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Evaluation Reports
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Summary Evaluation Report – Sri Lanka Country Portfolio (2011–2015)

Executive Summary

This country portfolio evaluation covered WFP's operations in Sri Lanka from 2011 to 2015. It assessed WFP's alignment and strategic positioning, its strategic decision-making and the performance of the portfolio as a whole, including WFP's application of humanitarian principles and assessment of cash-based transfers.

In 2009, Sri Lanka emerged from a long civil war. The legacy of displacement and loss of livelihoods was most acute in Northern and Eastern Provinces, but rapid economic growth at the national level has raised Sri Lanka to middle-income status. WFP's interventions – mainly through two protracted relief and recovery operations and three emergency operations – focused on the north and east, and included humanitarian relief to support the resettlement of internally displaced persons and emergency responses to floods and drought; mother-and-child health and nutrition activities; and school meals in Northern Province. Throughout these operations, the country office faced declining resources and staffing. International agencies' relationships with the Government deteriorated during the war amid concerns about human rights abuses, and remained poor until a new government took office in 2015. Under an agreement in place since 1968, the Government is the primary implementer of all WFP operations.

While no formal country strategy was completed, the protracted relief and recovery operations were succeeded by a country programme in 2016 and trust funds were used to support increased "upstream" work – focusing on technical support and capacity development, and including analysis, advocacy and piloting – in nutrition and climate change resilience. WFP's main activities were relevant. Target beneficiary numbers were reached, but with less support than planned, which compromised WFP's effectiveness. Support for internally displaced persons was part of a multi-agency effort in which collective resources were insufficient to ensure durable solutions. The school meals programme contributed to rehabilitation and the education system's recovery in Northern Province, but plans to integrate it into the national school feeding programme failed to progress. Joint attempts to address persistently poor indicators of wasting and low birth weight were ineffective because the distribution of nationally produced supplementary foods was insufficiently targeted. Gender analysis improved after WFP's revised Gender Policy was adopted.

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Regarding humanitarian principles, this review of the work of a single agency in one country during peacetime could not address the broad systemic failures highlighted in the United Nations post-war review.¹ During 2011–2015, the humanitarian principles were generally well reflected in the targeting and implementation of WFP’s work.

Although a very small part of WFP’s portfolio, cash-based transfers were included in a sophisticated cash/voucher pilot. Cost analysis informing the choice of modality was flawed however, particularly in ignoring the substantial costs borne by the Government.

The evaluation’s recommendations include: i) working with the Government to identify “upstream” areas where WFP can add the most value in the future, while agreeing a phased hand-over to the Government of direct service delivery, notably school feeding; ii) encouraging all United Nations agencies to coordinate and streamline their activities in line with Sri Lanka’s new circumstances; iii) working with government and other agencies to develop an adequately resourced plan for completing the resettlement of displaced persons; iv) continuing to offer specialist support to multi-sector nutrition approaches; v) hand-over of the school meals programme vi) strengthening the cost analysis linked to modality choice and assigning higher priority to assessing the performance of cash-based transfers.

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of “Summary Evaluation Report – Sri Lanka Country Portfolio (2011–2015)” (WFP/EB.1/2017/6-C) and the management response (WFP/EB.1/2017/6-C/Add.1), and encourages further action on the recommendations, taking into account considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

¹ United Nations. November 2012. *Report of the Secretary-General’s Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka*. “The Petrie Report”.

* 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.

Evaluation Features

1. This country portfolio evaluation covered all WFP operations in Sri Lanka during 2011–2015. It assessed WFP’s alignment and strategic positioning, the influencing factors and quality of strategic decision-making, and portfolio performance and results. Data and document review was supplemented by field work in July 2016 and interviews with more than 200 stakeholders. The evaluation was timed to assist the country office in its next round of strategic planning² and in designing an operation to succeed the current country programme (2016–2017). The evaluators were asked to pay special attention to application of the humanitarian principles and to the analysis underpinning the choice and assessment of cash-based transfers (CBTs).

Context

2. Sri Lanka has a population of 21 million people,³ of whom 75 percent are Sinhalese and 11 percent Sri Lankan Tamils.⁴ A 26-year war between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam ended in May 2009. The most evident humanitarian legacy of the war was the displacement and loss of livelihoods experienced in Northern and Eastern Provinces, which continue to lag behind the rest of the country economically.¹
3. Sri Lanka is changing from a post-conflict to a developing economy. Gross domestic product per capita grew at 5.6 percent per year between 2002 and 2013.⁵ Sri Lanka is a lower-middle-income country on the threshold of upper-middle-income status. The country performs strongly in most health and education indicators as a result of the Government’s long-standing commitment to providing universal basic services and social protection. However, sustained economic growth has not alleviated regional disparities, which have widened since 2009. With 29 percent of the population, Western Province accounts for 44.4 percent of gross domestic product, while one quarter of Sri Lankans are considered “nearly poor”, living above the official poverty line of USD 1.50 per day but with less than USD 2.50 per day.⁶ Food insecurity – chronic, seasonal and occasional – is widespread (Map 1) and Sri Lanka’s nutrition situation is unusual, with an exceptionally high wasting prevalence of 19.6 percent – well above the World Health Organization (WHO) “serious” threshold of 15 percent – contrasting with a relatively low prevalence of chronic malnutrition (stunting) at 13.1 percent. For reasons that are not well understood, these indicators have changed little over the past decade.⁶
4. After a peak following the 2004 tsunami, both humanitarian aid and other official development assistance to Sri Lanka declined throughout the evaluation period. Relations between the international community and the Government, which became more difficult in the latter years of the war, improved substantially after a new coalition government took office in 2015.

WFP Portfolio

5. Since 1968, a basic agreement between WFP and the Government has designated the Government as the primary implementer of all WFP operations, bearing all costs associated with in-country transportation and distribution of food commodities and sharing responsibility for project monitoring.⁷ Letters of understanding for each operation reflect agreements between WFP and the Government on project design and beneficiary targeting.
6. Figure 1 provides an overview of the 2011–2015 portfolio; and Map 2 shows the location of WFP’s interventions. The portfolio comprised early relief and recovery activities in the

²This is expected to take the form of a Country Strategic Plan (CSP).

³ Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics, 2014 projections from the 2012 census <http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/VitalStatistics/MidYearPopulation/Mid-year%20population%20by%20district.pdf>

⁴Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Statistics Department. 2014. *Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka*.

⁵ World Bank. 2015. *Sri Lanka – Ending Poverty and Promoting Shared Prosperity: A Systematic Country Diagnostic*.

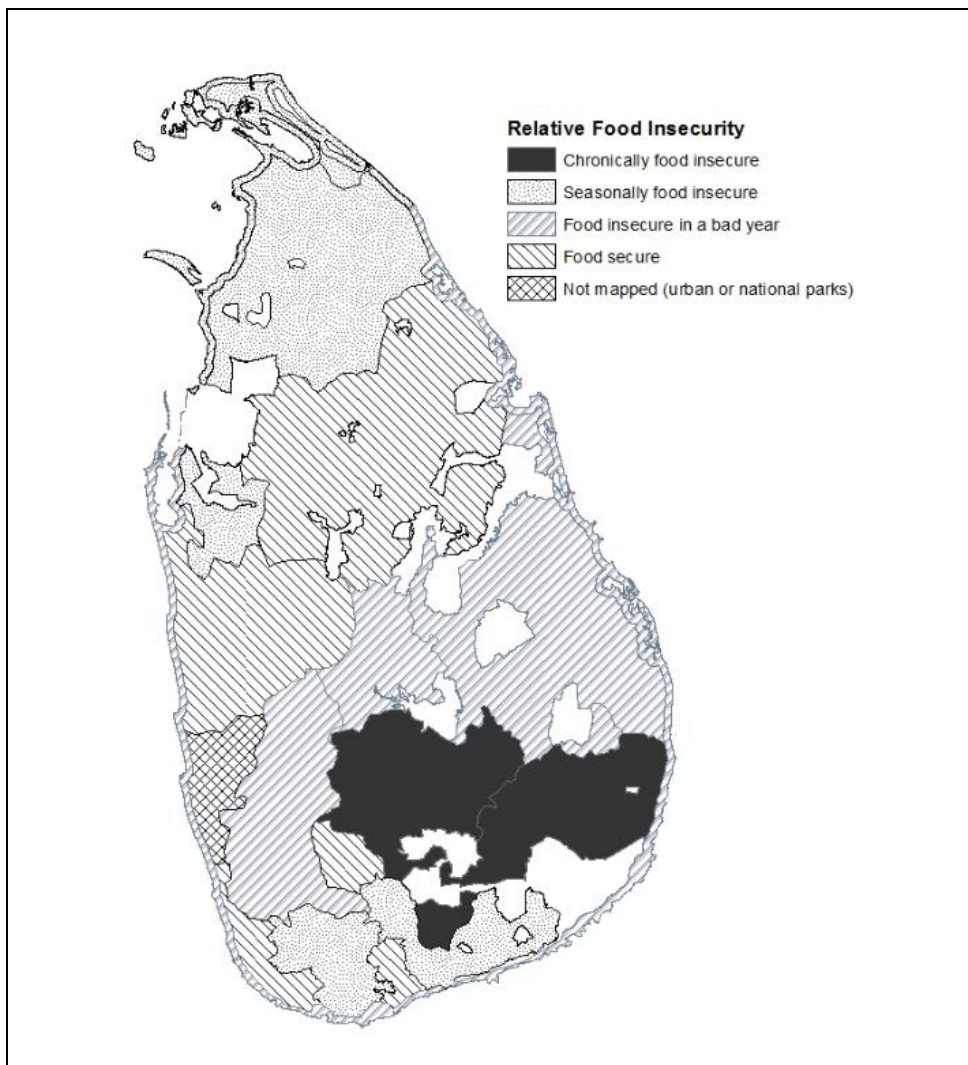
⁶ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Government of Sri Lanka. 2012. *National Nutrition and Micronutrient Survey*.

⁷ *Basic Agreement between the Government of Ceylon and the United Nations Concerning Assistance from the World Food Programme*, Colombo, 10 November 1968.

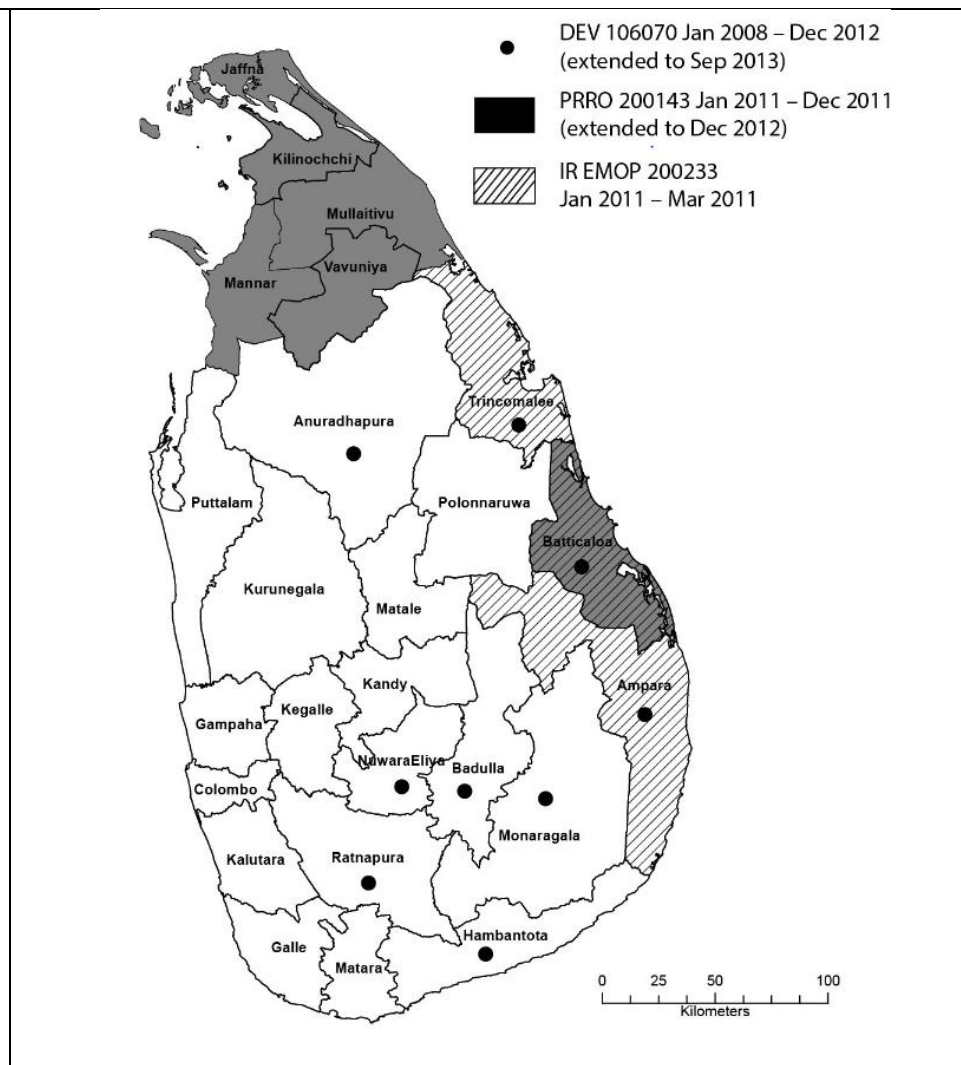
conflict-affected Northern and Eastern Provinces through two protracted relief and recovery operations (PRROs), a mother-and-child health and nutrition (MCHN) development operation in the same provinces and elsewhere, and three emergency responses in flood- and drought-affected areas. Special operation 105390 to support logistics capacity was concluded in 2011. The total budget for these operations was USD 178 million, of which 66 percent was funded.⁸ Three trust funds are currently supporting work on climate adaptation and nutrition. A country programme (2016–2017) is continuing several previous PRRO activities but with a wider geographical scope. Figure 1 shows that actual beneficiaries were close to the numbers planned for each operation, although actual tonnage was lower than planned in all cases.

⁸This figure excludes trust funds.

Map 1: Sri Lanka food security, January 2014



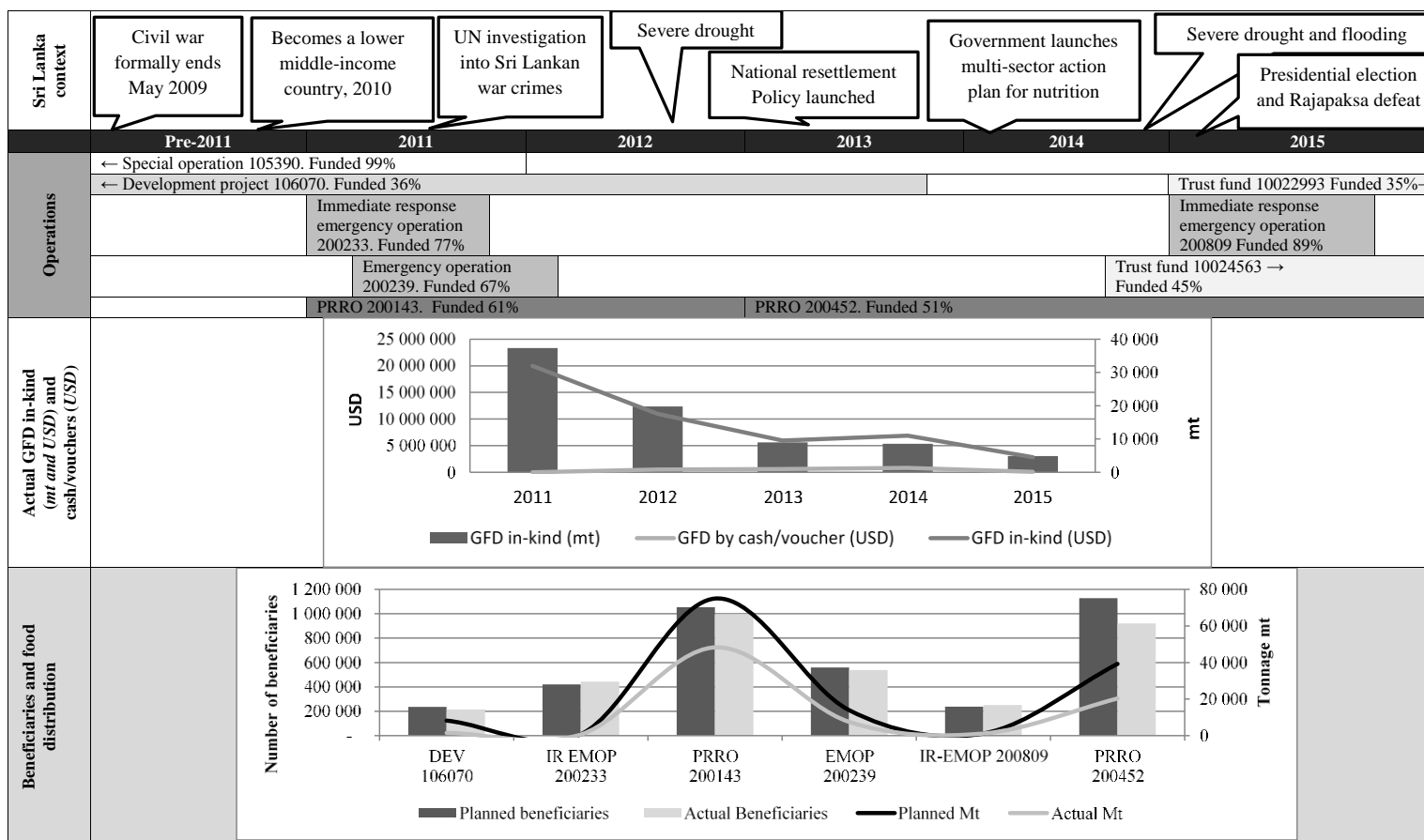
Map 2: Typical distribution of WFP activities, 2011–2015



Source: WFP and Government of Sri Lanka. 2014. Consolidated livelihood exercise for analysing resilience.

