

Evaluation Brief

Decentralized evaluation for evidence-based decision making



WFP Algeria: Decentralised Evaluation of the Nutrition components of the Algeria PRRO 200301

Context and subject of the evaluation

The Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200301 aims to ensure food security and minimum daily dietary nutritional requirements to the most vulnerable Sahrawi refugees living in five camps located in a harsh desert near Tindouf in southwestern Algeria. Through the nutrition components of the PRRO, WFP supplies Specialised Nutrition Products (SNP) for nutrition specific interventions: (i) treatment of MAM through targeted supplementary feeding programmes (TSFP) and (ii) prevention of stunting and anaemia.

Algeria hosts refugees from Western Sahara since 1975, the Sahrawi refugee camps representing a unique protracted and neglected crisis. In this context, major humanitarian threats include: food insecurity, sporadic torrential rains, low food production technologies, poor water and sanitation conditions, health risks, and dwindling aid. The health status in the camps is fragile and an uncertain health system offers basic care services through 27 health centres, five refugee camp (or *wilaya*) and a hospital in Rabouni, the administrative centre of the Sahrawi authorities. Water quality is inadequate, and sanitation and waste management precarious. Options for livelihoods are extremely limited and the refugee population remains entirely dependent on international assistance.

The evaluation

In 2017, WFP Algeria Country Office (CO) commissioned DARA the Decentralized Evaluation (DE) of the nutrition components of the Algeria's PRRO 200301, covering the period from January 2013 to December 2017. The evaluation took place between October 2017 and July 2018.

In line with the country-level strategic planning, the **purpose** of the DE was to provide evidence-based findings and constructive feedback to inform operational and strategic decision-making and the reformulation of WFP's role in nutrition in the Sahrawi context.¹ The **specific objectives** of the DE are to determine: (i) the relevance, appropriateness, coherence and connectedness of the PRRO's nutrition components, in light of WFP's mandate and nutritional challenges in the Sahrawi

context; (ii) the results of the PRRO's nutrition indicators, including efficiency, effects and impact; and (iii) the factors, both internal and external, that influenced WFP's performance and results during the period, including sectoral and intersectoral coordination.

The evaluation used a **mixed-methods approach**, combining both qualitative and quantitative primary and secondary data.² A number of limitations influenced the evaluation process, such as incomplete documentation, the overlap of the inception report drafting and the data collection field visit due to an overall delay in the evaluation process and availability constraints from the team. The field visit was hampered by the time constraints of WFP staff and the evaluation team, and the security and logistical issues affecting the team's access to WFP and UNHCR staff in Tindouf. Availability and reliability of primary data was a challenge, partly due to political sensitivity and to the absence of appropriate tools for data collection prior to 2016. Finally, the team was unable to carry the intended contribution analysis to explore causal links between observed contextual changes and the nutrition components of the PRRO. The co-habitation of multiple projects and actors working towards the same outcomes, the influence of several cumulative outputs over time, and other difficulties encountered have prevented the re-construction process needed to assess the contribution of WFP in changes on nutrition outcomes.

Key Findings

1. Appropriateness and relevance: At design, the nutrition components of the PRRO are relevant, adapted to the Sahrawi context, and appropriate to cover needs of the target population. However, although population needs are regularly assessed and recommendations from studies and surveys indicate the need for adapting programming to specific population-groups' (age, gender, or locations) vulnerabilities, this needs to be carried out more thoroughly and improved.

2. Coherence and connectedness: The nutrition components of the PRRO are coherent with (i) the operation's objectives and with WFP's Strategic Frameworks (2008–2013, 2014–2017) and corporate policy guidance; (ii) Sahrawi Ministry of Health's³

¹ WFP CO will implement a Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) in 2018–2019, followed by either a Country Strategic Plan, if a Country Strategic Review takes place on Sustainable Development Goal 2, or an Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP).

² Findings were obtained through a thorough desk review of available and relevant documentation, key informant interviews,

focus group discussions and observation during field visits, combined with participative methods as Storytelling and Photovoice

³ The opinions expressed in this report are those of the Evaluation Team, and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Food Programme. Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors. Publication

priorities and normative documents, and (iii) interventions of other sector's actors and key stakeholders. However, internal integration of the PRRO components is weak and no intersectoral complementarity is evidenced. Moreover, financial constraints prevented the adequate implementation of activities.

3. Effectiveness: Outputs, in terms of beneficiaries and assistance provided, have been negatively affected by repeated pipeline breaks due to financial shortfalls, as have the diversity and nutritional value of the food assistance distributed. Interpretation of results is complicated due to the mismatched and incomplete nature of the data available, and planning figures for the vulnerable population remain an issue.

4. Effects and impacts (outcomes): Most nutrition and food security outcomes for refugees have significantly improved during the period evaluated, indicating a positive contribution of the WFP intervention. However, the aggravation of the prevalence of anaemia in the last two years suggests that WFP's financial and operational constraints might, among other cultural and contextual factors, have had a negative effect on nutritional conditions.

5. Factors affecting performance and explaining results: While logistics is seen as an enhancing factor of performance, the limited availability of funds has drastically reduced the expected effects of the nutrition components of the PRRO. M&E activities need to be improved mainly through better data use and analysis. The layout and overall capacities of WFP Algeria are a recurring issue, mainly due to vacant positions, lack of technical expertise, and language obstacles. Partnerships are weak at strategic and decision-making levels.

6. Coordination: WFP's role in the coordination for nutrition is limited, possibly viewing its role a "supplier" of nutrition goods. In the active food sector, WFP is an effective and recognised leader, mainly at a practical logistical level. In contrast to Food Sector coordination (where WFP plays the key role), which has been active and systematic over the years, initiatives for inter-sectoral or inter-agency coordination are relatively recent and, to date, have not had demonstrated results

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

Although the PRRO's nutrition components are relevant and appropriate for the Sahrawi context, are aligned with the corresponding sectoral policies (corporate, national and international) and have contributed to the improvement of basic nutritional indicators, identified emerging specific needs have not been covered. Seeking programmatic complementarities and synergies within the operation's components and, externally, with other actors, is insufficient. There is a lack of internal technical expertise for an optimal understanding of the nutrition

context, and the adequate management of the nutrition components of the PRRO beyond its logistical aspects. This situation may have caused the irregular involvement of WFP on nutrition sector coordination matters and the general perception among stakeholders of WFP as supplier (of nutrition products and food) and donor. On the other hand, financial shortfalls, and their internal management, have affected the operation's outputs and outcomes.

Regarding GEEWS, the PRRO does not take gender-specific measures and needs more analysis to incorporate these issues in its programme. This evaluation as well as other assessments, determine a lack of understanding and programmatic approach to underlying issues that affect Sahrawi women.

Recommendations

Rec. 1 and 2 are to be implemented concurrently in 2018–2019, guiding the preparation of the WFP's new operation in Algeria. Rec. 3 goes beyond the nutrition components of the operation and will need to be put into effect immediately

R. 1 (Links to **Key Findings 2, 5 and 6**): In 2018, with the concurrence and support of all levels (HQ, RBC, CO, SO), WFP Algeria must decide on its role in nutrition and clarify, internally and externally, how to perform it. **R. 1.1.** If WFP remains in its current role of "supplier", it must be guided by decisions regarding the outputs of that role, taken jointly with all actors in the nutrition and food sectors after a constructive debate, exploring all possible options. **R. 1.2** If WFP decides to embrace a more active role within the nutrition sector: (i) WFP Algeria and the rest of the key stakeholders of the sector should explore and negotiate together how this role could be articulated and formalized (*see R. 2*) and (ii) WFP Algeria should reinforce internal capacities, systems and processes required by this role (*see R. 3*).

R. 2 (Links to **Key Findings 1, 2 and 6**): If WFP Algeria decides to assume a more active strategic role in nutrition, in 2018, the agency should actively promote and support a revision of the current nutrition strategies and activities, by (i) performing a comprehensive evaluation of current nutrition interventions; (ii) reviewing current regulatory documents; (iii) promoting increased internal and external complementarities and synergies, and (iv) assessing and rationalising coordination mechanisms for the nutrition sector.

R. 3 (Links to **Key Findings 1, 2 and 5**): WFP Algeria should reinforce the internal competences and technical capacities in nutrition, as a first step to improving the appropriateness and relevance of the design of the PRRO, and consequently of its nutrition components. It must also strengthen the internal processes and partnerships that influence the performance and results of the PRRO.

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Reference:

Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at <http://www1.wfp.org/independent-evaluation>
For more information please contact the Office of Evaluation wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org