



Evaluation of the WFP Gender Policy (2015-2020)

CONTEXT

The Gender Policy (2015-2020) was approved in May 2015. Its primary goal is for WFP to “integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment [GEWE] into all of its work and activities, and to ensure the different food security and nutrition needs of women, men, girls and boys are addressed”.

The Gender Policy identified four objectives:

- i. *Food assistance adapted to different needs.* Women, men, girls and boys benefit from food assistance programmes and activities that are adapted to their different needs and capacities.
- ii. *Equal participation.* Women and men participate equally in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-transformative food security and nutrition programmes and policies.
- iii. *Decision-making by women and girls.* Women and girls have increased power in decision making regarding food security and nutrition in households, communities and societies.
- iv. *Gender and protection.* Food assistance does no harm to the safety, dignity and integrity of the women, men, girls and boys receiving it, and is provided in ways that respect their rights.

WFP introduced the Gender Action Plan in 2016, which transforms the Gender Policy goal and objectives into a set of actions and accountabilities across programme processes and organizational areas.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation provides evidence, analysis and recommendations related to the Gender Policy’s quality, results and to the factors that influenced those results. It covers the period from 2015 to 2019 and addresses three standard policy evaluation questions:

- How good is the policy?
- What were the results of the policy?
- Why has the policy produced the results that have been observed?

OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation serves the dual objectives of accountability and learning. It assesses the quality and results of the Gender Policy 2015-2020 and analyses the factors that enabled or hindered results achievement. The findings, conclusions and recommendations are intended to inform the development of an updated Gender Policy.

The intended users of the evaluation are all WFP divisions and units at the headquarters, regional bureau, country office and field office levels, as well as WFP’s Executive Board, donors and government and cooperating partners.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

Quality of the Policy

The Gender Policy provides a clear strategic vision, framework and set of high-level objectives that are relevant to WFP’s mandate and to the Strategic Plan 2017-2021. The Policy recognizes the importance of leadership and capacity strengthening as well as the need to incorporate gender into WFP’s strategic and programme cycle.

It has demonstrated innovation with the development of the Gender Action Plan and its associated accountabilities. It was informed by and remains relevant to a series of international gender norms and standards, including Beijing +20 and Agenda 2030, and to the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), with WFP being one of two agencies to pilot and adapt the IASC Gender and Age Marker in 2019.

Policy results

The Gender Office has been highly effective in establishing mechanisms to support WFP contributions toward gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE), including the Gender Action Plan, Regional Gender Strategies, the Gender Results Network and the Gender Transformation Programme.

There is evidence of WFP’s food assistance activities adapted to the specific needs of women, men, boys and girls and efforts to enhance the equal participation of women and men in the design and adjustment of programmes, but these examples are not widespread.

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

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Similarly, there are a growing number of transformative programmes where women have been afforded new opportunities to engage in decision-making. The limited use of sex and age disaggregated data and of gender analyses hinders the achievement of gender mainstreaming.

While progress has been made towards gender parity, this has not been achieved at all levels or for all functions and broader mainstreaming challenges have been overlooked. Despite considerable effort to create and promote learning materials and opportunities, investments made in capacity strengthening to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at regional and country levels varies greatly.

WFP, like other UN entities, remains without an accurate picture of resources for GEWE. Budget allocations to secure gender expertise and support gender mainstreaming have not kept up with the significant growth in overall WFP contribution income.

Factors explaining results

The Gender Office and Regional Gender Advisors have made considerable effort to promote the integration of gender in WFP programming and strategies. The Gender Office has provided sustained leadership in creating the Gender Transformation Programme and supporting the Gender Results Network. However, WFP's failure to fully meet stated human and financial commitments has limited overall progress against the Gender Policy.

While there is evidence of modest progress towards gender parity, it has not yet been achieved at all levels or for all functions of the organization. There are wide variations in the investments made by regional bureaux and country offices on gender advisors and capacity strengthening to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Many regional bureaux and country offices view themselves as the users of overly theoretical subject matter rather than creators of context-driven knowledge and communications materials.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The Gender Policy remains relevant to WFP's commitments to Agenda 2030, the SDGs and UN Reform but requires an update to support WFP's work at the country level within UN system efforts to accelerate the support provided to partners as part of the Decade for Action 2020-2030.

WFP has shown leadership in establishing frameworks to support its work toward GEWE. However, the strong leadership focus on efforts to address gender parity have tended to overshadow other aspects of the Gender Policy and present a barrier to strengthening WFP's overall approach to gender equality and women's empowerment.

WFP is missing opportunities to ground the design of programmes around a comprehensive contextual analysis of the needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys. Consequently, country offices often struggle to translate GEWE concepts into clear actions tailored to each of their CSP strategic outcomes.

Overall, WFP has strengthened the enabling environment for gender equality and women's empowerment. However, attention to GEWE

is variable and reliant on the individual decision-making of regional and country directors to lead gender mainstreaming.

Finally, the evaluation found that the limited financial investment made to operationalize the Gender Policy across HQ, Regional Bureaux and Country Offices weakened the organization's ability to ensure that GEWE becomes integral to the culture and learning of the organization.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. WFP should update the Gender Policy to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and strengthen WFP's work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

Recommendation 2. WFP should allocate sufficient Programme Support and Administration budget to implement its corporate commitments, including the work of the Gender Office and implementation of the regional gender strategies, and develop strategies to mobilize extra-budgetary and project funding, including through operational and strategic partnerships, in line with United Nations reform.

Recommendation 3. The Assistant Executive Director of the Programme and Policy Development Department should establish a cross-organizational steering group on gender equality and women's empowerment to provide distributed leadership, champion the gender policy and ensure accountability for its implementation at all levels of the organization.

Recommendation 4. WFP should enhance the regional- and country- level ownership of the gender policy update and gender action plan through the revision of regional gender strategies and CSP-aligned gender action plans.

Recommendation 5. WFP should ensure that the development of the new human resources accountability framework – as agreed in response to one of the recommendation from the evaluation of the WFP People Strategy (2014-2017) – is informed by an analysis of gender, diversity and inclusion and ensures that senior managers are accountable for inclusive leadership practices and excellence in all areas of gender mainstreaming, including but not limited to gender parity.

Recommendation 6. WFP should invest in dedicated, professional gender advisors at headquarters and regional bureaux and build a cadre of experienced gender advisors to work in its Country Offices.

Recommendation 7. WFP should ensure that the framework and guidance for mid-term reviews and evaluations of first-generation CSPs incorporate quantitative and qualitative analyses of WFP's gender equality-related activities.

Recommendation 8. Country Offices should mainstream gender into the mid-term reviews and evaluations of first-generation CSPs and the design and implementation of second-generation CSPs.