



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **EASTERN AFRICA**

Knowledge Management and Evidence Generation

2021 Regional Achievements & Outlook

MAY 2022

Regional Overview

WFP in the Eastern Africa Region strives to be agile to the constant changing contexts in the region, responsive to the new emerging challenges, and innovative in providing solutions to address the challenges of delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 (Zero Hunger) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals). To achieve this goal, WFP aims to institutionalise learning and adaptation as a continuous process and leverage the best available knowledge from evidence and practice, from both internal and external sources, for comparative advantage.

RBN covers nine operational countries in Eastern Africa: **Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda**. Knowledge Management (KM) assessments conducted in 4 countries, 7 field offices, and units in the regional bureau in 2017, identified several gaps and challenges, including: an absence of a systematic approach to KM, limited understanding of the KM among staff, limited access to knowledge, poor culture of information capture and sharing, lack of accountability and governance, and lack of an enabling environment and systems to support KM. It is against these identified challenges and recommendations from the assessment that a Regional KM Strategy was endorsed at the beginning of 2021, and work commenced to start implementation at the regional office.

Following the endorsement and launch of the regional KM Strategy in January 2021, a lot of achievements were realised under the six impact pathways:

1. Leadership and governance
2. Knowledge and evidence generation and use
3. An enabling environment
4. Capacity building
5. Collaboration, learning, and adaptation
6. Enabling systems and technologies

Regional Achievements

In 2021, during the first-year implementation of the regional KM strategy, WFP achieved a lot under the six impact pathways.

Leadership and governance

The Regional KM Strategy was endorsed by the regional director, and KM was considered one of the three key priority areas for the region in 2021. Regional units incorporated elements of KM in their 2021 workplans which were presented to management at the start of the year and monitored through the Annual Performance Planning (APP) exercise. KM and Evidence generation and use is recognized as a comparative advantage for RBN countries and operations.

Knowledge and evidence generation and use

Knowledge management tool kit

Through inputs from both internal and external stakeholders, WFP RBN developed a knowledge management tool kit, which contains a variety of methodologies and tools and technologies that aim to guide staff on integrating KM into programming. It is envisioned that the tool kit will play an important role in guiding staff both at regional and CO level on the ways to properly integrate KM into programming to drive results, cut costs, and learn and adapt.

