

Evaluation Brief

Decentralized evaluation for evidence-based decision making

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Formative Evaluation of WFP Livelihoods Activities in Northeast Nigeria, 2018 to 2021

SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The World Food Programme (WFP) Nigeria commissioned this decentralized evaluation of the livelihood interventions implemented between October 2018 and August 2021 in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, the BAY states of northeast Nigeria. The evaluation primarily focused on learning and accountability, providing information to refine the design of WFP's livelihood intervention to conflict affected people in the BAY States, as well as to support the planning of the next Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027). The evaluation analysed how WFP objectives on gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) and GEEW mainstreaming principles were included in the intervention.

The DE commenced in May 2021 with the inception phase, followed by data collection in September 2021 and concluded in June 2022.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The main objectives of the evaluation are accountability and learning. The evaluation assessed the performance of WFP's livelihood intervention and identified reasons why certain results were achieved or not achieved, to draw lessons and recommendations for learning and operational and strategic decision making.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was designed around the standard set of six criteria for evaluating humanitarian actions and operations, namely **appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, coverage, coherence, and connectedness** of WFP Nigeria's livelihoods activities in northeast Nigeria. The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach which combined mostly qualitative findings with some quantitative data, and added a triangulated approach to examine findings, to reduce bias and enhance transparency and impartiality. The methods included desk review, face-to-face and virtual key informant interviews with WFP staff and partners and focus group discussions with beneficiaries and non-

beneficiaries. Specifically regarding GEEW, the evaluation assessed how livelihoods programming contributed to achieving the four dimensions of WFP's gender objectives: (1) food assistance adapted to different needs, (2) equal participation, (3) decision-making by women and girls, and (4) gender and protection.

KEY FINDINGS

Appropriateness

WFP and its partners adopted the three-pronged approach (3PA) at national, regional, and community levels, in line with WFP's guidance. The Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) process was suitable for planning livelihood interventions for the affected population. The transfer modalities adopted were contextually suitable and the conditional activities for targeted persons were focused on important communal assets with special needs of women and elderly duly accommodated. However, there were pockets of cases where women engaged in livelihood activities that were culturally inappropriate.

Effectiveness

In line with theory of change, the livelihoods activities largely succeeded in generating the expected outputs whereas short-term outcomes were partially achieved. Moreover, beneficiaries resilience to shocks was enhanced due to their involvement in the local economy, which enabled them to create assets and meet their basic food needs. Nonetheless, long term management of assets was a challenge due to shocks, lack of profitability and frail resilience of households. Intervention priorities were given to women, female headed households and people with special needs thereby increasing the contribution of women to household finances and decision making. Market disruption, COVID-19 pandemic and mobility restrictions impacted negatively on income generating activities and livelihood opportunities.



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Efficiency

The needs of communities were met through various livelihood activities, beneficiaries swiftly acquired necessary skills due to their previous involvement in such activities. The activities targeted food and non-food needs, which guaranteed regular demand for livelihood products. Good practices were highlighted in the areas of partners selection, referral of vulnerable groups and integration of nutrition programming. However, beneficiaries specified that the training and assets could be improved to better meet their needs.

Coverage

Targeting criteria and implementation were consistent with the needs of beneficiaries, with improvements in the process recorded since 2018. However, targeting the aged and people with disabilities (PWDs) for livelihood activities requires clarification. Moreover, not all people have the ability, technical knowhow, and skills to run successful businesses. For instance, women might need additional training to boost the chance for their businesses to succeed, whereas elderly people may not be appropriate candidates for livelihood activities. Due to poor understanding of targeting, there were concerns by non-beneficiaries on bias in targeting.

Coherence

The design and implementation of the livelihood activities were in line with human rights and humanitarian principles. The most vulnerable people were prioritized, especially women, which enhanced their empowerment due to participation in the livelihood activities. Similarly, the livelihoods activities matched the objectives of all government tiers (federal, state and local) to resettle and build resilience of displaced persons. The project acknowledged the important role of traditional leaders (bulamas and lawanis) as enforcers of local guidelines within the community and lastly, the livelihoods activity feedback mechanism provided partners and WFP with perspectives of the communities on the activities.

Connectedness

The livelihood activities contributed to peace and social cohesion in targeted communities. Community leaders indicated increased harmony among displaced persons and host communities. Moreover, feedback mechanisms were leveraged to understand and make necessary program adjustments, based on the perceptions and lessons from the targeted communities. However, the duration of the livelihoods support may be too short to ensure sustainability, especially for women, due to barriers and inequalities that they need to overcome compared to men.

CONCLUSIONS

WFP livelihood activities addressed the needs of people through the creation of livelihood opportunities and provision of knowledge and training. However, the following areas are identified for improvement:

Targeting: Despite improvements in the targeting processes, there is need for consistence in targeting especially for PWDs and elderly and also, households still struggle to understand the beneficiary selection process.

Sustainability: Livelihood activities helped beneficiaries to meet their immediate food needs on the short term but had limited success in restoring key productive assets required for resilience, due to the short-lived intervention duration.

Capacity strengthening: Beneficiaries were given livelihood assets without the complementary capacity strengthening that would sufficiently equip them with technical and managerial skillsets to facilitate entrepreneurial success.

Gender responsiveness: While women were empowered by the livelihood activities and engaged in coordination platforms like the Project Management Committees, recognition for women's voices remains a challenge, given the cultural context. Moreover, there is need for flexibility in the timing and scheduling of individual and communal work for women, due to their heavy domestic burdens.

Evaluation: Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impact can be improved by collection of data on key indicators from both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, to facilitate rigorous analysis of impact that is attributable to the intervention.

Scaling up: Scale up of livelihood activities by building on the progress and lessons learned from the current livelihood activities, bearing in mind the local context and type of beneficiary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the recommendations of the evaluation team are:

R1: refine the targeting approach to better ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups (women, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities).

R2: strengthen gender-responsiveness in programming. increased attention should be paid to assignment of communal livelihoods activities, to ensure they are gender appropriate.

R3: increase the timeframe for livelihoods activities to enhance sustainability.

R4: capacity building should be sufficiently comprehensive to enable beneficiaries gain adequate technical knowledge to grow sustainable and viable businesses.

R5: evaluate the livelihood activities to measure impact that are attributable to the intervention.

R6: scale up livelihoods activities with flexibility to build on the progress and lessons learnt from the current livelihood activities, maintaining the design elements that strengthened peace and social cohesion, and adjusting for local context and type of beneficiaries.