

Strategic Evaluation

WFP's Role in Ending Long-Term Hunger: A Strategic Evaluation – Vol. I Full Report November 2011

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This strategic evaluation report builds upon the voices of poor people, mostly pregnant and lactating women, living with hunger in vulnerable communities in three continents – Asia, Africa and Latin America. Their voices, in conversations with our field researchers, confirm United Nations figures showing that hunger has deepened during the evaluation period. They represent WFP's primary stakeholders. While working independently, we acknowledge the full support and cooperation, often above and beyond the call of duty, provided by WFP country offices, regional bureaux, and headquarters staff, as well as by WFP's external partners in government, NGOs, and civil society. Particular thanks go to Irada Gautam, Rodrigo Munoz Reyes, and Faustina Mwenda who carried out field research in Nepal, Bolivia and Zambia respectively.

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation Features

1. The evaluation's terms of reference identify three WFP activities as its focus: mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN); school feeding; and food for work/food for assets (FFW/FFA). The aim of this evaluation is to assess the contribution of these activities to ending long-term hunger and to draw lessons for WFP's future role in ending long-term hunger. The three activities, as implemented between 2007 and 2009, were considered using a combination of deductive and inductive methods.

2. Three countries where all three activities were implemented between 2007 and 2009 were selected for field visits following consultation with the regional bureaux. They provide geographic diversity as well as examples of protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) and country programme (CP) models. Seven filters were applied to the final country selection based on classification of poverty, Gini coefficient, gender inequality, incidence of hunger, undernutrition and low birthweight, and progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. The three countries visited by the team were Nepal (Asia), Bolivia (Latin America) and Zambia (Africa). Field work in each country lasted one week and consisted of: key informant interviews at country offices and regional bureaux; government and partner interviews; and focus group discussions at the community level carried out by locally recruited anthropologists. A total of 228 key informant interviews were conducted. In addition, three desk-study countries were selected for examination of particular interventions: MCHN in Guatemala (Latin America); school feeding in Bangladesh (Asia); and FFW/FFA in Ethiopia (Africa).

Global Context

3. The number of undernourished people in the world is estimated to be over 925 million.¹ WFP's ability to end long-term hunger is shaped by both external and internal factors, including short-term crises, which featured strongly during the evaluation period. The global economic context interacts with domestic forces to influence the effectiveness, sustainability, appropriateness, relevance and efficiency of WFP's interventions. Climate change and natural disasters negatively affect domestic agricultural production, in turn affecting local food supplies, domestic food prices and food access. Civil strife and prevalence of disease also affect food production, access to food and use of food at the household level.

¹The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) graph included in the terms of reference suggests that the number of hungry people during 2007–2009 rose from 825 million to 1 billion.

WFP's Strategic Directions

4. WFP's interest in long-term hunger can be traced to its 1994 mission statement, which emphasizes that policies governing the use of food aid must be oriented towards eradicating hunger and poverty. The United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000 also made eradication of extreme hunger and poverty a target. In addition, Strategic Objective 4 of WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2013)² commits WFP to “reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition”. The goals under these objectives relate to breaking the intergenerational cycle of chronic hunger, increasing education and improving basic nutrition, meeting the food needs of those with disease and strengthening national capacity to reduce hunger (the last is aligned with the current Strategic Plan's Strategic Objective 5). In 2010, WFP established an office to promote long-term hunger solutions, including country- and community-led solutions, in partnership with other players.

5. The three activities chosen for this evaluation of their role in ending long-term hunger are as follows:

- i) MCHN – supporting the health and nutrition of pregnant and lactating women (PLW), and children in both emergency and development programmes using preventative and curative approaches that address undernutrition and its causes;
- ii) school feeding – encouraging low-income children to attend school, resulting in improved school completion rates, enhanced concentration and increased attendance of girls; and
- iii) FFW/FFA – providing food assistance to food-insecure households in return for work, thus substituting income, building community assets and leading to economic growth, increased resilience to shocks and food security.

Conceptual Framework

6. For the purposes of the evaluation, the following working definitions were used:

- hunger is a condition in which people lack the required macro and micronutrients;
- undernutrition is the physical manifestation of hunger; and
- food insecurity is vulnerability or susceptibility to hunger.

7. The focus on chronic undernutrition during this evaluation was based on MDG 1. This evaluation was the first to assess the role of the three WFP activities in ending long-term hunger.

²The evaluation period spans two Strategic Plan periods: 2004–2007 and 2008–2013.

Findings

8. *Evaluation Question 1: To what extent are WFP's activities/mix of activities integrated into national solutions to end long-term hunger?*

9. Governments are always strategic partners for WFP, and WFP activities were well integrated into national strategies related to hunger. However, no government or WFP country office in the case-study countries had explicit goals for ending long-term hunger. There are hunger-related strategies, mostly linked to MDG 1, in which undernutrition and poverty are proxy indicators for long-term hunger. For example, Bolivia has proclaimed zero malnutrition as its overall policy goal, and Zambia has set its sights at becoming a prosperous middle-income nation by 2030. While these are important objectives, they may not completely overlap with long-term hunger.

10. WFP's initiatives with governments on strategy papers related to long-term hunger are intended to ensure that its CPs are aligned with national solutions linked to hunger and poverty alleviation.

11. *Evaluation Question 2: To what extent are the activities/mix of activities that the evaluation identifies as contributing to breaking the long-term cycle of hunger appropriate and effective?*

12. **MCHN.** The provision of nutritionally adequate food for MCHN activities is considered to be an appropriate strategy for ending long-term hunger by addressing basic maternal and child nutritional needs, and encouraging mothers and their children to utilize health centres. MCHN activities were consistently implemented in geographic areas targeted for vulnerability to food insecurity. However, MCHN activities in all country offices were not adequately monitored to measure their contribution to long-term hunger. An analysis of outcome indicators presented in the CP logframes, the Strategic Objective 4 Strategic Results Framework indicators and the annual Standardized Project Reports (SPRs) for the case-study countries demonstrated that none consistently measured any MCHN indicators over the life span of the CP or PRRO. As a result, none can conclusively demonstrate if the food and associated support had any effect on long-term hunger. In addition, the evaluation team found little evidence of synergy between MCHN, school feeding and FFW/FFA activities.

13. The SPRs for CPs in four of the six case-study countries showed that the food purchased for MCHN was efficiently delivered with little loss incurred. The quantities of food in MCHN activities were small compared with other WFP activities, but in all cases used a locally made blended food, reducing the costs associated with imported products and increasing demand for local production.

14. **School feeding.** A significant percentage of resources in the case-study countries was allocated to school feeding. The cost per beneficiary of school feeding tended to be the lowest of the three activities, but the programme costs may still be excessive from local governments' perspective. National governments tend to provide adequate resources and

support to ensure sustainability only when this activity is seen as leading to better education rather than addressing hunger.

15. Geographic targeting is based primarily on food insecurity and drop-out rates, thereby reaching communities at risk of long-term hunger even if the activity does not specifically target malnourished children. Ultimately, the utility of school feeding is seen only over time as beneficiary children become adults. This extended timeframe presents challenges for measuring the intervention's effectiveness in reducing long-term hunger.

16. The Campbell Collaboration Report (2006) challenged the appropriateness of WFP's traditional school feeding activities for ending long-term hunger. It suggested that even WFP's long-term school feeding interventions may be less likely to end long-term hunger than comparable investments in an enabling environment creating jobs for families and school-leavers, except in cases where the activity aims at increasing girls' attendance at school. In this case, school attendance can delay pregnancy and reduce nutritional risks associated with early pregnancy.

17. **FFW/FFA.** In responding to local disasters and environmental needs, a broad range of FFW/FFA activities and large number of beneficiary households were observed in the case-study countries. None of the countries visited had a global strategic livelihoods framework to guide activity development; only Ethiopia (a desk-study country) had such a framework. While FFW/FFA is an appropriate and effective response to hunger, its localized character makes it particularly relevant to those communities targeted on the basis of environmental vulnerability.

18. **Voices of the poor.** A local anthropologist's focus group discussions with vulnerable communities about their understanding of hunger highlighted some contrasts between vulnerable groups and other stakeholders. Focus-group participants did not criticize particular interventions; they showed interest in the delivery of the food rations rather than the creation of assets. They also suggested other priorities such as vocational training opportunities (instead of school feeding) and out-migration for seasonal labour (instead of FFW/FFA). These anthropological studies determined that beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries alike perceived that WFP's interventions bypassed addressing their hunger concerns.

19. *Evaluation Question 3: How do factors in the external operating environment – including donors, partnerships, the policy environment, and social, political, economic and cultural conditions in the country – affect WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions?*

20. Several external factors affected WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions, most importantly: i) food price volatility and its effect on WFP's resourcing and poor people's access to food; ii) the close link between short-term crises and long-term conditions; iii) the uncertainty of WFP funding; and iv) donors' perceptions of WFP.

21. **Food prices.** Food prices on world markets rose sharply in 2007 and remained high throughout 2008 and 2009 in many developing countries. All six countries reviewed in this evaluation were affected. Prices of basic staples increased from between 10 percent in

Zambia and nearly 90 percent in Ethiopia. This affected WFP programming, with case-study countries showing reduced resource flows, and shifting to relief and PRRO activities, which had greater chances of being funded.

22. The link between short- and long-term crises. During 2007–2009, all case-study countries experienced short-term crises – often attributed to natural disasters and civil strife – along with chronic hunger. Short-term shocks have implications for long-term hunger. Natural and man-made disasters can decrease domestic agricultural production, affecting local food supplies and leading to an increase in food prices. The general perception among key informants was that long-term hunger cannot be addressed without also addressing vulnerability to short-term crises. WFP’s activities were seen to be designed with either short- or long-term aims in mind, rarely incorporating the two into one programme.

23. WFP funding volatility. WFP’s funding structure is dependent on voluntary contributions from donors, and this was seen to create ongoing shortfalls. Strategies for dealing with shortfalls included reducing the quantity, regularity and quality of food distributed; shifting food commodities and geographic coverage; reducing the number of beneficiaries and cutting staff. WFP staff members highlighted the detrimental effects of shortfalls on partnerships, agreements, commitments to the target population and conflict resolution, and noted an inability to implement the programmes they designed. Funding uncertainty is a major stumbling block for any strategy aiming to end long-term hunger.

24. Donor and partner perceptions. WFP has good relationships with governments as strategic partners and functions well within the United Nations network of agencies. Nonetheless, stakeholders did not necessarily perceive WFP to be a development player with a comparative advantage for addressing long-term hunger, but often perceived it as better suited for emergency responses. In addition, they did not have confidence in WFP’s long-term commitments because of its funding structure. Consequently, donor support to WFP tended to shift from development (long-term) activities to relief (short-term) activities under budget duress, except in Bolivia. WFP’s support for building stronger national food security systems, including vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), may change this perception over time.

25. Evaluation Question 4: What factors related to WFP’s organizational capacity, including its processes, systems and culture, affect its ability to adopt long-term hunger solutions?

26. The following factors affected WFP’s ability to adopt long-term hunger solutions: i) WFP’s funding; ii) variable food deliveries; iii) organizational structure; iv) monitoring system; and v) VAM methodology.

27. Funding. The uncertainty of funding to cover approved projects and the occasional delays between WFP’s submissions for approval and the arrival of donor funds were seen to negatively affect implementation, including through the scaling back of activities and delays in food deliveries.

28. **Variable food deliveries.** WFP has consistently delivered its food assistance on time and in committed quantities as far as funds were available, which has meant irregular deliveries at times. Irregular food supplies affect intra-household food-sharing mechanisms, household coping strategies and expenditure patterns. This is most clearly seen in MCHN activities in which irregular supplies of food intended for one family member, such as fortified blended foods, are likely to be shared. Sharing dilutes their intended nutritional impact and cost-effectiveness since these foods are more expensive than those included in general food rations. Financial commitment to ensure timely and regular food assistance must be an integral part of any long-term hunger strategy, whether through MCHN, school feeding or FFW/FFA.

29. **Organizational structure.** WFP does not yet have a system for programming activities that address long-term hunger. The various components of a potential system are dispersed among several Headquarters units. These “grey areas” are replicated in country offices.

30. **Monitoring systems.** There is no monitoring system for WFP to track the effectiveness of any of the three interventions, or their combined effect on long-term hunger. The monitoring system for data collection is impressive, but its focus is on tracking food deliveries or beneficiary participation rather than measuring the effect of WFP’s interventions on long-term hunger; it was not designed for that purpose.

31. **VAM methodology.** Country offices in all case-study countries demonstrated an ability to identify and geographically target food-insecure areas. They often produced national-level vulnerability and food-insecurity data for use by governments and other stakeholders. However, their systems did not include a method for tracking individual household food security status over time in relation to WFP programming and other external factors. Although VAM has become an indispensable tool in most countries where WFP operates, WFP should build on its reputation to prove its utility for long-term hunger solutions.

32. *Evaluation Question 5: What factors related to staff capacity, including skills, knowledge, attitudes and motivations, affect WFP’s ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions?*

33. Four factors affected WFP staff capacity: i) motivation; ii) funding uncertainty; iii) staff technical skills; and iv) training and learning dynamics.

34. **Motivation.** The evaluation team found WFP staff to be highly skilled and motivated despite heavy workloads, using their knowledge of local context and willing to work in difficult and remote areas. Staff members have developed effective partnerships with government ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies. The importance of these individual relationships for effective partnering cannot be over-stressed.

35. **Funding uncertainty.** Unreliable funding has put pressure on country office management with regard to effective control, placing more demands on local staff members, who may lack experience. It has also led to increased job insecurity, excessive

workloads, loss of staff and the use of external consultants to accomplish internal programme tasks.

36. **Technical skills.** Staff technical capacity in finance, logistics, VAM analysis and food security information systems was found to be excellent. VAM skills were so developed that in Nepal and Zambia, the VAM officers were seconded to government positions. In Bolivia, where the VAM officer had to leave because of a lack of funding, the maps he developed were taken up by the Government for use in targeting. WFP offices were also developing capacity in nutrition and demonstrated considerable skills in negotiating and collaborating with Governments, donors and other partners. The offices lacked skills related to scientifically based evidence tracking and demonstrating the effectiveness of food assistance in long-term hunger solutions. Staff promotion policies did not always allow for individuals' skills to be used in an optimal manner.

37. **Training and learning.** Training and learning opportunities that might promote long-term hunger solutions have been uneven. The evaluation team noted some good examples of peer-to-peer training and learning. However, staff members suggested that one way to minimize the time required for new strategy changes to “sink in” at the country-office level is to develop more “learning through policy dialogue” on strategic and policy issues. Good-practice suggestions included allocating 10 percent of programme aid for developing the capacity of local staff and implementing partners, and implementing WFP's programmes as an experiment to assess their impact on ending long-term hunger. Country office staff reported that they have not been advised sufficiently in advance about strategy changes and have not been instructed about how to adapt country office planning and programming as a result. This has left individual operations to develop their own solutions based on staff members' own understanding and needs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

38. *Evaluation Question 1: To what extent are WFP's activities/mix of activities integrated into national solutions to end long-term hunger?*

39. Long-term hunger cannot be tackled in isolation, and assessing its origins and solutions requires cooperation among different social and economic sectors. Strong coordination at the government level among various ministries is therefore essential, not only to elaborate multi-sector strategies, but to ensure that they are actionable and that resources are properly targeted for optimum effect. National hunger strategies exist in the case-study countries, although they refer to MDG 1 and not explicitly to long-term hunger. WFP's programmes were found to be very well integrated in government development plans and incorporated in WFP–government country strategy papers. WFP country offices have developed very effective partnerships with ministries, ensuring mutual understanding of the issues, problems and solutions. However, the evaluation team could not find a direct link between government-level strategies and MCHN, school feeding or FFW/FFA, because ending long-term hunger had not yet been articulated in either government or WFP documents.

40. If WFP is to address the issue of ending long-term hunger, it needs to lead integrated nation-wide campaigns that involve civil society in determining strategies and solutions.

41. *Evaluation Question 2: To what extent are the activities/mix of activities that the evaluation identifies as contributing to breaking the long-term cycle of hunger appropriate and effective?*

42. There was a general consensus that all three activities may be appropriate for addressing long-term hunger, provided they target the right people and are delivered in time. The choice of activities itself is less critical than choosing the correct targeting and delivery methods. Based on the six countries studied, the three activities appear to be efficient and cost-effective³ in terms of food-aid delivery, but these are not measures of the impact of such food assistance in ending long-term hunger; no yardstick to measure this was found. The life-cycle approach is a useful framework that helps integrate activities and could potentially be applied more systematically.

43. Funding constraints have led to reductions in beneficiary numbers in some areas, and have delayed the delivery of rations. The findings suggest that some people who are vulnerable to long-term hunger have been unaffected by WFP's interventions.

44. *Evaluation Question 3: How do factors in the external operating environment - including donors, partnerships, the policy environment, and social, political, economic and cultural conditions in the country - affect WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions?*

45. WFP's reliance on voluntary donor pledges, combined with food-price⁴ volatility, presents a difficult environment for WFP to carry out its activities. Rising food prices both increased the vulnerability of some populations to hunger and posed challenges as WFP sought to maintain its commitments. Programming in response to short-term shocks and to long-term conditions ran in parallel. Staff generally responded with creativity to these constraints, but tended to choose whatever could be funded. As a result, the potential for the three activities to play stronger roles in long-term hunger solutions was weakened.

