

APC 2020 Q and A Follow Up: Unanswered Questions

Partnering in the new normal

Question from Oxfam: What is WFP doing to support local humanitarian leadership, particularly within your own organisational structures and recruitment processes?

WFP continues to strengthen the capacity of governments at all levels and supports the provision of training aimed at building the capacity of individuals to take up leadership roles.

Question from Plan International Canada: With localisation being a great strength going forward, how can WFP practically bring in more risk sharing so that local partners do not bear a disproportionate level of risk?

Embedded in WFP's partnership management processes is a focus on not only helping with more institutional and programmatic capacity strengthening with our partners, but together working on the improvement of planning in response to any performance or risk related issues that occur during our collaboration. WFP does not want to transfer risks to local entities. Our goal is to set up proper mitigation actions appropriate to the partnerships.

Question from Pure Hands: I'm extremely concerned about WFP operational reduction in Yemen and what this can mean for famine control and prevention. A brief post-Nobel Prize update for Yemen would be appreciated.

All of WFP's decisions for operational reduction stem from absolute necessities. WFP is also highly concerned about the situation in Yemen and the Executive Director frequently draws attention to the impact that reductions have on already devastated populations. The Nobel Peace Prize has drawn attention to the connection between food and peace and the situation in Yemen will continue to be highlighted as an area of priority for WFP.

Social Protection: Building Blocks for a Long-term Vision

Question from Strategies for Northern Development (SND): How is WFP pushing host countries to implement social protections issues at policy levels?

Recognising state sovereignty and noting that WFP has no vested interest in the adoption of any particular approach, WFP's work in social protection starts from countries' own objectives. WFP positions itself as a partner to governments to enhance their capacity to achieve their goals. In practical terms, WFP can help national actors understand the needs of affected people, determine policy options, and design social protection responses which the national actors themselves deliver. WFP can also support national actors practically by implementing elements of their social protection programmes on their behalf as needed.

Question from AVSI Foundation: There seems to be growing momentum for cash and voucher-based initiatives as a social protection response in Latin America. What do you see as some challenges and opportunities for implementing cash initiatives in the region?

There is indeed a growing momentum for implementing cash initiatives in the Latin America region, which comes with both opportunities and challenges. In terms of opportunities, once systems are set up and prepared, cash can be implemented swiftly through accountable mechanisms. It can empower people by providing them with the choice to buy what they need, boost markets by stimulating demand for goods and services and support governments as the frontline of response. In terms of challenges, it is critical that the right accountability mechanisms are in place, including data assurance and data privacy and protection. Payment instruments need to be reliable and available and preparedness needs to be in place if governments are to use their systems to deliver cash to respond to the varying climate and other shocks in the LAC region.

Question from Action in Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL): How dynamic social protection aspects can be integrated with the strategies in relevant government and LINGO?

During the session, we discussed several ways in which WFP and NGOs can jointly support governments put in place or strengthen their national social protection policies and strategies. These included working together to fill knowledge gaps and engaging in joint advocacy, particularly for inclusion of the most vulnerable.

ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS:

When is the WFP Social protection strategy going to be finalised, will NGOs be able to input to ensure close partnering?

WFP is currently in the middle of the strategy development, so we will reach out after the strategic direction has been endorsed internally to identify critical areas of partnership with NGOs across our areas of work in social protection.

Is partnering with private sector, particularly local enterprises, an important part of the approach and how do you go about it? For facilitating cold transport, agro-processing, diversifying diets, and in turn creating economic opportunities?

WFP and NGOs have an important role to play in terms of helping government think through their needs and requirements, as they engage with private sector entities. One of the greatest opportunities for partnering with the private sector on social protection is on the payment side. Payment service providers, especially those that are emerging as offering products that are particularly good for financial inclusion are important partners we should not overlook.

Re-opening Schools: Partnering to Ensure a Generation Isn't Left Behind

Question from Lutheran World Federation (LWF): What advice can you give in convincing donors on the importance of Multi-Year Funding (MYF) as this seems to be a recurring challenge across UN agencies?

MYF has enabled WFP to consistently lead on and engage with the Government of Rwanda in the development of the national school feeding agenda and come out as the government's main partner in school feeding. Especially within the context of working with Governments, time and patience are critical and sometimes an initiative launched in one year, may take multiple years to see through. MYF can ensure that UN Agencies' support is consistent and supports the achievement of long-term Government priorities.

