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SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT MOZAMBIQUE COUNTRY PROGRAMME 10446.0

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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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation team found that interventions carried out under the Mozambique country programme are relevant, particularly considering Mozambique's widespread poverty and the high levels of child malnutrition and food insecurity in large parts of the country.

Although the country programme refers to national strategies and plans, school feeding is not articulated within the Government's education sector strategy. This poses a risk to sustainability and the options for replicating experiences at the national level.

Despite these strategic considerations, interventions produced positive results, providing incentives for parents or caregivers to send children to school and, most important, to ensure that they do not drop out. On-site school feeding seems to have been effective. However, take-home rations for girls and orphans and other vulnerable children are costly and there is no assurance that the benefits reach the intended target group; their cost-benefit ratio may therefore be low.

In its selection of intervention areas, the school feeding programme used targeting criteria beyond those of vulnerability, including some based on educational objectives. As a result, operations are scattered over the country, compromising both their effectiveness and their efficiency.

The evaluation team considers that WFP's future support to school feeding in Mozambique should depend on the Government's commitment to supporting such interventions within a strategic framework that ensures substantial financial resources. So far, the Mozambican Government's commitment to school feeding has been limited and insufficient, with current interventions reaching only 1.3 percent of the country's primary schools.

DRAFT DECISION*

The Board takes note of "Summary Evaluation Report Mozambique Country Programme 10446.0" (WFP/EB.A/2009/7-D) 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.



BACKGROUND

Context

1. Mozambique is among the poorest countries in the world, ranking 172nd out of 177 in the 2007/2008 human development index (HDI),¹ despite steady economic growth averaging 8 percent a year between 1996 and 2007.² Mozambique's low HDI ranking indicates widespread poverty and is rooted in the country's war-torn history. Many Mozambicans struggle daily to ensure stable livelihoods and access to quality social services, including education.
2. Mozambique's second Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2006–2009 (*Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta 2006–2009*, PARPA II) aims to reduce the incidence of poverty from 54 percent in 2003 to 45 percent in 2009. Its objectives include improved education, health, governance and food security, and reduced malnutrition. Between 1997 and 2003, absolute poverty declined from 69.4 to 54.1 percent, but the proportion of chronically malnourished children rose from 36 to 41 percent. This gives Mozambique one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in Africa,³ with an estimated 1.3 million children chronically malnourished.
3. Education in Mozambique has undergone considerable progress in the last decade, with significant improvements in primary education enrolments. The guiding reference document for education in Mozambique is the Government's Strategic Plan for Education and Culture (SPEC) 2006–2011: "The Strategic Plan for Education and Culture sets out the Government's priorities for the sector, providing a framework on which to base decisions about the allocation of both domestic resources and external assistance."⁴ The plan refers to food production and meals, but school feeding is not a priority.

Description of the Operation

4. The current country programme (CP) Mozambique 10446.0 was approved by the Executive Board in November 2006 and covers the period 2007 to 2009. As in the previous CP, activities include several school feeding modalities: i) on-site feeding; ii) take-home rations (THR); and iii) support to boarding schools, which is being phased-out. The CP's objectives are: i) improved participation in primary education, particularly for orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) and girls; and ii) improved protection, care and access to basic services for OVC through a safety-net system. School feeding activities are implemented under the first of these objectives; activities under objective two were moved to protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 10600.0 in January 2008. The CP's strategic objectives include strengthened government capacity to promote long-term sustainability. The budget for the CP is US\$41.9 million with a planned food distribution of 66,684 mt for 381,400 beneficiaries.

¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2007. *Human Development Report 2007/2008*. New York.

² World Bank Country Brief: <http://go.worldbank.org/70UK6S1X30>.

