary basis when and as it arises in certain households and vulnerable groups. To the extent that food aid recipients avoid being marginalized and are allowed to participate in the development process the Programme will contribute in the longer term to mitigating the causes of food insecurity.

¹² Objective 1: "Enable young children and expectant and nursing mothers to meet their special nutritional and nutrition-related health needs". Objective 2: "Enable poor households to invest in human capital through education and training".



39. A more specific approach to the application of that policy cannot be formulated given the lack of results indicators. The weakness of monitoring and evaluation makes it impossible to gauge the impact of WFP support. Key indicators of results must be laid down, especially in the education sector, to ensure the country programme operates according to the Enabling Development policy.



LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE PRESENT DOCUMENT

BMI	Body mass index
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CSO	Country Strategy Outline
EDP	Extended delivery point
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FDP	Final delivery point
GDP	Gross national product
ITSH	Internal transport, storage and handling
LIFDC	Low-income food-deficit country
LTSH	Landside transport, storage and handling
MSP	Purchasing and Contracts Branch
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NISEA	National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis
ODP	Programming Service
OTS	Ocean Transportation Service
PTA	Parent teacher association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAM	Vulnerability analysis and mapping
WHO	World Health Organization