Question from Lutheran World Vision International (WVI): How did you measure the increase of literacy percentage in the program you presented and were you able to attribute this increase to the holistic school feeding program?

We used the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) which measures the ability of Primary 3 students to read. The 10% increase in reading was measured in schools where the program is being implemented, where attendance and exposure to the literacy methodologies was enhanced by school feeding. However, we have not conducted a detailed attribution study into what percentage of this is due to the various components of our efforts.

Questions from Andre Foods International (AFI): 1 School girls who got pregnant during lock down? 2 Moving with the new normal with schooling ,do you envisage change in school meal composition to take care of nutritional needs of learners?

COVID has restricted our abilities for a detailed view into the challenges students are facing. We anticipate with schools reopening that we will have a much better understanding in the coming months. Within our next 5-year programme to be fully rolled out in Q2 of 2021, the food basket given to learners will be expanded to include fresh fruits and vegetables, to add to the fortified foods and other nutritious elements already in the meals we provide.

Question form World Vision International (WVI): Thanks for sharing the great work taking place in Rwanda - I like the great partnership between WFP, WVI, Govt and the community I believe. I would like to hear more on how we can sustain this in the years to come.

The government of Rwanda is scaling up school feeding programmes nationally, with plans for scale up and implementation nationally. This effort from WFP and WV is helping to build capacity of government for the national scale up. For example, this project has facilitated the development and establishment of the Comprehensive National School Feeding Policy as well as the establishment of the National School Feeding Technical Working Group, which functions both at Central and district levels. Additionally, WFP and WV are members of the recently established National School Feeding Steering Committee, which provides strategic leadership to the implementation of school feeding in Rwanda. These structures and forums will ensure that close engagement is continued and that the partnerships remain strong.

Question from Welthungerhilfe (WHH): Has there been a collaborative/joint approach between WFP and World Vision to secure funding for the School Feeding programmes for the next 5 years? Could experiences and learnings be shared?

Yes, WFP and World Vision have secured funding for the school feeding program to be scaled up from 107 to 135 schools for the next 5 years. This is a result of the strong collaboration and partnership, which has resulted in achievement of results in the previous phase, making it a worthwhile investment from the donor perspective. Clear division of responsibilities between WFP, WV and other partners in the project has been one of the key strengths. Our ambitions are to continue to partner with government to expand this into all schools across the nation. In writing the new project proposal during Q2 of 2020, WFP and WV engaged closely throughout to ensure a strong programme design moving forward.

Question from AVSI: As Mrs Heines said it's so not just about school meals. It's so much more, it's about improving education outcomes, it's about new generations... So, I'd like to ask: How can we promote at local level these experiences as best practices? what was the key - in your experience - to promote this approach to local governments?

The set up in Rwanda is that Government policy implementation is decentralized and gets operationalized at local governments (district levels). In terms of this school feeding program, districts have adopted the approaches and engaged with local communities on how best they can contribute to the success of the program. Something other Governments can learn from Rwanda is the emphasis local governments have performance agreements, which are measured at the end of every year to determine how best the local government has implemented government policy and that ensures adoption even for programs like school feeding.

Question from Action in Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL): What is the best way to integrate the holistic approach package of Education-Health-Nutrition and wellbeing and at the same time replicate other countries through their strong engagements?

School health and nutrition is a multi-sectoral approach to design and deliver coordinated and comprehensive strategies, activities and services that are integrated and sustained within the education system for protecting and promoting the physical, emotional and social development, health and wellbeing of students and the whole school community.

While each country will demand its own version of a comprehensive health and nutrition package depending on a needs assessment process, essential components recognized by existing school health and nutrition programmes include:

- health-related policies and practices that address equity, social inclusion and violence prevention in education;
- health promoting environments conducive to positive physical and psychosocial learning and development – including sanitation and safe water;
- skills-based curriculum on health and nutrition education; and,

- school-based and school-linked health and nutrition services, including, depending on the context, interventions such as vaccination, oral health promotion, vision screening and treatment, malaria control, deworming, sexual and reproductive health services, menstrual hygiene management, school feeding and micronutrient supplementation.

Successful school health and nutrition programmes require providing adequate resources and support to both health workers and teachers and school staff . An enabling policy and institutional environment are key for sustainability.

Successful programmes also require effective national partnerships between the education and health sectors but also food and agriculture, local development, finance, social welfare and other relevant sectors. Partnerships among school staff, health workers and the community are also critical.