46. Despite forging excellent relationships with governments as strategic partners and functioning well within the United Nations network of agencies, WFP does not appear to be considered a development player and has not yet succeeded in demonstrating its comparative advantage in addressing hunger.

47. WFP's ability to alter donor perceptions and to define its role in the multi-stakeholder context of humanitarian assistance will determine its future role in addressing long-term hunger.

³ On cost effectiveness and efficiency, see Annex 5 of the full evaluation report.

⁴ This includes fuel cost, employment, the credit crunch and other factors that have negatively affected the resource mobilization climate.

48. *Evaluation Question 4: What factors related to WFP's organizational capacity, including its processes, systems and culture, affect its ability to adopt long-term hunger solutions?*

49. The WFP funding model increasingly puts pressure on country offices to mobilize resources, which consumes staff time, creates a “hand-to-mouth” mentality and inadvertently lengthens approval time and project extensions. The barriers to integrated programming are further exacerbated by the division of activities and reporting requirements in different organizational units. This leads to parallel initiatives and impedes monitoring and tracking. WFP's monitoring systems, although elaborate and sophisticated, have been designed primarily for tracking food commodities and beneficiary coverage rather than the effect of food assistance on long-term hunger.

50. However, WFP has been successful in developing food security information systems, VAM and Purchase for Progress (P4P) – a local food-purchasing programme. All are widely accepted by governments and often incorporated into their own strategies to assess risks, develop solutions and promote local food production and export. In identifying vulnerable areas and groups, VAM is a potential integrator for both short- and long-term interventions, and a mechanism for WFP to enter the wider sphere of responding to poverty and underdevelopment. P4P saves on delivery costs and contributes to poverty alleviation, thereby addressing long-term hunger. However, WFP's Food Security Analysis Unit may need to develop methods for improving targeting and widen its net to cover long-term hunger.

51. *Evaluation Question 5: What factors related to staff capacity, including skills, knowledge, attitudes and motivations, affect WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions?*

52. During this evaluation, WFP staff all proved to be dedicated to their mission, often in very difficult circumstances. They have developed very effective partnerships with government ministries, NGOs and other United Nations agencies. Their capacity to perform is affected by resource constraints, which often puts them under excessive pressure.

53. International staff are often rotated and promoted with little regard to their technical background and skills, except in transport, finance and logistics, and in some cases nutrition. They are sometimes placed in positions where their skills cannot be fully used. At the country level, national staff have an in-depth understanding of the causes of long-term hunger; however, they are not always given opportunities to implement Headquarters strategies in line with the national context.

54. Within WFP, this mismatch between local knowledge and Headquarters strategic direction translates into an operational gap in terms of designing, implementing and tracking the three activities in order to contribute to long-term hunger solutions.

Recommendations

55. **Broad recommendation: WFP should approach hunger holistically, integrating short-term and long-term hunger solutions.** A holistic model incorporating factors in short- and long-term hunger, and integrating MCHN, school feeding and FFW/FFA, can be used for dialogue with beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, partners, civil society, governments and donors.

56. **Recommendation 1: WFP should ensure that those who are vulnerable to hunger are actively engaged in choosing, shaping, implementing and evaluating the hunger solutions that affect them.** The case studies suggest different interpretations of long-term hunger among WFP, governments and vulnerable people. Building civil-society partnerships where the people most vulnerable to hunger are actively engaged in shaping hunger solutions is imperative to designing appropriate interventions.

57. **Recommendation 2: WFP should adopt a life-cycle approach to hunger.** WFP has a comparative advantage through multiple entry points for addressing hunger. MCHN, school feeding and FFW/FFA activities should be designed to complement each other and other hunger solutions. A framework for understanding the crucial points of intervention for long-term hunger across the life cycle can help WFP country offices to track the impact of their interventions.

58. **Recommendation 3: WFP should work with donors and other United Nations agencies to develop a funding model consistent with long-term hunger solutions and to challenge donor governments to meet their food security-related funding commitments.** This model should ensure stable levels of funding from donors, enabling WFP to address both short- and long-term hunger simultaneously, and reduce the amount of resources that need to be mobilized at the country-office level.

59. **Recommendation 4: WFP should develop a model to demonstrate its comparative advantage in addressing long-term hunger.** WFP staff perceive a clear role for WFP's engagement in ending long-term hunger. However, donors and partners do not necessarily share the same understanding. Differences in perceptions may be mitigated by articulating WFP's potential contributions to donors and partners, including its comparative advantages.

60. **Recommendation 5: WFP should have core-funded long-term career paths up to the senior level for technical specialists, which are performance-assessed in terms of ending long-term hunger.** Technical staff are generally considered for a career on par with generalists, and often placed in managerial positions when their technical skills can be better utilized to continue pursuing skilled technical functions.

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation Features

1. The Terms of Reference (TOR), presented in Annex 1, identify three World Food Programme (WFP) activities as the focus of this evaluation: Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN), School Feeding (SF), and Food for Work/Food for Assets (FFW/A). These activities are understood to have the potential to contribute to ending long-term hunger by providing better nutrition and health, improve school attendance where food is provided, and support rehabilitation and creation of community assets for poverty reduction or as strengthening resilience against disasters.
2. The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the contribution of these activities to ending long-term hunger and to draw lessons for WFP's future role in ending long-term hunger. The three activities were considered from global, national, and local perspectives using a combined deductive and inductive methodology further described in Annex 2. The period of time under study was 2007-2009.
3. Three case study countries where all three activities were underway during the period in question were selected for field visits. Countries were selected to represent geographic diversity as well as WFP post-emergency programming (Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO)) and Country Programme (CP)). The three field study countries were Nepal (Asia), Bolivia (Latin America and Caribbean region/LAC) and Zambia (Africa). Field visits took place between 23-March and 05-May 2011. Field work concentrated on key informant interviews at country offices (CO) and regional bureaux (RB) level, government and partner interviews, and country level document collection, as well as focus groups conducted by local researchers with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in vulnerable communities.
4. In addition, three countries were selected for desk study of a particular intervention model: MCHN in Guatemala (LAC), SF in Bangladesh (Asia) and FFW/A in Ethiopia (Africa). These desk reviews were intended to complement the themes identified from the field visit countries.
5. Information and analysis derived from the literature and documentation (see bibliography, Annex 3), persons met/interviewed (Annex 4), and tools for collection and analysis of data from field visits and desk reviews constitute the basis for the conclusions and recommendations of this report.
6. The evaluation was conducted by an independent team with no conflicts of interest. The team received strong support throughout from the Office of Evaluation (OE), with careful attention to WFP Evaluation Quality Assurance Standards (EQAS). Country level preliminary findings were shared at the conclusion of the first CO visit in Nepal, and debriefings took place with OE and the Internal Reference Group prior to finalisation of the report.
7. While focusing on the three activities proposed in the Evaluation TOR, the evaluation was approached with an openness to activities and approaches beyond these three, to the

extent that any other relevant activity might be brought to the team's attention in the course of the study.⁵

1.2. Global Context of Hunger

8. Recent estimates place the number of undernourished people on the planet between 925 million to one billion. A big proportion live in developing countries where 16% of the population has been estimated to suffer hunger during the period 2005-2007. The global community in 2000 pledged to reduce the number of hungry people through the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG), 'Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger,' which set a target of a 50% reduction in the proportion of undernourished people by 2015.

9. Progress towards meeting this target has been uneven. The capacity of WFP activities to end long-term hunger is shaped in important ways by a range of both external and internal factors. The recent economic and food price crises in particular pose important challenges for meeting MDG 1, as witnessed by the number of hungry people going up, rather than down during these crises. The global community has recognized the need for exceptional efforts to ensure food security in the new global economic context.

10. The global economic context interacts with domestic forces that can further influence effectiveness, sustainability, relevance, appropriateness and efficiency of WFP activities aimed at addressing long-term hunger. Vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters can increase risk of drops in domestic agricultural production, in turn affecting local food supplies and hence domestic food prices and access to food. Vulnerability to civil strife and the prevalence of disease such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria can similarly affect food production and in turn access to food and use of food at the domestic level. These three diseases have all been found to affect birth weight, the prime measure of intergenerational cycle of hunger and the basis of tracking.

1.3. WFP's Strategic Directions in Ending Long-Term Hunger

11. During the period under consideration for the evaluation, WFP adopted a new Strategic Plan for 2008-2013, setting in motion an institutional transition from food aid to food assistance. Food assistance is a broader approach to hunger issues that draws from an expanded range of approaches and instruments beyond donor sourced bulk food shipments, including cash/vouchers, new food products, and local purchase schemes.

12. Strategic Objective 4 of the plan commits WFP to 'reduce chronic hunger and undernutrition.' The goals under this objective relate to breaking the intergenerational cycle of chronic hunger, increasing education and basic nutrition, meeting the food needs of those with disease, and strengthening national capacity to reduce hunger (the last aligns with Strategic Objective 5).

13. In 2010, WFP established an office under the Executive Director to identify and promote long-term hunger solutions through food-assisted activities, in partnership with governments, communities and other development actors.

⁵ Purchase for Progress – P4P- was one activity relevant to this study; Enabling Upstream Environment – ODJ proposal – refer to Regional Bureau for details.

14. The evaluation's three focus activities and their overall roles with respect to ending long-term hunger are:

15. **Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN).** Pregnant women, infants and young children are especially vulnerable to undernutrition in situations of poverty. Poor nutrition before and during pregnancy is a key factor in the persistence of low birth-weight babies and child undernutrition.⁶ Since 1997, WFP has understood the reduction of undernutrition and micronutrient malnutrition through MCHN programmes with a pro-poor strategy to be an important step towards ending long-term hunger⁷ and has clear guidance on supporting MCHN in both emergency and development programmes.⁸ The Lancet series cites evidence to the effect that investing in optimal nutrition during pregnancy and first two years of life are cost-effective ways of preventing forms of malnutrition.⁹

16. **School Feeding (SF).** SF programmes help to draw low-income (although possibly not the lowest income) children to primary school, with a disproportionately positive effect on enrollment of girls, due to still existing gender disparities. SF also constitutes an investment that is expected to lead to improved health, school completion rates and concentration. By ensuring a meal with adequate macro and micronutrient content, SF prevents short-term hunger and in the long run contributes to ending long-term hunger. Enrollment of girls can also delay early pregnancy.

17. **Food for Work/Assets (FFW/A).** In situations of chronic food shortage, the provision of food to the most food insecure households in return for work substitutes for cash income and can help build community assets that generate economic growth, an important component in ending long-term hunger. Such schemes enhance vulnerable peoples' resilience to shocks, leading to better food security.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

18. The evaluation's mandate focuses on the potential use of WFP's three interventions for addressing long-term hunger. While this mandate appears to be intuitively understandable, there is much discussion about the exact relationship between hunger, undernutrition and food security. The evaluation team spelled out the working definitions of the various terms to be used in Annex 2 of the Inception Report, including: hunger is a condition in which people lack the required macro and micronutrients; undernutrition is the physical manifestation of hunger, while food insecurity is the vulnerability or susceptibility to hunger.

19. In addition to these working definitions, this report further refines these concepts based on the following elements adopted from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1987) and amplified by Millennium Development Goal 1:

⁶UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), *6th Report on the World Nutrition Situation: Progress in Nutrition*.

⁷WFP, *Ending the Inheritance of Hunger: Food Aid for Human Growth - Lectures, WFP/UNU Seminar*.

⁸WFP 2009 The Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Tool Kit.

⁹Zulfiqar A Bhutta et al. What works? Interventions for maternal and child undernutrition survival. The Lancet, Volume 371, Issue 9610, Pages 417 - 440, 2 February 2008.

- **Undernutrition** is the result of prolonged low levels of food intake and/or low absorption of food consumed. The term is generally applied to energy (or protein and energy) deficiency, but may also relate to vitamin and mineral deficiencies.
- **Undernourishment or chronic (long-term) hunger** is the status of persons whose food intake regularly provides less than their minimum energy requirements. The average minimum energy requirement per person is about 1800 kilocalories (K/cal) per day, with the exact requirement determined by a person's age, body size, activity level and physiological conditions such as illness, infection, pregnancy, lactation, and (as the evaluation team learned in Nepal and Bolivia) people living at high altitudes.
- **Nutrition through the life cycle.** The United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition in 1999 proposed a life-cycle approach in recognition that nutrition challenges vary as we progress through the life-cycle. Adequate nutrition for pregnant women and young children is essential for growth and healthy physical and mental development. In adulthood, the issues are different: the challenge is to avoid premature death or disability from diet-related chronic diseases and to progress into fit and healthy old age. Good nutrition in early life pays dividends in childhood and in later life.¹⁰ Further, an undernourished low birth-weight girl child is likely to suffer from severe pre-eclampsia when she in turn becomes a mother, and pre-eclampsia is a key cause of maternal mortality¹¹

20. Although previous evaluations have considered these activities individually with a view to project objectives and/or impact, none has attempted to look at the activities individually or together with a view to their role in ending long-term hunger.

21. These implicit dimensions provide a framework for investigating the roles of WFP interventions in addressing long term hunger:

- 1) How are the three interventions being used to target and end long-term hunger?
- 2) How are the three interventions being used for building resources, assets, skills or knowledge to reduce vulnerability to hunger conditions?

22. Finally, the concept of synergy adds one more element for analysis. The range of interventions, policies, strategies, and partnerships related to reducing the consequences of long-term hunger and those related to mitigating vulnerability should ideally overlap in terms of targeted populations and/or geographic regions.

¹⁰Commission on the Nutrition Challenges of the 21st Century, *Ending Malnutrition by 2020: An Agenda for Change in the Millennium*. http://www.unscn.org/layout/modules/resources/files/2020Report_1.pdf

¹¹Zetterstrom.K and others 2007 – Being born small for gestational age increases the risk of pre-eclampsia BJOG 114:319-324.

2. Evaluation Findings

23. The evaluation findings are presented within the framework of the five evaluation questions common to all four strategic evaluations currently initiated by the Office of Evaluation.

2.1. Findings regarding Evaluation Question 1

To what extent are WFP activities/mix of activities integrated into national solutions to end long-term hunger?

24. Governments are strategic partners for WFP activities within a national context. Consequently, WFP activities and mix of activities are perforce fully integrated into national priorities and strategies related to hunger. However, key questions are:

- 1) Do national governments have a clearly articulated interpretation of long-term hunger and a holistic national strategy that addresses the causes and consequences of long-term hunger?
- 2) How are the WFP activities integrated into this long-term hunger strategy?

Interpretations of Long-term Hunger & National Strategies for Long-Term Hunger

25. Interviews with different stakeholder groups in all three case study countries suggest that there is no single common definition of long-term hunger. Variations in the interpretations of long-term hunger – from acute poverty to chronic malnutrition – were common among the various stakeholders – donors, government, WFP, partners, and vulnerable groups.

26. All case study countries had hunger related strategies and WFP's three interventions were generally integrated with them. The common denominator in these strategies drew on Millennium Development Goal 1, where undernutrition and poverty were identified with long-term hunger. ¹² Table 1 briefly describes the key national strategies related to long-term hunger from the case study countries. Further details are elaborated in the ensuing paragraphs.

¹² During the evaluation period the indicators were: prevalence of underweight children under five years of age, and proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption.

Table 1: National Strategies related to Long-Term Hunger

Case-Study Country	Relevant Long-Term Hunger Strategies
Bolivia	<p>Comité Técnico del Consejo Nacional de Alimentación y Nutrición. <i>Programa Multisectoral Desnutrición Cero (Bolivia)</i>. La Paz, December 2008.</p> <p>National Development Plan 2006 Republic of Bolivia, Ministry of Planning and Development. Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia digna, soberana, productiva y democrática para Vivir Bien, 2006-2010, n.d.</p> <p>Education Law (draft)</p>
Nepal	<p>Nepal: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IMF Country Report 03/305). International Monetary Fund, September 2003.</p> <p>Government of Nepal. <i>Nutrition Report (Nepal)</i>. Nepal, 2008.</p>
Zambia	<p>Ministry of Health, Republic of Zambia. The National Food and Nutrition Policy, Republic of Zambia, n.d.</p> <p>Zambia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - Fifth National Development Plan, 2006-2010 (IMF Country Report No 10/276). International Monetary Fund, August 2007.</p> <p>Republic of Zambia. Vision 2030: –A prosperous middle-income nation by 2030, December 2006.</p>

27. **Nepal.** The government has two principal overlapping strategies which align with long-term hunger. First, the government has set education as its top priority long-term strategy to end hunger. This includes a nutritional component in its school feeding programme which is planned to be a national scheme. The rationale is that school feeding will address malnutrition issues, and education will in due course lead to long-term solutions through development and social upgrading. At the same time, the Ministry of Local Development has extensive plans to promote FFW/A activities in remote rural areas as part of a parallel approach to improve conditions in deprived areas. Nutrition Policy and Strategy 2004 is another separate government plan to tackle malnutrition issues through MCHN programmes.

28. Together, these amount to a strategy at national level. Planning is largely based on Nepal VAM (Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping) Atlas, which categorises deprived areas so that targeting can be done systematically according to degree of stress. A WFP-Government of Nepal strategic document reflects the practical approach of addressing hunger issues through the CP agenda.

29. **Bolivia.** The Constitution and National Development Plans strategize the fight against long-term hunger around the multi-sectoral programme called *Programa Nacional Desnutrición Cero*, which interprets long-term hunger as chronic malnutrition – an issue

that has multiple causes and is addressed through a multi-sectoral approach in the national strategy. WFP staff and government follow this interpretation, but donors have concentrated on poverty as the key element of long-term hunger, without however abandoning their strong support for the government policy.

30. The Plurinational State of Bolivia's National Development Plan 2006 and UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) 2008-12 both incorporate the Constitution's objectives and profess to address malnutrition issues through a range of activities which include the WFP nutrition and school feeding elements. School feeding is however the major element of the programme and includes nutrition education and a form of food for work as part of food production (although not specifically termed a FFW/A intervention) and its availability to the programme, mostly carried out at municipal level. Interviews with WFP country office staff suggested that FFW/A is considered to have positive potential for future development of remote Andean areas although this is not yet part of the programming plans of Government. VAM provides a strong basis for programming of activities and has become part of the government tool kit in planning its own development programmes.

31. **Zambia.** High chronic malnutrition levels, with stunting of children just under 50%, and a life expectancy of only about 37 years, one of the lowest life expectancy figures in the world, have led Zambia's government in its 'Vision 2030' document and the National Development Plans (5th and 6th -2006 -2015) to stress chronic poverty as the principal issue to tackle. For the government, chronic poverty equals long-term hunger. The WFP CO in Zambia is the only one of the three visited by the team which has already incorporated the WFP Strategic Plan objectives 4 and 5 in its future draft CP. The draft country programme has focused attention on building up government response capacity, in parallel with support for school feeding and nutritional programmes, and on safety nets for the poverty affected areas.

32. However, WFP Zambia has dropped the FFW/A programme due to lack of funding for this activity. Nevertheless, in contrast with the other case study countries, the Zambia CO has developed a strong local purchase side to its activity agenda, in an effort to encourage local production and strengthening of rural capacity. The future long-term hunger programme of the government is considered to be linked strongly to the regional initiatives for African development, much of it based on nutrition programmes, but no formal adhesion to such initiative has been concluded at the time of this report.

WFP integration into long-term hunger strategies

33. In all three case study countries visited, WFP presence is predicated on the UNDAF in each country and subsequent specific MOUs for each Country Programme. Whatever the hunger related solution in existence in the case study countries, the evaluation team found that the WFP country office referenced, incorporated, and integrated their activities in such a way that the WFP was highly aligned on paper to both government and UN sister agencies.

34. Much of what is written above relates to national strategies and the way WFP has approached synergy between its own programmes and those of the governments. These

findings are confined to Country Strategy papers, which are signed by the government and thus confirm their alignment with government policies. Such strategy papers have been signed with Nepal and Zambia and are in process with Bangladesh and Ethiopia. They have not yet been developed for Bolivia or Guatemala.

35. The WFP strategy papers are not uniform, since each country has a history which determines the Country Programme content. For example, Ethiopia has based its development planning on its recurrent disaster experience, and Zambia has given attention to national administrative and management capacity building and local food production. In contrast, Nepal has emphasized primary education.

36. While WFP has taken full account of governments' policies and strategies in programming its projects, there is no specific joint activity which addresses long-term hunger as a goal. The joint strategy papers, however, commit to address poverty, chronic malnutrition and thus long-term hunger through a range of activities jointly agreed upon by both partners.

37. There is a consistent linkage with MDGs in WFP programmes and project documents, but there is no documented evidence to demonstrate how WFP contributed to ending long-term hunger. The following paragraphs highlight some of the details pertaining to the use of the specific intervention activities within each country context.

Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition

38. MCHN activities, in all their variations, were found to be integrated in all three of the case study countries visited (Nepal, Bolivia, Zambia) as well as in the desk study country that was the focus of MCHN analysis (Guatemala). The MCHN component is primarily aligned with national government strategies related to either poverty alleviation or the provision of health and nutrition services through focusing on attracting women and children to primary health care services through the provision of supplemental feeding resources. CO project documents have consistently made reference to existing national nutrition priorities, when they exist, and have aligned their MCHN activities accordingly. The Nepal and Zambia governments have nutrition policies but they do not address long-term hunger. Bolivia has a more multi-sectoral strategy based on eradicating chronic malnutrition.

39. In all countries studied, WFP has targeted its support to MCHN activities through differential geographic targeting based on an analysis of food security. WFP typically targets the most food insecure areas¹³ of the country, which are often logistically complex areas that may have less government service provision than others. While MCHN has been implemented in partnership with government, in some cases non-governmental organisations (NGOs) serve as implementing partners.

¹³there is considerable debate and concern heightened by 'triage' concepts associated with the funding crisis at different levels within WFP, as to whether priority should be given to areas with large numbers of hungry people or to areas with deep levels/proportion of hungry people.

40. In Zambia, the CP focuses on (i) HIV/AIDS, (ii) basic social services, (iii) governance, and (iv) food security. These align with the Fifth National Development Plan.¹⁴ In this context, the MCHN support is provided to HIV positive mothers receiving anti-retroviral therapy, as specific nutrition support for a curative approach.¹⁵ In Bolivia and Nepal, MCHN activities did not include the HIV specific component but focused on the attraction to primary health care.

41. In Bolivia, the CP is integrated into a specific multi-sectoral government programme, *Malnutrición Cero (ZMNP)*. It aligns with the National Development Plan¹⁶ for the Integrated Care of Children under 6 years of age to complement the government's activities for 0-2 year olds, by only focusing on the 2-5 age. The WFP MCHN activities under the CP have targeted the under-5 year olds as part of an integrated national Government strategy. WFP's support is complemented by other initiatives targeting different age groups.^{17 and 18}

42. The rationale for applying WFP MCHN activities in this manner stems from a desire to ensure at least some level of support through a child's life cycle. MCHN in this context is seen as an entry point for addressing some of the associated consequences of undernutrition. By deliberately including the older children in the target group, WFP food assistance in the case study countries was seen to be entering the households of some of the poorest communities in the world. Although there is a risk that food assistance provided through MCHN is shared with other household members, the nutritional and economic value of the MCHN ration must be considered. Providing a ration for all children under 5 increases the chances of the under-2 year old to eat his/her full share, ensuring a bridge between early childhood health and later childhood education sectors, where food may be assured through a school meals programme.

43. In Guatemala, WFP also supported pre-school feeding for 3-5 year olds in targeted areas as part of the integrated government approach to provide some level of support through the beginning of school age. WFP supports the Government of Guatemala's National Strategy to Reduce Chronic Undernutrition (ENRDC) which began in 2006 and coincided with the broader economic and food crises.

44. During the evaluation time period, 2007-09, MCHN activities were found to be unsustainable for the most part, unable to attract consistent donor funding, and unable to ensure robust handover strategies. The exception to this was Guatemala, whose MCHN case load was more easily funded as a separate PRRO than as part of the CP, and whose support to the development, production and distribution of a locally appropriate, nutritional, complementary food was designed to be part of a sustainable food assisted strategy to be gradually handed over to the government.

¹⁴Zambia: *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - Fifth National Development Plan, 2006-2010 (IMF Country Report No 10/276)*.

¹⁵ Birth outcomes in South African Women receiving highly antiretroviral therapy: a retrospective observational study. *J.Int AIDS Soc.* 2011 Aug.

¹⁶Republic of Bolivia, *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia digna, soberana, productiva y democrática para Vivir Bien, 2006-2010*.

¹⁷*The Lancet series.*, Vol 371, 2008-Jan 17.

¹⁸US Department of State, *1000 Days: Change a Life, Change the Future - Panel Presentation*.

School Feeding

45. WFP's school feeding projects were integrated into national policies and priorities and were seen by the government as a key component of integrated social protection. Although housed in the Ministry of Education, or in some cases Ministry of Primary Education, school feeding features in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and National Development in all three of the case study countries (Nepal, Bolivia, Zambia) and in the SF desk study country (Bangladesh). NGO networks often provide nationwide institutional networks for delivering food and nutritional inputs for primary school children, Although the SF programme is generally aligned with national education strategies, the primary benefit or rationale was interpreted differently by different stakeholders interviewed.

46. For example, one of the rationales cited the ability of school feeding to serve as a magnet for attracting school age youth from poor households into the educational system. High levels of food insecurity were cited as being associated with parents withdrawing children from school.

47. Another rationale pertained to emergency response. WFP's school feeding activities were also described as intending to target food insecure rural areas as well as food insecure urban areas or disaster prone areas. Long-term school feeding was viewed by WFP and the governments as an effective component for disaster risk reduction and management through encouraging community resilience and expanding operations through schools in vulnerable areas.

48. A third rationale highlighted the quality of education. Respondents noted that in terms of quality of education, hunger and poverty represent the biggest impediments to school performance. School feeding was seen as protection against short-term hunger which impeded children's attention in classroom education.

Food for Work/Food for Assets

49. FFW/A activities have a long history in WFP. They were initially associated with development, but invariably to improve infrastructure, rehabilitate degraded land, provide access to markets and help with water availability, be that for drinking, irrigation or sanitation/disease reduction. With the WFP's increasing involvement and success in responding to emergencies, FFW/A activities have found a strong place in recovery and rehabilitation programmes.^{19 20 21}

50. The three countries in the field study and the desk study for FFW/A (Ethiopia), have all implemented FFW/A as a response to long-term hunger but with varying targeting strategies. In Nepal and Bolivia, FFW/A activities target remote areas with low productivity and chronic food deficit; in Ethiopia, areas with badly degraded land where food shortages were primarily due to low productivity; and in Zambia, areas where production was low, food deficit was high, but diversification of crops and improvement of infrastructure and

¹⁹WFP – Food Aid and Livelihoods in Emergencies WFP A/2003/5-A.

²⁰ WFP – Transition from Relief to Development WFP/EB.A/2004/5-B.

²¹Zambia Food Security Issues Paper – Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa.

access to markets could spell hope for the future. However, all four of these countries have also used FFW/A as an immediate intervention tool in response to short-term food crises.

51. In countries such as Ethiopia, FFW/A is considered to have a proven record. Although better monitoring and reporting are required to demonstrate success in the long term, there is a perception that all the ingredients of sustainability at both household and community level are present. In response to recurrent food crises, the government has undertaken a strategic plan to protect vulnerable, food-insecure populations through food security investments with longer-term productive effects. The 2005-2007 PRRO projected measurable results within three years.

52. In Bolivia, interviews with government representatives suggested that the government is very keen to collaborate with FFW/A types of approaches. Much of current employment of interventions similar to FFA/W is part of the SF project (gardens and food production), and the community is fully involved. These activities have been carried out through two EU (European Union) trust funds which do not involve FFW/A specifically but rather cash investments and technical assistance. The team sees the involvement of the community as an essential, important component for the sustainability of these initiatives, whether embedded within a formal FFW/A approach or integrated into a SF intervention. Both government and communities would appear to support a handover and thus ensure sustainability of the future FFW/A in the country. However, in Zambia, FFW/A is being discontinued under the upcoming CP. This discontinuation may be temporary, as it is likely that natural disasters will, as in the past, require recourse to similar activities in the future, either as a preventive/mitigation measure, or an immediate response, or as a recovery strategy.²²In general, in none of the three countries visited, or in Ethiopia, is there a specific government strategy to promote FFW/A per se, as these activities form part of a more general sector focused approach to resolve issues pertaining to the ministries which conduct other activities.

53. Thus, the three activities are implemented according to government priorities as circumstances dictate and WFP resources allow. For example, the Ministry of Education will promote FFW/A types of activities as part of a school feeding programme, such as seen in Bolivia and Zambia, where school gardens are strongly supported. In Ethiopia, FFW/A is principally done under the MERET project, which is part of disaster management, but with heavy participation of Ministry of Agriculture for technical support.

54. As WFP's assessment, poverty and malnutrition analysis, and methodology have improved, FFW/A activities are becoming more relevant to differential targeting and inclusion. In areas of the case study countries visited, geographical targeting of food deficit areas was the basic tool employed,²³ and the notion of creating assets which could in the long run be both sustainable and productive enough to guarantee self-sufficiency was the key principle.

55. FFW/A may be contributing to breaking the long-term cycle of hunger, but its effect depends on a high degree of community participation, governance issues (see Annex 5),

²² Zambia Vision 2030; UNDAF 2007-10.

²³ WFP - Thematic Guidelines VAM January 2005.

strong partnerships, interconnection with other activities, and provision of other inputs. In many settings, the mix with school feeding, when accompanied by productive activities – such as agricultural production at community level, school gardens and orchards – and nutrition and health initiatives, is a good approach, as is evident in Nepal,²⁴ and Zambia.²⁵ Bolivia's CP does not have an FFW/A intervention strategy, but elements related to FFW/A are integrated into the School Feeding Programme (Annex 6, Bolivia).

2.2. Findings regarding Evaluation Question 2

For those activities that the evaluation identifies as contributing to breaking the long-term cycle of hunger, to what extent are those activities/mix of activities appropriate and effective?

56. The information in this section is organized around themes relevant to appropriateness and effectiveness: programme rationale, issues pertaining to programme resource allocation, programme costs and degrees of loss, and the relative efficiencies in targeting through these interventions. The final segment in this section highlights some of the key contrasts noted between the anthropological studies of vulnerable beneficiary and non-beneficiary interpretations of hunger and interventions in comparison to those described by WFP documentation.

57. As an overall summary, Table 2 below is based on Factsheets for WFP Country Operations provided to the evaluation team by the Office of Evaluation. The table describes the percent of WFP resources allocated to each intervention for the case study countries during the 2007-2009 period. While there may certainly be variation between planned and actual funding as described in this table, the table serve to illustrate the relative importance given by Cos to the three activities. In addition, Annex 7 summarizes the relative costs per beneficiary of each intervention.

²⁴ Summary Evaluation Report Nepal Country Portfolio September 2010

²⁵ Zambia Draft Strategic Agreement March 2010

Table 2: Intervention Mix in Case Study Countries for all Operations developed during 2007-2009

Country	% Resources to MCHN	% Resources to SF	% Resources to FFW/A	% Total Resources committed to the three interventions
Bolivia	9	69	22	58
Nepal	8	62	30	56
Zambia	5	81	15	54
Bangladesh	8	88	4	21
Ethiopia	47	26	26	30
Guatemala	45	40	14	74

Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition

58. **Rationale:** MCHN can improve the nutrition status of individually targeted groups even when economic growth remains limited²⁶ and help break the intergenerational cycle of growth failure.²⁷ However, nutritious food alone can rarely achieve this unless accompanied by a gamut of maternal and child-health related activities such as vaccination, nutrition education, water and sanitation or pre- and post-natal care. Consequently, MCHN food supplements are often used as a magnet to integrate vulnerable households into the primary health care system. Attendance at health and education centers can be part of a successful strategy towards ending long-term hunger since integration into the health system provides a form of social protection. However, as discussed in later sections, the short-term nature of programmes in WFP CPs, even when they are extended, related to MCHN does not allow the organization to measure these effects long term.

59. Partner capacity is key for MCHN success. WFP works through Ministries of Health, a sector that is often underfunded or suffers from project-driven approaches rather than nationally driven strategies. Central budgets allocated to the Ministry of Health are usually between 5-9% of GDP, and therefore consistently have to be supplemented by additional donor loans and grants for health-related activities tied to specific projects, such as vaccination campaigns or reproductive health. The recent trend has moved support from “health service provision” to “safety nets,” which allows the very same activity of encouraging increased access to basic preventative and curative health care to be formulated under the objective of providing safety nets, rather than health care.

²⁶UNICEF, *Tracking Progress on Child and Maternal Nutrition ; A survival and development priority.*

²⁷UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), *Progress in Nutrition: 6th Report on the World Nutrition Situation.*

60. For example, in Guatemala, the PRRO supporting MCHN activities coincided with the government's conditional cash programme enticing poor households to increase their attendance at health and education services. Increased attendance was enhanced by WFP food assistance and nutrition education activities in these health centres. Incentives to increase demand were met with improved service delivery in this case, but in other countries where WFP food serves as the incentive to increase attendance, there is often no accompanying increase in the quality of service delivered.

61. In Zambia, the health staff highlighted the extra workload, in terms of storage and time requirements, that distributing fortified blended foods at health structures entailed. When the WFP PRRO changed to providing food e-vouchers that beneficiaries could redeem at local shops, the health staff appreciated the decreased workload connected with supplemental food handling. The delivery mechanism is not the concern of this evaluation, but rather the often under-resourced primary health care settings accessible to the target population.

62. Support to MCHN structures through partnering with government health service providers is an undisputed entry point for combating long-term hunger. MCHN provides an appropriate means for capacity building of government institutions when funding is regular. Decentralized government structures are not impediments to programming and WFP has shown in Nepal how it can add value to service provision when channeling funding through the emerging decentralized Village District Councils.

63. **Size/Cost/Loss:** Due to the individual targeted nature of MCHN programming, MCHN food quantities were small compared with other WFP activities in the field study countries and tended to have a smaller number of beneficiaries. The cost per beneficiary tends to be higher than for general food rations provided under WFP's other activities²⁸ due to the specialized supplements involved, even when WFP procures supplementary foods locally. All this makes MCHN activities costly, as small numbers of people are reached, often in remote places.

64. There is evidence from the CP Standard Project Reports for four of the six case study countries where the MCHN component was looked at (Nepal, Bolivia, Zambia and Guatemala) that the food purchased for MCHN was efficiently delivered to intended beneficiaries with little loss incurred.

65. **Innovations to Context:** In most cases, the intervention model incorporated the use of locally-made blended food,²⁹ reducing the costs associated with imported products and increasing demand for local production. This helped to offset the higher costs of the intervention. In Zambia, government food production policies facilitated the procurement of local food products, encouraging domestic production and ensuring that good-quality stocks were available on the local market.

²⁸Cost comparisons should be treated with caution, since the three activities were not designed with the same aim in mind.

²⁹ Fortified Blended Foods used include: Unilito in Nepal, High Energy Protein Supplements in Zambia, and Vitacereal in Guatemala.

66. **Targeting & Application:** MCHN activities were for the most part seen to take place in food insecure areas identified by VAM, where health structures were functioning. WFP MCHN coverage was not always as extensive as planned due to funding constraints. The COs demonstrated a clear strategy for increasing coverage based on a combination of need and cost efficiency. WFP's geographical targeting approaches were seen to be used by the government of Bolivia, which uses WFP VAM data to target intervention areas in 2011. In Nepal and in Zambia, WFP VAM staff were seconded or called upon to provide assistance to government offices.

67. However, targeting the appropriate points of intervention is important for ending long term hunger and no single intervention will be able to do this by itself. MCHN has the advantage of targeting the most vulnerable groups (pregnant mothers and young children) from a nutrition standpoint, offering a window of opportunity to break the inter-generational cycle of malnutrition. During the 2007-09 evaluation study period, WFP interventions, in all cases, tended to include supplementary rations for children under 5-years of age, in two countries focusing on 3-5 year olds where other government measures to support this age group were not in place. Evidence of a coherent targeting method was also seen in Guatemala, where a separate micronutrient supplementation project was aimed at school-aged children rather than to the under5 age group, as the micronutrient content of the supplementary food for those in the MCHN programme was already high enough and did not warrant providing more supplements.

68. WFP has deliberately included 2-5 year old children in institutional feeding activities as a way of ensuring continuity in nutritional support for this age group until they reach school age and can be eligible for school feeding. This is a life-cycle approach to programming taken despite pressures to focus on under 2 year olds for more cost effective impact on nutritional rates. Even if current monitoring systems cannot demonstrate how this strategy contributes to hunger reduction, some benefit may be expected in rural areas where the levels of poverty are most likely to compromise children's nutritional status.

69. The benefits of integrating the most vulnerable households into health care systems should not be minimized. It has crucial long-term effects on child mortality and morbidity. However, when viewed strictly from the goal of ending long-term hunger, "over-targeting" may diffuse its ability to contribute to reducing the consequences caused by undernutrition at the particularly vulnerable stages.

70. A further complicating factor was that in practice, it cannot be discerned from the monitoring data if any MCHN beneficiary received a food ration consistently throughout the period of implementation of the CP, and hence extrapolate that the sequence of rations contributed to improved nutritional status or even averted malnutrition. WFP project cycles tend to be designed for several years, and it cannot be necessarily assumed that any single beneficiary will be integrated into the project for the whole project duration. Current MCHN programmes cannot demonstrate that pregnant mothers and young children are receiving additional nutrition and health care when they most need it, based on their nutritional vulnerability and food insecurity.

School Feeding

71. **Rationale:** Within the framework of ending long-term hunger, the school feeding intervention is more relevant for building assets to resist vulnerability. Traditional primary school feeding programs intervene in areas where chronic undernutrition is related to food insecurity and poverty and where school meals offer an incentive for families to send their children to school, regardless of their nutritional status. Nevertheless, as cited in the previous section, there are a wide range of arguments in favour of school feeding for its utility in addressing long-term hunger. The secondary effect of primary education on intergenerational hunger through delaying the age of marriage of young girls is also of importance.

72. **Size/Cost/Loss:** School feeding typically occupies a significant percentage of programme resources invested in these three interventions. In the field case study countries, the percentage varied between 60-80% of all resources allocated to the three intervention models under consideration.³⁰ With respect to the costs per capita of the intervention, different evaluation studies have different estimates of the cost of feeding one child for one year. They vary depending on a range of factors. However, as shown in Annex 7, the average cost per beneficiary in school feeding programmes tends to be the lowest of the three interventions. As an institutional, rather than an individual, feeding programme, with minimum administrative involvement, school feeding is relatively efficient. The fixed entry points via schools also help manage losses and assure organizational efficiency.

73. However, SF costs represent a large proportion of the primary education budget for low income countries. WFP Bangladesh estimates the yearly cost of school feeding at \$ 27 per child out of total primary education cost of \$ 72 per child. As a consequence, 'stand-alone' school feeding based on imported or highly subsidised local food may not always be seen as sustainable in dollar terms by the governments.

74. **Innovations to Context:** The rationale for school feeding varied – from perspective of increasing educational coverage, attracting poor children to school, improving school performance, addressing hunger issues and using the institutional network for food distribution during emergencies. WFP staff have been eager to propose, design and implement innovative school feeding programmes. In Zambia there is an emphasis on developing a school feeding programme based on locally produced foods, and in Bolivia there is a strong community driven school garden initiative. Central government and local municipalities as well as families of school-going children have all shown interest and given support. They were motivated by cost reductions and the encouragement of local food production.

75. In all case study countries, governments have shown strong commitment to school feeding programmes with budget allocations and replication of the WFP school feeding model (e.g. in Nepal) in their own programming. They have also drawn on WFP to provide technical assistance. Guatemala is engaged in a South-South cooperative initiative that supports capacity building for national school feeding activities.

³⁰ WFP SF commitments as % of all resources committed: Nepal 62%, Bolivia 69%, Zambia 81%, Bangladesh 81%, Ethiopia 26%, Guatemala 40%

76. These local food production initiatives in SF programmes often take advantage of the FFW/A model. This cross-sectoral integration is a good example of building synergy through combined intervention programming, aligning with Strategic Objective #4 and Strategic Objective #5. Another example was found in Bolivia where a programme links school feeding with the transfer of nutritional and health knowledge to primary school children.

77. **Targeting & Application:** In contrast to the other two activities, the SF programmes are unable to target only the most vulnerable. The programmes are developed on the premise of equity as a general distribution to all schoolchildren, not a differential application for those most in need. Were the school feeding programmes primarily designed to combat hunger, one could question whether the intervention targets vulnerable populations efficiently. However, SF has predominantly educational goals.

78. The use of the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) and/or Food Security Information Systems (FSIS) can help target geographic regions for programming school feeding, but these systems do not track individual households or beneficiaries. As school feeding has no nutritional aims, there is no need to target individuals.

79. Funding shortfalls can lead to retrenchment of school feeding programmes, when the major burden of such retrenchment falls to the host government. Government decisions in such cases are not necessarily informed by either VAM or FSIS. In post-conflict situations like Nepal, SF programme changes - be that for a particular group, or geographical coverage - may be politically motivated.

80. School feeding programmes have a wide range of secondary effects. They offer a relatively easy and efficient mechanism to scale up in times of crisis and provide an important safety net at relatively low cost. Interviewees in the case study countries saw WFP's school feeding activities as contributing to improved primary school educational attainment. Outcomes attributed to the intervention included increased school attendance, improved gender equity, reduced drop-out rates, better performance rates, and improved attention and retention by children whose immediate hunger has been alleviated.

81. However, while justified for these reasons, the impact of WFP's school feeding programme on reducing long-term hunger has not yet been fully assessed. In terms of the contribution to ending long-term hunger, the intervention model can assist in the construction of assets (skills, knowledge or credentials) that would enable young children to develop better income generation opportunities and therefore lower their vulnerability to long-term hunger conditions. However, the assets developed in primary education do not necessarily provide immediate resistance to vulnerable hunger conditions, and the nutritional benefits from the activity do not come at the most strategic point to reduce the consequences of long-term hunger.

82. There have been some attempts to link SF more directly to long-term hunger, as earlier examples from Bolivia and Zambia demonstrate. In addition, in Nepal, there is some evidence that delayed marriage through primary girls' education can contribute to better birth weights. However, in general, the utility of SF is only seen over time as beneficiary children become adults. This extended timeframe presents challenges for

measuring the effectiveness of the intervention. In this context, the appropriateness of WFP's traditional school feeding activities for ending long-term hunger has been challenged to some extent in the Campbell Collaboration Report (2006), although the case study countries were not included in the Campbell Collaboration's series of studies. This report suggests that even WFP's relatively long-term school feeding interventions may be less likely to end long-term hunger than comparable investments in an enabling environment that creates jobs for families and school leavers.

83. This dynamic was reinforced in interviews with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the case study countries. Vulnerable women beneficiaries expressed appreciation for school feeding programmes and their focus on primary education. However, there was also a consistent interest in vocational education opportunities as a means to gain greater access to employment, more income generating activities, and escape from exploitative practices. Vulnerable non-beneficiaries also expressed significant interest in access to markets, employment opportunities, and vocational education. These trends suggest that in terms of asset building, education programmes oriented towards vocational training and employment are seen by vulnerable households as particularly useful for reducing vulnerability to hunger.

Food for Work/Food for Assets

84. **Rationale:** While FFW/A interventions can provide important income and nutritional support for vulnerable families, conceptually, the FFW/A intervention is most closely linked with building assets to reduce vulnerability to hunger. In WFP's original 1963 mandate, FFW was intended to provide income, or substitute for income, to purchase food. In most cases the specific initiatives still have a strong food production emphasis with asset creation and rehabilitation associated with food production. The improvement of the production base, in combination with activities such as access to markets, is relevant for addressing the vulnerability to long-term hunger. While the amount of food provided through the FFW/A activity to beneficiary families is not usually sufficient to have a major impact on the resolution of the long-term hunger, the cascade effects from the interventions can reduce vulnerability to long-term hunger.³¹

85. **Size/Cost/Loss:** Within the mix of interventions, FFW/A ranked behind SF but ahead of MCHN (with an average of about 22% among the case study countries) in terms of total resources allocated to the three activities. In terms of costs per beneficiary, FFW/A generally ranked lower than MCHN but higher than SF. However, the total average cost was severely distorted by the high costs of FFW/A in Nepal, where delivery costs to mountain areas were very high.

86. The lack of predictability in resource flows has been the principal constraint to the efficiency and effectiveness of the FFW/A programme. However, as the table in the Annex 7 indicates, taking into account the current high costs of commodities and transport and the remoteness of some of the target areas, cost efficiency and delivery effectiveness appear to

³¹WFP – Strategic Evaluation of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions OEDE/2003/5-A.

be reasonable. Although there were delays in delivery, particularly amidst civil unrest, the quantities planned were effectively received with minimal losses.³²

87. **Innovations to Context:** One of the common programme innovations is utilizing cash for work rather than food for work to achieve FFW/A outcomes. But cash is only effective when food is available to purchase locally, which has not always been the case in remote mountain areas. Interviewed women participants expressed a preference for payment in food rather than cash. Within the three case studies, FFW/A had considerable variation in the mix of activities and programming.

88. In Nepal, the project schemes centre primarily on construction of critical rural infrastructure, such as irrigation, water harvest tanks, improved storage, feeder roads and mule trails, plus training to enable farmers to increase their agricultural outputs. In addition,³³ the establishment of orchards and cultivation of high value cash crops, combined with soil conservation, reforestation, and anti-erosion works, were seen as potential contribution to increased income in most vulnerable areas in the country.³⁴

89. In Nepal, local production was insufficient to cover the whole year's food needs, so the food commodities in the FFW/A programme were a valid input with immediate nutritional benefit and helped in the development of assets.³⁵ However, the cost of delivery to remote areas has been a serious handicap. Although with the deployment of helicopters, activities have continued under the PRRO, the inefficiencies of operating in an environment with a relatively small number of beneficiaries at what some call prohibitive cost is putting the programme at risk. Other agencies have been exploring the possibility of cash for work programmes rather than food for work, but it is not clear if these will always be appropriate in cases where the barrier is food availability rather than food access.

90. In Bolivia, the sites for FFW/A activities were selected by municipalities, with participatory selection techniques at community level. They targeted Andean zones where the incidence of extreme poverty is recorded as 59% and the population comprises small-holders. Protection and rehabilitation of agricultural land and reforestation were key activities.³⁶ According to the interviews in the field visit, much of the land in high altitude areas has been affected by recurrent droughts and floods, largely attributed to climate change, and the population suffers from perennial food shortages. In these circumstances FFW/A activities in both emergency and PRRO interventions are highly valued by the Ministry of Civil Defense and the Ministry of Rural Development.³⁷

91. During the evaluation period, the Zambia FFW/A CP component targeted vulnerable households to improve their incomes and production through conservation farming, crop diversification, fish farming, bee-keeping and market access.³⁸ The customary reliance on

³²Zambia CP 10447.0 SPRs 2007, 2008, 2009; PRRO 10594.0 SPR 2009.

³³ Mercy Corps – Cash for Work April/June 2009 report.

³⁴WFP Nepal – More than Roads.

³⁵ Operational Agreement Government of Nepal/WFP Dec 2008 and April 2010 and relevant CP 10093.0 (2002-06 extended to 2010).

³⁶Bolivia SPRs 2008, 2009 CP 10596.0 and SPR 2009 PRRO 10836.0.

³⁷Bolivia EMOP 10616.0 SPR 2009, and PRRO 10836.0 SPRs 2008, 2009.

³⁸HHZ – Baseline Survey October 2009; FFA Baseline Survey July 2007; FFA Implementing Partners Meeting 6 Nov 2008.

maize production and consumption as the principal household food had led to widespread malnutrition. WFP's P4P local food purchase programme has been of considerable help in ensuring prompt delivery and promoting local production of basic staples.

92. In Ethiopia, the MERET project is targeting the most degraded areas and poorest people. Its past record of contribution to community and household food security and incomes was seen as a testament to its relevance for the country's development and to FFW/A as a tool in addressing long-term hunger.³⁹

93. **Targeting & Application:** FFW/A targeting is based on identifying vulnerable areas, primarily through VAM assessments. Although this methodology is not able to pinpoint individuals who are worse off than their neighbours, rehabilitating or putting under production degraded areas contributes effectively to risk reduction and thus to long-term hunger solutions.

94. In line with the conceptualization in the opening paragraph, the use of FFW/A in all three case study countries emphasized the building of assets rather than the distribution of the food rations themselves for mitigating undernutrition. For example, even though WFP Zambia received its planned resources in only one of the three evaluation years and underwent two budget reductions that led to cuts in beneficiary coverage, the work targets were exceeded – implying adding more beneficiaries even at the expense of less food per beneficiary. In Bolivia, the FFW/A interventions in Andean areas were discontinued after 2007 and restricted to capacity building, but all training courses planned in 2008 and 2009 were achieved. In Ethiopia, food shortfalls have had a negative effect on the programme due to the considerable size of the needs but did not diminish beneficiaries' interest in continued participation. While the number of targeted sites had to be reduced to 53.7% of those planned in 2007-08, the achievements were still commendable. Nevertheless, even if FFW/A achieves effective asset creation, variable or weak donor support has a distinctly negative effect on WFP's effort to contribute to ending the long-term hunger cycle in these circumstances.

95. In countries such as Nepal and Bolivia, where the costs of delivery to remote mountain regions are high, there are pressures to use cash, if available, to build assets to reduce vulnerability, on condition that food production locally can cover the needs. Experimental cash for work schemes are planned by WFP in appropriate circumstances. FFW/A in Ethiopia has been very successful in the MERET Project which targeted badly degraded areas, and its reports confirm increases both in production and productivity.⁴⁰ FFW/A activities are normally planned outside the agricultural season, so as not to interfere with normal production activities.

96. The Ethiopia MERET project is notable for introducing a Results Based Management (RBM) system which included, among its standard indicators, two that are particularly relevant to effects on ending long-term hunger. One expected outcome result is to assess the 'increased ability to manage shocks and meet necessary food needs and diversify livelihoods.' The 2007 RBM reports that 85% of the beneficiary households claimed that

³⁹ Ethiopia Summary of MERET RBM Report 2007 and Annual Summary MERET Report 2009.

⁴⁰ Series of Meret reports 2007-09.

their income has increased, and 53% of households confirmed a reduction in food deficit of two months or more due to MERET's intervention. One other positive indicator with implications for long-term hunger reduction relates to reporting on 'sustainable land management practices and systems institutionalized at community level and replicated to other areas.' Data for 2007 showed that 86% of households replicate technologies, especially assets such as soil and stone bund construction, seedling planting and compost making.⁴¹

97. This is not to imply that there is no other evidence of success or sustainability. While comprehensive monitoring of the success of FFW/A activities – for improved resilience to shocks, increased income, higher production and water availability – is not in place, there is evidence of communities embracing the structures and improved land for beneficiaries. In Zambia there is a record of improved consumption score, in Ethiopia of lesser stress on food availability during the crop year, and in Nepal of roads, water storage and improved crop maintenance, but there are seldom controls to demonstrate that these improvements are caused solely by the programme/project investments. In Bolivia as in Ethiopia, the improvements to land and reforestation remained visible long after their construction.⁴²

98. All three activities present potential and important contribution to resolving long-term hunger problem. WFP staff try their best to creatively adapt the available tools and resources to the context, prioritizing activities where government support and priorities match the assessed requirements. Long-term hunger has not been the primary policy driver for WFP programming during the evaluation period, but choice of activities has in effect corresponded to realities on the ground with regard to vulnerability to both long and short-term hunger. Stress on one or other of the three activities evaluated here was more pragmatic than policy directed.

Appropriateness and the Voices of the Poor

99. As part of the evaluation process, the evaluation team commissioned local field researchers in the three case study countries to do an anthropological assessment of the perspectives of the most vulnerable beneficiaries. A summary of these reports is found in Annex 8. The views of the interviewed groups were an interesting contrast to the findings from other stakeholders. They had very different ideas on the intervention use and WFP programming in contrast to other stakeholders within and outside of WFP. These points of contrast included: definition of hunger, consultation, intervention use, and effectiveness.

100. **Definition of Hunger:** Government and WFP stakeholders tended to use nutrition measures to assess and define hunger, for example, undernutrition, micronutrients, etc. The case study focus groups tended to perceive hunger both emotively and pragmatically – emotively, in the sense of what the condition of hunger “feels like” to a person who is hungry; and pragmatically, in the sense that hunger creates weakness and the inability to work and to produce for oneself. The descriptions of the stories of the most vulnerable in the anthropological reports create an impression of a situation that has a

⁴¹Summary of MERET RMB Report 2007.

⁴²WFP – Dependency on Food Assistance – Discussion Paper 22/11/2010.

spiral effect – the more hunger one experiences, the less one can do, and therefore the more hunger one experiences.

101. **Consultation:** The poorest did not perceive themselves to be consulted in the development and selection of long-term hunger interventions and strategies. Consultation was seen by the poor to be when the government or other figures appeared to announce an activity. In other words, consultation meant being told what was going to happen. In addition, participation meant attending a meeting or as registered beneficiary, but not as a decision maker or owner of one's destiny.

102. **Intervention Use:** In the focus group transcripts, the participants did not ever criticize a particular intervention. Mothers cited the value of the MCHN supplements and would talk positively of the attendance in the health centers. For school feeding, appreciation was expressed for the food allocated to the school. For FFW/A, the importance of the rations and the gratitude for the development of infrastructure were cited. However, two items of interest tended to emerge from the discussions. First, the focus group participants tended to focus on the delivery of the food rations rather than the creation of the assets. MCHN was valued most for the supplements, SF because their child could eat, and FFW/A for food in exchange for work done. In short, it was the food which was valued in situations where there was food scarcity, irrespective of modality of delivery.

103. Secondly, although the assets created from these interventions were welcomed, respondents suggested different priorities, such as vocational training opportunities for potential income opportunities (and stability in the shorter term). While FFW/A activities were appreciated, the attraction of a family member remittances from the city or abroad and seasonal migration patterns for temporary work during harvest or planting season were clearly a preferred alternative to cover their acute food and other needs.

104. **Effectiveness:** A key finding from the anthropological studies is that the respondents perceived themselves to have been largely bypassed by the WFP interventions. In Bolivia, the anthropologist noted that there was no difference in the nature of the responses and state of the households between those respondents who had been WFP beneficiaries and those who had not been involved in WFP activities. This suggests that WFP interventions may not be reaching the most vulnerable in micro-level contexts.

2.3. Findings regarding Evaluation Question 3

How do factors outside of WFP in the external operating environment, including donors, partnerships, policy environment, and social/political/economic and cultural conditions in the country affect WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions?

105. Based on the interviews and field visits in the case study countries, the following external factors appear to have played key role in affecting WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions. These were:

- Global Forces 1: Food price volatility and the global markets
- Global Forces 2: Interplay between short-term crises and long-term conditions.
- Global Forces 3: WFP funding uncertainty, both shortfalls and volatility

- Global Forces 4: Donor and partner perceptions of WFP and its role

Global Forces 1: Food Price Volatility.

106. The external operating environment in the 2007-09 period was complicated for WFP due to the food and financial crises of that period. Food prices on world markets rose sharply in 2007 and the first part of 2008, followed by a decline in late 2008 just as the financial crisis hit. However, food prices in many developing countries remained high throughout late 2008 and 2009.

107. Many factors contributed to higher prices in developing countries in this period, despite the fact that they had fallen on world markets. Currency devaluations in the face of financial turbulence in many poor countries translated into higher costs for food imports and a general increase in inflation; declining exports due to the global economic downturn meant less foreign exchange income; rates of economic growth generally fell in poor countries, as unemployment climbed; and these broader economic conditions affected the ability of many poor countries to obtain credit from international lenders to purchase food on world markets. There were also export bans on cereals in some countries. The combination of these economic conditions resulted in a continuation of high food prices in poor countries and declining local food availability.

108. Higher food prices on domestic markets for recipient countries led directly to increased levels of poverty and hunger over the 2007-08 period, globally and in the six countries examined for this evaluation. Globally, the number of hungry people is estimated to have climbed to 1.23 billion in 2009. Coping strategies available to poor people were mainly reductions in food and nutritional intake, as well as out-migration either abroad or urban. Fewer meals, greater reliance on less nutritional foodstuffs, or both, were common responses to the rising cost of food.

109. All six countries reviewed in this evaluation were affected by the food and financial crises in different ways. Food price increases ranged from 10% in Zambia to nearly 90% Ethiopia in 2008 when food price volatility was particularly stark. The extent to which different countries were affected depended on the extent to which they were integrated into global markets generally, and global food markets specifically.

110. **Nepal:** Over the 2007-09 period, the food price and economic crises had a negative impact on food security in Nepal, where 80% of all households are net food purchasers.⁴³ Changes in global food prices affected Nepal because it is a net food importer. Because Nepal imports most of its food from India, food prices and policies in India are extremely important for understanding outcomes in Nepal. In 2008, food prices rose domestically, which contributed to a deepening of both poverty and hunger. Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar led to rapid increases in price of legumes/proteins in Nepal. Food price inflation in Nepal in 2008 was around 15%, and the World Bank estimated that welfare losses as a result of higher food prices were around 10%.⁴⁴ With nearly 15% of Nepal's GDP made up of remittances, the broader economic crisis had an impact as this important source of foreign

⁴³Vokes and Jayakody, "Managing the Food Price Crisis in South Asia (Chapter 9)."

⁴⁴The World Bank, South Asia Region, *Food Price Increases in South Asia: National Responses and Regional Dimensions*.

exchange declined. High fuel prices during the 2007-09 period made transportation of food to remote areas difficult, further pushing up food prices in remote rural areas.

111. **Bolivia:** Bolivia is highly vulnerable to food price fluctuations as well as to global economic crises, due to the high percentage of cereals in its food imports and its dependency on gas exports as well as remittances.⁴⁵⁴⁶ The consumer food price index in Bolivia climbed sharply in 2008 when global prices began to rise and remained high throughout 2009, despite the drop in world food prices. Sustained high food prices affected the ability of poor households to secure enough food. Nearly 65% of food insecure households consumed their own seeds, and 65% also sold livestock.⁴⁷ In the wake of the broader economic crisis, overall economic growth declined from an average 4.7% in 2006-08 to just 3.4% in 2009.⁴⁸ Higher food prices and economic contraction in addition to a highly inequitable income distribution has meant that the poorest were disproportionately affected by these economic changes.

112. **Zambia:** Zambia was equally affected by the rising food prices and the global financial crisis in the 2007-09 period. Food price inflation reached 10% in 2008 and 16% in 2009. 72% of Zambia's people are engaged in agricultural production, most at subsistence level. Some provinces, for example Southern Province, rely on imported food commodities and therefore were more vulnerable to price shifts. The broader economic and financial crisis has also exacerbated hunger in Zambia. Copper exports fell and the Zambian currency was devalued, losing one third of its value between March 2008 and March 2009. Economic growth of 4% in 2009 was lower than the target of 7% needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.⁴⁹ Vulnerable populations in food insecure areas were clearly at risk due to higher food prices and the broader economic crisis.⁵⁰

113. **Bangladesh:** Bangladesh was affected by high world food prices in 2008, which had a direct impact on food security and nutrition in the country. Although Bangladesh produces most of the rice it consumes, the high prices on world markets caused panic on domestic rice markets in 2007-08, leading to a 50% increase in food prices. Increases in rice prices alone led to a 6% hike in the poverty rate.⁵¹ Both rural and urban poor were affected by these higher food prices, as 60% of rural smallholders in Bangladesh are net purchasers of rice.⁵² Protein prices rose steeply due to the demand of the urban rich and World Bank driven encouragement of aquatic protein exports. The global economic crisis also affected the economy through reduced remittances (which stood at 10% of GDP in 2008), as well as reduced exports and job losses of nearly 10%.⁵³

⁴⁵*Latin America and Caribbean - What are the facts about rising food prices and their effect on the region?*.

⁴⁶WFP, *Standard Project Report - Recovery of Food Insecure Households Affected by Consecutive Natural Disasters - Bolivia 2009*.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸The World Bank, *Bolivia - Country Brief*.

⁴⁹WFP, *Effects of the Financial Crisis on Vulnerable Households - Zambia*.

⁵⁰UNICEF, *Aftershocks from the Global Food Crisis*.

⁵¹The World Bank, South Asia Region, *Food Price Increases in South Asia: National Responses and Regional Dimensions*.

⁵²Burlando, *The Impact of Transitory Income of Birth Weights: Evidence from a Blackout in Zanzibar*.

⁵³WFP, *Effects of the Financial Crisis on Vulnerable Households - Bangladesh*.

114. **Guatemala:** Food prices in Guatemala rose by 22% between September 2006 and February 2008, as food prices rose globally. Most poor people in Guatemala purchase over 80% of their food in the market, and food accounts for around 55% of household spending.⁵⁴ Although some studies indicate that global price transmission from international to domestic markets in Guatemala was not high,⁵⁵ other studies show that the rise was significant, with food price increases alone resulting in a 6.5% increase in extreme poverty.⁵⁶ The broader economic crisis also affected food security by reducing remittances, exports, foreign investment and tourism, as well as limiting access to credit and producing higher unemployment.⁵⁷

115. **Ethiopia:** At 90% food price increase in July 2008, Ethiopia experienced the second highest rate of food price inflation in sub Saharan Africa. According to a recent study, global food prices had an enormous influence on domestic food prices.⁵⁸ Prices declined in 2009 but did not return to their pre-2007 levels, although prior to 2007 food prices were already higher than world prices, suggesting that local volatilities affected Ethiopian markets (including some refugee movements into different parts of the country).⁵⁹ The result of the food price and financial crises has been not just higher food prices, but also depletion of assets and poor access to food among the country's poorest people in both urban and rural areas.⁶⁰

116. Food price volatility concerns are not limited to the 2007-2009 period. In late 2010 and early 2011, the FAO's food price index indicated that food prices were virtually at the same level as at their peak in July 2008. As chair of both the G8 and G20 in 2011, France highlighted the issue of food price volatility. In preparation for a meeting of G20 agriculture ministers in June 2011, a document was prepared by ten international organizations, including WFP, to make recommendations for the G20's consideration regarding food price volatility.⁶¹ WFP contributed to this report with a proposal for pre-positioned emergency food reserves. WFP's advocacy role at the international level around these issues indicates that the agency is aware that food price volatility has important implications for all of its operations, including both its ability to respond to emergencies and interventions to address long-term hunger.

117. The rising rates of hunger across the developing world posed challenges for WFP as it sought to maintain its commitments. WFP's overall annual operating budget increased in 2008, from around US\$5.4 billion to around US\$6.4 billion, mainly due to rising food

⁵⁴WFP, *Central America Prices, Markets and Food and Nutritional Security*.

⁵⁵deJanvry and Sadoulet, *The Global Food Crisis and Guatemala: What Crisis and For Whom?*.

⁵⁶WFP, *Central America Prices, Markets and Food and Nutritional Security*.

⁵⁷WFP, *Standard Project Report - Guatemala Country Programme (2009)*.

⁵⁸Durevall, Loening, and Birru, *Inflation Dynamics and Food Prices in Ethiopia: Working Papers in Economics, No.478*.

⁵⁹Ulimwengu, Workneh, and Paulos, *Impact of Soaring Food Price in Ethiopia: Does Location Matter? : IFPRI Discussion Paper 00846*.

⁶⁰WFP, *Standard Project Report - Ethiopia Country Programme (2009)*.

⁶¹FAO et al., *Price Volatility in Food and Agricultural Markets: Policy Responses - Prepared per request of G20 summit meeting in November 2010*.

prices.⁶² A special appeal made to donors allowed WFP to meet its needs in 2008, although funding challenges remained in 2009.

Global Forces 2: Interplay between short-term crises and long-term conditions.

118. During the period of study, all case study countries experienced a mix of both short-term crises, often attributed to natural disasters, and long-term conditions giving rise to chronic hunger. Climate change in particular has increased vulnerability to harvest failures due to drought and other extreme weather events. These conditions affected local food production and employment as well as the extent to which these countries were forced to obtain food from outside of the country. All case study countries exhibited some level of susceptibility to these short-term crises.

119. Nepal is vulnerable to droughts, flooding and landslides. Additionally, it faced a longstanding Maoist rebellion. As 75% of the population is dependent on agricultural production for livelihoods, and is thus vulnerable to natural and manmade disasters environmental, economic and political variabilities are important when determining food security strategies.

120. Bolivia has been affected by frequent natural disasters and social conflict in recent years. It is highly prone to disasters such as floods, mudslides, frost and droughts. For three consecutive years (2006, 2007 and 2008), it suffered from a variety of such natural disasters, hurting the livelihoods of over 700,000 people.⁶³

121. Zambia is vulnerable to both drought and flooding. Because of the high percentage of the population engaged in agriculture, such disasters can wreak havoc on livelihoods and food security. In both the 2006/07 and 2007/08 crop seasons, flooding affected many parts of the county.

122. Bangladesh is also highly vulnerable to floods and cyclones. Some 20 million people who live in low-lying areas are especially at risk. In 2007, Bangladesh was hit by Cyclone Sidr, which affected a significant number of the vulnerable in the South-West coastal areas.

123. Guatemala is located in an earthquake zone where three tectonic plates meet, has experienced recurrent mudslides, is vulnerable to hurricanes, and has about 30 volcanoes. This vulnerability to natural shocks only heightens vulnerability to hunger.⁶⁴

124. Ethiopia is historically associated with recurrent droughts. It suffers from land degradation, soil erosion and high population growth. The Southern regions in particular are most affected, with the large pastoralist population especially vulnerable. There were successive droughts in the 2007-09 period.

⁶²WFP, *Rising Prices: Impact on WFP Costs and Programme of Work: Financial Seminar*.

⁶³WFP, *Standard Project Report - Recovery of Food Insecure Households Affected by Consecutive Natural Disasters - Bolivia 2009*.

⁶⁴Emil D Tesliuc and Kathy Lindert (2004). *Risk and Vulnerability in Guatemala: A Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank)

http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/207007/Risk%20and%20Vulnerability%20in%20Guatemala_11-05.pdf

125. These short-term shocks have implications for long-term hunger. Vulnerability to climate change and natural or manmade disasters can increase the risk of a drop in domestic agricultural production, in turn affecting local food supplies and domestic food prices. With heightened vulnerability to crises such as food and energy price spikes, resulting in unemployment, and economic downturn, the challenges for WFP programming are increased. The link between the short-term shocks and long-term hunger suggests that in order to address long-term hunger, the roots of short-term crisis vulnerability have necessarily to be addressed in concert with the same structures that underpin long-term hunger. Within WFP, programmes to respond to the short-term shocks and long-term vulnerabilities have been treated in parallel rather than in synergy. This concern will be dealt with in more detail in section 2.4.

126. In addition to this internal programming division, donor distinctions between the short-term shocks and long-term conditions – and WFP’s response to these perceptions – have given rise to volatile funding shifts and re-programming as new shocks emerge. This dynamic is dealt with in greater detail in the subsequent section.

127. Finally, the short- and long-term division also has consequences for how the interventions are operationalized. School feeding activities were viewed as being easily scaled up and able to serve as a broader safety net in times of crises, as well as a convenient distribution outlet in acute emergencies. In FFW/A, case study interviews implied that the intervention was seen by respondents as helpful, depending on the nature of the external shocks that exacerbate long-term hunger conditions, and particularly effective for improvements that can increase food production or enhance infrastructure that allows better access to markets. Finally, MCHN may shift its priorities from children under 5 years old to those under 2 years, who are most stressed by undernutrition. This may protect the latter from the effects of malnutrition, but leave the over 2-year old exposed to the nutritional risks associated with short-term and cyclical crises. The focus on increasing the number of beneficiaries or qualifying age groups comes at the expense of mitigating the damage of long-term hunger.

Global Forces 3: WFP Funding Volatility

128. The evidence suggests that WFP’s funding structure leads to shortfalls and crises – particularly in its long-term programming strategies. For example, by September 2009, WFP had received from donors less than 39% of US\$6.7 billion projected budget requirements for that year. WFP’s dependence on donor pledges made only in response to appeals and guided by donor budget situations, received some attention at the height of the 2008 global food price hike. World Bank President Robert Zoellick, for example, noted in an open letter to Prime Minister Fukuda and the G8 ministers that it was unlikely that WFP could maintain a budget of US\$5-6 billion per year solely on the basis of voluntary donations. Zoellick argued that the G8 should consider a UN assessment to “guarantee a portion for WFP’s funding.”⁶⁵ Some have also advocated for a strategic or emergency food reserve.

⁶⁵Zoellick, “Open Letter to G8 Ministers.”

129. These funding challenges affected a number of recipient countries, leading to reduced rations (see Annex 9) or shifts in programming priorities. Within the case study countries, the availability of donor funding has varied considerably, with some country programs significantly short of funds to implement the planned programs.

130. Strategies for dealing with shortfalls included reducing the quantity, regularity, or quality of food being distributed, shifting commodities and geographic coverage, reducing the number of beneficiaries, or staffing cuts. In Bolivia, the operations reduced the products in the rations of SF from six to two in order to avoid reducing geographic and beneficiary coverage. MCHN was prioritized over FFW in the PRRO. The effects also put in jeopardy the agreements with the Government of Bolivia and the trust of the government in WFP's capability to execute its programmes. In Zambia, there were two rounds of cuts and sub offices were closed down between 2007-09. In other instances, interventions were shifted from CP to PRRO in order to be maintained and re-articulated as forms of recovery rather than long-term development (Nepal).

131. Often these retrenchments were seen to be sudden and left little time for appropriate handover or alternative solutions. WFP staff interviewed consistently highlighted the detrimental effects on partnerships, agreements, and commitments to the target population.

132. In Nepal, in 2008, multilateral donations of US\$7.37 million fell short of budget requirements by nearly US\$4 million, and no local donations were received. In 2009, the funding shortfall from multilateral donors was nearly US\$6 million, and in that year the government contributed 50% of local transport, storage, handling and staff costs for WFP programmes.⁶⁶ Due to concerns about the impact of local purchases on food prices within the country, at the height of the crisis the Government of Nepal even requested that WFP source food outside of the country for its programmes, although most trends indicate much greater national interest in local food production strategies within WFP programming.⁶⁷

133. In Bangladesh during 2008 and 2009, donor contributions have been less than planned for. For example, in 2008, only 45% of the funding required was provided and in 2009 only 56%. The government stepped in to provide some assistance in-kind, but some of this was not accessible to WFP due to lower external donor contributions.⁶⁸ WFP noted in its 2009 funding appeal to donors, for example, "In Bangladesh WFP is reaching barely 1 million people out of a target 5 million who cannot afford to buy the food they need for their families."⁶⁹

134. In 2008, WFP Bolivia was able to secure enough funds for its programming because it was able to transfer funds from the previous year. Thus, despite the global food crisis, programme levels were maintained. The level of resources available in 2009 declined, however, forcing WFP to adjust the levels of some rations in its programmes.⁷⁰

⁶⁶WFP, *Standard Project Report - Nepal Country Programme (2008, 2009)*.

⁶⁷World Food Programme, *Summary Evaluation Report Nepal Country Portfolio (WFP/EB.2/2010/6-B)*.

⁶⁸*Standard Project Report - Bangladesh Country Programme (2008,2009)*.

⁶⁹WFP, *WFP Factsheet: Hunger in 2009 - A Recipe for Disaster*.

⁷⁰WFP, *Standard Project Report -Bolivia Country Programme (2008, 2009)*.

135. In Ethiopia, external funding levels for WFP's FFW/A and SF activities have been adequate in the 2007-09 period. In Zambia, the funding overall was less than planned, with donor contributions to the Country Programme in 2009 only around two-thirds of planned resources.⁷¹

136. In Guatemala, the government's National Strategy to Reduce Chronic Undernutrition (ENRDC) experienced funding shortfalls in the 2007-2009 period. In 2009, for example, the programme received only 43% of its funding needs from donors, which was a decline from support received in previous years.

Global Forces 4: Donor and Partner Perceptions

137. In the three field visit cases, it was evident that WFP has established good relationships with government as a strategic partner and functions well within the UN network of sister agencies. Despite some rivalry for resources, UN partners are important and a good deal of cooperation was observed with PRSPs, UNDAFs and MDGs, as well as the drive to work within a 'one UN' family.⁷²

138. Nonetheless, relationships with partners and donors were complicated by partner perceptions of WFP and its role in addressing long-term hunger. A consistent theme that emerged from interviews was that donors, UN partners, and governments did not necessarily perceive WFP to be a development player, nor did they have significant confidence in WFP's long-term commitments, due to its funding structure. Development-oriented donors saw WFP as better suited to deal with emergencies, where they felt its strengths lie.

139. In addition, donors did not always perceive WFP interventions as relevant for long-term hunger solutions. For example, in one of the field visit interviews, a donor noted that they did not see school feeding programmes to be an activity which addresses long-term hunger. Some donors also did not consider FFW/A to be the most effective instrument to tackle long-term hunger. Several donors were unequivocal in claiming that food assistance is not the best way to deal with long-term hunger and that a solution requires other inputs to be effective.⁷³ It is possible that over time, with WFP developing a monitoring model to show the effect of food assistance on long-term hunger, this perception may change.

140. WFP's variable funding also affected partnering potential. In partner interviews in the field visit countries, uncertainty regarding resource availability in joint projects negatively affected partner's trust and support. The comparatively higher investment in development and longer time frame to show demonstrable results caused WFP successes to be more easily seen by donors in the emergency context. As a consequence, when volatile global forces create short-term funding crises, donor support to WFP tended to shift from development (i.e., long-term orientation) activities to relief (i.e., shorter-term orientation). As an illustration, in Nepal, in 2009, WFP's FFW/A activities were shifted from its CP to a parallel PRRO project.

⁷¹WFP, *School Feeding Capacity Development Project for Latin America and the Caribbean Region, 2011-2013 (Development Project 200141)*.

⁷² Bolivia UNDAF 2008-12 and UN Trust Fund on Human Security 2011

⁷³ Key informants among donors in Nepal, Bolivia and Zambia; SPRs and RBM reports in Ethiopia

141. This tendency was not universal. In exceptional cases where government strategic priorities overlapped with strong pre-existing WFP relationships with government, this shift effect was muted. The case of the EU *Facilidad Alimentaria* project in Bolivia is an example of this, demonstrated by the fact that WFP had been nominated to chair the Food Security Donor Table.

142. Nevertheless, observations of the field visit countries suggested that the case study countries are attempting to use the three activities as multi-sectoral entry points for engaging in long-term hunger solutions and partnerships. Although partnerships with other UN agencies with a role in nutrition varied, despite the existence of UNDAFs, WFP programmes excelled at building partnerships with government and civil society, which are key for successful implementation. In most cases, there were strong links with community organizations and local-level government structures, which helped guarantee sustainability of long-term activities.

143. In Bolivia, for example, when the new government came into power in 2005 and realigned priorities, WFP secured a technical leadership role in nutrition among the UN agencies for the zero malnutrition national plan. This came about due to strong partnerships with the Ministry of Health over years of institutional feeding programmes for under five year olds and because of WFP's vulnerability mapping capacity, which provided the government with a targeting methodology for their welfare strategies.⁷⁴ In Zambia and Guatemala, WFP was instrumental in organising workshops and consultations to tackle long-term hunger-related issues with nutrition stakeholders, demonstrating its ability to attract key participants for technical discussions and maintain technical leadership.

Summary

144. Unpredictable external factors affected food prices and the general economic situation, and availability of donor funding (as well as donor perceptions of WFP) posed challenges to WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions. A review of the case study countries revealed they had been affected to different degrees. These factors, including food price volatility and climate change, are very likely to continue into the foreseeable future. Global volatility has affected both short-term crises and long-term chronic conditions. The application of the specific interventions within this context and the network of partnerships requires serious consideration given the global economic circumstances.

145. During case study interviews, FFW/A was seen as being efficient depending on the local situation and availability of continued resource flows. School feeding activities were seen as being easily scaled up and able to serve a short-term relief role in times of crises. Finally, MCHN may shift its priorities from longer-term engagements at the crucial age intervention sites to shorter-term "relief aid" which focuses on increasing the number of beneficiaries and/or qualifying age groups.

146. The evaluation team noted that given this artificial division of long-term and short-term hunger solutions, the long-term hunger activities, as implemented, may only be

⁷⁴Government of Bolivia and UN, *Bolivia: Marco de Asistencia de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (UNDAF), 2008-2012*.

maintaining a *status quo* of vulnerability rather than actually reducing the consequences and vulnerability to long term hunger. An ongoing and “non-volatile” commitment from donors for long-term hunger activities is necessary for ensuring the true, sustainable application of these interventions within the context of addressing long-term hunger.

2.4. Findings regarding Evaluation Question 4

What factors related to WFP’s organizational capacity including its processes, systems and culture affect WFP’s ability to adopt long-term hunger solutions?

Main Findings

147. In the case study countries, the evaluation team identified five factors affecting WFP’s ability to adopt long term hunger solutions:

- The voluntary nature of WFP’s funding system, essentially outside its control, is a handicap to long-term hunger programming;
- Organizational structures among WFP units inhibit building synergy towards long-term hunger solutions, and place enormous responsibility on country offices to mobilize funds, putting stress on already overburdened staff;
- Unpredictable funding leading to rescheduling, reducing and delaying delivery and changing quantities of food assistance have implications in nutritional interventions;
- The monitoring and tracking systems in place are oriented towards tracking short-term interventions and immediate outputs and do not assess effect of interventions on ending long-term hunger;
- Vulnerability Analysis Mapping tools and Food Security Information Systems (FSIS) provide a comparative advantage for WFP in engaging in long-term hunger solutions.

The nature of WFP’s funding system

148. WFP depends on voluntary contributions to its operating budget. These come primarily from donor countries, most of which are also represented on the organization’s Executive Board. The Board approves Country Programmes and other projects. However, approval does not necessarily mean provision of funds. As a consequence, funding of specific activities, even if approved is never guaranteed until donors confirm their pledges. There may be delays between Board approval and the flow of donor funds to finance its activities.⁷⁵In most cases WFP proceeds to activate its projects on the premise that funds will be pledged, but in a pluriannual programme, commitments of resources are spread over project duration, and as noted above, not guaranteed.

149. The WFP funding system makes financial and administrative programme management difficult, especially in activities aimed at long-term solutions to hunger and

⁷⁵ SPRs for CPs all countries under study for the period 2007-09, where donor funding for development has been falling well below the planning figures.

protracted over time. WFP is constrained to make agreements with partners without being certain that it can honour the agreements.

150. In a move to shift the centre of gravity for programme implementation to the field, much of the resource mobilization responsibility has been shifted to country offices. According to field visit interviews, this arrangement places an enormous burden on country staff. The direct involvement in resource mobilization can occupy significant staff time, which is thus diverted from the core business of managing food assistance activities in line with the WFP mission statement and the strategic objectives. The in-country fund raising also leads to a “hand-to-mouth” mentality in which programmes may be guided by donor perception of needs rather than by WFP approved programmes. There is also the issue of country level donor representatives not always being in a position to make decisions, thereby creating further delays in the resource mobilisation process. These factors lead to a short-term mentality – favouring crisis responses and negatively affecting long-term hunger activities.

151. Another example pertains to Country Programmes. WFP CPs develop a systematic set of interventions and partnerships over a pre-identified time-frame with expectations of funding to support these interventions. If funding is delayed or is not forthcoming, country programmes and projects are extended in time, as funds come in, rather than new activities being developed.

152. In Nepal and Guatemala, budget revisions extended the CPs annually for a period of almost 10 years. This suggested that the identified needs had not been met and the projects still had relevance. However, instead of developing a systematic 10 year plan, the country office was forced to renew a set of ostensibly shorter-term activities on a periodic annual basis, effectively executing a *de facto* 10-year programme relying on an *ad hoc* funding strategy.

153. On the operational side, key operational partners for FFW/A projects rely on WFP for cash support for their field operations and for their role as implementing partners for FFW/A projects: designing activities, distributing food, and providing technical advice on physical structures. Strong partnerships with key NGO and civil society partners in FFW/A were viewed by staff as crucial for the success of these initiatives. However, WFP’s uncertain funding led to the frequent reduction of contract duration and the delay of payment for services, with negative repercussions on both project performance and partnership relations.⁷⁶

154. Finally, as mentioned in Section 2.3, funding crises required juggling programmes to take advantage of available resources. One strategy was to shift interventions from CPs to PRROs.⁷⁷ In Nepal, the CP project document includes an analysis of the synergies between three WFP activities (FFW/A, FFE and MCHN), clearly demonstrating a people-centered vision of WFP’s role in supporting hunger solutions, based on food security analysis (see Annex 5). However, in practice, FFW/A was removed from the CP and run as a PRRO where funding was available. While these solutions are ingenious for working around resource

⁷⁶ Nepal – six NGO partners’ meeting with evaluation Team, 30 March 2011.

⁷⁷Nepal PRRO 10676.o.

limitations and donor priorities, they inhibit the successful application of long-term hunger solutions.

155. On the positive side, the P4P initiative aligns well with synergistic approaches to long-term hunger, as it promotes local food production and the development of trade and markets. The initiative is supported by donors who switch out of food to cash pledges. In Zambia,⁷⁸ Bolivia and Nepal, WFP purchases of local food products have saved costs of delivery to FFW/A activities and to other programmes as well as contributed to other long-term hunger objectives.⁷⁹ Uganda uses WFP funds to supply food for other countries in East Africa.

Organizational structures inhibit the development of interconnected programming towards long-term hunger solutions.

156. WFP does not have a smoothly integrated system for programming activities that address long-term hunger. The various components of a potential system are generally dispersed through several headquarters units. With attention to hunger solutions growing, reporting needs have also grown, and the number of HQ units that deal with reports from the field has also grown, further ramifying the organizational tree.

157. As an illustration, the Performance and Accountability Management Division oversees the global approach to hunger solutions through Country Strategy papers, which define responsibilities between governments and WFP, while the Handover and Partnership Branch follows the sustainability of WFP solutions for an eventual handover to governments. Programme Design Service helps produce the logframe and supervises production of the SPRs, and the Operational Reporting and Analysis Branch oversees reports for donors. This complicated system puzzles both outsiders and many field staff who contribute reports.⁸⁰

158. These divisions are replicated in country offices. The evaluation team sought to access to cost efficiency data both in its sample countries and through the WFP logistics department (Annex 7), but compartmentalization between logistics and programming made this a difficult task.

159. In another example, an increased focus on new micronutrient initiatives was observed in two of the four countries where the MCHN component was evaluated. However, in Nepal and in Guatemala, this new focus ran parallel to, rather than being integrated with, MCHN activities, targeting different population groups from the ‘traditional’ MCHN intervention model. This was likely the consequence of grant funding opportunities and may indict WFP’s funding model rather than be an indication that CO staff are not aware of the lack of integration. A similar case was observed in Zambia where P4P funding led to a CO focus on that activity, dropping one of the other core activities – FFW/A – not because the CO did not believe in the intervention, but because it could not be funded.

⁷⁸ WFP Zambia cooperation with Zamatec (Zambia Commodity Exchange Commission) and Profit (NGO) have been most valuable to promote local purchases in the country.

⁷⁹WFP - P4P report 2011.

⁸⁰WFP HQ organisational chart 2011.

160. On a positive note, the evaluation team saw that in Zambia, the new CP for 2012 was designed with a life-cycle approach, making links among the three WFP activities. Coverage maps generated through VAM and other methodologies were able to highlight the areas of overlap and disconnect. The evaluation team sees this as a step in the right direction to maximize the synergies among the various WFP activities.

The monitoring and tracking systems in place are not geared towards tracking the effects of WFP assistance on long-term hunger.

161. WFP does not yet have a monitoring system to track the effectiveness of any one of the three interventions with respect to ending long-term hunger. The monitoring system for collection of data varies from country to country and is impressive in some instances. But the focus is on tracking food deliveries and beneficiary participation as well as physical achievements and the food security situation, rather than assessing the effect of the WFP interventions on reducing undernutrition and hunger.⁸¹The only possible exception is the RBM monitoring in Ethiopia in the MERET project. This makes the CO staff resource mobilization responsibilities more difficult, as demonstrating success in combating hunger is essential to fund-raising.

162. An analysis of the outcome indicators presented in the CP logframes, the SO4 Strategic Results Framework Indicators,⁸² and the data reported in the yearly SPRs for the case study countries demonstrated that none consistently measured any of the MCHN indicators over the life span of the CP/PRRO; consequently, none can conclusively demonstrate how the food and associated support affected long-term hunger. This leads to the conclusion that the indicators need to be revised and programme implementation redesigned with controls of reference groups, if WFP programme staff and their partners are to be able to measure the contribution of the activity to ending long-term hunger in partnership with the vulnerable.

163. Several factors contribute to the challenge of tracking long-term hunger solutions. Outcome or objective level indicators are often quite difficult to measure through a monitoring process, assessment at the level of households is usually not possible given the current systems, and linkages between food assistance and long-term hunger outcomes are often not well established. When undernutrition was measured, it was often not at a level that could be applied to tracking WFP's interventions. Undernutrition was generally measured through national surveys that collected anthropometric and micronutrient status data. Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) were used in all case study countries, and Zambia collected anthropometric data in two additional national surveys as well⁸³. However, this national level data cannot be extrapolated to measure WFP intervention areas as they cover different time periods and smaller geographical areas. In this sense, despite regular trend data on nutrition status, nutrition outcome indicators have a limited use when they are

⁸¹as evidenced by Bolivia monitoring formats: Perfil de Proyecto Alimentos por Trabajo y Alimentos por Capacidad, and Fecha de Seguimiento.

⁸²SRF SO4 indicators for 2008-12 were looked at, although the evaluation team acknowledges that some CP were designed using the previous SRF 203-07. Only the original CP project document logframes were looked at, since not all budget revision project documents had a new logframe.

⁸³Zambian Demographic Health Surveys; Zambian Living Conditions Surveys; Zambian National Vulnerability Assessments.

included in SRF-based logframes. In Bolivia, one of WFP's partners collected anaemia levels for school aged children, but this was a unique example of the capacity of some of WFP partners to collect intervention specific data and not a reflection of WFP's monitoring systems. Even here, it was collected for the SF, not the MCHN programme, and thus was of limited use for tracking the effectiveness of the MCHN intervention.

164. Using MCHN activities as a typical example, the evaluation team found little documentation of evidence regarding health-seeking behaviour change among MCHN beneficiaries regarding access to primary health care or the application of imparted nutritional knowledge. Only in Guatemala did the team find documented evidence regarding these changes. This is not to imply that these changes are not occurring, rather that an integral component of MCHN may be left largely unassessed by WFP.⁸⁴

165. In Zambia, Community Household Surveys were routinely collected but did not contribute to an analysis of the effectiveness of food assistance. In Nepal, reduction in coverage from 34 to 9 Village District Councils (VDCs) for MCHN activities significantly reduced programme effectiveness. The reductions were the result of a country portfolio evaluation in 2010 revealing that MCHN activities were spread too thinly, but the reduction in scope created the unintended consequence of missed opportunities for increased synergy with other activities.

166. The evaluation team found that CO staff have a very good knowledge of the working environment within which the programmes are implemented. However, this context monitoring is not captured systematically by WFP systems but rather left as informal knowledge with staff. This reduces organizational knowledge management sustainability as the rotation of staff implies a loss of the institutional knowledge and relationship development acquired by previous staff.

167. As a complement to internal monitoring or reliance on partner monitoring, WFP country offices occasionally sponsor outside research studies to examine effectiveness questions. However, the evaluation team found that, in general, the studies available for review were often handicapped by the difficulty of measuring either the appropriate variables (e.g., lack of dietary and nutritional measures for the various interventions) or the appropriate populations (e.g., children being absent at the time of measurement, economic crises inducing out-migration of the most vulnerable populations to the cities, or difficulties in tracking a suitable control group).

168. One exception from the desk review pertained to the Ethiopia MERET project. In that project, a Results Based Management (RBM) system has been introduced which includes among its standard indicators two that are particularly relevant to the issue of ending long-term hunger. One expected outcome result is to assess the 'increased ability to manage shocks and meet necessary food needs and diversify livelihoods'. The 2007 RBM reports that 85% of the beneficiary households claimed that their income has increased, and 53% of households confirmed a reduction in food deficit of two months or more due to

⁸⁴Frize and Calderon, *Evaluación de la Operación Prolongada de Socorro y Recuperación Guatemala 10457.0: "Recuperación y Prevención de Desnutrición de Grupos Vulnerables" (diciembre 2005-diciembre 2008) ampliada a diciembre 2009 - Informe Final (OE/2010/004)*.

MERET's intervention in the last years. One other positive indicator with implications for hunger reduction relates to reporting on 'sustainable land management practices and systems institutionalized at community level and replicated to other areas.' Data for 2007 showed that 86% of households replicate technologies, especially assets such as soil and stone bund construction, seedling planting, and compost making.⁸⁵

Variable timing of deliveries and changes in quantities and quality of food assistance have implications for mitigating damage.

169. The evaluation team carried out an analysis of food deliveries as a percentage of planned deliveries as reported in SPRs (2007-09) per commodity and found that WFP often failed to deliver the quantities and varieties set out in the project designs. These variations were generally ascribed by staff to funding shortfalls and uncertainty, although pipeline breaks were also admitted to be factors in some instances.

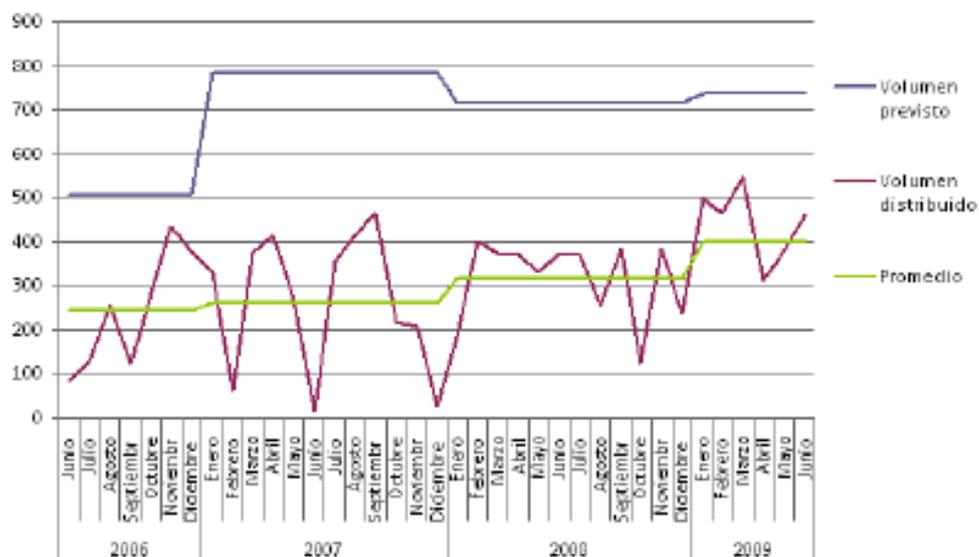
170. The shortfalls are illustrated in Annex 9. The shortfalls have particularly severe consequences for MCHN beneficiaries who are, for the main part, targeted for their nutritional vulnerability. Foods used in MCHN programmes are fortified blended foods, which are costly, and lack of funding can affect their availability. The three year average shortfall (2007-09) for the blended food ration for FFW/A, SF and MCHN activities combined for Nepal, Bolivia and Zambia was 55%, 0% and 24% respectively. Consequently, the groups most vulnerable to undernutrition (pregnant and/or lactating mothers from food insecure communities, children under 5 years, PLWHA) would have received an average of less than 50g of blended food per day – half their daily required supplementary macro nutrient intake and less than half their required daily micro nutrient intake. This rather indirect calculation suggests that the effectiveness of the programmes to address the damage caused by long-term hunger may have been insufficient. For example, in Guatemala it was shown that while blended food deliveries over the lifespan of the project were roughly half of those planned in the project document,⁸⁶ food deliveries were highly inconsistent throughout the year for various reasons, as shown in the graph below.

⁸⁵Summary of MERET RMB Report 2007.

⁸⁶ The PRRO evaluation report attributes the difference in the number of planned and delivered rations to an overestimated case load, and not only funding constraints.

Figure 1: Actual versus planned monthly distribution – Guatemala PRRO 10457 (June 2005-June 2009)

Gráfico 3. Distribución real y programada mensual en TM a lo largo de la operación OPRS 10457.0n De junio 2005 a junio 2009



Source: Guatemala PRRO evaluation report 2009 p.24

171. This variation in food deliveries is likely to result in highly irregular food intake of the intended target group. Irregular food supplies affect intra-household food sharing mechanisms, and foodstuffs intended for one family member, such as fortified blended foods, are more likely to be shared, diluting their intended nutritional impact.⁸⁷When MCHN activities are viewed primarily for their role in attracting people to the health system, these variations are less problematic; however, in terms of addressing long-term hunger, the allotment and timing of the nutrition package becomes more crucial.

The Vulnerability Analysis Mapping tool (and Food Security Information System) provides a comparative advantage for WFP in collaborative partnerships for planning and designing hunger solutions.

172. Targeting vulnerable people, those who suffer long-term hunger, requires a sound methodology, and WFP's VAM has become an indispensable tool in most countries where WFP operates. Yet VAM is a geographical targeting tool, adequate for activities delivered through institutions with targeted geographic catchment areas; it is not currently able to pinpoint individuals who are worse off than their neighbours. Though WFP does have other analytical tools to target individual households, this cannot be applied on large scale. VAM is organized to identify food insecure areas and remains an approximate measure of vulnerability.

⁸⁷For example in Zambia the target groups are often the poor, defined as those people who spend at least 70 % of their household budget on the basic food basket; the core poor are defined as those whose household budget is less than that required for the basic food basket.

173. Nevertheless, interviews with partners and donors in the case study countries suggest that even with its shortcomings, the WFP VAM approach is still much further advanced than equivalent methodologies, and partners and donors recognize the value of VAM within the context of long-term hunger. In fact, Bolivia has used VAM for its national level targeting since 2003, and in Nepal the Food Security Atlas produced by WFP with VAM methodology also provided targeting criteria.

174. The skill and work of the food security analysis staff in identifying, mapping and disseminating information was seen as the strongest contribution to good programme design and effective targeting. In Nepal and in Zambia, WFP VAM staff provided valuable services and skills to government offices and were occasionally seconded to government offices.

175. The evaluation team also found that the government of Bolivia continues to use WFP VAM data to target intervention areas. Furthermore, the Government of Bolivia expressed interest in applying VAM to highlight 'shadow areas' where inequities in educational attainment occur, e.g. for ethnic groups or income groups, so that VAM staff may then measure how school feeding activities affect those inequalities.

176. There are still numerous opportunities to employ VAM systematically within the larger social and political context. For example, funding shortfalls can lead to retrenchment of school feeding programmes. In such circumstances, primary responsibility for cuts in school feeding falls to the host government. However, government rulings on retrenchment of school feeding programmes may not necessarily be informed by either Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) or Food Security Information Systems (FSIS). If a systematic tool for mapping programme retrenchment is not applied, retrenchment runs the risk of falling prey to political interests.

177. There are cases of exclusion by custom or prejudice of certain populations, such as minority groups.⁸⁸ VAM could identify areas where this occurs and remains a key guide to planning FFW/A activities, in association with FSIS, which provides alerts when a crisis is imminent. Coordination between the two systems is crucial, as well as with government services responsible for food security and development planning.⁸⁹

178. While there are limitations to the VAM system itself (e.g. inability to distinguish social variations within VAM geographical areas), this seems to be an arena where WFP can build on its strong foundation. The VAM approach and methodology can be linked to monitoring systems. In terms of a synergistic life-cycle approach, for example, in Nepal the evaluation team and VAM staff discussed coordinating knowledge on individual vulnerable children through their neonatal and child years, adolescence, and until they are followed by the next generation. This type of long-term tracking can help assess WFP's contributions to some of the longer-term objectives in combating hunger, such as higher birth weights across generations.

⁸⁸ Community Score Card March/July 2010.

⁸⁹ Among others, Ethiopia Mid-term evaluation of CP 10430.o.

2.5. Findings regarding Evaluation Question 5

What factors related to the capacity of WFP staff, including their skills, knowledge, attitudes and motivations, affect WFP's ability to find and implement long-term hunger solutions?

179. The evaluation team identified four general categories of factors that contributed to WFP staff capacity:

- Positive motivations and attitudes;
- Cascade effects of funding volatility;
- Staff technical skills;
- Training/Learning opportunities.

Positive Motivations and Attitudes

180. The evaluation team found CO and sub-office staff to be highly skilled and motivated, despite heavy workloads. There is little doubt that WFP staff, whether international or national, professional or general service, are dedicated to their mission and have performed effectively often in very difficult circumstances. The Nepal staff had to work during a civil war in areas controlled by insurgents and have shown extraordinary courage and skill controlling food deliveries amidst a war-like atmosphere.

181. Staff in all case study countries have demonstrated considerable creativity and openness in addressing issues related to food deprivation with the tools they have available. In addition to the strategic alignment of existing WFP interventions with government objectives or donor priorities mentioned in earlier segments (such as taking advantage of alternative funding sources in Nepal and switching from CP to a PPRO facility), staff were able to foster new visions. The school feeding programme in Bolivia is a case in point.

182. In Bolivia, national programme staff and their government counterparts pioneered a different approach to school feeding programmes under the '*PAE-S Facilidad Alimentaria*'. This vision of WFP school feeding involved local communities determining their own diet and nutrition elements. While these initiatives have not yet been linked to a scientific evaluation of their effects on long-term hunger, the team perceived a desire among WFP country staff and their national government counterparts to expand the programme and carry out impact analysis of their initiative.

183. Finally, in all three case study countries, WFP staff have developed very effective partnerships and relationships with both government ministries and departments, and with NGOs and sister agencies. These relationships were often built through specific project structures at the national level to ensure a mutual understanding of the issues, problems, and solutions and to present a common front to donors and others regarding long-term hunger.

184. The importance of these individual relationships cannot be sufficiently emphasized for their contribution to effective partnering. While there have been instances of organizational relationships through national level structures, most of these creative and

effective partnerships are due to the skills of the WFP staff members. This obviously will have implications if staff are cut or rotated rapidly. The evaluation team saw examples of significant staff longevity (up to 17 years in one case – national professional), but the Country Programme remains vulnerable to knowledge loss due to frequent staff rotation.

185. One item noted in the interviews was that in more than one country the changes in strategy, decided in WFP HQ, took time to ‘sink in’ and be applied at the country office level, generally due to time required to amend existing programmes or develop new ones to fit. However, staff adaptability was not the problem so much as the hierarchical nature of communications and the existing workloads.

Cascade Effects of Funding Volatility

186. Funding uncertainty played a role in staff capacity, creating increased job insecurity, overwork, and recourse to external consultants to accomplish internal programme tasks. These factors had an effect on the staff to work towards long-term hunger solutions.

187. **Rotation:** The need to react to funding shortages creates the need to shift programming emphasis. This has implications for the staffing, as personnel are switched to new priorities, sent to other COs, and replacements come late. Each employee has to adapt quickly to new surroundings and sometimes to changing strategy, such as the phase-out of FFW/A from the CP to the PRRO, following the funding availability.⁹⁰

188. **Overwork:** It is difficult to assess whether COs are adequately staffed, but if an office with a staff complement that corresponds to the volume of work (measured in either tonnage or funding) experiences a budget cut, this invariably leads to staffing cuts. Yet the work related to programming (whether short or long-term) often remains the same and does not diminish to an extent commensurate with the budget reduction. For example, the staff work required for arranging the delivery of 1000 metric tonnes to five partners is roughly similar to the work required for arranging the delivery 100 metric tonnes to five partners.

189. **Job Insecurity:** Unstable funding conditions also create a mindset of focusing on quick results and short-term achievements. Staff on short-term contracts can hardly demonstrate WFP’s role in ending long-term hunger.

190. **Consultant Usage:** The recourse to local consultants has filled gaps in short-term contracts, but it can hurt long-term planning and programming and increase the uncertainty of career prospects. Consultants can’t replicate relationships nor do they have the ability to represent WFP in larger fora. As an exception, Ethiopia’s FFW/A operating unit has been able to maintain a strong project unit in charge of programming in spite of cuts to the budget.

Staff Technical Skills

191. WFP offices are developing and some had developed capacity in terms of nutrition and mapping (VAM). However, general monitoring and evaluation (M&E) skills related to

⁹⁰WFP Nepal organigrammes 2007-09 and 2011.

scientifically based evidence tracking, understanding programme theory, and demonstrating effectiveness could be strengthened.

192. All COs operated with a nutritionist/food technologist who adapted HQ and RB directives to national priorities. The existence of in-house expertise related to nutrition may be helpful for tailoring programming to address the implications of long-term hunger. In addition, partners and donors described the skill and work of the food security analysis staff in identifying, mapping and disseminating information, as most useful. This was often cited as the strongest contribution to good programme design because it provided clear targeting justifications. While VAM may require some adjustment to map and track WFP effectiveness in combatting long-term hunger, mapping expertise was one of the most commonly praised skills of WFP staff.

193. In contrast to MCHN, there was often no in-house expertise related to school feeding or FFW/A, especially as they relate to long-term hunger solutions. However, staff were already perceived to be skilled in the management of the school feeding projects, as this model is of considerable importance to WFP and receives significant general organizational support. Secondly, the mix of skills required for FFW/A expertise would be such as to require a range of expertise: water supply, irrigation, soil erosion, civil engineering, etc. As a result, there is a perception that WFP must necessarily rely on partners, either in the government, NGOs, civil society or beneficiaries to help provide programming guidance. Consequently, there are few calls for technical training in these areas.

194. There appeared to be a need for more in-depth training to articulate and demonstrate the relative contribution of individual WFP programmes and the mix of programmes to reducing long-term hunger. In M&E terms, there is a need to identify measurable indicators to monitor effectiveness of the interventions in the context of long-term hunger. This could be used as evidence to substantiate claims of positive impact of food assistance on long-term hunger.

Training and Learning Opportunities

195. The evaluation team noted some good examples of peer-to-peer training/learning where WFP country offices are transferring lessons learned. There was also much praise for the technical support received from the Regional Bureaux in planning and programming activities as well as in nutrition and negotiating with regional organizations, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAAPD), and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

196. The need for training and learning has been a subject of considerable discussion in meetings with staff, especially local national professionals. However, with respect to trainings provided by WFP to staff, there appear to be some limitations. Training offered in the six case study countries focused on specific programmes and covered technical issues such as gender or food handling and preparation.⁹¹ Staff suggested that one way to minimize the time required for new strategy changes to 'sink in' at the country office level would be to

⁹¹ WFP – Human resources Development Training activities for the 6 selected countries during 2007-09 (list).

develop more 'learning through policy dialogue' on strategic and policy issues. This suggests that there is a training gap surrounding the monitoring, tracking, and conceptualization of the use of the three activities for addressing long-term hunger. Calls were also made for training in public communications and more opportunities in nutrition training.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Conclusions

Evaluation Question 1

197. Long-term hunger cannot be tackled in isolation, and assessment of its origins and solutions requires cooperation among different social and economic sectors. It is therefore essential that there be strong coordination at government level among various ministries and departments, not only to elaborate multi-sectoral strategies, but also to ensure they are actionable and that resources are properly targeted for optimum effect.

198. Interviews with different stakeholder groups in all three case study countries suggest that there is no single common interpretation of long-term hunger and its causes and consequences. Interpretations of long-term hunger vary from acute poverty to chronic malnutrition among government, WFP and partner informants. As a consequence, the governments' approaches regarding the type of national strategy devoted to long-term hunger differed, but the common denominator in these strategies tended to reference Millennium Development Goal 1, with stress on undernutrition and poverty.

199. WFP programmes, as implemented in the countries selected for study in this evaluation, were found to be well integrated into government development plans and are incorporated in joint WFP-Government Country Strategy papers aimed at addressing long-term hunger (either already agreed or in the process of agreement with governments). The strategy papers were not uniform, since each country has a history which determines the Country Programme content. Strategies varied from a disaster response (Ethiopia) to a capacity building (Zambia) to educational priorities (Nepal).

200. In all three activities studied, WFP country offices have developed very effective partnerships with ministries and departments, often through specific project structure at national level, ensuring mutual understanding of the issues, problems, and solutions. Regarding long-term hunger issues, the evaluation team did not find a direct link between the national level strategies and WFP operational interventions, because ending long-term hunger had not yet been articulated in either government or WFP documents.

Evaluation Question 2

201. The three activities – MCHN, SF and FFW/A – encompass a wide range of beneficiary targets, through multiple entry points and in diverse sectors of the economy. Since they involve health, nutrition, hygiene, education, rural development, agriculture,

water supplies, and access to markets, they provide scope for synergies among sectors and suggest a need for a holistic approach when planning solutions to end hunger. Whilst WFP projects, such as SF, MCHN and FFW/A are not always adopted as part of a government's long-term hunger strategy, some projects have served as a lessons learned platform for government partners to plan and build upon when developing their own strategies within either a sectoral or national context. However, while it is recognized by staff that the three interventions in concert can provide an outlet for addressing long-term hunger, there was no evidence of implementation of an integrated framework. The life-cycle approach is one such useful integrating framework that could potentially be applied more systematically.

202. There appears to be a general consensus among stakeholders interviewed that each of the three activities are appropriate in addressing long-term hunger, provided that they target the right people and are delivered in time. The activity choice itself is less critical than the correct targeting and delivery methods. On the basis of the six countries studied, the three activities appear to be relatively efficient and cost-effective, but these are not measures of their impact on long-term hunger. Regrettably, funding problems and other forces have in some instances led to cuts in the number of beneficiaries, elimination of some targeted areas, delays in the delivery of food assistance, and incomplete ration distributions.

203. Earlier references cited suggest that the crucial intervention points for long-term hunger are in the pre-natal periods for mothers and the first two years of life for infants. WFP has however deliberately included 2-5 year old children in institutional feeding activities as a way of ensuring continuity in nutritional support for this age group until they reach school age and can be eligible for school feeding. This is a life-cycle approach to programming, taken despite pressures to focus on under 2 year olds for more cost effective impact on nutrition rates MCHN is also being employed for its potential contribution in integrating vulnerable households into the health systems rather than solely for nutritional concerns.

204. SF occupied the largest percentage of tonnage and revenue distributed to the three interventions. In interviews, staff viewed SF as efficient and cost effective way of providing macro and micro nutrients to vulnerable children and was identified as generating other secondary effects. The wide range of rationales for school feeding and the degree of innovation and enthusiasm from staff on programme design suggested that it was a highly valued component in WFP programming. When viewed as a conduit in ending long-term hunger, the other two activities of MCHN and FFW/A may play more significant roles for addressing long-term hunger than their relative resource commitments may suggest.

205. Finally, interviews with the most vulnerable suggested that although WFP and governments have made considerable progress in targeting vulnerable hungry people and assessing their needs, the level of personal and household vulnerability and proposals for eventual solution to their hunger are understood differently from the perspective of the potential beneficiary. Evidence from the anthropological reports suggests that at least some of the most vulnerable have been largely unaffected by WFP interventions, implying that targeting and design are still not reaching the most vulnerable.

Evaluation Question 3

206. The expectation of ongoing food price volatility both illustrates and underlines the linkages between the causes of long-term and short-term hunger, pointing to the need to address these different forms of hunger together. The rising food prices increased the degree of vulnerability of some populations to hunger and posed challenges for WFP as it sought to maintain its commitments. WFP's overall annual operating budget rose 22% in 2008 mainly due to rising food prices.

207. Within WFP, the programming to respond to short-term shocks and long-term conditions treated them in parallel rather than as one common challenge. With this artificial division of long-term and short-term hunger solutions, the long-term hunger activities, as implemented, may only be maintaining a *status quo* of vulnerability rather than actually reducing the consequences and vulnerability to long-term hunger. An ongoing and secure commitment from donors to long-term hunger activities is necessary to ensure sustainable action against hunger within the current and projected global economic context.

208. There is evidence that short-term crises drew donor attention away from long-term hunger programmes and WFP staff into necessary, but energy and time-consuming, activities to deal with short-term emergencies. There have been cases where an effective long-term initiative has been dissected and treated as a shorter-term initiative in response to donor funding priorities. A complicating factor is that food price volatility is rapidly becoming the new 'norm' in humanitarian context.

209. WFP reliance on voluntary contributions combined with food price volatility on world markets presents a difficult environment for the agency to carry out its activities. These dynamics presented programming challenges in all of the case study countries, resulting in reduced rations or shifts in programming priorities. Shifts included reducing the quantity, regularity, or quality of food distribution (Nepal), shifting commodities and geographic coverage (Bolivia), reducing the number of beneficiaries (Zambia, Bolivia, Nepal), or staffing cuts (Bolivia and Zambia). In Zambia there were two rounds of cuts and sub offices were closed down between 2007-09. In other instances, interventions were shifted from CP to PRRO in order to be maintained and re-articulated as forms of recovery rather than long-term development (Nepal).

210. Finally, it was evident that WFP has established good relationships with governments as strategic partners and both government and NGO implementing partners. Relations within the UN network of sister agencies and donors were good, but more variable. Relationships with donors and some partners were complicated by partner different perceptions of WFP role in addressing long-term hunger. Donors do not necessarily consider WFP to be a development player and partners did not have confidence in WFP's ability to honour long-term commitments due to its voluntary, and thus uncertain, funding procedures.

211. Donor and some partner reactions suggested that WFP has not yet succeeded in developing a case to demonstrate its comparative advantage in solving the hunger dilemma. The lack of such a model inhibits WFP's ability to alter such perceptions or to define well its role in the multi-stakeholder context.

Evaluation Question 4

212. WFP's current funding model creates difficulties for implementing activities aimed at addressing long-term hunger. Resource mobilization efforts at the country office level occupy significant staff time, create a hand-to-mouth mentality and inadvertently lengthen approval time in some cases. In addition to these constraints, the uncertainty in programming due to lack of guaranteed funding structure leads to time extensions of projects and country programmes far beyond their original timescale. Long-term programming is thus effectively a series of short-term activities. Long-term agreements with implementing partners were also affected by lack of funds and delayed payments. Finally, juggling resources would sometimes lead staff to shift interventions between different programming structures (CP, PRRO, EMOP). While tactically ingenious, this has negative consequences for synergies between the interventions.

213. The barriers to integrated programming are further exacerbated through the division of programming activities and their reporting to separate units at both the regional and HQ levels, which are then replicated at the national level. This leads occasionally to parallel initiatives (such as an MCHN programme and a micronutrient programme) as well as impeding good monitoring and tracking. In addition, the treatment of long-term hunger entirely separately from short-term hunger is misleading, as the causes and remedies are common to both.

214. WFP monitoring systems, although often very elaborate and sophisticated, have been designed primarily to demonstrate diligent and responsible management of food assistance to donors. These systems measure outputs – such as number of beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex; tonnage delivered; and contributions, in terms of funds pledged and disbursed – but not the effects on the beneficiaries in terms of their physical state or improved food security at household level. This absence of clear and compelling evidence on impact is an obstacle to effective resource mobilization with donors regarding long-term hunger solutions.

215. WFP monitoring data is strictly country programme and project based and does not link activities with national level strategies addressing poverty and undernutrition. While this does not imply that there is no link, the absence of documented connection represents a strategic gap.

216. Further, the funding uncertainty and delays in transmission of funds led to delayed deliveries and reduction in quantities of food assistance with negative implications on activities. Irregular food supplies affect intra-household food sharing mechanisms, and foodstuffs intended for one family member, such as fortified blended foods, are more likely to be shared, diluting their intended nutritional impact.

217. The consequences of long-term hunger, the potential for mitigation, and the degree of resistance to hunger conditions through the construction of assets, skills, and knowledge are likely to vary considerably within even a tiny geographic region. The level of variation may be distinct even at the level of individual households. As a consequence, the ability of a programme to identify vulnerabilities and to track households over the long term becomes crucial for successful implementation of integrated activities.

218. WFP has been very successful in developing food security information systems (FSIS) and vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM), both widely accepted by governments and often incorporated in their own strategies to assess risks and develop solutions. VAM particularly, in its role of identifying vulnerable areas and vulnerable groups, is a potential integrator for both short and long-term interventions as well as an entry mechanism for WFP into the context of reduction and ending long-term hunger.

219. While there are shortcomings within the VAM system itself (e.g. lack of distinction of ecological and social variations within VAM geographical areas), this seems to be an arena where WFP can demonstrate a comparative advantage. In terms of a life-cycle approach, for example, in Nepal the evaluation team and VAM staff discussed coordinating knowledge of individual vulnerable children through their neo-natal and child years, through their school feeding, through their adolescence, and on till they are followed by the next generation. This type of long-term tracking can help assess WFP's contributions to some of the longer-term objectives in ending long-term hunger, such as higher birth weights across generations.

220. Field visits suggested that the case study programmes are attempting to use the interventions as multi-sectoral entry points for engaging on long-term hunger solutions and partnerships. Forming and sustaining partnership with government and civil society were considered keys for successful implementation and WFP programmes excelled at building these partnering relationships around issues. In most cases, there were strong links with community organizations and local-level government structures which helped to support the sustainability of these long-term activities.

Evaluation Question 5

221. The evaluation team found most staff to be highly skilled and motivated, despite heavy workloads for many. There is little doubt that WFP staff, be they international or national, professional or general service, are all dedicated to their mission and have performed well in very difficult circumstances. The case studies demonstrated that WFP country staff have developed very effective partnerships and relationships with both government ministries and departments, as well as with NGOs and sister agencies.

222. However, funding cuts affected staff capacity by creating increased job insecurity, some rotation of positions, overwork, and recourse to consultants to accomplish internal programme tasks. Filling gaps through short-term contracts has negative effects on long-term planning and programming, as they cannot replicate relationships nor do they have the historical knowledge to represent WFP in strategic planning meetings.

223. Staff technical capacity varied in terms of its relevance to long-term hunger solutions specifically. Positively, WFP offices were developing and had developed capacity in terms of nutrition and mapping (VAM). Further, all COs observed were operating with a nutritionist/food technologist who could contextualize directives in programming. However, general M&E skills related to scientifically based evidence tracking and demonstrating effectiveness need strengthening. With the exception of MCHN, there was no in-house expertise related to school feeding or FFW/A .

224. While the necessity of in-house technical expertise related to SF or FFW/A may not strictly be necessary, it was noted that increased general technical expertise on the activities being implemented could be helpful. There is need for in-depth training to articulate and demonstrate the relative contribution of individual WFP programmes and the mix of programmes in reducing long-term hunger. There is also a gap in monitoring, tracking and conceptualizing the use of the interventions in synergy for building long-term hunger solutions, as well in communications and additional nutrition expertise.

3.2. Recommendations

225. **Broad Recommendation, with respect to overall findings: WFP should approach hunger holistically, integrating short-term and long-term hunger solutions.** WFP should consider hunger as one issue rather than targeting short and long-term hunger separately. WFP should therefore coordinate with its partners to address the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger in line with Millennium Development Goal 1. A holistic model that incorporates short and long-term hunger factors and integrates the three interventions can be used more intentionally for dialogue with beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, partners, civil society, government, and donors.

226. **Recommendation 1, with respect to Evaluation Question 1: WFP should ensure that those who are vulnerable to hunger are actively engaged in shaping and implementing the hunger solutions that affect them.** The case studies suggest that there exist different interpretations of long-term hunger among WFP, government, and beneficiaries. Further, the landscape of vulnerability presents difficulties in targeting program interventions. Finally, there is a need for stable, long-term partnering to address long-term hunger. Building civil society partnerships where the most vulnerable to hunger are actively engaged in shaping their hunger solutions may help develop more hunger-appropriate interventions. WFP should strengthen efforts to equip government policy-making partners with the latest civil society knowledge for promoting food security and improved nutrition through effective community-driven approaches to ensure the inclusion of all social groups vulnerable to extreme poverty and hunger.

227. **Recommendation 2, with respect to Evaluation Question 2: WFP should adopt a life-cycle approach to hunger.** WFP has a unique comparative advantage by having multiple entry points for addressing hunger and should ensure that MCHN, SF and FFW/A activities are designed to complement each other when addressing hunger among the most vulnerable sectors of the population. A framework for understanding the crucial points of intervention for long-term hunger across the life cycle can be crucial for helping WFP country offices assess the relative use of their interventions and the potential synergies that can be built. This requires an expansion of WFP, national governments, and other partners' analysis of food insecurity (through VAM and other dynamic multi-dimensional tools) to include the lifelong and ultimately intergenerational vulnerability of individuals in order to ensure that the three activities are targeted appropriately.

228. **Recommendation 3, with respect to Evaluation Question 3: WFP should work with donors and UN sister agencies to develop a funding model consistent with long-term hunger solutions and challenge donor governments**

to meet their food security related funding commitments. This model should ensure stable levels of funding that respond adequately to changes in global economic conditions, particularly rapidly changing prices of food. It should also enable WFP to capitalize on synergies to address both short and long-term hunger simultaneously. A new model would need to incorporate set annual contributions and guaranteed multi-year contributions. It would also need to reduce the amount of resource mobilization generated at the national office level and be integrated into long-term design functions. WFP should mount a major mobilisation (e.g. the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Seoul, and further advocacy through G20, G8, and future Food Aid Conventions) for raising more predictable funding through donor country delegations for food security congruent with MDG 1 and WFP Executive Board commitments to ‘eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.’

229. Recommendation 4, with respect to Evaluation Question 4:WFP HQ should develop a model to demonstrate WFP’s comparative advantage in addressing long-term hunger. A complex mix of agencies and donors are involved in elements pertaining to addressing long-term hunger. Internally, WFP staff perceive a clear role or responsibility for WFP engagement in ending long-term hunger. However, it does not appear that donors and partner agencies necessarily share the same understanding of WFP’s role within this mix of agencies, suggesting there is work to be done yet on articulating WFP’s potential contribution to donors and partners. A clearer model of WFP’s comparative advantages in the mix of agencies may help address these donor/partner misperceptions of WFP.

230. Recommendation 5, with respect to Evaluation Question 5:WFP should have core-funded long term career paths up to senior level for technical specialists which are performance assessed in terms of ending long-term hunger for promotion. Technical staff are generally considered for a career on par with generalists, and often placed in management positions when their technical skills could often be better utilised in continuing to pursue skilled technical functions.

Acronyms

AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
CAAPD	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CERF	UN Central Emergency Response Fund
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
EMOP	WFP Emergency Operation
EQAS	WFP Evaluation Quality Assurance System
EU	European Union
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FFE	Food for Education
FSIS	Food Security and Information System
FFW/A	Food for Work/Assets
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HQ	WFP Headquarters
IRA	WFP Immediate Response Account
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition
MoH	Ministry of Health
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSFP	National School Feeding Program
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OE	WFP Office of Evaluation
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
PRST	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RB	Regional Bureau
RBM	Results Based Management
SCN	UN Standing Committee on Nutrition
SF	School Feeding
SO	Strategic Objective
SPR	Standard Project Report
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
VDC	Village District Council
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
ZMNP	Zero Malnutrition Programme

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