Source: Country office vulnerability analysis and mapping exercise, 2016.

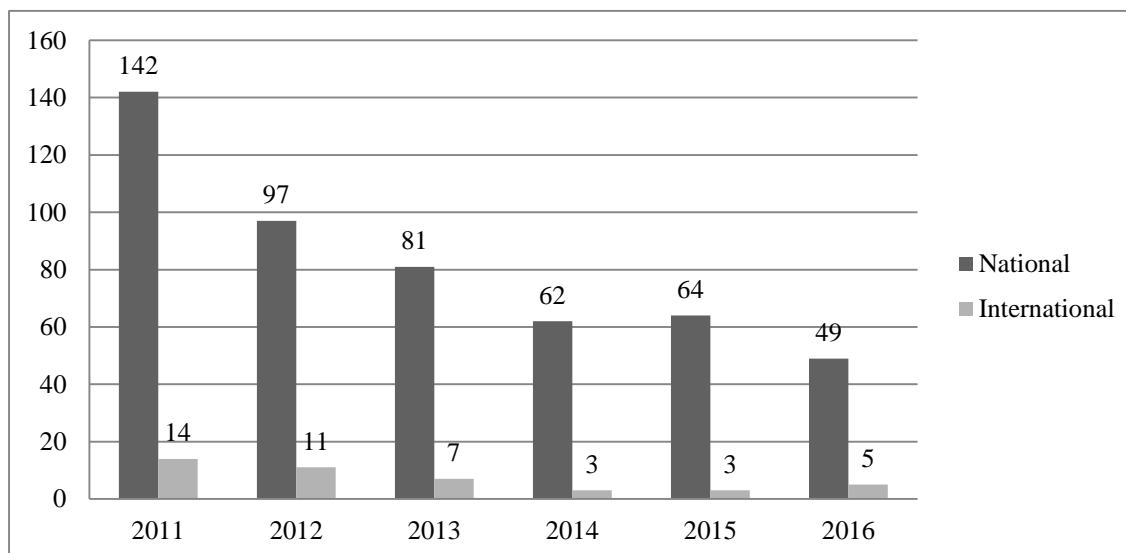
Figure 1: Context for WFP's Sri Lanka portfolio



DEV: development project
 EMOP: emergency operation
 GFD: general food distribution
 IR-EMOP immediate response EMOP
 LMIC: lower-middle income country
 SO: special operation
 TF: trust fund

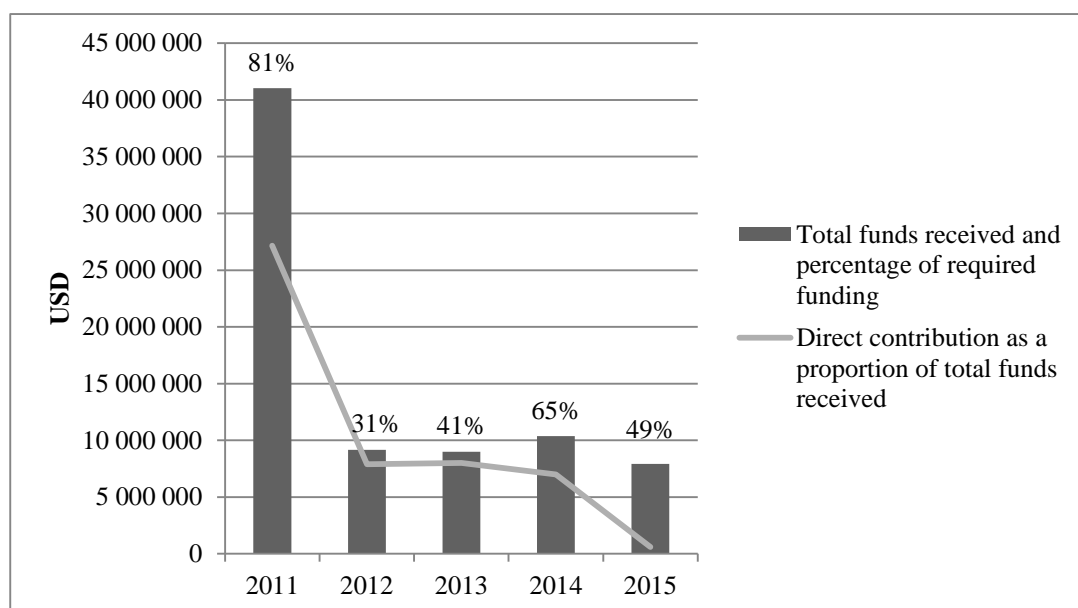
7. Many current country office staff members were first employed during the war and the tsunami response in 2005, and their perspectives reflect experience during these events. Overall, the scale of WFP operations has been steadily shrinking, as illustrated in Figure 2 for staff, Figure 3 for funding and for general food distribution (GFD) in the central panel of Figure 1. Figure 3 shows the percentage of each operation that was funded.

Figure 2: Number of WFP country office staff members, 2011–2016



Source: Country office data

Figure 3: Percentage of portfolio funded, by year

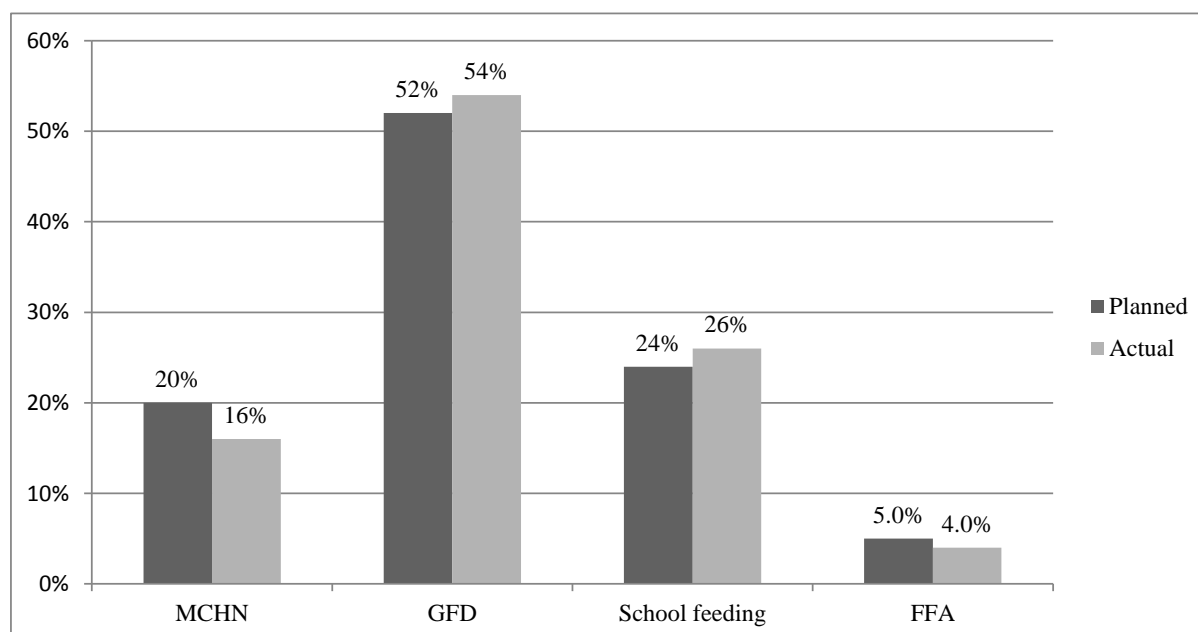


Source: Country office data. Excludes special operation 105390, immediate-response emergency operation 200233, development project 106070, the country programme and trust funds.

Direct contributions are from bilateral donors and the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. Non-direct contributions include multilateral allocations, miscellaneous income, stock transfers and carry-overs from previous years or projects.

8. While funding levels have declined – especially of direct contributions from bilateral donors (Figure 1) – the Government has become an increasingly significant contributor to WFP activities.⁹
9. Thematically, the portfolio comprised humanitarian relief to support resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) through GFDs and food assistance for assets (FFA), and emergency relief for people affected by floods or drought; MCHN activities focused on treating moderate acute malnutrition (MAM);¹⁰ and school feeding – WFP supported the school meals programme (SMP) in Northern Province while the Government took full responsibility for school feeding in the rest of the country. Figure 4 shows the percentages of planned and actual beneficiaries for each activity.

Figure 4: Percentage of beneficiaries by activity, 2011–2015



Source: Standard Project Reports. Data are not available for trust funds. As special operation 105390 was a non-food operation, it is not included.

FFA includes food-for-work and food-for-training activities.

10. Geographically, most WFP activities were concentrated in Northern and Eastern Provinces, which were the most severely affected by the war, but other provinces were included in emergency relief and MCHN activities (Map 2). Government ministries and academic institutions undertook a broad range of capacity development and analytical work.
11. There was significant innovation in the use of CBTs, including a cash/voucher pilot to assist IDPs in Jaffna; the use of cash in emergency relief and FFA operations; and a short pilot project to provide schools with cash to purchase school meals locally. As illustrated in Figure 1, CBTs accounted for less than 5 percent of GFD.

WFP Strategy

12. There was no formal country strategy in place during 2011–2015 despite continual attempts to formulate one. Two draft strategy documents were prepared for 2013–2017 and 2014–2017, but neither was formally approved by the regional bureau or Headquarters, although the 2014–2017 draft influenced the formulation of the current country programme.

⁹ In addition to meeting the landside costs of programme implementation, the Government has donated more than 50,000 mt of rice since 2011 to support international responses and programmes in Sri Lanka. A shortage of complementary funding slowed the country office's progress in utilizing in-kind donations.

¹⁰ A preventive element was dropped because of funding constraints.

Evaluation Findings

Portfolio Alignment and Strategic Positioning

13. The evaluation found that WFP's portfolio in Sri Lanka was relevant to humanitarian needs in the aftermath of the war, responding to emergencies and addressing enduring nutrition problems. The challenge was in adapting activities to remain relevant to the country's changing circumstances amid waning donor resources. While WFP's interventions in the conflict-affected provinces were relevant in supporting basic service restoration, the slow release of land in the high-security zone and the decline in donor support meant that WFP's assistance to returnees was often inadequate.¹¹
14. The 1968 basic agreement provided a strong basis for dialogue and operational alignment between WFP and the Government. The quality of collaboration and alignment with national policies was more mixed however, reflecting strained relationships between the Government and international agencies, which limited the space for policy dialogue for most of the review period; and restricted WFP's ability to engage with non-governmental organizations. Opportunities for constructive dialogue increased from 2015, reflecting the incoming government's approach to peacebuilding and reconciliation, and progress in the release of land in the high-security zone.
15. Inter-agency communications were generally perceived to be good, partly reflecting the well-established cluster system left over from the conflict. However, interviewees acknowledged that strategic coherence and operational integration between WFP and other United Nations agencies were weak. The two United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) in place during the evaluation period did not anchor WFP's programming or facilitate a One UN approach. Competition and overlaps persisted, and One UN remained more of an aspiration than a reality.
16. Against the background of the United Nations' reflections on its actions during the war,¹ the evaluation reviewed WFP's application of the humanitarian principles.¹² It noted that a review of the work of a single agency in one country during peacetime cannot address the broad systemic failures highlighted in the United Nations post-war report. WFP's peacetime dilemmas were less dramatic and the evaluation found that humanitarian principles were generally well reflected in WFP's work. WFP's programmes targeted vulnerable groups through impartial beneficiary selection, and its focus on displaced persons and returnees resulted in an important contribution to peacebuilding. However, WFP's ability to fulfil the principle of humanity in seeking "to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it is found" has been constrained by declining funding.
17. In principle, the basic agreement risks being an obstacle to WFP's operational independence, but it has been implemented with safeguards. The roles of WFP and the Government are stipulated in letters of understanding that incorporate principles of impartiality, while independent monitoring mitigates the risk of undue influence from the Government.
18. WFP's strategic positioning evolved with the changing context, moving from emergency programming towards a more strategic orientation. This was more the result of piecemeal adjustments than of a formal strategy: significant changes included the recent use of trust funds to support "upstream" work – analysis, advocacy and piloting – in nutrition and climate-resilience interventions.
19. Partly for the same contextual reasons, alignment among United Nations agencies and with government policies was limited during the period under review. The context for joint planning with the Government has improved since 2015, but United Nations agencies can all be expected to face similar constraints during the next UNDAF period, commencing in 2018, with financial resources continuing to diminish. Interview respondents were aware that the cost

¹¹ Land taken over by the military.

¹² The four main humanitarian principles are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence.

structures of their agencies will make it difficult for them to remain relevant and viable, unless they can achieve a more streamlined One UN presence.

Factors and Quality of Strategic Decision-Making

20. The principal factors affecting WFP's strategic decision-making were the diminishing funds available to the country office, a shrinking staff base (Figures 2 and 3) and the difficult relationship with the Government for much of the period. The country office also had to keep pace with developments in WFP policies and organizational change. Despite the absence of a formal strategy document, the strategic choices implicit in the portfolio's evolution and implementation had positive features. The PRROs have been succeeded by a country programme, albeit more slowly than first envisaged. The "upstream" orientation of the portfolio is reflected in the trust fund activities linked to nutrition and climate change interventions. Project documents set the objectives of integrating nutrition programming into national systems and handing over responsibility for the SMP to the Government, although neither of these objectives has yet been achieved.
21. The evaluation found an appropriately pragmatic approach to decision-making in the choice of modalities. Although inconsistent with WFP's standard terminology of "food assistance for assets", "soft food for assets" – using food assistance to support relatively simple schemes – was a reasonable adaptation to resource constraints and the difficulty and delay in obtaining government approval for more elaborate FFA projects.¹³ The cash pilot in the SMP was timed to avoid losing time-bound grant funding from Canada.
22. The country office undertook useful analytical work, including support to livelihoods mapping and cost-of-diet studies, although the collation – especially at the outcome level – and use of regular monitoring data were weak, partly because of constraints in staff capacity. The use of economic analysis throughout the portfolio was also weak, with an uncritical emphasis on maximizing beneficiary numbers and insufficient analysis of the implications of thinly spread resources on effectiveness.¹⁴
23. The country office made consistent efforts to target the most vulnerable groups, despite the difficulties. For example, the PRRO extension for 2012 incorporated a move away from blanket GFD towards needs-based targeting;¹⁵ the 2015 emergency operation used a community-based approach to beneficiary selection targeting women-headed households, elderly people and people living with disabilities; MCHN preventive activities were dropped to concentrate limited resources on MAM treatment; and WFP advocated – unsuccessfully – for the Government's adoption of a more targeted approach to the use of *Thripasha*, a fortified blended food produced in Sri Lanka since the 1970s.¹⁶
24. The evaluation found commendable innovations in CBTs, which were increasingly linked to Sri Lanka's social protection systems. For example, the Jaffna pilot for IDPs was a remarkably sophisticated intervention, with vouchers targeting households and individuals precisely, being adjusted regularly to take food price fluctuations into account, and allowing beneficiaries a much wider choice of locally available foods. However, WFP's analytical tools for calculating alpha and omega values¹⁷ to compare in-kind assistance with CBTs are seriously flawed, ignoring costs incurred by the Government and therefore overstating the competitiveness of in-kind assistance.

¹³ The country context inhibited implementation of WFP's preferred approach to FFA; however, recent use of FFA to support climate adaptation has been consistent with WFP guidance.

¹⁴ The country programme launched in 2016 recognizes this weakness: "Targeted communities will receive assistance for the duration of country programme 200866 to maximize its benefits. This approach differs from previous food-for-work activities characterized by short-term assistance over a wide area."

¹⁵ PRRO 200143, budget revision 1.

¹⁶ This reflected a wider concern about the Government's blanket approach to safety nets as opposed to a more targeted system. *Thripasha* has suffered from production constraints, linked to reliance on local inputs and technical problems at the factory. As a result, although it has become familiar and popular, it has been distributed in portions that are too small to be effective for undernourished mothers and infants.

¹⁷ The alpha value compares the costs of foods delivered by WFP with the market prices of the same foods purchased locally. The omega value compares the cost-effectiveness of an in-kind food basket with a CBT alternative.

When determining the best modality, there was also insufficient attention to post-distribution monitoring of CBT outcomes as opposed to hypothetical calculations prior to providing assistance. It is wrong to consider the nutrient value score as an outcome indicator.

Portfolio Performance and Results

25. At the output level, WFP succeeded in maintaining beneficiary numbers close to planned levels (Figure 1). However, tonnage shortfalls meant that beneficiaries received smaller amounts or were assisted for shorter periods than planned.
26. At the outcome level, shortfalls in necessary complementary support and WFP resources reduced the effectiveness of relief and recovery activities for IDPs, and often prevented the attainment of durable solutions.¹⁸
27. In school feeding, WFP's SMP in Northern Province was effectively delivered; it fulfilled its safety net function and contributed to the post-war recovery of basic education. However, the lack of progress towards integration with the national SMP is a concern, and there is little justification for providing in-kind assistance using imported food, considering the cash-based SMP being implemented by the Government elsewhere in the country and the positive results of the SMP cash pilot. The intended hand-over was delayed by the absence of a national school feeding policy¹⁹ and WFP's concerns that switching to the Government's modality would lower nutritional standards.
28. Nutrition activities were adequately aligned with national systems, but efforts to address MAM and prevent low birthweight through supplementary feeding were not effective, and national indicators remained poor. This was partly because of difficulties in delivering WFP assistance at the intended scale, but mainly because of chronic bottlenecks in *Thripasha* production and the lack of an effectively targeted approach to the distribution of supplementary foods. The "upstream" focus of the trust funds and advocacy for a more targeted approach to supplementary feeding were appropriate, given WFP's limited resources.
29. Underfunding was a serious constraint to programme efficiency. Maintaining beneficiary numbers while reducing per capita support is a natural short-term response to resource shortfalls, but almost certainly limits efficiency – results per unit of input – as well as effectiveness.
30. Despite the attention paid to gender considerations in planning and monitoring, Sri Lanka was not exempt from the characteristic weaknesses identified in the 2013 evaluation of WFP's Gender Policy. There are signs that the 2015 Gender Policy is beginning to raise the quality of gender analysis, for example, by including gender marker codes in all project documents.

Overall Assessment

31. This marked a difficult period for the country office, which needed to adjust to a new peacetime context and to Sri Lanka's ascent to middle-income status. The adjustment was not easy in a context of declining resources and, until 2015, strained relations between the Government and its development partners. Despite awareness of the need for strategic reorientation, most of the country office's strategic planning efforts were unsuccessful, and the portfolio remained more a collection of inherited activities and continuing obligations than a coherent expression of an explicit, proactive strategy. However, in all of its main focus areas, including humanitarian relief, nutrition, school feeding and related analytical work, WFP had a relevant mandate and distinctive expertise, and achieved significant results. It was appropriate to focus on the districts that were hardest hit by the war while responding to emergencies elsewhere. The most obvious shortcomings in performance were in areas where success was not dependent solely on WFP.

¹⁸ The general insufficiency of support to IDPs was evident at all sites visited by the evaluation team.

¹⁹ There are recent signs of progress in developing such a policy using the Systems Approach to Better Education Results (SABER) advocated in WFP's 2013 Revised School Feeding Policy.

32. Although the principal components of the portfolio were all relevant, its effectiveness was more mixed. Funding constraints meant that resources for support to IDPs were spread too thinly, and this, together with shortfalls from agencies supporting other aspects of IDPs' re-establishment, undermined the possibility of achieving durable solutions. School feeding was effectively delivered in Northern Province, serving as a useful element of social protection in the districts most affected by the war and contributing to restoration of the education system. The combined efforts of WFP and the Government to address MAM and low birthweight through supplementary feeding were not effective, partly because of difficulties in delivering WFP assistance at the intended scale, but mainly because of shortcomings in the national strategy for supplementary feeding.
33. The most serious impediment to efficiency was chronic underfunding. While the portfolio was strongly oriented towards institutional sustainability – as reflected in close cooperation with government agencies, including on capacity development and technical support for national policy-making – there was little progress on the hand-over strategies envisaged in WFP's project documents. There is a continuing risk that the process of resettling IDPs and returnees will fall short of international standards, notably the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,²⁰ and will fail to ensure sustainable livelihoods for the resettled people; this could have negative implications for the reconciliation process.
34. There were significant internal synergies across the portfolio, linked to its geographical focus, common analytical work and the need to adapt GFD and FFA approaches to different contexts, including assistance to IDPs, emergency relief and climate change interventions. The pursuit of external synergies was less successful, as evidenced by the collective failure of the Government and its humanitarian partners to provide sufficient support to IDPs. The potential for synergies between WFP and the Government on MCHN was not realized. In addition, WFP's SMP in Northern Province has persisted as a distinct programme using a different modality from the national school feeding programme. There are encouraging signs that the review mechanisms associated with WFP's new Gender Policy are raising the quality of gender analysis.
35. The design and implementation of WFP's operations were consistent with the humanitarian principles. However, the challenge of preventing and alleviating human suffering needs to be understood in context. Direct interventions are less feasible – and arguably less appropriate – in a middle-income country. WFP will increasingly need to adopt an “upstream” focus – helping to establish systems to ensure that human needs are not overlooked in middle-income countries.
36. As noted in the findings on strategic positioning, the evaluation found positive features in the evolution of the portfolio, but the challenge – as reflected in hand-over strategies that were not carried out – is for WFP to move further “upstream”, with more focus on technical support and capacity development and less direct support to service delivery. WFP's adoption of the country strategic planning process is timely for Sri Lanka: it coincides with preparation of the successors to the UNDAF – the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) (2018–2022) – and to WFP's current country programme, the CSP. The country office has already initiated preparation of the CSP, commissioning a gender analysis and commencing a country strategic review.
37. Since 2015, there has been closer alignment between WFP and the Government's objectives, which is a positive sign for the next phase of WFP's engagement in Sri Lanka. The Government needs to be a full partner in the strategic planning exercise, because WFP's future role will depend on effective government demand for “upstream” services from WFP. The evaluation determined that these services are likely to include technical support to the formulation of nutrition policy, including on the role of specialized foods; technical support to school feeding; and continued support to nutrition and food security assessments, including emergency assessments and emergency preparedness linked to analysis of the implications of climate change.

²⁰ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2004. *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, second edition.

38. The evaluation makes six recommendations, most of which need to be implemented in collaboration with the Government or other international agencies.

Recommendations

	Issue	Rationale	Recommendation	Specific actions and timing	Responsible
1.	Country Strategic Plan	<p>The country strategic planning process is very timely for Sri Lanka: it coincides with preparation of the UNSDF (2018–2022) and the successor to WFP’s current country programme, while the political context in Sri Lanka is more favourable than it has been for many years.</p> <p>The Government needs to be a full and active partner in the exercise, because future demand for WFP’s services will depend mainly on the Government.</p> <p>On the basis of this evaluation, these services are likely to include technical support to nutrition policy formulation, including on the role of specialized foods (Recommendation 4); technical support to school feeding (Recommendation 5); and continued support to nutrition and food security assessments, including emergency assessments and emergency preparedness linked to analysis of the implications of climate change.</p>	<p>Adopt a zero-based approach towards considering what long-term role, if any, WFP should have in Sri Lanka. WFP needs to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> engage the Government as a full partner and jointly identify areas where WFP can maximize value in the next few years; and develop time-bound exit strategies when WFP’s engagement cannot be indefinitely justified, such as the SMP in Northern Province. 	<p>This recommendation should be incorporated into preparation of the CSP during 2016 and 2017.</p>	<p>Country office, with support from the regional bureau and Headquarters</p> <p>The Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs will coordinate the government agencies that engage with WFP</p>

	Issue	Rationale	Recommendation	Specific actions and timing	Responsible
2.	Joint adaptation of United Nations agencies to the new aid landscape in Sri Lanka	<p>UNDAFs have not succeeded in changing the way in which United Nations agencies work. WFP's CSP needs to be based on consideration of the roles of WFP and other United Nations agencies in WFP's areas of engagement. Other United Nations agencies face similar challenges in strategic planning. The UNSDF exercise offers a unique opportunity for United Nations agencies, in consultation with the Government, to rationalize and streamline their operations in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Country-level coordination of support to food security and nutrition is of particular concern for WFP.</p>	WFP should advocate for preparation of the UNSDF to include a radical and costed review of the roles of all major United Nations agencies working in Sri Lanka.	Roles should be reflected in the UNSDF process during 2017, with equal engagement of the Government and United Nations agencies active in Sri Lanka.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and Headquarters, reflecting Headquarters- and regional-level agreements on coordination among United Nations agencies involved in nutrition and food security
3.	Addressing the needs of IDPs	WFP alone cannot resolve all the resettlement challenges faced by IDPs; the situation deserves the urgent attention of the Government, United Nations agencies and other development partners.	WFP should work with other United Nations agencies, international humanitarian agencies and the Government to develop a comprehensive and adequately resourced plan for completing the resettlement of IDPs and returning refugees.	Relevant commitments should be incorporated into the forthcoming UNSDF (Recommendation 2); however the issue is too urgent to be deferred until then.	Country office, with support from the regional bureau and Headquarters in strongly urging joint action by United Nations agencies and the Government
4.	Future engagement in nutrition	WFP's significant comparative advantages in, for example, food fortification and specialized foods are highly relevant in middle-income countries and should guide its future "upstream" support to improving nutrition in Sri Lanka.	WFP should maintain in-country nutrition expertise and continue to support and facilitate multi-sector approaches. It should continue to advocate for targeted approaches to supplementary feeding and offer its technical expertise – linked to rigorous economic analysis – on nutritious foods. Coherent support to a national nutrition strategy should be one of the themes of the UNSDF.	During 2017, the country office should work with the Government and United Nations partners to position the nutrition strategy at the centre of the UNSDF and to reflect WFP's important role in the CSP.	WFP, in coordination with other United Nations agencies working in nutrition and food security

	Issue	Rationale	Recommendation	Specific actions and timing	Responsible
5.	Managed hand-over of the SMP	The current situation, with a different and more generous SMP operating in Northern Province than elsewhere, is unsustainable. WFP has been understandably reluctant to step aside without assurance that a successor programme will comply with its standards for school feeding, but this concern cannot be allowed to be a decisive consideration. The two school feeding initiatives are bound to converge: WFP can urge but cannot insist that SMPs throughout the country be brought up to the standards in Northern Province. Because school feeding needs to be embedded in Sri Lanka's social protection system, it is important to bring the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Education to the centre of these discussions. As there will inevitably be convergence towards a cash-based system, the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs will need to be involved in overseeing phase-out of the ongoing logistics exercise.	WFP and the Government should jointly develop a time-bound strategy for hand-over of the Northern Province SMP to the Government.	An agreed, time-bound strategy for hand-over should be reflected in the CSP.	Country office, with the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs, and the Ministry of Education

	Issue	Rationale	Recommendation	Specific actions and timing	Responsible
6.	Strengthening WFP's economic analysis	Review of decision-making on CBTs in Sri Lanka has exposed basic flaws in WFP's analysis of modality choices. Ignoring the costs incurred by the Government introduces an unjustified bias in decision-making. It is wrong to consider the nutrient value score as an outcome indicator and, more seriously, there must be less emphasis on hypothetical comparison of modalities prior to operations and more attention to gathering and using performance data during implementation. Such data are crucial in convincing WFP's donors of the effectiveness of its work and will result in more robust information into future ex ante assessments. Although the collection and analysis of CBT performance data, including gender analysis, should take place at the country office level, it also requires sufficient prioritization and resourcing by Headquarters and regional bureaux.	WFP should strengthen its guidance on the choice and design of modalities – cash, vouchers and in-kind. Cost analyses should include all costs and focus less exclusively on the costs incurred by WFP. It is even more important that WFP improves the quality and use of the performance data it collects during the implementation of CBT programmes.	WFP should review guidelines on CBT analysis and monitoring as part of the roll-out of its new Strategic Plan.	Guidance and support from Headquarters and regional bureaux; data collection and analysis by country offices

Acronyms Used in the Document

CBT	cash-based transfer
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DEV	development project
FFA	food assistance for assets
GFD	general food distribution
IDP	internally displaced person
LMIC	lower-middle income country
MAM	moderate acute malnutrition
MCHN	mother-and-child health and nutrition
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PRRO	protracted relief and recovery operation
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SMP	school meals programme
SO	special operation
TF	trust fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNSDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework