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THEMATIC EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT ON WFP-ASSISTED PROJECTS FOR THE URBAN POOR IN EASTERN AFRICA

**Project Madagascar 4553 - Support to the SECALINE
expanded nutrition and food security project**

**Project Mozambique 4721 - Urban basic services in
Maputo (pilot project)**

**Project Zambia 4756 - Safety net for vulnerable groups
under structural reform**

	Project No. 4553	Project No. 4721	Project No. 4756
Total food cost	7 800 000 dollars	455 160 dollars	10 216 300 dollars
Total cost to WFP	12 208 500 dollars	1 129 190 dollars	17 173 050 dollars
Date of approval of project	November 1992	June 1992	May 1992
Date plan of operations signed	July 1993	December 1992	July 1992
Date of first distribution	January 1994	October 1993	August 1992
Duration of project	Five years	18 months	Five years
Official termination date	December 1998	September 1996	July 1997
Date of evaluation	May 1996	May 1996	April 1996
Composition of mission	Consultant	Consultant	Consultant/WFP

All monetary values are expressed in United States dollars.

ABSTRACT

The three projects share much in common. All their long-term objectives are more in the nature of short-term measures supporting ongoing government programmes. Their immediate objectives focus on outputs. Extreme urban poverty qualifies for WFP assistance - not least because it is characterized by overcrowding, pollution, lack of sanitation and environmental degradation. But urban settings do not lend themselves to the provision of directly productive infrastructure. Urban projects cannot easily achieve the ultimate objective of food aid: removing the need for it. Progress has been slow in all three projects. Output quality ranges from fair to good, though with reservations over the utility and net benefits of some and the sustainability of most. The percentage of women engaged in food-for-work (FFW) activities meets or exceeds design targets. Women assign a high value to incentives in the form of food and recognize that the food rations represent high returns to labour. Under structural adjustment, payment in food has a comparative advantage in being inflation-proof. There is no risk of dependency on food aid: the dependency in fact is on the short-term employment opportunities. There are real doubts about the sustainability of most activities initiated and the maintenance of physical outputs. WFP staff have been closely involved in 'making the projects work', and unable to monitor higher-order issues. Urban authorities everywhere are weak. In replication, WFP has options of: i) retaining the simplicity of current projects, hence achieving limited developmental impact; or ii) being more ambitious, but facing far greater complexity, staff-intensity and cost, if food aid were to be a real 'launching pad' for the urban poor.

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NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted for consideration to the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the decisions taken on the methods of work by the Executive Board at its First Regular Session, the documentation prepared by the Secretariat for the Board has been kept brief and decision-oriented. The meetings of the Executive Board are to be conducted in a business-like manner, with increased dialogue and exchanges between delegations and the Secretariat. Efforts to promote these guiding principles will continue to be pursued by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat therefore invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document, to contact the WFP staff member(s) listed below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting. This procedure is designed to facilitate the Board's consideration of the document in the plenary.

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THE WFP-ASSISTED PROJECTS AS PLANNED AND DESIGNED

Objectives

1. The long-term objectives of the projects are expressed in highly similar terms. What they share is their reference to government policies and programmes, as summarized below:
 - a) support the Government's efforts to apply its food security and nutrition policy in favour of those most disadvantaged by structural adjustment (4553 - Madagascar);
 - b) assist the Government's policy of improving the living conditions of the low-income urban population (4721 - Mozambique);
 - c) improve the situation of the low-income population in peri-urban areas and support the Government's health and nutrition programme in peri-urban and rural areas (4756 - Zambia).
2. What these objectives also have in common, however, is their essentially short to medium-term nature. The lack of such phrases as 'increased self-reliance' among the target groups may have been an oversight - or may reflect an uncertainty about the feasibility of setting more ambitious long-term objectives. This evaluation questions whether it is possible for the type of assistance provided by WFP to offer such prospects in urban areas.
3. The immediate objectives of the food-for-work (FFW) components are also similar and are more in the nature of outputs than objectives. All refer to improvements in community infrastructure and/or services. None mentions specific longer-term benefits or effects on the lives of beneficiaries. Projects 4721 (Mozambique) and 4756 (Zambia) also refer to budgetary support to NGOs for income-generating training activities. Only Project 4553 (Madagascar) refers to sustainability in terms of 'sensitizing local inhabitants to the necessity of continued upkeep'. All three projects have objectives for the improvement of nutrition among target groups. These have not been covered by the evaluation.

Roles and functions of food aid

4. The roles and functions of food aid stated in the project summaries are the same - to serve as an 'incentive and income transfer' to workers engaged. The main difference among them is that the incentive in Mozambique (4721) is payable partly in cash: the other two offer food only. Project 4721 was to offer a cash portion equivalent to half the statutory minimum wage plus a food ration for a household of five. (In addition, there was to be a pilot component with an incentive fully in cash, at the minimum wage, to test the relative acceptability of the two options.) At the design stage, the total value of the cash-food incentive was nearly 30 percent higher than the minimum wage. The ratio of cash to food was about 40:60.



Innovative features

5. Of course, the main innovative feature of all three projects is their urban focus. What they share in common with other (rural) FFW projects is the creation of temporary employment for the poor people. A different question for urban projects is the extent to which new or rehabilitated urban infrastructure may - or may not - offer the prospect of a sustained increase in the food security and standard of living of the workers themselves and other beneficiaries.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE THEMATIC EVALUATION

6. International experience in addressing the problems of the hungry urban poor through food aid is quite limited. WFP is currently supporting a total of only five such projects in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to the three covered by this evaluation, the others are in Ethiopia and Senegal. The causes of urban poverty and food insecurity are complex, variable, often rapidly deepening, though still not well understood. The June 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul has drawn more attention to these problems and also may lead to a corresponding increase in initiatives. So far, WFP's approach has hinged on: a) the provision or rehabilitation of physical assets to benefit the urban poor, through b) temporary FFW opportunities, and in parallel c) direct feeding interventions to improve the nutritional standards of vulnerable groups.
7. Meanwhile, WFP has the task of focusing resources where they are most needed and may achieve the best, most lasting effects. Hence, the primary purpose of this evaluation has been to focus on critical design issues in FFW components common to all three projects.
8. The scope of the evaluation calls for assessments and analyses of such issues as project approach and relevance; urban poverty, unemployment and food insecurity; complementarities with other urban relief and development initiatives; and the potential for replicating success. The evaluation covers the following four key questions (each of which has a number of facets):
 - a) Who are the beneficiaries?
 - b) What is the role of food aid: does it improve food security among the target group?
 - c) Are the activities, services and outputs sustainable?
 - d) Are the project implementation agencies appropriate?



ASSESSMENT

Appropriateness of project design

9. Urban poverty and food insecurity.¹ Extreme poverty can be more invidious in urban than rural settings. In cities, inadequate production and employment opportunities, as a main cause of poverty, hence food insecurity, are often compounded by a loss of social and family support systems, overcrowding, pollution, lack of sanitation and environmental degradation. In different combinations these factors affect the urban poor target groups of all the projects.
10. In Antananarivo, for some 75 percent of the population the average food intake is estimated at less than 80 percent of the recommended minimum. In Maputo, more than 80 percent of the population are considered poor, and three quarters of these 'absolutely' poor (unable to meet the recommended minimum food intake). Zambia is the sixth most highly urbanized country in sub-Saharan Africa and 46 percent of its urban population are classified as poor. Of these, nearly two thirds are 'core' poor (total household expenditure level insufficient to meet recommended food needs).
11. Compliance with WFP's Mission Statement. In relation to WFP's Mission Statement (MS), the urban poor are clearly an appropriate target group. Not only this, but some of the activities and outputs among the projects - such as *bairro* drains in Maputo so that houses are not inundated when it rains - clearly respond to community priorities. In doing so, they meet the MS reference to the use of food aid 'to support...social development'. More problematic are the MS references to a) WFP's objectives being 'eradicating hunger and poverty' (hence eliminating 'the need for food aid'); b) using food aid in 'as developmental as possible' a manner; and c) the role of FFW in building 'the infrastructure necessary for sustained development'. The question is: to what extent can urban project activities and physical outputs contribute to the economic dimensions of these objectives and targets?
12. Using food aid to build or rehabilitate rural infrastructure can - if the output 'menu' is sensible - help to increase both productivity and total production. However, in urban settings the concept of directly-productive infrastructure for individual or groups of households hardly applies. Water-supplies and pre-schools can release time: but if the (more complex) urban economy itself fails to grow, it is the more difficult to translate this into an actual increase in the material level of living. Drains, refuse collection activities, pit latrines and the like under FFW can still serve clear social objectives, but they hardly contribute to new growth and incomes to tackle the underlying problems. Perhaps this led WFP in Maputo and Zambia to include income-generating training in their immediate objectives. Yet international experience suggests that training alone can achieve little. Credit is a more likely starting point - perhaps mixed with simple training. In these respects, the projects in Mozambique and Zambia do not precisely match WFP's MS. Only project 4553 in Madagascar, linked with the larger SECALINE project and its

¹ Data sources: i) Antananarivo - a MADIO (Madagascar-Dial-Instat-Orstom) project survey; ii) Maputo - F de Vletter: Urban Poverty and Employment in Mozambique, Poverty Alleviation Unit, Ministry of Planning and Finance, February 1995; iii) Zambia - IBRD: Zambia Poverty Assessment (Vol. 1), Report 12985-ZA, November 1994; and IBRD: Urban Restructuring and Water-Supply Project, Report 13853-ZA, April 1995.



social development intervention fund, holds out the prospect of wider benefits.

Progress towards objectives

13. In quantitative terms, prorated progress in the FFW components (to the end of 1995) has been variable but generally disappointing. In Madagascar, only 12 percent of the planned workdays had been generated - mainly re-excavating drainage canals. The number of FFW beneficiaries was some 22 percent of the target (implying a shorter period of employment per person than planned). In Maputo, only 12 percent of the road target was achieved and one percent of latrines installed. But progress in school construction and refuse disposal was much better - 93 and 190 percent of the targets, respectively. The number of FFW workers was 21 percent of the target: but 45 percent of planned workdays had been created (implying a longer period of employment per person than planned). Project 4756 in Zambia has not reported on total FFW workdays but nevertheless seems to have done significantly better. Its output progress had reached 191 percent of the target in aggregate production; 187 percent in refuse disposal; 65 percent in the construction of refuse bins; and 70 percent in laterite production (though none of these outputs account for a high share of total employment). Roads (which create large numbers of jobs) and latrines were again disappointing - at 28 percent and eight percent of output targets, respectively. The number of FFW beneficiaries was 66 percent of the target.
14. In qualitative terms, the technical standards of outputs can be judged as ranging from fair to good, though with some reservations over the utility and net benefits of some. In Antananarivo, the re-excavation of canals has generally been well done and has clearly improved drainage. Yet, previously, when they were so filled, poverty and food insecurity had led to their being used for cultivation and raising small animals. Research into alternative methods of vegetable production is being carried out, but meanwhile, the benefit of better drainage must be balanced against a loss of food security. The project in Maputo is the only one to include new community pre-schools. These respond to the priority requests of mothers who must work long hours in petty trade to make even a modest contribution to household income. The appreciation of pre-schools is reflected in the payment of fees (albeit as low as the equivalent of two dollars per child per year).
15. In Zambia, roads have been rehabilitated and widened by the project to a generally high standard. These are appreciated by many residents, who report that clean drains reduce the risk of cholera, and by artisans who claim assured access to supplies. In fact, the standard of roads in both Zambia and Maputo is generally higher than can be justified by the volume and type of traffic likely to use them. Refuse disposal has also been welcomed by urban communities.
16. However, the magnitude and durability of the economic benefits that better infrastructure may bring to those who are destitute and lacking assets to take advantage of the opportunities their urban economies may offer, are in doubt. The projects in Maputo and Zambia have begun helping people to engage in appropriate activities, usually in groups. But only few will be involved, and the poorest of the poor will remain the hardest to reach.



Targeting and benefits

17. The design of the projects did not include special criteria in targeting by strata of poverty. WFP instead relied primarily on the familiar assumption that FFW would be self-targeting on those sufficiently poor, fit, willing and available to apply. Project 4553 (Madagascar) was preceded by a pilot which 'demonstrated that payment in food, in an urban context, is a system that effectively targetsthose most in need'.¹ Project 4721 (Mozambique) took a more participatory approach, stipulating that the communities would submit work proposals and assist in selecting beneficiaries. When Project 4756 (Zambia) began, payment in food was regarded as inferior to cash and somehow demeaning. This gave some additional validity to the self-targeting assumption, although during project implementation in Zambia and Madagascar, due to over-subscription, some targeting mechanisms were introduced.
18. Apart from these criticisms, the Thematic Evaluation has confirmed that very poor areas are being covered and that FFW work forces do represent the poorest of the fit and willing poor. But the poorest areas in terms of incomes - and certainly living conditions - are the illegal settlements, which local governments tend to exclude.
19. The other main reservation about targeting relates to project 4756 (Zambia) and the lack of rotation among FFW workers. Some have been employed for nearly four years. A restricted period of employment would have reached more people. Since this project soon became popular, there would have been many deserving applicants, not least because the numbers of direct beneficiaries represent very small proportions of the populations of the compounds covered.²
20. Direct benefits to FFW workers are very significant - certainly in terms of relative returns to labour. In Madagascar the value of the incentive per hour worked is nearly 40 percent higher than the typical wage for unskilled labour (assuming an eight-hour day). In Maputo the food and cash incentive represents an hourly return about double that of the statutory minimum wage, or the net margin made on a 'bad day' by a young petty trader. The hourly returns from FFW in Zambia at the time of this evaluation were about double those of the minimum wage, and more than double the hourly net margin of some small traders in the compounds.

¹ Quotations taken from sections of the project summaries dealing with Beneficiaries and Benefits.

² From as few as 0.2 percent in George compound in Lusaka, to 4 percent in Kaputula compound in Kabwe.



Gender issues

21. Poor urban women have consistently been key direct beneficiaries in each of the projects. This evaluation has estimated that women currently comprise about 60 percent of the work force of project 4553 (Madagascar); of these, about one third are the heads of their households. This is quite distinct from the predominantly male composition of urban work forces employed, say, by contractors paying cash wages. In project 4721 (Mozambique) women comprise over 70 percent of the FFW work force. The project in Zambia set the most ambitious target - of women comprising 90 percent of FFW work forces. This evaluation concluded that the target is close to being met.
22. The main reason that women account for such high shares of the work forces in all the projects is that they assign a higher value than men to payment in food. None of the projects has had to set special criteria to ensure meeting its female participation target. The clearest example was project 4756 (Zambia). When it began, as noted, payment in food was regarded - primarily by men - as demeaning in an urban society previously accustomed mainly to formal-sector wage employment. However, the perception among women was that a) men could be unreliable providers of sufficient food even when in wage employment; b) food accounts for a high share of household expenditure; and c) the food incentive offered an excellent return to labour.

Role and effects of WFP food aid

23. The role of food aid in the FFW components of all three projects is identical - to serve as an incentive to workers. There are three main strands to the comparative advantage of food over cash. First, as noted, payment in food is attractive because of its dominance in household expenditure. Indeed, with smaller seasonal variations in food prices in urban than rural settings, food is the consistently preferred form of payment among many people. Secondly, there is no transaction cost of converting cash into food. Thirdly, food is proof against high inflation in all three countries.
24. There is little evidence of workers selling portions of their food incentives. The main positive effect of food aid can therefore be expected to be enhanced household food security during the period of employment, and among many people, a higher standard of nutrition. No negative effects attributable to food (rather than any other form of assistance) could be detected. In Zambia, the length of FFW employment enjoyed by many direct beneficiaries (as noted) may raise concerns about possible excessive dependence on food aid. Certainly, there is high dependence on FFW in all three countries. But it is a dependence on the employment opportunities created in very poor and over-supplied urban labour markets rather than a dependence on food itself. This is acceptable, there being few (and recently diminishing) employment opportunities for the poor. The volumes of food the projects provide are too small for there to be any displacement or market distortion effects.



Sustainability

25. Doubts surround the sustainability of the activities initiated and the maintenance of outputs produced by the three projects. In Madagascar, before work can start, the project requires a formal agreement with the *Fokontanys* concerned as well as the communities themselves, including detailed specifications of maintenance arrangements. This can take some time to achieve. The project has not been in operation long enough to have been able to show the outcome of such arrangements. The doubt relates to whether the need for FFW activities may lead to agreements which may be hollow of any real commitment.
26. In Maputo, the design of pre-schools minimizes maintenance, including windows without (breakable) glass. The experience of parents paying modest fees may augur well for voluntary maintenance work which can be carried out purely by labour. The main doubt surrounds the ability of parents to mobilize cash to buy paint, for example, and other building materials.
27. In Zambia, the experience of people having continued to work purely voluntarily even during a temporary disruption in food supplies in March 1996 may reflect good prospects for the sustained maintenance of roads and other outputs and activities. This evaluation is not convinced. The value assigned by FFW workers to their employment is high enough to have generated a concern that failure to continue working might lead to them being replaced by others on the resumption of supplies. And people who can afford to spend time working against no immediate return whatsoever portray themselves as not being among the most needy.
28. In none of the projects is there a real prospect of the urban authorities concerned providing significant financing for the continuation of activities or maintenance of infrastructure. The communities may find it economically worthwhile, financially affordable and organizationally feasible to continue what has been started. But international experience is not encouraging.

Monitoring and evaluation

29. Only project 4553 in Madagascar has a distinct monitoring system. This was designed by ILO jointly with WFP. For the others the staff of country offices have been occupied mainly in the practicalities of 'making the projects work'; solving immediate problems in, for example, food management and logistics; and checking the 'arithmetic' of the proper use of food aid. The main type of monitoring work has been restricted to checking on progress indicators.
30. What has been neglected has been performance monitoring - stepping back to look at the benefits of project activities and outputs; studying the possible economic pay-offs of outputs; drawing up financial and economic models of net household benefits; exploring community organization and fund-raising in the interests of sustainability; and other higher-order issues.



Project management

31. The projects were designed with quite different management arrangements. In Madagascar, project 4553 was conceived as an integral part of the SECALINE food security and nutrition project funded jointly by the World Bank/IDA, WFP and the Government. IDA funds were available for material and technical inputs, including management staff. In practice, the ILO technical assistance has reduced the involvement of WFP staff in detailed management issues.
32. In Mozambique, two NGOs are responsible for managing WFP inputs to their ongoing programmes - the Mozambican Association for Urban Development (AMDU) and the Irish NGO, GOAL. The AMDU obtained support from the World Bank (IDA) funds through the social dimensions of adjustment window and resources through WFP.
33. Above the level of site implementation, project 4721 presents major management problems deriving from weaknesses in the Maputo urban authority (CMCM). The plan of operations is less than clear. It should perhaps have specified more precisely what arrangements were expected between CMCM and the NGOs concerned. There is still no letter of understanding between CMCM, and AMDU. WFP's role in supervision and advisory services is also outlined somewhat narrowly in the plan of operations. Given the basic weakness of CMCM, close, pro-active provisions were needed. In practice, WFP has had to work quite hard - both to be kept informed of plans and to learn of such issues as food leakage and the award of food packages to CMCM staff.
34. Project 4756 in Zambia has been a source of concern within WFP as PUSH - one of two NGOs responsible for management - has been seen as a creation of WFP and is actually funded by the Government. In fact, the competence and motivation of PUSH staff - both at the apex in Lusaka as well as in its offices in other towns - are impressive. Most PUSH staff are engineers and the road works supervised by PUSH are generally to higher engineering standards than those under the other NGO, CARE International. PUSH has recently recruited a number of community development specialists to work alongside its engineers, with some success. On the other hand, CARE already has quite a broad vision of its work on behalf of urban compound dwellers. This is illustrated by its current attempts to use livelihood ranking methods to understand the circumstances and potential among project workers and to help form savings groups. For PUSH, the issue is whether it may have a broader life and role beyond the WFP project. To work on this, its Director would need a capable deputy to release some of her time.

CONCLUSIONS - LESSONS LEARNED AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy and operational lessons

35. Extreme urban poverty clearly qualifies for assistance under WFP's Mission Statement. Indeed, it shares four of the same 'integrated' dimensions of rural poverty characterized by Robert Chambers - lack of assets and income; physical weakness; vulnerability to contingencies; and powerlessness.¹ It can also mean a lack of the support networks that exist in rural areas and - more invidiously - an overcrowded, polluted, insanitary and degraded environment.

¹ R. Chambers: Rural Poverty Unperceived. IBRD Staff Working Paper No. 400, 1980.



36. Living conditions in the areas of Antananarivo and Maputo are appalling. The urban compounds in Zambia have somewhat better conditions. In all three countries, the advent of rain brings the physical disruption of floods and a major risk of disease. Cholera has been a major killer in the poor urban and peri-urban quarters reached by all three projects. The causes are complex, but the contamination of domestic water sources is probably a major factor. In Zambia, the prevention of flooding, hence disease, is a strong motivation to keeping road drains clean.
37. Food is an appropriate form of incentive in community works programmes. Food accounts for a high share of urban household expenditure, as it does in patterns of rural production and consumption. Experience has shown that food is often preferred - especially among women, who tend to assign a high value to what they know is a priority need. This was reflected, during evaluation field work, by the very high morale of women workers in all three projects.
38. One area in which urban differs from rural poverty is in Chambers' fifth dimension: isolation. Urban poverty is concentrated. And however isolated the urban poor may be from new ideas, markets and opportunities, they are - physically at least - easy to identify and reach. Even in densely populated cities, it is easy to identify the poorest settlements. This makes it easy to mobilize labour. But, since a) employment is so much in demand, and b) FFW can reach only small proportions of the labour force, there is a strong case for rotating employment opportunities. High population densities also mean that large numbers of people can be the indirect 'downstream' beneficiaries of some activities (such as refuse disposal) and completed outputs (such as roads and better transport services).
39. One problem, however, is that the poorest urban settlements are likely to be illegal - not recognized by urban authorities. Another problem is that such settlements often require very large infrastructure investments before they might become acceptable for human habitation. The operational lesson learned is that the inclusion of illegal settlements should be preceded by detailed discussions with urban authorities to identify a) the policy, planning and physical preconditions to be met; and b) the costs of meeting those preconditions.

General development lessons

40. FFW programmes can bring about significant improvements in the urban environment. Experience so far, however, shows one main development lesson learned and one nagging doubt. The development lesson is that urban (unlike well-designed rural) works can do little or nothing to tackle the underlying structural problem of urban economies with low purchasing power yet overcrowded labour markets. Food aid has been shown to be as powerful a mobilizer of labour in urban as in rural settings. But experience also shows the limitations of food interventions alone. Accepting that all three projects have finite durations, FFW workers describe their likely post-project positions in terms of 'a return to despair'. Some, as in Zambia, have requested help to set up their own small enterprises (envisaged in the income-generating training components of two of the projects). But hardly any training has been done, while international experience has shown that training alone may not be enough. First, care is needed to avoid the risk of 'training for unemployment'. Secondly, credit services - if managed very carefully - can be a more rapid and effective way of helping people to do sustainably better.
41. The nagging doubt relates to the sustainability of the activities and services initiated



with food aid and the maintenance of physical outputs. The most obvious limitation is that of resources - both among the relevant urban authorities and among poor communities. Also, there are underlying problems related to organization, commitment, will and capacity. The urban authorities concerned are fundamentally weak. Those in Zambia, retaining much of their previous competence in staff and organization, probably offer the best prospect for picking up where project 4756 may stop - but only if the resource problem could be tackled. Urban councils already cannot cope with town-centre maintenance and service needs; retrenchment and decline are continuing. The urban authorities in Maputo and Antananarivo are more fundamentally weak - so, even with more resources there would be risks of their ineffective use. Urban re-structuring and strengthening are being tackled by IBRD/IDA in all three countries. Yet there are many uncertainties about how to tackle the multi-faceted problems; what the results may be; and how long it might take. These are waters which WFP has wisely dared not enter.

Preconditions for similar projects

42. This evaluation has concluded that there are two broad options for WFP if food aid were to be extended to similar projects - a) a limited (but simple) option; and b) a more ambitious (and more complex one). The simple option is to accept the limitations of food aid alone (or food accompanied by the magnitude and type of complementary resources as in the three projects covered here). But when projects end, the direct beneficiaries must be expected to revert to whatever survival strategies they may be able to devise. Such projects should not include objectives in training for income-generating activities - at least not without rigorous appraisal of capacities, markets and other inputs. The implication of this option is for WFP to accept a target position less than half-way along the relief-development continuum. Thus, the precondition applies to WFP's expectations.

43. The more ambitious option is more complex because the factors that cause and perpetuate urban poverty are complicated. Projects could be designed with FFW as just one component of a multi-faceted range of development assistance to the same beneficiaries. FFW would serve as the initial mobilizer of the target group, providing an opportunity for project advisory staff to establish a relationship with them and develop an understanding - both of their current circumstances and their potential. Those with the best potential could be 'graduated' away from FFW into their own new or expanded (and sustainable) occupations. Such projects would be inherently more staff-intensive than those at present (raising questions about the capacity of NGOs to provide enough numbers and quality of support staff). They would require analytical support to assess the viability of proposed occupational patterns. They would also need to include well-managed credit services. These are all fields in which WFP as an agency has little expertise. It would be necessary to identify suitable collaborating partners to supply both the financial and human resources required. Indeed, this would be the main precondition to be met.



Summary conclusions

44. All three projects have done good work. Progress in meeting output targets has been slower than planned - but this reflects the learning curve that had to be negotiated, including the new (or expanded) use of food aid in urban settings as well as collaboration with untested implementing partners and weak urban authorities. Nevertheless, FFW activities have increased the food security of many of the urban poor - especially because large numbers of women have been employed. In the process, food incentives have become very popular, not least because they offer excellent returns to labour. Indeed, the popularity of the projects has given them a higher profile than their actual size would have suggested. The main doubts have included a) prospects for the continuation of activities and the maintenance of outputs; b) the utility and net benefits of some outputs; and c) the very limited extent to which the projects have been able to tackle the underlying problem of overcrowded urban labour markets. Food aid could be granted to similar urban projects - but clearly recognizing the limitations. If urban projects were to aim at any point significantly further along the relief-development continuum, they would become more staff-intensive, more costly and more complex.

