



# Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience

This strategic evaluation provides a formative and forward-looking assessment of WFP's support for enhanced resilience. The concept of resilience has long been implicit in WFP's work outside of the humanitarian context, and the organization has undertaken a range of policy, programming and assessment efforts over the last decade to improve people's abilities to deal with shocks and reduce the need for repeat humanitarian interventions. Affirming WFP's core business of saving lives, its current Strategic Plan (2017–2021) further positions the organization in the global resilience agenda by anchoring its operations across the humanitarian-development nexus.

## SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation uses a theory of delivery model to examine how and to what extent WFP's concepts, strategies, guidance, systems, programmes, people, partners and information work together to strengthen WFP's support for enhanced resilience. These eight organizational components, referred to as 'nodes', are used to address five evaluation questions concerning:

- i) the relevance of WFP's resilience work;
- ii) the right partnerships to engage in;
- iii) WFP's 'fit-for-purpose' to implement resilience programming;
- iv) WFP country offices' ability to generate and use data to make informed decisions, and the consistency of WFP's approach to measuring outcomes;
- v) emerging lessons.

## OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was intended to promote learning on the extent to which WFP is organizationally capable to undertake resilience programming. It is expected that evidence from the evaluation will serve senior management, as well as operationally focused employees. The findings may also be of interest to WFP's implementing partners and donors.

## KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

The summary of key findings are organized by theory of delivery 'node'.

**Node 1 – Concept.** WFP's commitment to enhancing resilience is integrated into policies and guidelines, but a unifying, agency-wide conceptualization of resilience is lacking. There is a gap in understanding that resilience capacities are owned by those who face shocks, as well as of the importance of addressing structural causes of vulnerability. While WFP recognizes that it needs to target a range of different groups, including communities and households, more weakly articulated is how this helps to enhance the resilience of individual women, men, girls and boys. There is uncertainty around enhancing resilience in more unstable or crisis contexts globally.

**Node 2 – Strategy.** Resilience sits at the heart of WFP's strategic response to protracted crises; however, there is no clear, coherent framework to advance a resilience enhancing agenda from concept to integrated programming and measurable results. Moving forward, the Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) provide a potentially good platform for resilience programming.

**Node 3 – Guidance.** The evaluation found little evidence of explicit guidance to support WFP's resilience work. While Integrated Road Map (IRM) guidance encourages greater integration of programmes, technical and process-related guidance needs more specificity. There is also a demand to expand the useful technical support provided by Regional Advisors.

**Node 4 – Systems.** WFP's tendency to work in silos constrains the integrated approach needed to enhance resilience. WFP's financial framework is currently transitioning towards a dual needs-based and resource-based financial planning structure, which could be beneficial for resilience building when fully realized.

Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at <http://www1.wfp.org/independent-evaluation>

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**Node 5 – Programmes.** WFP supports a range of interventions that contribute to different resilience capacities and has the programmatic tools to support a phased, layering of activities, which supports graduation from extreme poverty. Some WFP programmes use a ‘convergence approach’, but much more could be done to enhance synergies between interventions and address contexts of mobility and migration. While effective, more time is needed for Food Assistance for Assets initiatives to realize their resilience-building outcomes.

**Node 6 – Partners.** WFP is improving its support to governments through Zero Hunger Strategic Reviews and continued country capacity strengthening, which will serve to strengthen the resilience of potentially vulnerable individuals and communities. WFP actively engages in other partnerships on resilience, including with the Rome-based agencies, but these have not systematically address the different needs and priorities of women, men, girls and boys. It is too early to determine whether the CSPs will allow for the more diversified partnership and financial modalities needed for longer-term resilience approaches.

**Node 7 – People.** Country offices have experienced and dedicated staff; however, with notable exceptions, there is a need to broaden the skill sets available to work effectively to support enhanced resilience outcomes.

**Node 8 – Information.** WFP has access to a wealth of tools that provide insights into specific aspects of resilience; various combinations, along with new assessments, are being piloted to provide a more holistic picture. WFP’s corporate monitoring framework includes elements that are relevant to the measurement of resilience, but is limited by the differences between indicator methodologies and a tendency towards equating outputs with outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall Assessment

There has been a concerted effort within WFP to contribute to resilience strengthening, including a range of policy, programming and assessment efforts to reduce the need for repeat humanitarian interventions. However, this is not fully manifested through a concerted drive by WFP leadership to develop a shared understanding of resilience and how WFP can consistently enhance it to improve food security.

Significant opportunity lies with the CSPs, which place greater emphasis on contextualization, government priorities, ‘whole of society’ approaches and integrated programming. A major constraint, however, is the unmet demand for further guidance at Country Office level on how to integrate a resilience lens into this process.

Furthermore, a tendency towards siloed working restricts the integration across approaches, including with partners, necessary to strengthen capacities (anticipatory, absorptive, adaptive and transformative) towards resilience outcomes. WFP’s assessment capacity is an exception to a siloed approach, particularly for targeting but also for shock identification.

WFP has established and is piloting individual programmes that have the potential to support resilience strengthening in one or more areas – vertically and horizontally. However, WFP’s breadth of interventions seldom converge in a way that could help an individual, household or community progress from food insecurity towards strengthened resilience.

The evaluation concludes that there are foundations and a higher-level strategic commitment to enhance resilience, but this needs to be matched by operational realities with better guidance, measurement and systems if WFP is to make a significant contribution in this area.

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** Establish an inter-Divisional leadership team chaired by the AED, Operations to develop a strategy for enhancing resilience to achieve Zero Hunger.

**Recommendation 2.** Integrate gender/equality, empowerment and resilience-related questions into the ZHSR and IRM guidance for Country Offices.

**Recommendation 3.** Strengthen the financial and partnership base for initiatives to enhance resilience.

**Recommendation 4.** Building on the strategy development, Commission a workforce study to assess the horizontal and vertical adjustments needed to ensure that WFP employees can successfully deliver on resilience-focused commitments.

**Recommendation 5.** Consolidate performance measurement data from resilience-related initiatives for corporate reporting and in support of national partners.

**Recommendation 6.** Strengthen HQ and the Regional Bureaux’s ability to collect, collate and/or analyze information on covariate transboundary and localized shocks before they happen.

**Recommendation 7.** Support the generation of evidence on the relevance of food security and resilience interventions in conflict and protracted crises.