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EVALUATION REPORTS

Agenda item 5

For consideration

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF FOOD FOR ASSETS ON LIVELIHOOD RESILIENCE IN UGANDA (2005–2010)

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

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

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Should you have any questions regarding availability of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation assessed outcomes and impacts associated with WFP's food-for-assets activities in northern Uganda, as one of a series on the impact of food-for-assets activities on livelihoods resilience. It identified lessons for enhancing resilience impacts and the alignment of current food-for-assets programming with WFP's Food for Assets Guidance Manual (2011), particularly in the context of the transition from conflict to peace building and development.

The evaluation assessed the food-for-assets components of four WFP operations in northern Uganda, from 2005 to 2010: protracted relief and recovery operations 101211 and 101212, and country programmes 104260 and 108070. Up to 90 days of food rations were provided to 329,400 households over the period. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, including document review, observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and a household survey.

The period reviewed was one of civil conflict and violence, refugee influxes, large internal population displacements, and drought. It included the transition from emergency to recovery, and the first implementation of WFP's shift to a food assistance strategy.

The evaluation found that the WFP country office achieved significant short-term benefits for internally displaced persons through food assistance that bridged a hunger gap created by the dissolution of camps and reductions in general food relief distributions. WFP is one of few organizations to have operated in the most remote and dangerous parts of northern Uganda, and was among the first to shift from emergency to recovery programming.

Assets were appropriately designed to address immediate problems with food security and employment and high-priority needs, such as access and planting materials, rather than longer-term goals. Roads contributed to increased access to abandoned farm plots; woodlots to stabilization of environmental degradation; and teachers' houses to re-establishment of the education system.

The most significant improvements reported by households were immediate food security and skills gained, for 21 percent; social-sector benefits in education and sanitation, for 21 percent; economic benefits, particularly access to markets and services, for 19 percent; and access to resources – fuelwood, water, fish and seeds – for 16 percent. Positive impacts on women were felt most in agropastoral communities, where women are responsible for most agricultural activities – although men retain control over resources – and through household-level benefits, particularly access to fuelwood.

Despite the absence of longer-term plans, assets were found in 39 percent of intervention locations, and more than half were fully functioning. Assets associated with schools appeared to have the most successful maintenance arrangements.

Food-for-assets activities were designed individually and depended on scarce technical partners, resulting in only marginal livelihood gains linked to specific assets in certain locations.

The evaluation made recommendations related to the management of food-for-assets activities in transition contexts: capacity development and knowledge retention for implementation of the 2013 revised Food for Assets Guidance Manual; strategic and operational planning, technical design capacity and partnerships; coordinated, inter-agency planning of food for assets and complementary programmes; and lessons learned for food-for-assets activities in transition contexts.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board takes note of "Summary Report of the Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience in Uganda (2005–2010)" (WFP/EB.1/2014/5-D) and the management response in WFP/EB.1/2014/5-D/Add.1, and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

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

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation Features

1. This independent evaluation assessed WFP's food-for-assets (FFA) activities implemented in Uganda between 2005 and 2010 under four programmes: protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs) 101211 and 101212, and country programmes 104260 and 108070.[1]

2. As one of a series, the evaluation's objectives were to assess the outcomes and impacts of FFA on livelihoods resilience, identify changes for enhancing these impacts, and generate lessons for better alignment of FFA programming with WFP's 2011 FFA Guidance Manual[2] and disaster risk reduction policy[3,4] It addressed three core questions:

   - What positive and negative impacts have FFA activities had on individuals within participating households and communities?
   - What factors were critical in affecting outcomes and impacts?
   - How could FFA activities be improved to address the findings from the first two questions?

3. The evaluation tested a theory of change, based on WFP programme guidance, in which food or cash are provided for work on constructing assets or time spent in capacity development, with the aims of:

   - improving household food security in the short term;
   - improving the biophysical environment, agricultural production and livelihood options in the medium term; and
   - achieving sustained improvements in livelihoods resilience, including improved ability to cope with shocks, in the longer term.

4. The factors considered necessary for achieving intended impacts include:

   - a supportive external context;
   - accurate risk and livelihoods analysis;
   - assets that meet quality standards;
   - adequate funding;
   - the availability of resources;
   - technical assistance;
   - complementary inputs; and
   - local ownership and maintenance.

[1] In 2013 WFP changed the use of the FFA acronym to mean "food assistance for assets", covering food, cash and voucher activities for asset creation and training. During the period covered by this evaluation, however, FFA referred exclusively to food-for-assets activities.

[2] WFP FFA Guidance Manual (2011), modules A to E and annexes.

