

Evaluation Briefing Note



2012 – 2013 Evaluation of the Impact of Food for Assets on Livelihood Resilience

This brief provides an overview of plans to date for the “Evaluations of the Impact of Food for Assets (FFA) on Livelihood Resilience” that have been included in the Office of Evaluation’s work programme for 2012-2013.

What is Impact Evaluation?

The Office of Evaluation added Impact Evaluation to its portfolio of work in 2009, to enable a more in depth assessment of intended and unintended outcomes and impacts and a deeper analysis of results attributable to an intervention, by comparing conditions before the intervention with conditions afterwards and comparing participating communities or individuals with non-participants.

To achieve the necessary depth of assessment often with limited data, in the complex environments in which WFP operates, and recognizing that WFP’s intervention is one among many factors, a retrospective, mixed method approach is used, focusing on one programme activity/topic at a time.

The aim is to gather credible evidence of a “plausible association” between an intervention and lasting and/or significant change (positive and/or negative). Theories of change or logic models serve as frameworks for identifying and then testing the links from activities to outcomes and eventual impacts and the assumptions and risks that underpin successful achievement of results.

Why Evaluate Food for Assets for Livelihood Resilience?

The following criteria guide selection from WFP’s portfolio of activities/topics for impact evaluation:

- A) significant WFP programming over time;
- B) timeliness for corporate decision-making: either at policy level (e.g. review of policy is

- planned; issue of public debate) or at operational level (e.g. new policy in place and understanding of the extent of adjustments necessary to implement it is needed);
- C) existence of significant gaps in the body of knowledge about the outcomes and impact of WFP operations in that activity;
- D) feasibility of evaluating the activity to impact level.

The FFA impact evaluations cover past operations where WFP’s Food for Assets activities aimed at maintaining or recovering livelihoods and building livelihood resilience, with a focus on natural shocks as compared to human caused shocks.

From 2006-10, FFA accounted for one of the three largest areas of WFP activity (which include the largest activity area General Food Distribution, and school feeding).

A recommendation from the 2009 strategic evaluation of the Effectiveness of WFP Livelihood Recovery Interventions, in which the Executive Board expressed particular interest, was for further analysis of the impact of food assistance in recovery processes on people’s own efforts to build stronger livelihoods. Some issues raised in the evaluation included how the amount and duration of food assistance provided by FFA activities, linkages between FFA activities and other livelihood interventions and the quality of assets created through FFA activities relate to sustainable asset creation and livelihoods.

There have also been requests for evaluation to codify and capture the lessons learned from well-established programmes such as the MERET programme in Ethiopia.

Several new policies and guidance documents related to FFA were developed in 2011, including a new policy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and the new Food for Assets Guidance Manual. These are not the subject of the evaluation, however, the evaluation will provide an opportunity to assess the extent to which long running FFA programmes are aligned with the new policy and guidance and provide lessons as to how they can be better aligned.

Objectives & Approach

The Impact Evaluations of FFA on Livelihood Resilience serve both accountability and learning purposes. The objectives for the evaluations are to:

- Evaluate the outcomes and impact achieved so far (intended or unintended) by FFA on livelihood resilience;
- Identify changes needed to enable fulfilment of the potential impact of FFA on livelihoods resilience;
- Provide information about how FFA activities can be better aligned with new policies and guidance.

The following three main evaluation questions are being addressed by the evaluations:

Question 1: What positive or negative impacts have FFA activities had on individuals within participating households and communities?

Question 2: What factors were critical in affecting outcomes and impact?

Question 3: How could the FFA activities be improved to address findings emerging from the analysis in Key Questions 1 and 2?

The impact evaluations use a mixed method approach that includes four main components:

- Quantitative survey of impacts at the household and community level;
- Qualitative assessment of impacts at the household and community level;

- Technical appraisal of assets and associated biophysical changes;
- Social and institutional analysis of networks and linkages.

Secondary data e.g. national household level surveys, census data and WFP monitoring data on inputs and activities will be used where possible to complement primary data collected.

The evaluations are carried out by independent consultants contracted by the Office of Evaluation.

Participating Countries

Five countries were selected based on a screening of WFP's project plans and reports based upon objectively verifiable criteria; assessment of Country Office interest and availability; and Regional Bureau support. The selected countries and associated regions are shown below.

Region	Countries
ODB	Bangladesh and Nepal
ODD	Senegal
ODN	Uganda
ODP	Guatemala

Timeline

The country evaluations and the series synthesis will be presented to the Executive Board as shown in the following table.

EB Session	Countries
EB.2 November 2013	Guatemala, Nepal and Bangladesh
EB.1 February 2014	Uganda and Senegal
EB.A June 2014	FFA IE Series Synthesis

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