



# Do Integrated WFP Interventions Contribute to Household Resilience Capacities? Impact Evaluation Brief



## SUMMARY

This brief presents the first window-level pre-analysis plan (PAP) developed for the WFP Climate and Resilience Impact Evaluation Window, which is implemented jointly by the World Food Programme's (WFP) Office of Evaluation (OEV), Asset Creation and Livelihood Unit, the Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, and the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) department.

Through a coordinated, multi-country approach, this Impact Evaluation Window aims to provide robust evidence on the effectiveness of resilience programmes in strengthening households' ability to respond to, recover from, and adapt to shocks and stressors. Impact evaluations guided by this Window pre-analysis plan focus on answering the overarching question: *How do integrated resilience programmes, which combine multiple activities to support a population, strengthen household resilience?*

This question is answered across a portfolio of country-specific impact evaluations. A multi-country analysis of data collected from four to six countries will support in understanding the impact of integrated resilience programmes across contexts. Additionally, each evaluation will examine the effectiveness of resilience programmes in that specific context. Data is collected from households through a combination of baseline, endline, and bi-monthly high-frequency surveys.

## WFP'S DEFINITION FOR IMPACT EVALUATION

WFP defines impact evaluations as assessments of the positive and negative, direct or indirect, intended or unintended changes in the lives of affected populations,

that can be *attributed* to a specific programme or a policy through a credible *counterfactual*.

WFP defines the *counterfactual* as estimating what would have happened in the absence of the intervention, thereby establishing what outcomes would not be present without the intervention. The counterfactual is often created by randomizing aspects of the intervention to establish comparison groups.

Impact evaluations answer cause and effect questions to understand whether interventions have any *impact* (i.e., a net effect on outcomes such as food security or empowerment), to assess the extent of the impact, and to understand how impact is achieved. Impacts can be short-term or long-term depending on the outcomes of interest.

## WHAT ARE IMPACT EVALUATION WINDOWS?

Windows are OEV-managed portfolios of impact evaluations, co-funded by WFP's country offices and donors, that generate evidence in WFP's priority areas. Windows create opportunities for WFP offices to access technical support for their impact evaluations.

Each window is guided by one or more PAP and includes multiple impact evaluations using a common study design, thereby increasing the predictive power and generalizability of evidence. We currently implement three impact evaluation windows: "cash-based transfers and gender", "climate and resilience", and "school-based programming".

## WFP'S CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE IMPACT EVALUATION WINDOW

The Climate and Resilience Impact Evaluation Window seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How does integrated programming, which brings together multiple activities aimed at improving different outcomes, contribute to resilience?
2. How can resilience activities target the most vulnerable households and their needs?
3. How can we adjust the timing and sequencing of activities to reach beneficiaries when they need the support most?
4. How do combinations of short-term (e.g., shock response) and long-term (e.g., livelihood development) activities strengthen household's ability to absorb and adapt to shocks, and improve their well-being?

The first PAP in the window focuses primarily on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> questions.

### DEFINING RESILIENCE

The concept of "resilience" has gained attention, including in WFP, because it recognizes the importance of addressing shorter-term humanitarian needs while simultaneously supporting communities to face future crises induced by climate change, conflict, and other factors.

The Technical Working Group of the Food Security and Information Network defines resilience as "the capacity to ensure that shocks and stressors do not have long-lasting adverse development consequences".

In WFP, resilience programmes use combinations of activities to support people's resilience capacities to absorb and adapt to shocks and stressors and improve their well-being over time. Therefore, developing and maintaining resilience requires understanding dynamic interactions between shocks, resilience capacities, and well-being over time.

The Window will focus on the effect of WFP's programmes on resilience at the household level.

### WFP'S RESILIENCE PROGRAMMES

WFP uses the concept of resilience to inform how programmes are designed and implemented. This is reflected in WFP's policies that advocate for the use of innovative tools and approaches to strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities (WFP, 2015). Many WFP country offices have streamlined the provision of integrated "resilience" packages, where communities and households receive bundles of activities over several years.

The entry point for impact evaluations under this PAP is the Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities – one of the activities of the resilience programme. FFA combines cash or in-kind transfers with additional household or

community-level asset creation activities aimed at supporting longer-term food security. FFA activities, therefore, primarily target poor and very poor households with available labour that can be allocated towards asset creation.

### HOW DO WE EVALUATE THE IMPACT ON RESILIENCE CAPACITIES?

Each evaluation in the window harnesses randomized FFA interventions as a basis for establishing credible counterfactuals and identifying the impact on resilience outcomes. These experimental designs enable evaluations to examine three priority areas for generating evidence:

**1. Overall impact of resilience programmes:** We examine the impact of integrated programmes on resilience capacities. In each country, we compare villages, or communities, that receive FFA or an integrated resilience package that includes FFA, with those that WFP is not yet able to support because of budget and programme constraints. This enables WFP to understand the impact of longer-term livelihood programmes and integrated activities on households' ability to maintain and improve food security. By collecting data on the different shocks and stressors encountered by participating and non-participating households, we are able to understand whether households receiving WFP's support are better at improving their food security and coping with shocks.

**2. Impact of combinations of activities:** In countries where it is feasible to do so, we also aim to examine what combinations of activities contribute to resilience. Questions include:

- What are the impacts of asset creation/livelihood activities beyond the direct income benefits of cash/food transfers?
- Are interventions (e.g., health, nutrition, etc.) more effective when combined with asset creation/livelihood activities, and vice versa?

These questions will help us to understand the role of different activities in improving the resilience of the population. For example, activities that are designed to meet immediate food needs serve a different purpose than long-term livelihood activities. Understanding the individual contribution of these activities is important to effectively combine or sequence activities in a programme.

### 3. Mechanisms that enable contributions to resilience:

In countries where it is feasible to test multiple implementation modalities, we also examine whether programme implementation can be further improved. Specifically, the window focuses on two aspects of programme delivery:

- *Timing:* Can we time asset creation activities and cash/food transfers to ensure that beneficiaries receive food assistance when they need it the most, while having the flexibility to fulfil asset creation activities when their own in-farm labour requirements are low?
- *Targeting:* How do targeting decisions for livelihood activities influence the impact of interventions on

household-level outcomes? More specifically, do vulnerability profiles of households change as they encounter shocks/stressors?

Finally, each evaluation contributes data for cross-country comparisons and meta-analysis. Descriptive methods of analysis will also be used to examine interactions between the types and timing of intervention and shocks, and the resulting coping and adaptation strategies used by supported households.

### HOW DOES WFP MEASURE RESILIENCE CAPACITIES?

A growing body of resilience literature has relied on measuring the impacts of livelihood programmes at a single point in time, and documents positive gains in well-being (Banerjee et al., 2015; Haushofer & Shapiro, 2018; Macours, Premand, & Vakis, 2020). Yet, households are systematically exposed to seasonal fluctuations and shocks, such as changes in precipitation or agricultural productivity, that impact well-being over time. People who are poor today may not be the poorest tomorrow. Capacities needed to improve and sustain well-being are also likely to evolve over time, depending on the type and severity of shocks encountered.

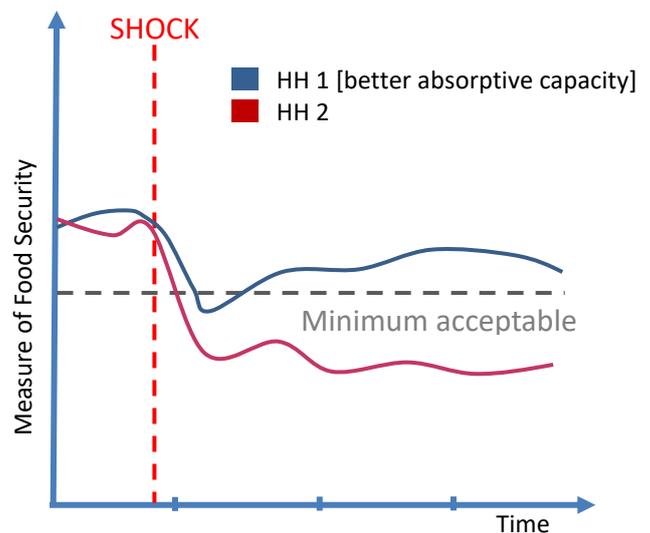
Evaluating the impact of programmes on resilience requires measuring well-being and absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities across seasons, as well as before and after shocks. Building on proposals from Barrett and Conostas (2014) and Cissé and Barrett (2018) to conceptualize resilience as avoidance of poverty in the face of shocks and stressors, each evaluation in the window directly measures welfare dynamics to understand resilience outcomes. These measures are calculated from a minimum set of food security indicators collected at higher frequencies in each country supported.

The measurement strategy for the window includes two main components:

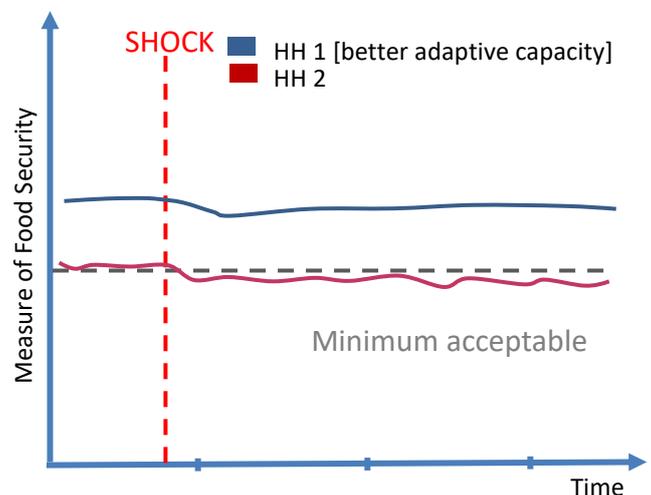
- Measurement of the outcomes and household characteristics which could potentially contribute to resilience using baseline and endline surveys (similar approaches include RIMA).
- Measurement of absorptive, adaptive, and transformative resilience capacities using high-frequency measurement (bi-monthly or quarterly) of key well-being outcomes (similar approaches include Barrett & Conostas (2014), Cissé & Barrett (2018), and Phadera et al. (2019)).

Well-being pathways are examined through the lens of food security, because the programmes in the window mainly focus on improving food security and nutrition. Food security data collected is used to measure changes in resilience capacities as follows:

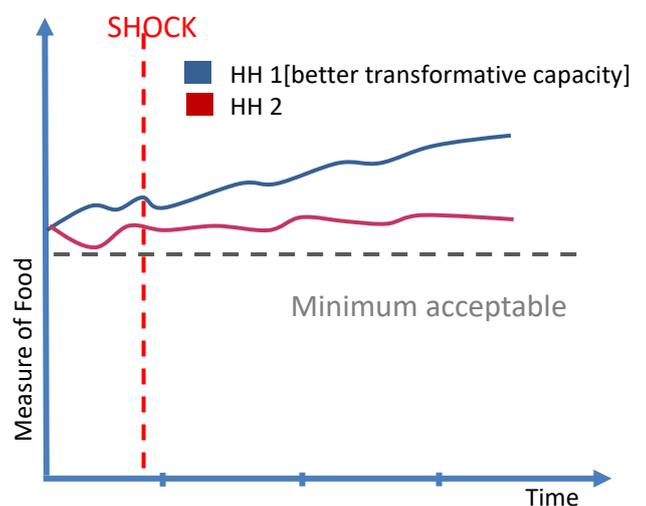
**Absorptive capacity:** a household's ability to maintain or return to a food security and well-being status above acceptable levels when they experience shocks.



**Adaptive capacity:** a household's ability to maintain a higher level of food security and well-being on average, over time, when they experience shocks.



**Transformative capacity:** a household's ability to increase food security and well-being at a higher rate over time while they experience shocks.



## OUTCOMES AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

The main objective of WFP's resilience impact evaluations is to estimate the impact of interventions on resilience capacities. Resilience capacities are assessed through the lens of food security. Absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities will be assessed based on measured changes in food security between baseline, high-frequency and endline surveys.

Outcomes are primarily measured at the household level. In addition to changes in food security, each evaluation captures household characteristics that might influence resilience capacities. To begin unpacking how programmes contribute to measured improvements in resilience, each evaluation captures the following outcome areas:

### Primary Outcomes:

**Consumption and Expenditures:** The primary measure of household consumption and food security is WFP's Food Consumption Score. Additional household consumption and food security measures include the Food Insecurity Experience Scale and Consumption Expenditure over a standard reference period for food and non-food goods.

### Secondary Outcomes:

**Earnings:** Data on the types of income-generating activities pursued by households is collected, including 1) non-farm businesses; 2) agriculture and livestock; and 3) wage employment. In addition, evaluations capture data on which members of the household generate income (e.g., men and women's income).

**Reservation Wages:** High-frequency surveys capture data on the minimum hourly wage respondents are willing to accept for jobs that take various amounts of time, as well as how often they would be willing to work, and the likelihood of finding work.

**Time Use:** During baseline and endline surveys, the primary beneficiary is asked what activities they were doing at various points during the previous day, followed by questions about the amount of time spent on a set of activities. As most of WFP's intended beneficiaries are engaged in agricultural activities throughout the year, a standard agricultural module collects information about how households allocate their labour across the agricultural cycle. Time use information is collected because households may move labour away from uncompensated activities to work on WFP assets (which may not be observed through the income measures). Time use data is collected for both a household head (who is typically also the WFP registered respondent) and also the household's primary female decision maker when the head is not a woman.

**Assets:** A comprehensive list of assets owned by households is captured during each survey. The baseline will capture the amount and value of these assets. The high-frequency surveys and endline will capture the same set of assets (how many they own and their value). This ensures evaluations capture assets correlated with wealth,

as well as productive assets (to be used in income-generating activities).

**Shocks and Coping Mechanisms:** The baseline, endline and high-frequency surveys ask households what shocks (drought, food, family death, asset loss, job loss, etc.) they have experienced over the previous 12 months and the severity of each shock. In response to any of the shocks identified, the surveys capture which coping mechanisms the household used over the previous 12 months. Examples of coping mechanisms include selling assets for cash, reducing consumption, increasing labour supply, and accessing safety nets.

**Migration:** Baseline and endline surveys collect information about which household members have migrated over the previous six months (or since the last survey) and whether they send money back home.

**Financial Outcomes:** Through baseline and endline surveys, households are asked about their current savings levels; whether they have taken a loan and their current outstanding debt; and whether they received any cash transfers (from NGOs, friends, or family members) over the past month.

### Tertiary Outcomes

**Conflict:** Two types of conflict-related outcomes are measured: 1) whether the household experienced any conflict in the last year; 2) conflict outcomes (at the village level) measured by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).

**Psycho-social Well-being:** The following measures are used to create a psycho-social well-being index for the window: Cohen's Stress Index, Well-being measures, the Center for Epidemiologic Depression Scale, Life Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy, and Aspirations.

**Women's Empowerment:** Perceptions related to gendered decision-making are collected using questions drawn from Demographic Health Surveys. Using Rotter's locus of control questionnaire, these questions measure how strongly people believe they have control over situations and experiences that affect their lives. In addition, surveys collect data on women's time-use, wages, and labour outcomes. The data collected on women's empowerment aims to complement the ongoing impact evaluations under the "Cash-based Transfers and Gender Window" and will inform WFP's programming.

**Social Capital:** Three indices related to social capital are included in the baseline and endline surveys: 1) a social cohesion closeness of community index, 2) a financial support index, and 3) a collective action index. Households' trust in various community members and institutions are also captured through this module.

For more information, please contact the Office of Evaluation: [wfp.evaluation@wfp.org](mailto:wfp.evaluation@wfp.org)

Corresponding authors: Paul Christian (Development Impact Evaluation, World Bank) ([pchristian@worldbank.org](mailto:pchristian@worldbank.org)), Jonas Heirman (Office of Evaluation, World Food Programme) ([jonas.heirman@wfp.org](mailto:jonas.heirman@wfp.org)), and Hanna Paulose (Office of Evaluation, World Food Programme) ([hanna.paulose@wfp.org](mailto:hanna.paulose@wfp.org)).

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All WFP evaluations conform to 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical guidelines. Climate and Gender window impact evaluations are also subjected to institutional review board (IRB) approvals. Each impact evaluation ensures informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, fair recruitment of participants, and that evaluation activities and results do not cause harm.

## FUTURE WINDOW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

This Brief provides an overview of the first pre-analysis plan developed for WFP's Climate and Resilience Window. WFP windows will remain open as long as the selected thematic areas remain evidence priorities. This enables WFP to build up evidence over time, by sequencing and expanding the questions examined.

## REFERENCES

**Banerjee, A., et al.** 2015. Development Economics. A Multifaceted Program Causes Lasting Progress for the Very Poor: Evidence from Six Countries. *Science* (New York, N.Y.) 348 (6236):1260799.

**Barrett, C., & Constan, M.** 2014. Toward a Theory of Resilience for International Development Applications. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*. 111 (40):14625–14630.

**Cissé, J., & Barrett, C.** 2018. Estimating Development Resilience: A Conditional Moments-Based Approach. *Journal of Development Economics* 135:272–284.

**Haushofer, J. & Shapiro, J.** 2018. The long-term impact of unconditional cash transfers: experimental evidence from Kenya. *Busara Center for Behavioral Economics*, Nairobi, Kenya.

**Macours, K., Premand, P., & Vakis, R.** 2020. Transfers, Diversification and Household Risk Strategies: Can Productive Safety Nets Help Households Manage Climatic Variability? Working Paper.

**Phadera, L., et al.** 2019. Do Asset Transfers Build Household Resilience? *Journal of Development Economics* 138:205–227.

**WFP.** 2015. Policy On Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition. *Tech. rep.*, World Food Program.