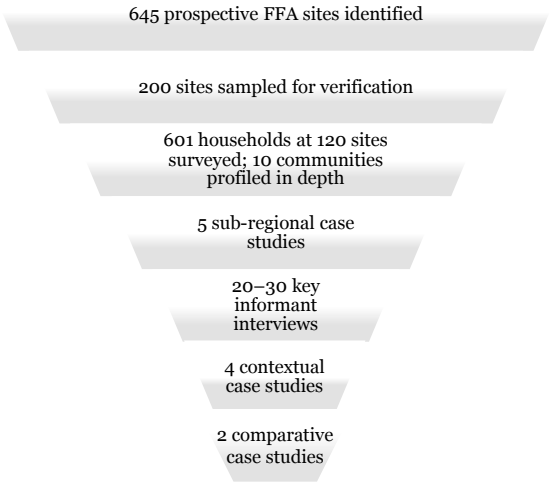
[3] "WFP Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management" (WFP/EB.2/2011/4-A).

[4] The activities evaluated were designed and implemented prior to adoption of the guidance manual (which is being revised) and disaster risk reduction policy, but their goals were broadly similar and the evaluation terms of reference emphasized learning.

5. Although the evaluation series focused on natural resource assets, this evaluation also considered infrastructure assets such as roads and schools, which were considered particularly relevant to the food security and resilience of returning populations in the fluid and conflict-affected context of northern Uganda. [5] Reflecting this fluidity, the evaluation considered the contributions of FFA as concurrent elements of the transition from vulnerability to resilience rather than as distinct linear steps.[6]

6. The evaluation's mixed-methods approach is summarized in Figure 1 and included: i) document and corporate data reviews; ii) semi-structured interviews with 30 key informants; iii) focus group discussions in eight communities representing different contexts;[7] iv) direct observation of 169 assets; and v) a household survey involving 601 interviews, 36 percent with women and 64 percent with men.

Figure 1: Overview of the evaluation methodology



Source: Inception Report for this evaluation.

7. Limitations included lack of information on the assets created – location, selection, work norms and standards, implementation logic and baseline data – and of a base from which to make comparisons.[8] The following factors precluded comparative analysis of FFA impacts:

- FFA was implemented in the context of conflict, with no baseline data or records of where, how and why assets were constructed.
- Returns of displaced persons and refugees made it difficult to identify FFA participants; many of the camps that were centres for FFA activities no longer existed.

[5] For the purposes of this evaluation, northern Uganda includes the sub-regions of Acholi, Karamoja, Lango, Teso and West Nile.

[6] Based on Pasteur, K. 2011. *From Vulnerability to Resilience: A Framework for Analysis and Action to Build Community Resilience*. Rugby, UK, Practical Action Publishing. The circular model includes livelihoods, governance, hazards and stresses, and future uncertainties.

[7] The contexts of the communities in Acholi, Teso and Lango were typified as dynamic, and those in Karamoja and West Nile as chronic.

[8] Of the 601 households interviewed, 519 were present at the time of asset construction, and 82 were current users of the assets. Plans to interview a third group of participants who had moved out of the area were abandoned, as these people were too difficult to trace.

- Many households were displaced, traumatized and practising extreme coping strategies.
- Large external forces such as peace settlements were likely to have greater effects on livelihood strategies than the FFA interventions had.
- The scale of the WFP programme made it difficult to identify comparison groups who did not receive assistance.

8. These limitations were mitigated by analysis of distribution data, individual recalls of FFA activities, a verification survey, and triangulation of evidence from qualitative and quantitative, primary and secondary data.[9] Evidence was analysed against the theory of change framework and comparisons made across sub-regions.

CONTEXT

9. Over the evaluation period (2005–2010), people in northern Uganda experienced severe shocks, including:

- a violent conflict with massive waves of internal displacements, affecting all sub-regions, particularly Acholi, Teso and Lango;
- large refugee influxes, mostly in Western Nile;
- widespread insecurity and cattle raids, mostly in Karamoja; and
- drought, flooding and environmental degradation, mostly in Karamoja and Western Nile.

10. In 2005–2006, 1.6 million people lived in 164 camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). By 2008, across northern Uganda more than 650,000 people – many of them children – had been abducted at one point or another during the conflict. These problems compounded the underdevelopment and poverty that characterize the region. For example, among districts in Karamoja, adult literacy rates ranged from 8 to 22 percent in 2007, compared with the Ugandan average of 50 to 60 percent.