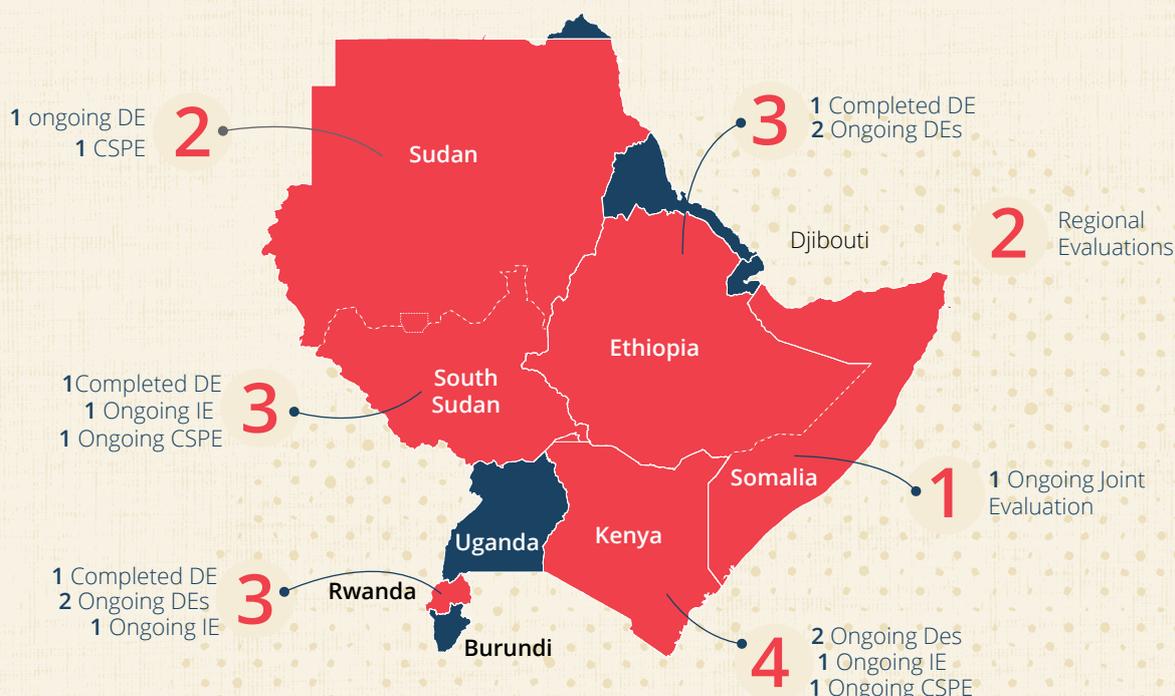
Evidence Generation

2021 Totals

3 Completed Decentralized Evaluations

15 Ongoing Evaluations, including regional evaluations, Impact Evaluations (IE) and Country Strategic Plan evaluations (CSPE)

3 Summaries of evidence



Evaluation

In 2021, the WFP Eastern Africa region was very proactive in commissioning new evaluations that helped to produce credible, independent, and useful evidence on a wide range of topics, despite COVID-19 constraints and challenges. A total of 18 evaluations (including CO) led evaluations, regional evaluations, impact evaluations, and CSPEs were conducted across the region, among which 3 evaluations were finalized.¹ Six countries (**Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan**) had at least one evaluation in-process.² The commissioned evaluations strategically supported the COs across the region to generate evidence and fill knowledge gaps on various topics, such as food systems, supply chain, cooperating partnerships, school-based programming, innovation, and resilience.

Thinking Regionally

In 2021, the region began adapting its evidence generation strategy, focusing on key evidence gaps and evidence to support and guide WFP actions on a regional level. Traditionally, a decentralized evaluation covers a single activity or programme, often being commissioned due to Donor requirements. In order to position WFP with evidence in emerging programmatic, operational, and strategic interest areas, RBN began commissioning regional level evaluations.

Regional evaluations in 2021 focused on two important areas of WFP's work that has not been evaluated in-depth in the past: Cooperating Partnerships and the outcomes of Supply Chain on food systems. The first, finalized this year, was a "[Thematic Evaluation of Cooperating Partnerships in the Eastern Africa Region from 2016 to 2020](#)"³ was commissioned in collaboration with the RBN Cooperating Partnership Management Team, and covered 8 country operations in the region. Both international and national Cooperating Partnerships organizations are core to

implementing WFP programming across the region and WFP. In 2016, WFP began strategically shifting toward longer term planning at the country level (Country Strategic Plans) and to better strengthen local capacity through Grand Bargain commitments, among other shifts. This evaluation was commissioned to help WFP meet these commitments, inform an anticipated regional cooperating partnership strategy, and inform the on-going work with cooperating partners. Overall, the evaluation highlighted important progress in both strategic thinking and management practices around cooperating partners, and areas for improvement:

- Strategic discourse has shifted to better consider cooperating partners beyond simply delivery agents/contractors to being more strategic partners to achieve Zero Hunger.
- The mix of cooperating partners engaged across the region are also relevant to CO priorities and contexts, and WFP has made progress against its Grand Bargain Commitments related to localization, though needs a more intentional approach to localization and a strategy to operationalize how this will be implemented.
- Management practices around cooperating partners have also improved, especially related to risk management. However, the evaluation also highlighted ways in which management practices lag behind current strategic thinking, including: uptake of multi-year agreements with cooperating partners, limited investment and clarity on the approach to strengthen capacity of cooperating partners, and utilizing a more gender-transformative approach with and through its partners.
- Capacity strengthening, particularly for local NGOs, is a critical element of country capacity strengthening more broadly and sustaining programmatic outcomes. While corporate guidance on NGO capacity strengthening exists, operationalizing this guidance, including selecting specific approaches and benchmarks for success, is a challenge.

- Utilizing a more gender transformative approach with cooperating partners can further support WFP's wider gender transformative agenda. While gender considerations have been integrated in operational tools, such as agreement clauses, practices and tools do not encourage cooperating partners to go beyond numeric gender equality towards more gender transformative programming. A more gender-transformative approach requires WFP to pay attention to their cooperating partners and their capacity in deeper ways.

The second regional evaluation, still ongoing, is the "Thematic Evaluation of Supply Chain outcomes in the Food System in Eastern Africa from 2016 to 2021,"⁴ commissioned in collaboration with the RBN Supply Chain and Procurement team to assess the nature and extent of the outcomes of supply chain activities in food systems, to differentiate effects according to gender and other groups. This evaluation will provide information to enhance the design, implementation and monitoring of supply chain interventions and overall WFP programming in such a way as to minimise disruption and promote the development of food systems.

Promoting Evidence Use

Across the year, as standard practice to ensure evidence accessibility, all evaluations and evaluation products commissioned and finalized by the region are public and can be found on the [WFP website](#).

- In addition to commissioning evaluations to fill evidence gaps and meet accountability and learning needs, RBN also produced two Summaries of Evidence in 2021 to inform strategies, programme planning, and evidence needs. The first, is the "Evidence on Food Systems: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the East and Central Africa Region (2013-2020)." This summary of evidence consolidated key evidence in terms of good practices, lessons learned, and challenges faced by MSMEs (especially micro enterprises) across the Eastern African region in support of its work to strengthen regional food systems. Overall, the summary found some gaps in evidence: micro-enterprise (typically less than 10 employees) related evidence typically focused on livelihoods and smallholder farmer programming, and evidence



from programming in the region related to SMEs was scant, particularly from UN Agencies. Little evidence was also found on issues such as post-harvest losses, food processing enterprises, and evidence of effectiveness at the policy level.

The second summary of evidence produced was in support of the Burundi Country Office Interim Country Strategic Plan (ICSP) development process. A summary of existing evidence (primarily evaluation and review evidence) specific and relevant to the Burundi context was produced and guided the CO to address and include findings and recommendations into the ICSP. Evidence identified focused on social protection modalities, school feeding programmes, nutrition sensitive programming, gender equality and protection, resilience, and climate change. Very little existing evidence relevant to the Burundi context was found on early warning, forecast-based financing, food fortification, and market integration.

Enabling environment

In a bid to create an enabling environment for KM to thrive in the region, the regional bureau established a network of Information & Knowledge Management Focal Points (IKMFP) from each unit to train and support bureau teams capture, share and use knowledge. Regular meetings with the IKMFP ensured that challenges to adopting KM were addressed in a timely manner and peer-support and learning was enhanced. All 2021 unit workplans incorporated IKM elements which were monitored throughout the year. Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning was one of the key 2021 priorities focused on during APP events.

To enhance Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation

To allow global staff to document good practices and exchange knowledge with different subject matter experts, the KM team engaged with the Regional Centre of Excellence Against Hunger and Malnutrition in Abidjan (CERFAM) to leverage CERFAM's Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEPT). The RBN Nutrition unit has submitted two good practices to the platform. Discussions are underway with other programmatic areas to document good practices using the platform.

On the regional level, KM Café sessions were introduced in February 2021, to enhance knowledge sharing and collaboration across the region. 23 knowledge café sessions were held in 2021, which have been praised widely as providing a good platform for sharing knowledge, lessons learned, and means of collaboration. Discussions are underway to introduce other knowledge sharing channels in 2022.

Enabling systems and technology

In 2021, WFP RBN successfully transitioned all files and documents to Office 365 and decommissioning the legacy shared drive. This transition ensured all bureau staff could access information from anywhere they had internet connection allowing for a more flexible and efficient workforce. Future training will focus on the effective use of Office 365 tools and leveraging the DOT platform operational information and updates.

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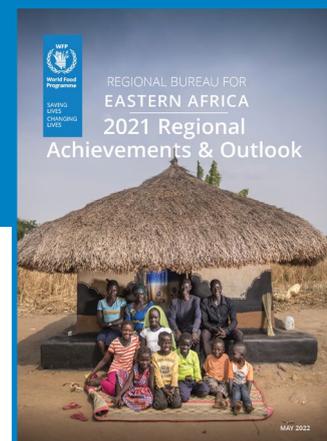
PHOTO CREDITS

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The following evaluations were finalized in 2021: [Ethiopia, Evaluation of Support for Strengthening Resilience of Vulnerable Groups: The Fresh Food Voucher Programme Expansion](#); Rwanda, WFP's USDA MGD International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's support in Rwanda 2016-2020 (endline); and [South Sudan, Evaluation of the Food Assistance for Assets programme 2016 – 2019](#)
- 2 Evaluations in process are defined as those in any stage between confirmation of an evaluation through to approval: preparation (TOR development, contracting), inception, data collection, and reporting.
- 3 The final evaluation report is available here: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/thematic-evaluation-cooperating-partnerships-eastern-africa-region-2016-2020>
- 4 The Terms of reference is available here: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/eastern-africa-supply-chain-outcomes-food-system-evaluation>. The final evaluation report will be finalized in April 2022



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