For more information on successful interventions, you can access: Re-Imagining School Feeding: A High-Return Investment in Human Capital and Local Economies (<http://dcp-3.org/schoolfeeding>)

Question from World Vision International (WVI): Does WFP aim to increase the aim of NGOs in supporting school feeding, as now we have seen more government led school feeding as part of social protection, will NGOs still play a significant role in growing this area?

WFP's overall goal is to promote sustainable and national school feeding programmes. In countries in crisis and humanitarian setting, where governments do not have the capacity, WFP will keep operating school feeding programme and relying on the support of local implementation partners and NGOs.

However, WFP does not only see NGOs having a role in implementing school feeding programmes, but also in supporting governments increase their capacities and advocating for national programmes. We would like to leverage our networks and together elevate our voice to encourage governments' ownership and secure children's wellbeing.

Mothers, Masks and MUAC: Ensuring Nutrition Services in the Time of COVID-19

Question from: Medical Teams International: I would like to appreciate the various strategies presented by WFP partners. Particularly with the IRC presentation on use of community health workers to implement the management of acute malnutrition without having to go to the health facilities. I am wondering how the children who present with medical complications are managed or how clinical symptoms/signs and infections in diseases like anaemia, dehydration, hypoglycaemia etc are identified and managed at the community level by the semi-illiterate CHWs?

Malnutrition in children is assessed and identified through different methods including at least one of the following: various anthropometry measurements (weight, height or length, and mid-upper arm circumference, BMI) and nutritional indices. Clinical assessments observe signs and symptoms of malnutrition and consequential complications such as micronutrient deficiencies or dehydration for example. This is mainly conducted through physical observing and assessing the condition of the child's hair, mouth, skin, eyes, and nails, as well as swallowing difficulties, dehydration and oedema. In resources are available, additional biochemical assessments are conducted to examine specific metabolites found in body fluids such as blood and urine to measure for example haemoglobin, albumin, triglyceride, total cholesterol, iron, etc.

WFP provides dietary support (nutrient dense foods), nutrition counselling and complementary interventions. Illness is often complicated by malnutrition; to counterbalance this the IMCI strategy has three main focus areas to address the most common diseases that affect young children: improving health worker skills, improving health systems and improving family and community practices. Supporting child health at household and community levels is at the core of the approach, as most child deaths occur at home before the child has reached a health facility. Training and educating community health workers are part of the work.

Question from MSF: What can be done in difficult to reach areas where there are no functioning health systems? What part of nutrition programs can be done where there are no reliable health services?

WFP works in countries dealing with conflict, post-conflict or disaster situations, as well as in countries in fragile state due to food insecurity, providing emergency food assistance to the most vulnerable populations. This often means the work is done in difficult to reach areas where health systems may be limited. WFP has the technology and tools to reach these areas despite complications.

Thinking long term, prevention approaches to malnutrition are key to reaching areas where there aren't reliable health services. This means focusing on activities which help to reduce and mitigate malnutrition to prevent it in the future.

Health services do not always equal health systems. Health services are part of the health system whether they are delivered at health facility, community or

outreach level, and regardless of their preventive or curative nature. No functioning health systems could mean that CHW are inactive in their catchment area, thus, envisaging a nutrition programme delivered by CHW (closer to the communities) will not work unless the network of CHW is reactivated, trained and supervised. So, what can or can't be implemented will much depend on specificities of the health service to be provided and on the strengths/weakness of the health system in which it operates.

WFP will continue to pilot innovative approaches that aim to improve treatment coverage, ensuring no child is left behind.

Question from BRAC: Understanding that so many children are born low birth weight or already malnourished at birth, can you speak about maternal malnutrition and what we must focus on , especially in food insecure areas?

The health and nutritional status of mothers and their babies are inherently linked biologically and socially to maternal nutrition, when left unaddressed, risks driving mother and baby into an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. In food insecure areas, counselling on adequate nutrition is often not enough and malnourished women need access to specific products that can support their nutritional health during pregnancy and breastfeeding where the physiological demands are very high.

Pregnant and lactating women and girls are enrolled in WFP's moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) prevention and treatment programs. Women identified as malnourished are given counselling and a nutrition product - the most common is a fortified cereal blend such as CSB+/CSB++/WSB - and this product not only serves as a nutritional therapy, but also often as an incentive to ensure the women continue with their pre- and post-natal care appointments.

The focus on nutrition support for PLW both to prevent and to treat malnutrition is very important, especially in food insecure areas. Therefore, providing essential dietary support, counselling and social behaviour change communication are key. In addition, intervening during the first 1,000 days of life provides a critical window of opportunity to promote optimal growth and development of the child.

How has COVID 19 affected WFPs plan to shift from the nutrition specific response to the more sustainable nutrition sensitive programming. Does this mean a new road map to sustainable management of malnutrition is in plan?

WFP is expanding both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive work as a result of COVID-19. This work is complementary and covers a wide scope of work, addressing the underlying causes as well as direct causes of all forms of malnutrition (wasting, stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity). We are engaging and exploring further our value addition to healthy diets through nutrition sensitive social protection, building more sustainable and nutrition sensitive food systems and supporting health and nutrition for school-aged children.

Harmonizing NGO Partnerships as the UN

Question from Andre Foods International (AFI): In your process of harmonizing NGO partnerships, how do you harmonize your divergent mandates and objectives? Any challenges around UN agencies competing interests?

Together our efforts are focused on finding common denominators to help us move forward in areas of mutual recognition and harmonization. The UNPP has provided a core initiative in which to build upon as we explore further opportunities.

Question from Concern Worldwide:

Thanks for the very clear statements; could you please repeat the target of UN agencies to join the UNPP. Also, we are aware that UNICEF has started country level platform for reporting - this is separate from the UNPP - are there plans to extend the UNPP to include reporting. Limiting the number of portals will be important.

Currently we are hoping to onboard two more agencies within the first quarter of 2021 with more coming on board during later parts of the year although the exact numbers are not known now. We are considering enhancing the partner portal to reduce elements of repetition, but this is in the initial stages.

Question from WVI: When will the portal become 100% the sole platform? We see that we are still having multiple processes for example call for proposals done in country, others on the portal. Is the aim to continue with the two systems.

As the portal now only has four agencies, other systems have to be in place. During 2021 the four current Portal agencies will be working towards full CO adoption. We are also hoping to increase the number of UN agencies using the portal.

Question from AVSI: UNPP has lots of potential in harmonization and simplification. An example/proposal can be Improving CV sections for organizations at global and field level that can lead to less requests during EoI. These sections could be, then, removed from EoI requests and concentrating the applications on the proposals and the contents. This is just an example, but I would like to ask what are the plan for the development of the UNPP for the future in terms of simplification?

Ongoing monthly conversations are taking place with business and management units of the current four UN agencies involved in the UNPP. The focus is squarely on how to move ahead with enhancements that will facilitate better harmonization and simplification, as well as to facilitate more efficient and effective partnerships with our NGOs.

Question from ICVA: As many have highlighted, there is very good potential in the Partner Portal to further develop efforts to harmonize and simplify across agencies/partners. However, since the launch in 2018, it seems there has been a gap in collective dialogue across agencies and partners on how to further develop the PP. Is this something we can re-start? With a commitment to have a formal dialogue among agencies and partners to develop a plan for future development?

The agencies currently using the portal will be having vision sessions with NGOs to discuss enhancements for 2021. We will let partners know in the first quarter of 2021 when they will be. Raising awareness with partners about the portal is why we put this session on the agenda of APC 2020.

Working Together Better: Field Level Agreements

Question from AVSI: Compliments for optimizing the FLA and downsizing the core documents. If there is still time to participate to the current round of consultations AVSI would be happy to join. We hope that on local level WFP is envisaging a path with the partners in order to help them familiarize with the new FLA.

The current round of changes is about format and presentation to make it more user friendly- no legal clauses will be changed. The format changes will be communicated to FLA users and for the first six months of 2021 both the old and new FLA formats will be available. The use of the new format will be integrated in induction and request proposals for training.

Before any changes are introduced to the legal clauses, consultations will be held with partners to familiarize them with the upcoming changes.

Question from Concern Worldwide: Is there consideration of longer-term agreements in the interests of limiting administrative burden on both sides that annual agreements present; this would also be allowing planning in a more effective manner. This might be implemented in some fields.

FLAs can be signed for the duration of the project and we should be looking at the longest horizon possible, while considering yearly budget revisions as well as CO operational considerations, and use of yearly performance evaluations.

Question from ICVA: Suggest that the new FLA allows partners to give their feedback after the first year of roll out, in order to correct and fine tune some of the clauses.

It is our intention to present frequent opportunities for feedback from our partners on any new clauses that are added.

Questions from Plan International: Can WFP include a clause in the FLA that allow NGO partner get commodity valuation statements of actually distributed foods at least on a quarterly basis from WFP offices. We sometime face financial reporting compliance gaps due to delays in such statements for some projects that is causing audit issues.

This is well noted but CO staff capacity makes it increasingly hard to provide these reports quarterly although we hope that as we progress along the path of digitalization, we can consider this option of providing these at the field level more often than annually.

Is WFP open for a tripartite agreement between WFP, NGO partners and third-party service providers for CBT projects with the purpose of quality program delivery and timely response to beneficiary complaints? We noted instances of delayed actions to beneficiaries' complaints for some projects due to timing gap in information flow and actions taken (beneficiaries tell NGO partner - NGO partner reports to WFP -WFP communicates to the service provider.)

Yes. WFP is open to exploring all opportunities for well performing complaint mechanisms and delivery of beneficiary complaints. This would always be discussed at country level where a project is being implemented

Question from Foundation for Rural Development (FRD) Pakistan: We hope that new FLA arrangements will reduce the burden of reporting on the Implementing partners, and duplication of reporting on daily, weekly and monthly reporting will be simplified.

Simplification is very much an objective WFP's efforts. An end of project report is being piloted. Also, UN efforts are being made at harmonization of reporting but varying projects across agencies and donor demands can be challenging.

Strategic Opportunities

Questions from Food for the Hungry: What are the most prominent and trustworthy studies that have been published about the interrelationship between hunger and peace?

The report mentioned in the session is Winning the Peace: Hunger and Instability (WFP USA December 2017) at this link:

https://www.wfpusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/wfp_food_security_final-web-1.pdf

Humanitarians need more training to specialize in humanitarian diplomacy (given the example of NGOs making politicizing mistakes) given the nuance. Will WFP consider organizing more discussions/trainings?

We are ready to discuss what additional tools would be needed to enhance our individual and collective abilities in humanitarian diplomacy.

Question from ActionAid: I wanted to find out, if we could create space for more advocacy and lobbying to have governments take issues of ending hunger with humanitarian principles strongly in national policies but also ensuring local women groups are taking the resolutions and demanding accountability

Country Strategic Planning engagement allows for the whole of Society approach where all stakeholders are vital to the planning of our project. The CSP process is an opportunity to "foster strategic interaction and dialogue with NGOs" within which we can include local women's groups. As noted additionally within the policy, this engagement includes not just civil society but host government within stakeholder discussions providing the opportunity for aligning of national policies with SDG2. At HQ level WFP's Communications Advocacy and Market Division are constantly looking at way to enhance our collective advocacy efforts.

Duty of Care and Localization: From Standards to Implementation

Question from LWF: How can we balance the principles of duty of care and our mandate to stay and deliver particularly for front line national staff? Need to avoid bunkerisation of aid.

At the end of the day solutions need to be context specific. We rely heavily on strong and continuous dialogue with all humanitarian partners at CO level to find that difficult balance. From those experiences we will draw lessons to be brought to the global policy debate

Question from World Vision International: In cases where programmes are being suspended due to schools being closed due to C19, would WFP pay full costs of staff salaries till end of their contracts as part of ensuring the extension of duty of care, regardless of one month notice shared in the agreements?

The answer to this question would be on a case by case basis depending on the particular situation at country and operational levels. WFP encourages its country offices to discuss the concrete issues arising from the closures of schools including any budgetary aspects.

Question from ActionAid: Great presentations everyone. My question is, with women led partners, local organizations, are there tailored interventions for the duty of care for women groups/actors? Would be great to learn more on this as well

There are many ongoing initiatives by many organizations focussing on women and women's leadership. Their bearings on duty of care for women is an area may require further gathering of information from such organizations who are in touch with situation at country level.

Questions from Andre Foods International (AFI): Is there any difference between national and international NGOs in regard to the implementation of the minimum draft standard of duty to care? Any figures or percentages?

The minimum draft standards have only just been finalized. Their implementation in the field is yet to commence although we hope to be soon to be in a position to draw lessons and best practices on such important issues.

Scenario: If a humanitarian worker x and beneficiary y are both in equal danger, where will one draw the line of duty to care and where do you start?

The focus of the "IASC Minimum Standards on Duty of Care in the Context of Covid-19" is on personnel as highlighted in the second paragraph:

"Focusing on preventing and mitigating COVID-19 related risks, the standards aim to protect the health and safety of personnel, while ensuring that organizations continue to deliver on their mandates. Attention is paid to non-discrimination and ensuring that all personnel, regardless of nationality or contractual type is equally covered and protected by the minimum standards in the COVID-19 context."