



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of Mozambique WFP Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021

CONTEXT

Mozambique is a low-income, food-deficit, highly food-insecure country, extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It is one of the poorest and most unequal countries in the world. The COVID 19 pandemic aggravated the challenges faced by the country and placed an added burden on women and girls.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The country strategic plan for 2017–2021 focused on strengthening national capacity for disaster preparedness and response and sought to address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition while maintaining WFP's lead role in direct humanitarian assistance. It is structured around seven strategic outcomes, 22 outputs and 12 activities in the areas of resilience building, crisis response and root causes. Intervention modalities include cash-based transfers; food transfers; capacity strengthening; and service delivery

With a needs-based plan of USD 167.7 million, the CSP was initially intended to reach 932,000 beneficiaries. Since 2017, the CSP has been revised eight times to target 6.4 million people in need, with the country portfolio budget reaching USD 1.1 billion. As of December 2021, the CSP was 54 percent funded, with emergency response accounting for 73.5 percent of allocated resources.

OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was commissioned by the independent Office of Evaluation to provide evaluative evidence for accountability and learning to inform the design of the next WFP CSP in Mozambique. It covers WFP activities implemented between 2016 and August 2021 to assess continuity from the previous programme cycle, the extent to which the CSP introduced strategic shifts and implications for such shifts for performance and results.

It was conducted between January and December 2021. It assessed WFP's strategic positioning and role and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP; WFP's contributions to strategic outcomes; efficiency and factors that explain WFP performance. The main users for this evaluation are the WFP Mozambique Country Office, the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, WFP headquarters technical divisions, the Government of Mozambique and other stakeholders in the country.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

WFP's strategic position, role and specific contribution based on country priorities and people's needs as well as WFP's strengths

The CSP design was consistent with SDG 2 and 17 and well aligned with the overarching national policy frameworks and sectoral government priorities regarding nutrition, social protection and disaster risk reduction. It addressed the needs of the most vulnerable by focusing on the areas with the highest levels of food insecurity and the regions most prone to natural disasters. However, the scale of WFP's interventions was found to be small compared to needs.

WFP's response to crises, including its role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, has positioned the organization as a key player in humanitarian response. Similarly, WFP is considered an important partner in resilience building. On the other hand, the evolving national policy and strategy framework for food and nutrition security could have better informed adjustments during CSP implementation, in particular with regard to the approach to technical assistance and capacity strengthening.

Extent and quality of WFP's specific contribution to CSP strategic outcomes in Mozambique

Under Strategic outcome 1, WFP contributed to improving government capacity to monitor food insecurity, manage climate-related risks and respond to shocks. However, continuity of processes to consolidate installed capacities remains a challenge.

Under Strategic Outcome 2, WFP effectively responded to the emergencies generated by cyclones Idai and Kenneth, to the displacement of nearly 670,000 people from Cabo Delgado due to attacks by non-state armed groups and to the food insecurity generated by three consecutive years of drought. While cash transfers proved to be effective, coverage of emergency school feeding was limited because take-home rations were not authorized by national institutions during COVID-19 related school closures.

Under Strategic Outcome 3, the CSP focused on strengthening national capacities for a gradual handover and scale-up of the national school feeding programme. Partnering between WFP and the Government in this programme proved to be challenging due to differing interpretations of the management arrangements, which had an impact on operational coordination. As of today the national school feeding programme remains small scale compared to needs,

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and the government funding envisioned in the CSP, essential for handover and effective scale-up, has not yet been secured.

Under strategic Outcome 4 WFP contributions included the successful delivery of nutrition-sensitive training and social and behavioural change communication campaigns together with the generation of evidence for advocacy and informed decision making. Moreover, nutrition was mainstreamed across all CSP outcomes, and the innovative gender- and nutrition-sensitive approach to stunting prevention introduced by WFP seems promising. WFP also provided food assistance to patients in COVID-19 treatment centres. Despite these achievements, some funding and internal capacity gaps still limit WFP's contributions to improving nutrition.

Under strategic Outcome 5 evidence suggests some progress in livelihood coping strategies and smallholder farmers' sales. However, dispersion of projects across geographic thematic areas resulted in limited effectiveness. The collaboration with Rome based Agencies that was envisaged in this area has not fully materialized and evidence suggests that it was not actively pursued by any of the three entities.

Under strategic outcome 6, WFP supply chain services are appreciated by humanitarian and development partners and acknowledged as a comparative advantage of the organization. However, communication between supply chain and programme staff within the country office was found to be less than optimal, and some partners experienced challenges in using WFP services. Areas of concern include delayed deliveries, difficulties related to procurement services, warehouse management and degradation or loss of goods.

Under strategic outcome seven, the support provided in the response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth through WFP management of the logistics cluster and provision of telecommunications services was highly appreciated.

WFP emergency responses adhered to the humanitarian principles. There were some challenges in the domain of protection during the first half of CSP implementation that WFP managed to address. Disability was included as a vulnerability criterion for transfers but it has not yet been mainstreamed. The CSP interventions ensured gender balance among beneficiaries and helped increase the number of decisions made by women on the use of assistance provided by WFP. However, there is room for improvement in mainstreaming gender in the CSP design.

In view of very limited domestic resources, national institutions continue to rely on financial support by WFP. In this context, the handover of school feeding to the Government is unlikely to be feasible in the near future. Similarly, despite progress in national capacities to carry out food and nutrition security assessments and for preparedness and emergency response, support from WFP and other United Nations organizations remains essential in these areas.

WFP made several positive contributions across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, however, the triple nexus approach was not fully articulated in an overarching strategy and was not institutionalized within the broader United Nations system during the period observed

WFP's efficient use of resources in contributing to CSP outputs and strategic outcomes

Implementation of activities was generally timely. Occasional delays were mostly due to external circumstances, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and or delays in donor and government funding. Delays originating at WFP are frequently attributed to less than optimal performance of the supply chain function.

WFP was able to reach the most vulnerable populations with its humanitarian assistance, although coverage was of small scale in relation to needs.

The transition from food to cash transfers resulted in significant efficiency gains, with variations across regions. There were significant post-delivery losses in 2018 and 2020, but measures have been taken to address their causes. Cost-effectiveness analysis and alternative measures have been considered in some areas, but not consistently

Factors that explain WFP performance

Funding was not sufficiently predictable and flexible; the skills of country office staff did not fully match with the roles that WFP intended to play; monitoring and reporting systems were inadequate to capture progress and inform decision making in capacity strengthening initiatives; and there is need for stronger and more strategic with national and international development actors. Government staff turnover also influenced the effectiveness and sustainability of capacity-strengthening initiatives.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The CSP was relevant to country priorities and people's needs and offered a relatively flexible programmatic framework within which WFP responded promptly and effectively to the various crises that affected Mozambique during the programme cycle, including cyclones and other climate-related shocks, the COVID-19 pandemic and the internal displacement caused by the insurgence of non-state armed groups in the north of the country.

In doing so, WFP confirmed its comparative advantage and is clearly positioned as the lead player in humanitarian action in Mozambique. On the other hand, emergency response required reprioritization of activities and overshadowed the CSP original upstream focus. Contributions to national and local capacities to address root causes are still emerging. In this connection, a relatively siloed approach to implementation hindered internal coherence, economies of scale, and effectiveness across the triple nexus. External coherence also needs to be strengthened, particularly with other United Nations organizations and in partnering more strategically with Government and civil society. Insufficient, highly earmarked and short-term funding were also critical hindering factors, as well as WFP HR capacity to play an enabling role, and staff turnover on WFP and Government side.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Maintain the strategic direction of the new country strategic plan in humanitarian assistance alongside development interventions that have a long-term vision, focusing on areas where WFP can better position

Recommendation 2. Position WFP as capable of driving progress towards and strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in Mozambique.

Recommendation 3. Continue to strengthen and diversify strategic partnerships with a range of national and international actors to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the new country strategic plan.

Recommendation 4. Enhance organizational readiness to play a more catalytic role in the implementation of the country strategic plan.

Recommendation 5. Define a fundraising and advocacy strategy centred on donors and international financial