11. After the 2006–2008 peace agreements, IDPs began returning home, where they faced challenges such as reintegration of child soldiers and rebuilding of agriculture, infrastructure and services. Local governments coordinated these efforts, and the main shocks became natural hazards (see Table 1). Loss of livestock, changes in coping strategies[10] and social upheaval during the conflict changed livelihoods irreversibly.

[9] Non-binary comparative analysis – "fuzzy set analysis" – was used to process the large amount of qualitative data from assets verification, focus groups and household data, to identify patterns in variables systematically. Details in the full evaluation report, annexes 6 and 7.

[10] In 2005, an estimated 50 percent of the population in Acholi and 30 percent in Lango depended on food aid.

TABLE 1: CHANGES IN SHOCKS TO HOUSEHOLDS OVER TIME			
Year	**Sub-regions**	**Shocks**	**Prevalence (households) %**
Ongoing	West Nile	Refugee influxes	-
2004	Acholi, Lango, Teso	Violence, abductions, mass internal displacements	30–70
	Karamoja, West Nile	Droughts	45–57
	Karamoja, Lango, Teso	Cattle raiding	-
2009	Karamoja	Insecurity, looting of assets	94
	Acholi, Lango, Teso, West Nile	High food prices, poor rains	-

Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics, National Household Surveys (2005/06 and 2009/10).

12. The main root causes of food insecurity during and after the conflict were lack of access to land and farmers' limited productive capacity in Acholi, Lango and West Nile; and climate stresses and land degradation in the agropastoralist sub-regions of Karamoja and Teso.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

13. The evaluation period covered WFP's transition from food aid (2005–2008) to food assistance (2009–2010); Uganda was viewed as a vanguard country for the WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2013). Intended FFA beneficiaries were refugees, IDPs, host communities, resettled people and agropastoralists in 645 villages of five sub-regions of northern Uganda.[11] FFA activities were scattered geographically and over time, and varied in intensity within individual areas.

14. Corporate reporting systems for PRROs do not record the locations of assets, or expenditures by specific activities. The evaluation estimated that from 2005 to 2010, 329,000 households participated in FFA activities (see Table 2), with overall programme costs of approximately USD 2.1 million per year – 2 percent of the WFP country office's total inputs in northern Uganda. Up to 90 days of food rations were provided to participants during lean seasons.

TABLE 2: ESTIMATED FFA PARTICIPANTS BY PROJECT, 2005–2010							
		2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
PRRO	101210	19 866	-	-	-	-	-
	101211	28 720	91 552	106 240	12 603	-	-
	101212	-	-	-	21 177	32 280	-
Country programme (CP)	104260	-	8 004	5 435	3 987	725	-
	108070	-	-	-	-	-	49 434
Participants est. (excl. overlap)	EST. TOTAL	28 720	91 552	106 240	21 177	32 280	49 434
GRAND TOTAL: 329 403							

[11] According to Commodity Movement Processing and Analysis System (COMPAS) data provided by the country office.

Sources: WFP standard project reports 2005–2010.

15. Collaborating partners included national and local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Local leaders drew up lists of vulnerable households whose members were free to participate if interested.

16. Community mobilizers and partners designed asset proposals, which WFP approved based on the feasibility of the asset, the availability of technical partners and food, the establishment of management structures, and adherence to WFP's Enhanced Commitments to Women.

FINDINGS

17. At the 200 locations sampled, 169 assets in 77 locations were established within the evaluation reference period.[12] The asset verification exercise found surviving assets in 39 percent of locations.

18. As shown in Table 3, most of the assets found were infrastructure, at 38 percent of the total, and natural resource assets, at 34 percent. The highest percentage of assets observed was in West Nile, with 37 percent, and the lowest in Teso and Lango, with 10 percent.

TABLE 3: ASSETS ASSESSED, BY CATEGORY AND SUB-REGION

Sub-region	Total		Asset category					
			Natural resource		Infrastructure		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Acholi	45	26	17	10	13	7	15	9
West Nile	62	37	13	8	31	18	18	11
Karamoja	45	27	20	12	12	7	13	8
Teso and Lango	17	10	7	4	9	5	1	0
TOTAL	**169**	**100**	**57**	**34**	**64**	**38**	**48**	**28**

Source: Verification survey, 2013.

19. Table 4 shows the most common types of asset in each category.[13] No single type represented more than 27 percent of the assets created in a sub-region. School woodlots and teachers' houses comprised the largest proportions of assets, at 21 and 14 percent respectively.

[12] Of the 308 assets verified, 11 had unknown construction dates, 108 pre-dated 2005, and 20 were created after 2010.

[13] Types found: 12 natural resource assets, 13 infrastructure assets and 20 other assets.

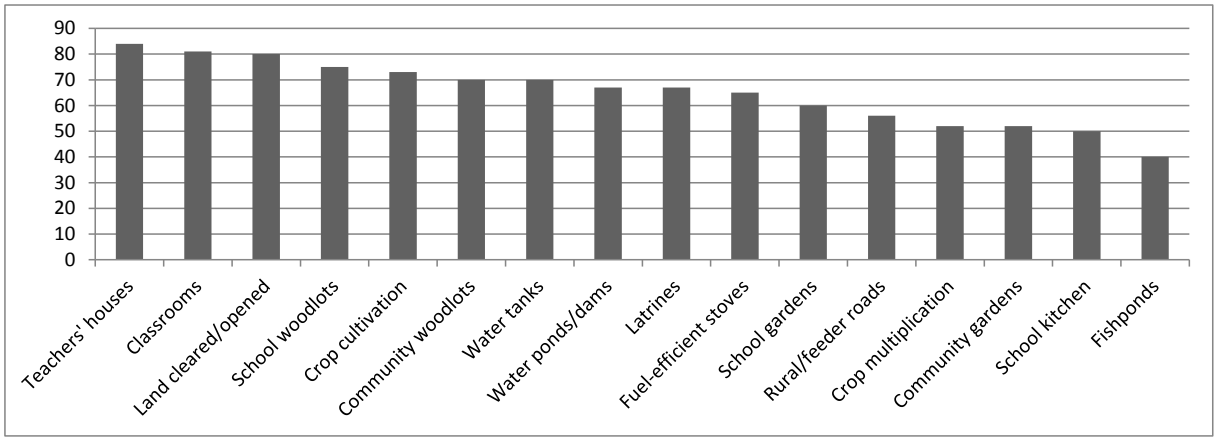
TABLE 4: MAIN TYPES OF ASSETS CONSTRUCTED, BY CATEGORY AND SUB-REGION

Sub-region	Natural resource		Infrastructure		Other	
Acholi (45 assets in total)	School woodlots	10 (22%)	Rural/feeder roads	7 (16%)	Water ponds/ dams	5 (11%)
West Nile (62)	School woodlots	10 (16%)	Teachers' houses	13 (21%)	Water ponds/ dams	6 (10%)
Karamoja (45)	School woodlots Water ponds/dams	12 (27%) 4 (9%)	Teachers' houses	7 (16%)	Fuel-efficient stoves	5 (11%)
Teso and Lango (17)	School woodlots	3 (18%)	Teachers' houses	4 (24%)	Class floor maintenance	1 (6%)

Source: Verification survey, 2013.

20. As shown in Figure 2, most assets were functional, apart from fishponds, of which only 40 percent were. Except for in Acholi, most assets had a functioning user group with responsibilities for asset management.

Figure 2: Asset functionality *(%)*



Source: Verification survey, 2013.

Effects on the Biophysical Environment

21. The theory of change and WFP's programme documents expected FFA to bring improvements in land productivity. As shown in Table 5, only 14 percent of survey respondents cited environmental benefits as the most significant change attributable to the assets created. In Karamoja, however, 17 percent of respondents cited increased access to seeds as the most significant change to their livelihoods.

TABLE 5: PERCEPTIONS OF BIOPHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS *(%)*					
Environmental benefits (14)	**Acholi**	**Teso and Lango**	**Karamoja**	**West Nile**	**Overall**
Trees as windbreakers or shade	3	2	1	1	**2**
Modified local climate	2	1	4	2	**2**
Soil erosion control	-	-	1	-	**< 1**
Land reclamation	-	-	-	1	**< 1**
Beautification	-	-	-	1	**< 1**
Increased fuelwood	5	2	1	3	**3**
Increased fish availability	-	1	-	-	**< 1**
Increased access to seeds	-	-	17	1	**5**
Increased crop yields	1	1	2	-	**1**

Source: Household survey, 2013.

22. According to interviews and focus group discussions, cassava multiplication – 2 percent of the assets observed – was a short-lived but influential intervention in Acholi that met the immediate need for cassava cuttings. Rural roads – 5 percent of observed assets – helped returnees to reach their villages and farmland; and woodlots – 24 percent – mitigated environmental degradation around camps. However, the assets created did not overcome larger constraints to agricultural productivity, particularly security, and the need for draught animal traction for land cultivation. As peace returned, people's access to their land improved, partly as a result of road construction, although extra efforts were needed to clear overgrown fields.

23. With 75 percent still functioning,[14] woodlots[15] were more successfully maintained than other assets; qualitative and quantitative data indicated that school woodlots had the highest survival rates, but their productive capacity was limited by their size, the species used, community management, poor maintenance arrangements and weak market connections.[16]

24. The water ponds and dams observed tended to be relatively large and provided water for both cattle and irrigation. Given the importance of agropastoralism, it was significant that these were the only assets identified as benefiting cattle keepers and were few in number, reaching only 3 percent of the beneficiaries identified in the verification survey.

Effects on Food Security and Livelihood

25. The most frequently reported livelihood effects attributed to FFA were the direct short-term impacts of addressing the food gap created when displaced persons returned to their home areas, and of the technical skills acquired, which together were mentioned by 21 percent of respondents (see Table 6). Other important perceived changes related to social sectors – education and health – mentioned by 21 percent, and economic benefits, mentioned by 19 percent.

26. Across sub-regions, 82 percent of respondents reported that FFA food was directly consumed. The proportion was lower in the dynamic contexts of Acholi, Teso and Lango

[14] Verification survey, 2013.

[15] Including community woodlots, not included in Table 4.

[16] Asset verification and secondary observation, 2013.

than in the chronic contexts of West Nile and Karamoja, suggesting that households in areas with returnees were more likely to use food transfers as a source of capital to restart livelihoods, while those in conditions of chronic food insecurity or in refugee settings were more likely to use them to fill a food gap directly.

27. Given the relative importance of woodlots and food transfer benefits, fewer than expected time and energy savings and diet/nutrition benefits at the household level were identified, although there were significant gender differences, as indicated in the following section.

TABLE 6: PERCEPTIONS OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL BENEFITS *(%)*

Benefits		**Acholi**	**Teso and Lango**	**Karamoja**	**West Nile**	**Overall**
Direct (21)	Food provision	15	6	22	10	**14**
	Technical skills	3	7	9	10	**7**
Economic (19)	Increased savings or income	6	12	5	9	**7**
	Improved standards of living	9	8	2	2	**5**
	Access to markets and services	9	6	7	3	**6**
	Rural development	1	-	-	1	**<1**
Social sector (21)	Clean water	6	1	2	1	**3**
	Improved sanitation, health and hygiene	5	13	6	3	**6**
	Retention of teachers in remote rural areas	3	13	2	5	**6**
	Increased enrolment of children in school	1	-	-	4	**1**
	Increased attendance of teachers	-	4	1	9	**3**
	Improved education performance	2	4	1	5	**3**
Household-level (1)	Job opportunities	1	-	-	1	**<1**
	Improved nutrition/diet	-	1	1	-	**<1**
	Time and energy savings	-	2	1	-	**<1**
Other (17)	No change/impact/don't know	20	2	12	25	**17**

Source: Household survey, 2013.

Effects on Women and Gender Dynamics

28. Table 7 suggests that higher impacts on women were associated with agropastoral-based livelihoods. In Acholi and West Nile, about half of respondents reported at least one significant positive impact for women, compared with 76 percent in Teso and Lango and 89 percent in Karamoja.

TABLE 7: PERCEPTIONS OF MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR WOMEN *(%)*					
Reporting significant change for women	**Acholi**	**Teso and Lango**	**Karamoja**	**West Nile**	**Overall**
	55	76	89	52	**66**
Food provision	6	17	27	8	**14**
Increased savings or income	5	6	8	5	**6**
Group mobilization/organization /motivation	8	4	7	2	**5**
Fuelwood	7	7	6	6	**6**
No change/impact/ don't know	45	24	11	48	**34**

Source: Household survey, 2013.

29. In Table 8, perceived changes in livelihoods in general are compared with perceived changes for women. Direct, economic, social and environmental benefits, such as improved technical skills, access to markets and seeds and standards of living, were reported to be significantly lower for women, while community cohesion and household benefits, such as self-reliance, security, group mobilization, job opportunities, diet and time savings, were reported to be significantly higher.

TABLE 8: PERCEPTIONS OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS *(%)*		
For livelihoods overall		**For women**
21	**Direct**	**17**
19	**Economic**	**11**
21	**Social sector**	**11**
6	**Community cohesion**	**12**
14	**Environmental**	**9**
1	**Household-level**	**6**
17	**Other**	**34**

Source: Household survey, 2013.

30. FFA did not challenge established gender roles in which women provide the main productive capacity for agriculture, while men control resources and decision-making. According to WFP field staff and local government, although women did most of the work in FFA consistent with traditional cultural roles, they did not acquire greater control over the assets constructed. However, FFA was found to enhance self-reliance for some women through experience of tasks previously seen as the preserve of men, such as road building.

