

TALKING POINTS EB2/13: IMPACT OF FFA ON LIVELIHOOD RESILIENCE - BANGLADESH

Intro: This is one of a series of 5 evaluations on the impact of WFP's *food and cash for assets* activities on livelihoods resilience. Other countries include Nepal - tabled next; and Guatemala, Uganda and Senegal will be presented at the next EB session. A Synthesis of the full series will be presented at the 2014 Annual Session.

This evaluation covered the **Enhancing Resilience F&CFA** component of Bangladesh's CP between 2008-2011; in which participants received a combination of food and cash for 2 years, in remuneration for around 90 days of labour over 6 months a year, and training for 5-6 days a month in the remaining 6 months.

Based on WFP guidance and programme documents reviewed in preparation for the series, the intended impacts of FFA were categorized broadly to:

- improve household food security in the short term;
- improve the biophysical environment, agricultural production and livelihood options in the medium term;
- and over the longer term, contribute to improved resilience.

FINDINGS

As discussed in the recent Evaluation Roundtable, **Overall the evaluation found that significant positive impacts were achieved:**

Assets were well targeted with participant h/holds poorer than comparison groups; ... **and highly relevant** to addressing major disaster risks such as flooding and erosion. While not a full measure of resilience, disaster preparedness assessment scores were 50% higher for participants (a measure of preparedness actions taken).

Most assets were operational and there was evidence of multiple positive impacts on the **biophysical environment, agricultural productivity and economic/market access** e.g. > 80% of respondents reported that embankments enabled an additional crop cycle.

In addition to the immediate **short-term food security benefits** from working on asset creation and participating in training, comparative analysis between participants and comparison groups confirmed **significant longer term programme impacts on income, assets and savings.**

HOWEVER, the evaluation found **no differences** between participants and comparators on **food consumption, dietary diversity and coping strategy scores.** The Roundtable discussion noted that the actual limited size of the income effect

may be part of the explanation. And, as also strongly noted at the RT, there is a need for better baseline and more systematic monitoring to confirm the longer term trends, and more detailed analysis would be needed to explain household choices between consumption and investment.

Gender: Women were specifically targeted by the project, and gender-sensitive provisions such as childcare and sanitation facilities reduced barriers to female participation. In addition to direct benefits accruing mainly to women, there was also strong evidence of the programme's contribution to women's empowerment and social transformation (e.g. 75% of committee members were women).

FACTORS important for success included **effective targeting**; the **innovatory network management approach** which helped prevent elite capture; and **complementary services** such as microfinance and technical support - both vital factors in achieving and sustaining women's empowerment impacts.

CONCLUSION & RECS

The evaluation noted an implementation gap concerning **maintenance arrangements**, important for longer term sustainability. Notwithstanding, the evaluation confirmed the C/FFA programming in Bangladesh to be a model for WFP's approach to C/FFA and Enhancing Resilience.

Accordingly the evaluation's 4 recommendations focused on learning and improvements for future programming:

- Building on the positive experience and sharing lessons widely;
- Institutionalising the network management model, and particularly the complementary services essential to ensure sustained positive impacts for the ultra-poor;
- Building in asset-management planning to the overall FCFA approach;
- And, more robust monitoring systems - this evaluation illustrates once again, the importance of comprehensive baseline and outcome monitoring data - as observed in yesterday's SRF discussions, a robust evidence base is particularly important for programmes of this type in which complex, long term and multiple outcomes and impacts are intended.