³ <http://allafrica.com/stories/200810220903.html>

⁴ SPEC (2006–2011), page 1



Evaluation Features

5. The evaluation approach was based on identifying main issues related to programme performance that could help improve existing and future interventions. It was divided into phases: a briefing and desk review at Headquarters in Rome, resulting in a pre-mission report; field work in Mozambique; and reporting. The evaluation followed WFP's Evaluation Quality Assurance System (EQAS).
6. The criteria used for the evaluation were relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Data collection was based on interviews and analysis of secondary data related to CP activities. The two-man evaluation team carried out its mission from 19 October to 1 November 2008.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Operation Design: Relevance and Appropriateness

⇒ *Internal coherence*

7. The CP is aligned to WFP's Strategic Plan (2006–2009),⁵ through Strategic Objective 4 – “Support access to education and reduce gender disparity in access to education and skills training” – and Strategic Objective 5 – “Strengthen the capacities of countries and regions to establish and manage food-assistance and hunger-reduction programmes”. Its current interventions were found to be coherent with and appropriate to these objectives related to access to education (see Results section below).
8. WFP's Strategic Plan (2008–2011)⁶ introduces changes that may affect the internal coherence of the CP.⁷ If outcomes beyond those related to access to education are expected, complementary interventions will have to be considered, particularly if school feeding aims to improve children's nutritional situation, or to break the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition – Strategic Objective 4 in the new Strategic Plan.
9. The 2008 vulnerability assessment indicated that vulnerability was most pronounced in southern Mozambique and some coastal areas in the north. Vulnerability has been present in these areas for several years. Retrospective comparison between these findings and the targeting of the school feeding programme makes it clear that the CP's current countrywide presence compromises the greater use of interventions targeting the most vulnerable areas.

⇒ *External coherence*

10. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and WFP identified the modalities for cooperation between the Government and WFP in the CP action plan.

⁵ WFP/EB.A/2005/5-A/Rev.1

⁶ WFP/EB.A/2008/5-A/1/Rev.1

⁷ Although the current CP was not based on the 2008–2011 Strategic Objectives, this paragraph provides input for discussions of future interventions and eventual changes to the current CP. WFP's Strategic Objectives have changed considerably, and the changes are expected to affect the way in which WFP operates in the future.



11. The Government's education strategy is clear about food production from school gardens, but does not include school feeding as a priority area, so school feeding is implemented outside the national strategic framework. Although stakeholders are increasingly aware of the potential value of school feeding, its absence from the national strategy affects national ownership and sustainability of school feeding interventions. All consultations among development partners and government stakeholders confirmed that they support the school feeding concept.
12. The CP was prepared in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2007–2009. This is based on Mozambique's PARPA, which provides the overall framework for development assistance to Mozambique for the 2006-2009 period. The Government will revise the PARPA, and a new poverty reduction strategy is expected in 2011. The United Nations System in Mozambique has therefore decided to extend its existing programmes by two years, to cover the period up to the new strategy. This demonstrates the United Nations' commitment to aligning its interventions with national priorities and to harmonizing programming cycles.

⇒ *Project design and appropriateness*

13. In aligning the CP's objectives with Strategic Objectives 4 and 5, WFP faced a dilemma in selecting a targeting strategy. If school feeding was to focus on educational objectives, targeting should follow educational performance and vulnerability criteria, which generally apply to northern provinces of Mozambique. If the main objectives were to decrease food insecurity and malnutrition, the targeting strategy should focus on the most vulnerable areas, regardless of educational performance. The targeting strategy chosen was countrywide, with implications for efficiency and effectiveness, as described in more detail later in this report. The country office is currently revising the targeting strategy with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC).
14. The food items used in WFP school feeding operations in Mozambique require extensive preparation and are relatively expensive, making sustainable replication difficult for the Government.

Outputs and Implementation Processes: Elements of Efficiency

⇒ *Levels of outputs*

15. The 2007 Standardized Project Report (SPR) recorded a total of 355,350 beneficiaries, of whom 43 percent were women and girls. This was roughly in line with the CP's target of 381,400 beneficiaries, making it reasonable to forecast that the programme would meet its quantitative objectives by the end of 2009. However, some of the figures reported show significant divergences between planned and actual beneficiary numbers; for example, those for THRs diverge by more than 400 percent. Although these figures seem positive in terms of beneficiaries reached, they also demonstrate that the links between planning and implementation processes could be improved.

⇒ *Channels of delivery*

16. The logistics set-up of the CP is complex and labour-intensive. The main cause of this is the countrywide targeting of beneficiary schools, which creates serious logistics challenges for the country office in dealing with scattered delivery points and long distances, combined with small quantities. This has negative effects on the operation's efficiency.



⇒ *Implementation mechanisms*

17. Regular monitoring is challenged by the dispersed nature of school feeding sites. WFP staff regularly monitor food deliveries among CP beneficiaries, and use three monitoring levels: inputs, outputs and outcomes. Input-output monitoring focuses on the delivery of food items at delivery points. The evaluation team suggests that outcome monitoring could differentiate among immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes.

⇒ *Cost and funding of operations*

18. The total budget for the CP is US\$41.9 million. The operation has been well funded, having received 66 percent of its appeal by September 2008.

⇒ *Cost efficiency*

19. According to 2008 data, on-site meals cost approximately US\$48 per child/year, compared with a global average of US\$45; THRs cost US\$130; and food provided in boarding schools US\$190, because more meals are provided per beneficiary. By comparison, MEC's regular funding for primary schools is US\$3 per child/year. The evaluation found that operation costs are inadequately monitored, including in relation to rising food prices and the cost-efficiency of the chosen modality and food items; unit cost prices have not been calculated since 2005. Overall costs must be converted into unit costs, to enable cost monitoring for planning purposes and for ensuring that the replication of interventions remains affordable for the Government.

Results

⇒ *Effectiveness*

20. School feeding helps to accelerate increases in enrolment rates, as shown in Table 1. Interviews with parents, teachers and community members indicated that many newly enrolled children are from groups that are traditionally among the least likely to attend school, including the many OVCs who reportedly enrolled as a result of the school feeding programme.

TABLE 1: ENROLMENT INCREASES (COUNTRY LEVEL)		
Year	Schools with school feeding (%)	Schools without school feeding (%)
2002	4.2	-0.8
2003	20.4	7.8
2004	42.1	20.4
2005	62.5	33.4
2006	61.1	37.5

Source: Evaluation team, based on data from Lehmann, 2007⁸

⁸ Lehmann, C. 2007. Food for Education Works? Food Assistance to Primary Schools in Mozambique. A comparative Trend Analysis of Gender Gaps, Increase in Enrolment, Promotion and Drop-Out. WFP country office Maputo.



21. Effectiveness in terms of retention/drop-out rates varies among provinces, depending largely on such variables as poverty, hunger, culture, traditional rites and gender perceptions. However, school feeding is an effective way of promoting retention, or reducing drop-out, as confirmed by the data presented in Table 2.

Year	Schools with school feeding (%)	Schools without school feeding (%)
2001	9.0	7.0
2002	7.7	8.9
2003	7.6	8.6
2004	7.4	8.7
2005	8.6	10.5
2006	6.7	8.7

Source: Evaluation team, based on data from Lehmann, 2007

22. The evaluation found that school feeding contributes to decreases in drop-out rates. Data from 2001 and 2006 show a decrease from 9.0 to 6.7 percent in beneficiary schools, compared with an increase from 7.0 to 8.7 percent in non-beneficiary schools.
23. However, data indicate that the school feeding programme is less effective in Mozambique's three southern provinces, which have the lowest drop-out rates in the country. This confirms international findings, which indicate that school feeding is most effective in areas with relatively poor education figures, and less effective in areas with higher educational performance, as in southern Mozambique. The figures in Table 3 indicate that drop-out rates can even be higher in schools with school feeding.

Year	Schools with school feeding (%)	Schools without school feeding (%)
2002	6.5	7.0
2003	7.8	7.2
2004	5.5	7.6
2005	10.6	5.2
2006	8.0	3.8

Source: Evaluation team, based on data from Lehmann, 2007

24. Various initiatives implemented in Mozambique in recent years have sought to improve the quality of education and student promotion rates. The most efficient measure has been the cancelling of promotion exams at the end of the school year, resulting in many more pupils being promoted. Regarding promotion rates, the evaluation team found no significant differences between beneficiary and non-beneficiary schools. In 2006, schools with daily school feeding registered pass rates of 80 percent for boys and 81 percent for girls, compared with an overall rate of 81 percent for schools without meals. Assessment of



school feeding's effectiveness in terms of improved school performance will require a more comprehensive school feeding approach and more advanced monitoring.

25. Generally, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of THR, as they target the same schools as school feeding interventions. In the north, where most families live in poverty, although not all are in vulnerable areas, THR are an important incentive for the caregivers of OVCs and for families with girls. However, it has not been possible to assess the effects of THR on results such as enrolment and attendance.
26. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supports the Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) project, which aims to provide life skills for OVCs. During the current and previous CPs, WFP has supported JFFLS with meals for participants at 28 schools for a period of four years. This support was conceived as a pilot project. Challenges related to the institutionalization of JFFLS, regular monitoring, the targeting of fertile areas, and the measurability of effectiveness have raised doubts as to whether WFP should continue to support JFFLS.

⇒ *Impact*

27. It is likely that school feeding has a long-term positive educational impact on individual beneficiaries and whole communities, through increased enrolment and retention rates among targeted schoolchildren. Longitudinal data, tracer studies and comparable control groups would provide additional information on the causes involved.

⇒ *Sustainability*

28. The sustainability of interventions depends on the Government's capacity to take over and manage the programme. Sustainability is best achieved through exit strategies, accompanied by targeted capacity development efforts and reasonable operational and investment costs that allow governments to replicate interventions. Since 2005, WFP has sought to have school feeding incorporated into MEC's sector strategic plans. However, these efforts have apparently been hindered because the current school feeding model cannot be replicated on a larger scale, such as within the SPEC framework, and because the cooperation model currently applied by WFP and MEC is based mainly on service delivery.

Cross-Cutting Issues

⇒ *Capacity development*

29. The CP's capacity development objective is to strengthen government capacity to promote long-term sustainability; this is a demanding task. WFP seems to be working towards more comprehensive approaches to capacity development by focusing on institutions, for example, through its hand-over strategies for support to boarding schools and its assistance to policy design. However, the evaluation found that WFP still tends to work on an individual level, without a comprehensive operational framework. While the evaluation team acknowledges the country office's efforts so far, it recommends that future capacity-building assistance be guided and structured by a policy and/or strategic framework, to ensure more durable outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

30. The CP is aligned to the PARPA and the UNDAF, and supports WFP Strategic Plan 2006–2009, Strategic Objective 4: access to education. However, although current interventions are relevant to vulnerable populations, they will need to be more comprehensive to reach the objectives of the WFP Strategic Plan 2008–2011.
31. The school feeding programme has been effective, in terms of both access to and retention in education. There are also indications that the programme has provided families or caregivers with incentives for sending girls and OVCs to school and ensuring that they do not drop out.
32. The design of the CP has negative effects on efficiency. Logistics support is costly, requiring substantial human and financial resources and coordination. This is mainly because of countrywide distribution, which involves the transport of small amounts of food over large distances.
33. Sustainability will depend on MEC's political and financial commitment. WFP and development partners could support MEC in the design of an appropriate national school feeding programme to be incorporated into the Ministry's sector strategy, with resources allocated from the national treasury or other funding mechanisms.

Key Issues for the Future

⇒ *Targeting*

34. Interventions must target the most vulnerable areas, where WFP can make best use of its comparative advantage and where interventions are most aligned with the 2008–2011 Strategic Objectives. Given the scale of the educational challenges facing Mozambique, school feeding needs to be conceived more holistically, within broader approaches that involve – as a minimum – other relevant United Nations agencies. The One UN reform process seems to provide the most appropriate opportunities for WFP to contribute more effectively and efficiently to the achievement of educational objectives in Mozambique.

⇒ *Food rations*

35. To improve the effectiveness of school feeding, pupils should receive food as early in the day as possible, to alleviate immediate hunger, thereby enhancing their capacity to concentrate and learn. However, the current meal composition makes this difficult, as it is very time- and energy-consuming to prepare.

⇒ *Take-home rations*

36. The evaluation team considers that THR interventions require further analysis. Their cost-effectiveness is questioned because schools with in-school feeding but no THRs have derived similar benefits, in terms of enrolment and retention of girls and OVCs, to those with THRs. Furthermore, THRs are far more expensive than on-site feeding, making them highly unsustainable. A combined cost-benefit analysis and qualitative beneficiary assessment would inform decisions regarding the continuation of THRs.



⇒ *Junior Farmer Field and Life School*

37. If WFP is to continue its support to JFFLS, there is need for: i) commitment from relevant ministries; and ii) documented evidence from FAO of JFFLS' effectiveness, especially regarding children's application of life skills after participating in the schools. FAO has recently added new JFFLS where meals are not used as an incentive. WFP should observe this experience to assess the extent to which meals encourage OVCs to attend the schools; if there is no evidence of this, there is no reason for WFP to continue supporting JFFLS.

⇒ *Learning from experience*

38. Future interventions could be strengthened through a more articulated approach to learning from current operations. Findings from the 2005 school feeding evaluation and appraisal and the 2007 Lehmann quantitative survey could also be incorporated.

⇒ *Lessons learned*

39. When the model for a new CP is being designed, the evaluation team recommends that the following key issues be considered:

- i) A statement of commitment, such as a Memorandum of Understanding, clarifying the Government's commitment to and role in school feeding should be drafted before the end of the current CP. Without such a commitment, it is doubtful that school feeding can continue, mainly because of WFP's limited capacity to finance such interventions.
- ii) School feeding should follow a replicable design that is as simple as possible in terms of logistics, unit costs, food items, and the storage and preparation of food.
- iii) School feeding should be conceived as part of a comprehensive package of interventions in collaboration with other United Nations organizations and MEC. This will enhance the options for achieving results beyond the immediate outcome level, including those outlined in the WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2011).
- iv) Target areas should be assessed to ensure that the neediest people in food-insecure areas are targeted.
- v) Simple food items should be used. These should have high nutritional value, be easy to prepare – such as biscuits – and require minimal storage facilities. Logistics should also be kept simple, with as few deliveries as possible.
- vi) Local food prices and unit costs must be monitored closely to avoid market distortions and rising costs for interventions.
- vii) Provided MEC demonstrates its commitment to school feeding, WFP and development partners should elaborate plans for developing the implementation capacity of national stakeholders at the central and decentralized levels.

Recommendations

⇒ *Strategic recommendations*

40. The evaluation indicated the need for MEC to assume greater ownership of operations and for operations to be made more sustainable. It is therefore recommended that the WFP country office moves from its present cooperation modality, guided mainly by in-kind aid, towards one based on assistance.



41. It is recommended that the country office's continued support to school feeding activities depend on MEC's explicit political and financial commitment, as the basis for joint identification of a simple and sustainable school feeding approach for the period up to 2011.
42. The evaluation team recommends that, once MEC has expressed its commitment to school feeding, WFP should extend the current CP until 2011, to align it with the UNDAF process and the Mozambican Government's new poverty reduction strategy to be launched in 2011. The country office should use the extension period for closing down the existing school feeding intervention and, in collaboration with MEC, designing a new modality.
43. The evaluation team recommends that the country office revise its current approach to the school feeding programme to make it replicable on a larger scale, cost-efficient, sustainable and based on locally accessible food items.
44. The evaluation team recommends that the country office and WFP's Programme Design and Support Division (OMX) carry out a cost-benefit analysis before deciding whether or not to continue providing THRs for girls, especially in areas where on-site school meals are also provided. Experiences from other countries should be incorporated in the analysis.

⇒ *Operational recommendations*

45. It is recommended that OMX clarify how to monitor contextual factors and complementary interventions (see paragraph 8), including the nutritional effects of school feeding.
46. The evaluation team recommends that the country office review its current monitoring systems to ensure that: i) operation and unit costs are monitored regularly, as these are key data for assessing the efficiency of operations and for keeping costs at acceptable levels for MEC to replicate interventions; and ii) indicators developed by OMX are used.
47. It is recommended that the country office's future capacity development efforts be part of a broader donor-coordinated institutional development plan for MEC and provincial departments, backed by appropriate policy and strategies.
48. The evaluation team recommends that the country office reviews current food rations and investigates alternatives such as biscuits. This would help reduce the number of food deliveries and guarantee easy storage of food under difficult conditions in rural areas and for long periods.
49. If the necessary conditions for continuing support to JFFLS are not in place, the evaluation team recommends that WFP withdraw from JFFLS by the end of the current project cycle in mid-2009.

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

CP	country programme
EQAS	Evaluation Quality Assurance System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HDI	human development index
JFFLS	Junior Farmer Field and Life School
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
OMX	WFP Programme Design and Support Division
OVC	orphans and other vulnerable children
PARPA	Poverty Reduction Strategy (<i>Plano de Acção para a Redução da Pobreza Absoluta</i>)
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
SPEC	Strategic Plan for Education and Culture
SPR	Standardized Project Report
THR	take-home ration
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund