



Decentralized Evaluation

Final Evaluation of the WFP Country Programme in the Plurinational State of Bolivia

CP 200381 2013-2017

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**World Food
Programme**



Executive summary

Introduction

1. The World Food Programme (WFP) Country Office (CO) in the Plurinational State of Bolivia commissioned Econometría Consultores to carry out the Final Evaluation of the Country Programme (CP) 200381 between 2013 and 2017. The objective of the evaluation was to *"strengthen local and national capacities to break the intergenerational cycle of chronic hunger"*. The CP was implemented in three departments: Pando, Chuquisaca and Tarija. It covered three components: 1) Sustainable and productive school feeding 2) Strengthening of government nutrition programmes 3) Livelihood Development and Disaster Risk Reduction. In its latest approved version, with a budget of USD12,885,352, the CP aimed at reaching 177,200 people, of which 44% was attained. The evaluation planned to contribute to the operationalization of the WFP Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2018-2022 in Bolivia. This strategic plan represents a new programme period after the implementation of CP 200381 to its completion as of 2018. The objectives of this evaluation are 1) accountability, and 2) identify lessons learned from the CSP. The assessment covers the period from January 2013 to December 2017, and its users are the WFP CO and its partners, particularly the Bolivian government, and the WFP Regional Office (RO). It seeks to answer three questions: 1. Was the CP consistent with the national development related-objectives? 2. Were the results satisfactorily and efficiently achieved? 3. What were the factors influencing the objectives (drivers and obstacles), and to what extent and how did they operate?

2. The methodology was based on the criteria of relevance, coherence, connectivity, coverage, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. To answer the questions, the evaluation team used a mixed methods approach (quantitative and qualitative), and data gathering methods that included a desk review, semi-structured interviews with all the interested parties, direct observation and the presentation of preliminary results in a debriefing after the fieldwork. In total, approximately 300 women and 270 men were consulted. The limitations faced by the team included the rotation of stakeholder human resources, only one member of the team could visit Pando, and the lack of availability of quantitative information about the effects of the programme. To mitigate these limitations, the team tried to take full advantage of the interviews with people who work throughout the implementation of the program, and with people at the national level to complete information on Pando. The team also searched for available complementary or alternative indicator data that were not measured.

Context

3. The political and social context has been defined by the Government led by Evo Morales' since 2006, in terms of food security, sovereignty, nutrition, and education as structural changes relevant to the evaluation.

4. In the years before CP 200381, the socio-economic situation of the country experienced significant progress, which could be seen, by the substantial reduction in poverty. However, several gaps persist in areas focused on by the CP. Thus, despite significant improvements, Bolivia has one of the highest undernourishment rates in Latin America and the Caribbean. Chronic malnutrition in children under 5 years of age was 16% in 2016, and 43% of children continued to live in multidimensional poverty until now (UNICEF, 2017). One well-known factor that influences food insecurity is climate change, which causes severe meteorological anomalies such as droughts, snowfall, floods, storms and forest fires that directly generate losses of agricultural and livestock production. It also creates food price increases.

5. Bolivia presents favourable educational indicators, where the margins to reach 100% of primary schooling and literacy are seemingly insurmountable. However, there are still gaps in this area, such as the early incorporation of boys, girls and adolescents into the labour market, and early pregnancies in adolescents (Romero Cruz, 2016).

6. Regarding the situation of gender equality, there are still challenges to overcome. According to UN Women, four out of ten women live in conditions of poverty and inequality.

Main results

Was the CP consistent with the national development related-objectives?

7. The objectives and activities of the three components were relevant to the needs of the population, except for the educational purpose, addressed by the first component. Indeed, the high rate of attendance to primary school challenges its goal of increasing enrollment. The component did not include activities aimed at supporting schooling at the secondary level, the activity possibly most affected by school drop-outs, particularly for girls.

8. The three components were fully aligned with national and local policies as well as priorities. They were integrated into existing plans and activities. They were also aligned with the current WFP strategic plan and its sectoral policies. The municipalities and beneficiaries showed a strong interest and commitment to the proposed activities.

9. Good coordination was achieved with the local actors in the implementation of the program, which facilitated the execution of the CP activities in the territory. However, some stakeholders at the national level expressed a desire to have had a greater dialogue with the WFP during the period of implementation of CP 200381.

