



**WFP EVALUATION**

# Update on impact evaluations

23 May 2025 – Round table on evaluation reports



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# Impact evaluation (IE)

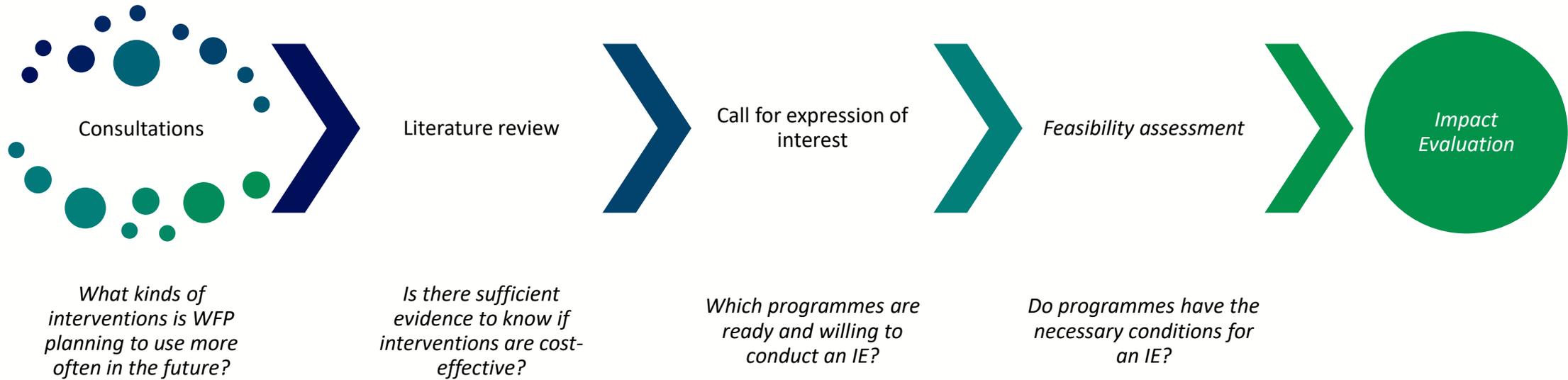
## WHAT IS IT?

- **Impact evaluations** measure **changes** that can be **attributed** to a specific programme through a **credible counterfactual**.
- They measure **what would have happened** in the absence or changes of the intervention.
- A **Randomized Controlled Trial** is the method that gives the highest level of confidence in measuring the causal effect of the programme.

## WHY DO WE USE THEM?

- Impact evaluations are **useful to demonstrate** the direct effects of an intervention to support **decision-making**, particularly to:
  - Assess innovative programmes;
  - Inform strategic decisions on whether to scale up innovations and pilots;
  - Test whether a programme is replicable in a new context;
  - Test causal pathways and delivery mechanisms.

# On-demand IE selection



# Impact evaluation windows and

# workstream



Cash-based transfers and gender



Climate and resilience



School-based programmes



Humanitarian workstream

Preparedness

Needs & targeting

Intervention

Transitions

# Window 1: Cash-based transfers & gender

## **Theme 1 (2019+):**

Can providing women with cash transfers and work opportunities promote women's socio-economic empowerment?

## **Countries covered:**

El Salvador, Rwanda, Kenya, Haiti

## **Summary of evaluation findings (Theme 1):**

- Household food security improved over the course of the project.
- Women's participation in WFP programming and income-generating activities increased.
- Women gained greater decision-making power and agency within the household.
- In the longer term, men showed greater acceptance of women's decision-making authority.

# Window 1: Challenges encountered



**Barriers to participation:** Many programmes struggled to get women to participate in public works programmes.



**Psychological backlash:** The first phase of the window identified short-term negative impacts on psychological abuse, which dissipated by the endlines. Future programmes will need to find solutions to avoid this when targeting women.

# Window 1: Future directions

## **New Gates grant 2025-2029:**

- How do digital cash transfers impact women's agency, nutrition- and health-related outcomes?
- Does adding digital financial literacy interventions and digitally enhanced social and behavior change (SBC) improve impacts further?



# Window 2: Climate & resilience

## **Theme 1:**

Impacts of Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) and complementary activities

### **Countries covered:**

Niger, Mali, South Sudan, Rwanda

## **Theme 2:**

Small-holder farmers' support (Ghana)

## **Theme 3:**

Anticipatory action (AA)

## **Summary of findings (Theme 1):**

- FFA increases food security. These impacts are dynamic and largest in the post-harvest period.
- A primary driver of increased food security is agricultural production (approx. 60 kg per household per year on average).
- Psychological well-being increased in Niger and Rwanda.
- However, no impacts were detected in Mali.

## **Summary of findings (Theme 2):**

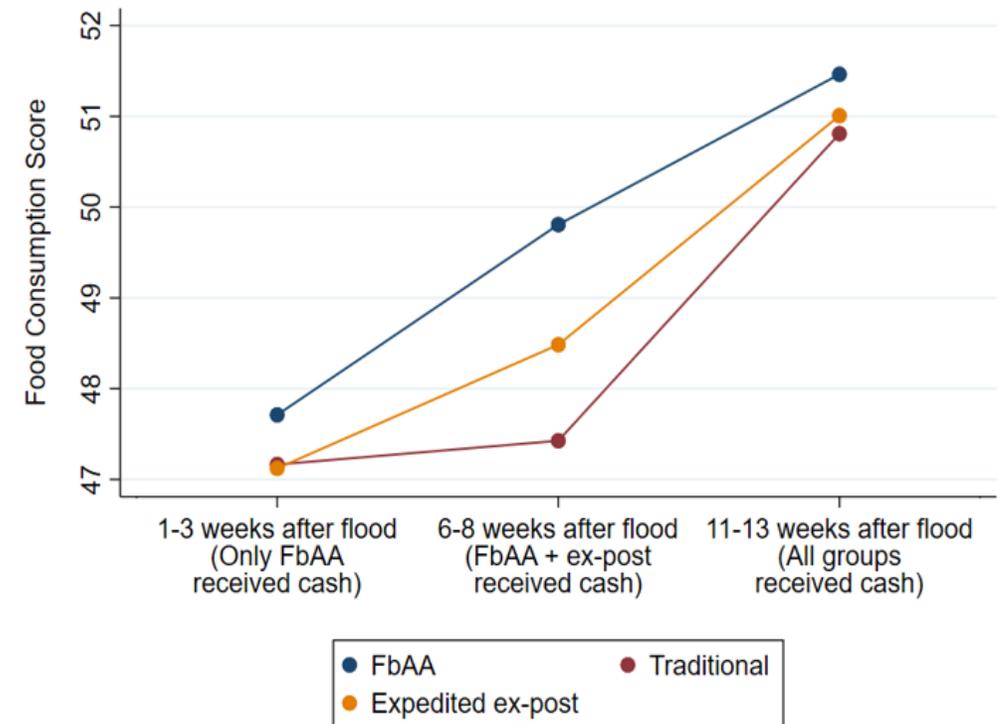
- Farmers receiving a lump-sum payment saw increased agricultural production and higher yields, compared to those receiving monthly payments.

# Window 2: Impact of anticipatory action

## Summary of findings (Theme 3):

- Consistent findings in **Nepal** and **Bangladesh**.
- AA transfers alleviate immediate humanitarian needs in the short run:
  - Beneficiaries reduce food insecurity;
  - Avoid negative coping strategies; associated with food (i.e. in Nepal 25% fewer households relied on borrowing food);
  - Have better mental health.
- No differences between AA group and “standard” post-shock group in the longer run once both groups received transfers (but also no reversal of trends).

## Impacts on food security in Bangladesh



# Window 2: Challenges encountered



**Timelines:** Findings after two years of implementation show some impact, but the households do not appear to be resilient (e.g. particularly during lean seasons).



**Cost-effectiveness:** The first phase of resilience IEs struggle to identify the cost-effectiveness of individual interventions.



**Focus:** Many different activities could contribute to resilience; however, WFP focused largely on small-holder agriculture.

# Window 2: Future directions

## **New BMZ grant 2025-2027:**

- Objective 1: Evaluations of the longer-term impacts of WFP resilience programmes.
- Objective 2: Ensure visibility and usefulness of resilience impact evaluation evidence.
- Objective 3: Identify new evidence priorities for future WFP climate and resilience impact evaluations.
- Objective 4: Contribute to the global community of practice on climate and resilience impact evaluations.



# Window 3: School-based programmes

## **Theme 1:**

Children's nutrition and learning

**Theme 2:** Employment, agricultural practices and local economy

**Theme 3:** Procurement and delivery modalities

## **Countries covered:**

The Gambia, Jordan, Burundi, Guatemala, Malawi, Madagascar, Zambia

## **Summary of findings:**

### **The Gambia:**

- Improved food security, dietary diversity, and mental well-being, with results driven by large impacts among girls.
- Increased child attendance among children whose attendance was low, but limited improvements in literacy tests.
- School meals are as cost-effective as cash transfers for improving learning-adjusted years of schooling.

# Window 3: School-based programmes

## Summary of findings:

### Jordan:

- Household income increased by a third, with increases in savings and non-food expenditures.
- Workers reported higher life satisfaction and men reported less restrictive attitudes towards women.
- No short-term impacts on social cohesion, bargaining power and coping strategies.

### Burundi:

- Commodity Voucher (CV) model delivered a statistically significantly higher number of meal days compared with a decentralised procurement model.
- School meal quality decreased in the CV model schools, but the CV model was also less expensive than the centralised model.

# Window 3: Challenges encountered



**Cost-effectiveness analysis:** conducting cost-effectiveness analysis, which is particularly challenging because of the wide range of different outcomes that the meals contribute to, including education, nutrition, local economic development etc.



**Limited multi-country designs – farmers' component:** developing a multi-country design to assess impacts on farmers, which is challenging because each country has adopted very different procurement systems.

# Window 3: Future directions



## Moving forward:

- Aligning global evidence priorities with global network;
- Explore the potential of school meals to support regenerative agriculture;
- Expand partnerships;
- Explore machine learning and AI tools;
- Explore evidence use and communication.

# Optimizing humanitarian assistance

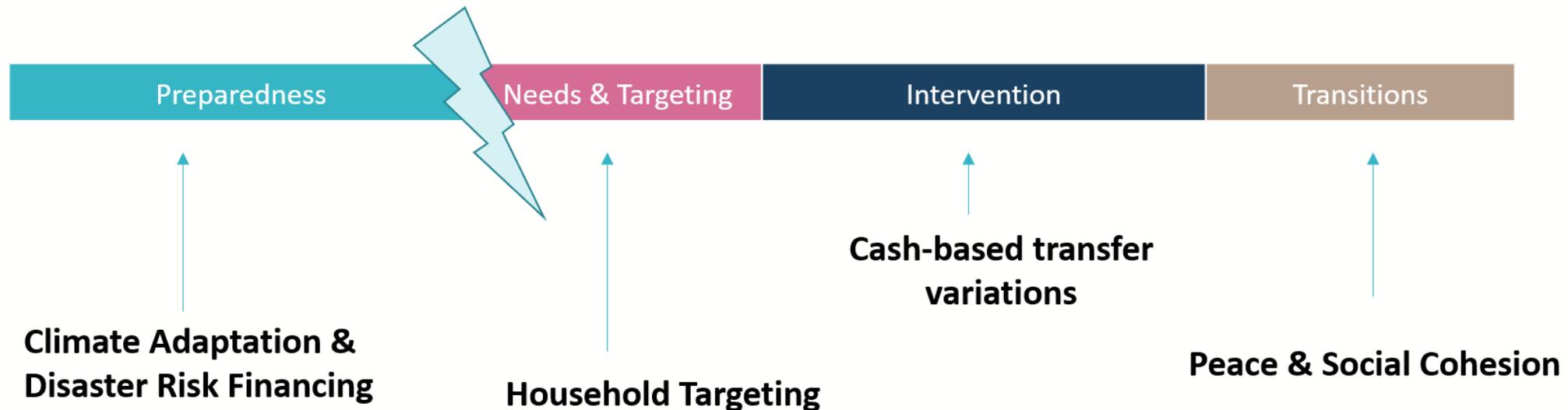
## Evaluation question:

How can humanitarian transfer programming be optimized through impact evaluations?

➔ A/B Testing (lean IE)

## Themes:

- Targeting in DRC and Lebanon
- Modalities in Peru and Afghanistan



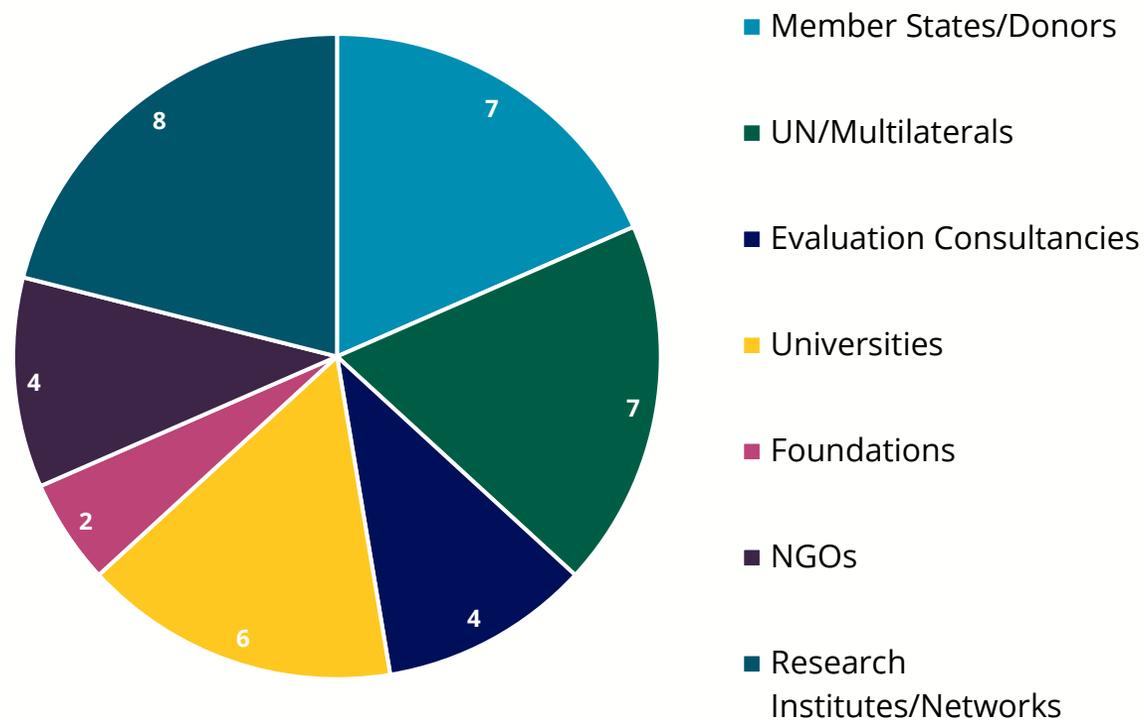
# Community of practice | IE Forum and UNEG

- **Global IE Forum:**

- The 2nd IE Forum hosted jointly with UNICEF in New York from 4-7 December 2024.
- Objectives focused on evidence, partnership, and learning.
- Over 100 in-person attendees from partners and WFP country offices and 300+ online attendees.

- **UNEG Interest Group 2024 and Working Group 2025.**

Global IE Forum Attendance: External Partners





[www.wfp.org/independent-evaluation](http://www.wfp.org/independent-evaluation)



[wfp.evaluation@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.evaluation@wfp.org)



Via Giulio Cesare Viola 68, Rome - Italy

# Thank you!

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