31. Although environmental benefits were rated lower for women than overall – 9 percent versus 14 percent – perceived benefits from improved access to fuelwood were much higher for women, accounting for two-thirds of the 9 percent of perceived environmental benefits for women. Productive woodlots also provided strong direct benefits for women by relieving the fuelwood collection burden that primarily affects women and girls.[17] Income-generating assets, such as fishponds, were reported as remaining under men's control.

32. Informants in local government and NGOs suggested that an unintended effect of the encouragement of women's participation in FFA was to exacerbate the erosion of men's sense of responsibility for household production, which originated with effects of the conflict that included loss of livestock, trauma and alcoholism.

Effects on Community Resilience

33. Although WFP's investment in FFA in northern Uganda was relatively limited for the context, FFA contributed to community cohesion, with 6 percent of the significant changes reported relating to group dynamics and mobilization (see Table 9). As noted, this area of benefit was significantly more important to women, for whom these changes were reported by 12 percent of households.

34. Substantive data on longer-term resilience effects were almost entirely absent, but two examples from the evaluation emphasize the need for careful consideration of longer-term unintended impacts. Fast-maturing cassava varieties, accounting for 2 percent of observed assets, were selected to help address the food and agricultural needs of returning IDPs. However, some interviewees expressed concern that these varieties now dominated cassava production, while traditional varieties were more appropriate because they can be left in the field, are less susceptible to diseases and pests, and regerminate year after year. 35. The widespread use of food bags in camps in Acholi, Teso and Lango may have contributed to eroding traditional resilience mechanisms such as granaries after IDPs returned home. The advantages of granaries include lower susceptibility to cross-infestation, and public access, which hinders re-sale and increases women's control of stocks.

TABLE 9: COMMUNITY COHESION BENEFITS *(%)*

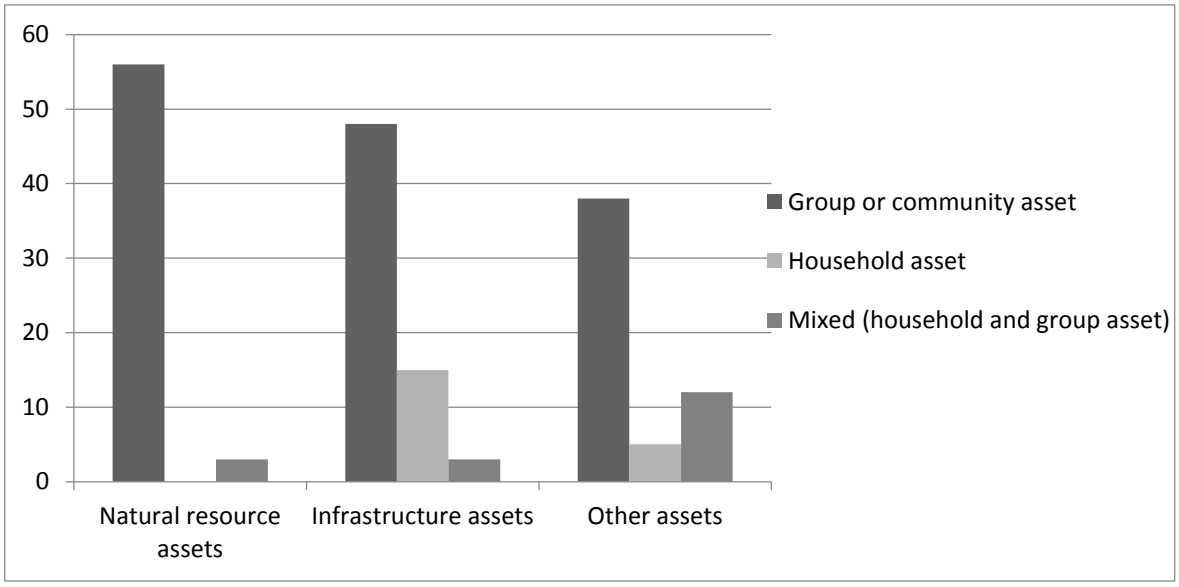
Community cohesion (6)	Acholi	Teso and Lango	Karamoja	West Nile	Overall
Self-reliance	2	1	1	-	**1**
Optimism	1	1	1	4	**2**
Improved security	1	1	-	-	**< 1**
Group mobilization/organization/motivation	3	6	1	2	**3**

Source: Household Survey, 2013.

[17] According to 6 percent of households, increased fuelwood availability – a result of woodlots – was the single largest impact for women. Overall it ranked as the second most important reported change for women, after access to food.

36. Across all types, most assets were community assets, accounting for 79 percent of the total; 11 percent were household assets, and 10 percent were mixed assets (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Ownership, by asset category



Source: Asset verification, 2013.

