

Evaluation title	Evaluation of the School Meals Programme in Malawi with financial support from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2016 - 2018	Evaluation report number	DE/MALAWI/2018/011
Type	Thematic evaluation	Centralised/ decentralised	Decentralised
Global/region or country	Malawi	PHQA date	19/02/20
Overall category – Quality rating		Gender Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) – Overall report category and rating	
Approaches requirements: 52%		Meets requirements: 7 points	
<p>The Evaluation of the School Meals Programme in Malawi with financial support from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2016 - 2018 approaches requirements. The report demonstrates a number of strengths, including relevant evaluation questions, a comprehensive evaluation matrix, largely appropriate data collection methods which provide a robust evidence base, and the consideration of gender issues in the evaluation methodology and findings. However, a number of key areas could have been further strengthened. Information on the evaluation context, purpose and scope could have been more specific. In addition, a more systematic analysis of the large volume of evidence based on a theory of change and/or results framework that could inform the assessment of the relationship between the programme's activities and results would have enhanced the coherence of the report and enabled more robust substantiation of evaluative judgements against the evaluation criteria. The report would have also benefited from conclusions which provided a more strategic overview of the findings, and a more limited number of recommendations focused on the critical issues and important lessons within WFP's scope of operations or influence.</p>			

CRITERION 1: REPORT SUMMARY	Category	Approaches
The report summary does not provide sufficient evidence to inform decision making as a stand-alone piece. While it describes the main features of the evaluation methodology, the main users of the evaluation and includes a concise and relatively comprehensive overview of the programme's key characteristics, some key information is not provided, including the evaluation questions, the evaluation type and scope, as well as important information about the evaluation's rationale and the programme context. There are also inconsistencies between the findings and conclusions presented in the summary and those in the main report. Reflecting the main report, readability is complicated by long, densely written sentences and a lack of coherence in some areas.		
CRITERION 2: OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION SUBJECT	Category	Approaches
The overview provides a clear description of the programme's beneficiary numbers, geographical scope, key activities, main partners, resourcing profile and other related WFP interventions. Information sources, on which the overview of the subject draws, are clearly referenced. However, the analytical basis of the subject, especially lessons learned from the previous phase of the programme, is not explained. In addition, the absence of a theory of change and/or results framework that clearly articulates the relationship between the programme's activities, outputs, short- and medium-term outcomes and longer-term changes is a key shortcoming of the evaluation.		
CRITERION 3: EVALUATION CONTEXT, PURPOSE AND SCOPE	Category	Partially meets
Information provided in the overview of the context is not sufficiently specific to the programme's target districts. Available information sources, including the end line survey of the programme's previous phase, the programme's baseline study and vulnerability assessments could have been drawn on to provide a more specific overview of the context. Moreover, the report would have benefited from greater clarity on the evaluation's purpose and scope, including the intended balance between accountability and learning. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of the main intended users of the evaluation is provided. Information related to key humanitarian issues in the country, other WFP programmes and relevant government policies is also well presented and helps contextualise the evaluation.		
CRITERION 4: METHODOLOGY	Category	Meets
The evaluation is guided by a comprehensive set of questions and sub-questions which are relevant to the criteria. The evaluation matrix is comprehensive and contains the minimum elements required, as well as an assessment of the availability and reliability of evidence collected. Data collection methods are largely appropriate, and triangulation of methods and data are used to produce findings. However, a clearer definition of the evaluation criteria as they apply to the evaluation, as well as a discussion of limitations, beyond those related to survey conducted, and mitigation measures, particularly for the lack of disaggregated secondary data, would have strengthened this section.		

CRITERION 5: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	Category	Approaches
<p>The evaluation generated a large amount of data from different sources which provides a robust evidence base for the analysis and findings. However, while findings are presented for each evaluation question, there is considerable variation in the extent to which they provide clear, summative answers to the questions. In the absence of a coherent results framework, the analysis underlying findings is confusing, and it is difficult to follow the logical thread from presented evidence through to findings. For some questions, the key findings are clear and transparently generated (e.g. questions related to relevance of the programme). For other questions, (e.g. those related to impact and effectiveness), a large volume of data is presented, but important evidence is not consistently reflected in the findings.</p>		
CRITERION 6: CONCLUSIONS	Category	Partially meets
<p>Conclusions do not provide a strategic overview of the findings, and as a consequence do not adequately address the relevant 'so what' questions. While evidence to support conclusions is drawn directly from the findings section, a more systematic and strategic reflection on the findings would have provided a more robust evidence base for this section. Moreover, there is no rubric or explanation for how evidence/findings were selected as a basis for the overall assessment of programme's performance (high, medium-to-high, medium or low) against the evaluation criteria. In addition, there is a missed opportunity to identify lessons learned which can be applied to other contexts and situations and contribute to wider organizational learning.</p>		
CRITERION 7: GENDER and EQUITY	Category	Meets
<p>The evaluation demonstrates an awareness of GEWE issues in the context and subject analysis, methodological choices, evaluation matrix, data analysis and reporting. The overview of the methodology, in particular, suggests that special efforts were made to ensure the inclusion of men and women, boys and girls, in a manner that was appropriate for the evaluation, and that ethical safeguards were in place to ensure that their rights, privacy and safety were protected. Findings draw on primary data that reflect the voices of men and women, boys and girls and describe unintended outcomes. The integration of gender and equity could have been further strengthened by a discussion of the implications of the lack of gender-disaggregated secondary data for the evaluation, and consideration of equity dimensions beyond gender.</p>		
CRITERION 8: RECOMMENDATIONS	Category	Partially meets
<p>A number of factors jeopardise the quality of recommendations and prospects for their implementation, including: the large number of recommendations and technically complex actions to implement them; lack of clarity on assigned responsibility for their implementation; a limited timeframe for implementation; and the limited scope of WFP to implement or influence some of them (e.g. school infrastructure, literacy teaching capacity). Nevertheless, the recommendations adequately cover the key issues identified by the findings. They are prioritised and provide a clear timeframe for action.</p>		
CRITERION 9: ACCESSIBILITY/CLARITY	Category	Meets
<p>The tone of the report is balanced, and secondary data and quotes are well-referenced. Diagrams, maps and tables in the main report and annexes are helpful to summarise, illustrate or substantiate the report narrative. The report's accessibility and clarity could have been strengthened through greater systematization and organization of the large volume of evidence and information presented, as well as shorter, less densely written sentences. This would have enabled greater coherence throughout the report and clearer communication of the key messages the report aimed to convey.</p>		

Gender EPI	
1. Scope of Analysis, Evaluation Criteria and Questions	2
2. Methodology	3
3. Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations	2
Overall EPI score	7

Quality rating scale legend: Evaluation reports	Overall scoring of gender EPI scale legend: Evaluation reports UNSWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator
Exceeds requirements: 75–100%	
Meets requirements: 60–74%	
Approaches requirements: 50–59%	7–9 points = Meets requirements
Partially meets requirements: 25–49%	4–6 points = Approaches requirements
Does not meet requirements: 0–24%	0–3 points = Missing requirements