To what extent were the results satisfactorily and efficiently achieved?

10. The effectiveness of the program, in terms of expected outputs, was affected by the low level of budget funding, especially for components two and three. The implementation of component 1 was more in line with the plan, particularly in terms of the extent of the period of implementation (5 years), although food transfers were also affected by the limited resources.

11. The available resources were used efficiently, which allowed significant positive effects to be generated in component 1, especially for Chuquisaca and Tarija. The cited effects were quality and quantity of school feeding, knowledge and nutrition practices at the level of schools and families, performance education of boys and girls, and effective and efficient management of school feeding at the municipal and school levels. There are also good perspectives in terms of the sustainability of these benefits in these departments. In Pando, similar results were not achieved due to the premature ending of the CP planned actions due to the lack of resources and departmental government commitment. The school feeding service had returned to the familiar situation it held before the CP was implemented.

12. Component 2 was implemented efficiently, although the small extent of the implementation did not allow to confirm the contribution of the CP in possible improvements in the nutritional status of the beneficiaries. Regarding the assistance of mothers to pre and post-natal controls, the people interviewed during the evaluation stated that the programme generated a positive effect, although the available quantitative data do not clearly demonstrate this. The government is currently distributing a food supplement to the Juana Azurduy Bonus Programme (BJA), which was introduced in 2015. There is no evidence that the CP contributed to this decision, even though WFP introduced the use of a supplementary food basket to the cash transfer programme provided by the government.

13. Component 3 did not last long either due to limited resources. The new assets delivered results and a sustainability that were different between the three departments. In Chuquisaca and Tarija, the assets were still functioning at the time of the evaluation, two years after its creation, and contributed to the risk reduction and the improvement of availability and access to food. In Pando, however, the assets do not work and are not being used. The success factors include the quality of the assets, the strengthening of the beneficiary's capacities, and the type of use and benefit of the assets (family or collective).

14. The programme included actions to strengthen capacities at the national level and capitalization on experience, whose effects are not evident. This was influenced by the lack of a clear strategy with specific objectives, an active approach that included approximation and communication measures, as well as mechanisms to measure the results achieved.

15. The design of the programme included measures to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. This occurred mainly through components two and three, with the implementation of general measures to promote equality. The needs and potential of women were considered. Thus, on one hand, component two was specifically aimed at women beneficiaries of the BJA with vulnerabilities generated by a low level of income and low attendance during pre and post-natal controls. Component three, on the other hand, aimed at promoting the participation of women in productive activities. In practice, actions

such as equitable participation in the educational councils in component one, registration of women as heads of households in component three, or the identification of assets of interest to women, produced positive results in terms of equal participation and empowerment of women. However, a clearer gender strategy with contextualized goals was missing. In component two, the opportunity to promote more co-responsibility between women and men concerning the nutrition of boys and girls was not fully tapped.

What were the factors influencing the objectives (drivers and obstacles), and to what extent and how did they operate?

16. The geographic convergence approach oriented to implement the three components in the three targeted communities allowed the creation of internal synergies. This was a factor that favored the results of the CP. The co-responsibility approach of the municipalities also contributed to the efficiency of the CP and to the sustainability of its actions. Likewise, the quality of WFP's human resources and the capacities and commitment of the implementing partners contributed to efficiency and effectiveness.

17. In contrast, the CP's monitoring and evaluation system was not effective enough to support the implementation. The absence of a clear strategy for advocacy, capacity building and technical assistance at the national level limited the program's performance and effects, despite the existence of opportunities.

18. The limited availability of resources was the external factor that most affected the implementation of the CP. The reduction of resources of the municipalities also prevented them from satisfying specific commitments and affected their ability to monitor the activities in the field.

Conclusions

19. The objectives and activities of the CP were relevant to the needs of the population, to national and local policies and priorities, and to WFP's strategic plan and sectoral policies. The exception being the educational objective of component one.

20. The three components were integrated into a geographic convergence approach that allowed the establishment of synergies that potentially contributed mutually to the specific objectives of each component and the overall objective of the CP.

21. The implementation of the CP was efficient thanks to several factors such as the quality of human resources, capacity, commitment and resources provided by partners and beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the results were significantly affected by the lack of resources especially in components two and three.

22. Component 1 has contributed to the improvement of the school feeding service, both qualitatively and quantitatively, and its efficiency in Chuquisaca. The school performance of boys and girls, as well as their knowledge and their nutrition practices, were also

improved. The model and experience developed have a more significant potential for capitalization, dissemination and advocacy at the national level. More generally, the absence of a more elaborate capacity-building strategy focusing on advocacy at the national level limited the generation of effects beyond the local level in the intervention areas of the programme.

23. In component 2, the available data and the short period of its implementation do not allow clearly to confirm effects on nutritional status and attendance to pre and post-natal controls. On the other hand, the positive effects on nutrition knowledge and food management of the BJA staff could contribute to the usage of the food supplement which has been implemented by the BJA since 2015.

24. Component 3 presents juxtaposed results regarding the sustainability and effects of the assets created or refurbished, between Chuquisaca and Tarija where most of the assets are in good condition and in use, and Pando where they are abandoned.

25. For the implementation of CSP 2018-2022, several strategic aspects to be considered are identified, such as the need to have a more explicit and more complete action strategy in terms of incidence, capacity building and technical assistance at the national level. This includes the promotion of women's equality and empowerment. At the operational level, key aspects such as the search for collaborations and synergies with other relevant actors or the strengthening of the monitoring system require special attention.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Continue acting to improve the efficiency and sustainability of complementary school feeding (WFP CO with MAECH, medium term, during the implementation of CSP 2018-2022 - activity 5), incorporating an objective of incidence at the national level to the CSP, and previously conducting a detailed study of the efficiency of the different models developed by the WFP and MAECH.

Recommendation 2: Conduct a diagnosis of inequality (WFP CO, medium term, in 2019 – cross-cutting in CSP 2018-2022), to enable the incorporation of more specific objectives and activities adapted to the inequalities identified.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen coordination and synergies with other actors involved in food security and nutrition, in particular UN Agencies within the framework of the UNDAF (WFP CO, continuously - cross-cutting in the CSP 2018-2022), including a technical dialogue, the search for synergies and thematic and geographical complementarities. The mutual assessment of experiences to increase efficiency and effectiveness, particularly, regarding resilience also needs strengthening.

Recommendation 4: Support the MAECH to develop an action and sustainability strategy (WFP CO with MAECH, short term, first semester 2019 - activity 4 of the CSP 2018-2022), to clarify the role that MAECH wants to assume once WFP's direct food assistance has ended.

Ensure that it includes a realistic and sustainable business plan for communication and negotiation at all levels.

Recommendation 5: Maintain the prioritization of the population of pregnant and lactating mothers and children under two years of age in the technical assistance and incidence activities of WFP in order to achieve the results stated in the CSP 2018-2022, specifically with regards to strategic result 4 (WFP CO, continuously in the CSP) Influence the Universal Prenatal Subsidy, based on the lessons learned in the CP 200381.

Recommendation 6: Improve the monitoring and evaluation system of all WFP activities (WFP CO and RO, continuously in CSP 2018-2022), reviewing the current system in depth to make it more relevant and effective, and ensuring that the resources and capacities are formulated accordingly.

Recommendation 7: Review the support approach to local purchases for school feeding in Tarija (WFP CO, in 2019 - activity 4 of the CSP 2018-2022), better adapting the activities to the existing school feeding management system in the municipalities and avoiding developing a parallel system of local purchases.

Recommendation 8: Strengthen the quality and sustainability of food assistance activities for the creation of assets (WFP CO, continuously in CSP 2018-2022, activities 1 and 3), improving the technical quality of assets, the technical assistance, the development of capacities of the beneficiaries, and studying the effect of the type of use and benefit of the assets on their sustainability.

Recommendation 9: Ratify commitments with the actors most involved in the actions in which WFP intervenes (WFP CO, continuously in the CSP, activities 1, 3 and 4), with the elaboration of collaboration agreements, in particular, the mayoralties for activities implemented at the local level.

Acronyms

BJA	Bono Juana Azurduy
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CSP	Country Strategic Programme
MAECH	Mancomunidad de Municipalidades para la Alimentación Escolar Chuquisaca
RO	Regional Office
SPR	Standard Project Report
WFP	World Food Programme

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