37. The transition of asset ownership when IDPs left camps was not clear and was not effectively addressed in the FFA design.

38. Qualitative evidence found that FFA activities were managed more sustainably when they targeted host populations rather than temporary residents such as refugees. This finding reflects comparisons of data from the dynamic conflict contexts of Teso and Lango with data from Acholi, where there are more camps.

39. The evaluation found that communities continued to maintain assets long after construction, with more than 80 percent of asset users reporting participation in maintenance. More than two-thirds of asset users were connected to schools, which were the most common beneficiaries of the FFA assets surveyed. However, respondents made few links between school-related assets and higher-level improvements in education (see Table 6).

40. According to WFP records and field staff interviews, asset selection was through community mobilizers who matched community priorities with project requirements. Despite these efforts, however, the survey found that across sub-regions, between 39 and 53 percent of households perceived that WFP had selected the assets constructed.

41. In areas of prolonged conflict – Acholi and Karamoja – more households reported that FFA did not disrupt other productive activities than in less affected areas, with 80–90 and 60–70 percent respectively.[18] The most stable sub-region, West Nile, had the highest perception of disruption, reported by 37 percent of households, suggesting that more refined targeting is necessary in chronic contexts, as has been attempted in Karamoja since 2010.

[18] Household surveys.

FACTORS AFFECTING IMPACT

External Factors

42. The effects of external contextual factors on livelihoods resilience are particularly important in the dynamic conflict-affected, transition and chronically food-insecure context of northern Uganda during the evaluation period. The main external drivers of change in livelihoods and resilience identified were: i) reduced insecurity; ii) relatively good weather throughout the year; and iii) market demand from South Sudan.[19] The evaluation observed that the effects of these drivers were likely to outweigh the livelihoods effects of FFA interventions, most of which had been selected for their short-term rather than longer-term livelihood impacts.

43. Differences in the functionality of assets among sub-regions suggest that asset type is not the only determinant of long-term functioning. For example, in Teso and Lango, where 89 percent of infrastructure was found to be functional, roads enabled new settlement areas to be established and organizations such as Oxfam and the International Committee of the Red Cross to deliver services in remote rural areas.[20] Assets were more functional where people had complementary support through education, health care, water and agricultural extension.[21]

44. WFP's coordination with government structures and work within the overall relief effort were outstanding, with FFA areas selected with partners. FFA was most effective where programming was done jointly with the National Agricultural Advisory Services or other partners. However, the relationship between WFP and the Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO) was hampered by unresolved design differences between FFA and FAO's Farmer Field Schools, reducing opportunities to deliver technical quality at scale.[22]

Internal Factors

45. The evaluation found four main factors that affected the scope and effectiveness of FFA in northern Uganda:

- the technical quality of the asset design within the local context;
- the capacity and scope for participatory, local-level planning processes;
- the values placed on different asset types by populations under stress; and
- the uncertainties of programme planning, including population movements and contextual changes, staffing and funding.

46. Although FFA activities were reported to boost the morale of WFP field staff by providing opportunities to contribute to longer-term developmental goals, high staff turnover created gaps in implementation and partnerships, with WFP unable to

[19] These were also identified in the WFP 2013 comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis.

[20] Key informant interviews.

[21] Fuzzy set analysis in Karamoja, Teso and Lango (see footnote 9).

[22] Farmer Field Schools extend context-specific technical assistance to farmers. Associated with FAO, the approach is also used by other organizations. Participation is voluntary: farmers are motivated by the desire to improve their productivity. No direct transfer/incentive is made, so there is often a perception that FFA – by offering incentives for work – can draw farmers away from the schools.

institutionalize a successful mechanism for hand-over and the orientation of incoming FFA staff.

47. WFP's logistics and pipeline were critical to positive impact. Operational factors play a vital role in relationships with communities, and assets were better maintained where there were fewer setbacks. While 44 percent of respondents reported no or few problems with implementation, 32 percent of those reporting problems mentioned lack of tools, and 28 percent late deliveries of inputs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

48. Project documents stated that FFA objectives were related to restoring livelihoods and strengthening resilience. In practice, however, 2005–2010 FFA activities in northern Uganda were primarily oriented towards addressing short-term objectives, including immediate relief of food gaps and creation of productive assets. While FFA was intended to be a recovery mechanism for providing food as people restored their livelihoods, recurrent shocks continued to affect the populations targeted by FFA activities.

49. While WFP's FFA operations should be viewed in the context of its far larger relief efforts during the early part of the evaluation period, and the arguably more significant external drivers of livelihoods resilience in northern Uganda, the main finding of this evaluation was that people appreciated the food delivery in times of need. WFP was one of few agencies that responded at scale to the transition from conflict. Stakeholders reported FFA as effective and necessary in: i) filling the food gap experienced by returnees; and ii) shifting the mind-set of communities and other service providers from relief to transition. WFP's operational scale enabled the placing of assets to take advantage of the peace dividend.

50. The conditional transfer modality was introduced when most programmes in the region provided unconditional relief. This helped the gradual shift to recovery programming as populations were expected increasingly to contribute time and resources to their own development. Although loosely targeted conditional transfers represented important progress from hand-outs, they continued the practice of paying for self-help work, which the evaluation observed contributed to dependency among the population. Shifting to household-based vulnerability targeting as early as feasible in the recovery phase would mitigate this risk.

51. Three major patterns were identified from the data:

i) Positive impacts on women were most felt in agropastoral communities.

ii) Challenges with asset ownership were most prevalent in camp settlements, given the transient nature of the population.

iii) Food transfers were more likely to be consumed directly by households affected by chronic food gaps than by beneficiaries in post-conflict return areas, who more readily used rations as a source of capital.

52. Most surviving community assets[23] had a small but positive impact on income at either the community or household level, with 33 percent of the changes reported relating to economic or resource access benefits such as seeds, fuelwood, water and job opportunities.

[23] Comprising woodlots, ponds/dams/tanks, stoves, gardens and roads – 48 percent of the assets verified.

53. Asset design tended to reflect the urgency of implementation, and focused on providing solutions to immediate problems. WFP's action-oriented approach to FFA was acknowledged as effective and necessary by external informants. The evaluation findings offer several lessons for the design of FFA in transition situations, including the following:

- The programming and design of FFA interventions in conflict and transition contexts must be conflict-sensitive, for instance regarding land ownership, and include risk mitigation planning to address emerging environmental challenges.[24]
- Understanding, supporting and re-establishing traditional management systems such as cattle herding, granaries and traditional varieties are important for resilience.
- The success of FFA depends on performance across all of WFP, and not just the quality of the programme team.

Recommendations

54. Many of the lessons for design and implementation emerging from this evaluation are already being applied by the WFP country office in its current programming for Karamoja. WFP's corporate guidance on FFA programming and on gender programming have also been substantially changed since the period reviewed. Recommendations are therefore intended to support WFP's ongoing efforts.

55. **Recommendation 1: WFP should carry out a corporate roll-out of the updated (2013) FFA programme guidance at the country-office level.** This investment in capacity development and dissemination of corporate guidance is important to mitigate the impacts of the high turnover of field staff and address previously inadequate or lack of training and hand-over. The roll-out should include a corporate prioritized and budgeted plan for the short to medium term timeline to ensure relevance to country office programming needs. [Headquarters]

56. **Recommendation 2: The country office should formally commit to carrying out the requisite follow-up actions to the FFA guidance roll-out for effective knowledge transfer and retention at the field level,** including through: i) participating staff's commitment to remaining in post for a minimum period, to develop effective capacity in the country office; ii) linking the performance plans of participating staff to key areas of the guidance; and iii) planning adequate levels of country office FFA staffing and Headquarters technical support to sustain and extend FFA capacity. [Uganda country office]

57. **Recommendation 3: Jointly with complementary sector partners, develop a strategic FFA plan that ensures deployment of the necessary technical capacity,** based on: i) a three-pronged approach to FFA in resilience-building efforts, comprising integrated gender and context analysis, seasonal livelihoods programming, and participatory community-based planning; ii) a common understanding of how WFP's FFA and other initiatives can complement each other in the transition from relief to development; and iii) a comprehensive analysis of the specific risks faced by communities that integrates gender issues, land ownership and traditional resilience mechanisms. [Uganda country office with Regional Bureau and Headquarters support]

[24] Such as soil erosion linked to land opening.

58. **Recommendation 4: Develop a multi-year operational FFA implementation plan that involves country office management, programming, operational and support units, and takes into account the seasonality of activities and the lead times for procurement and delivery.** This plan should enable the implementation of WFP's corporate objectives in Uganda, pre-empt bottlenecks and include predefined mitigation strategies. [Uganda country office]

59. **Recommendation 5: Include in WFP's corporate FFA guidance, lessons learned for FFA in transition contexts,** related to the early introduction in the recovery phase of vulnerability-based household targeting and of a community communication strategy that emphasizes the time-bound nature of conditional FFA transfers. [Headquarters and country offices]

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	food for assets
IDP	internally displaced person
NGO	non-governmental organization
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation