



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of Pakistan WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022

CONTEXT

Pakistan is a lower middle-income country with a population of 221 million. Multidimensional poverty has decreased but there are stark disparities between provinces and urban and rural areas. The country and economy have been impacted by natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic and recent political instability. In 2020, 16.4 percent of the population were estimated to be either moderately or severely food insecure. Pakistan hosts 1.6 million refugees from Afghanistan.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The CSP articulates WFP's increasing focus on technical assistance to government-led programmes and policies through five strategic outcomes (SOs) focused on: access to food and nutrition in the aftermath of shocks, social protection, nutrition; resilient food systems and disaster risk reduction and strengthening capacity.

The revised CSP budget totaled USD 475.3 million. As of November 2021, the CSP was 41 percent funded, with 46 percent of the resources allocated to emergency response (SO1).

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 Pakistan. It covers WFP activities implemented between 2018 and 2021 and assesses WFP's strategic positioning and role and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shifts 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 Pakistan Country Office, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. WFP headquarters divisions, the Government of Pakistan, and other stakeholders in Pakistan.

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 aligned with government's priorities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSD). However, the CSP was not particularly well adapted to specific provincial needs nor fully aligned with the process of devolution.

Geographic targeting was appropriate, but more could be done to address the specific needs of people in vulnerable situations within each province.

The country office adapted to a number of shocks including the COVID-19 pandemic. However, resources were insufficient to allow for adaptation to the latest government climate change policies.

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

WFP made progress in several areas, albeit unevenly across SOs. Unconditional food transfers under SO1 contributed to better, more stable food security for temporarily displaced people (TDP). While food assistance for asset (FFA) supported dietary diversity and better economic standing, they offered insufficient support for beneficiaries in the face of shocks of the type experienced during CSP implementation.

Under SO2 on social protection, WFP established an important partnership with the Government's social protection programme (Ehsaas Nashonuma). However, in later years WFP's support remained largely focused on implementation of activities rather than gathering lessons learned to inform the development of sustainable mechanisms for expanding government systems.

WFP also provided technical assistance for the development of the government-led school meals and education support programme, as well as the implementation of an education pilot project for adolescent girls. However, major funding issues for this activity, COVID-19 and the closure of schools led WFP to

reach far fewer beneficiaries with cash-based transfers compared with its targets.

Under SO3, WFP worked with the Government to broaden the scope of its nutrition interventions from the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition to a multisectoral integrated programme addressing the root causes of chronic and acute malnutrition in a holistic and sustainable way. However, coverage of the treatment and prevention of malnutrition was below targets set by international standards. Through the implementation of the Ehsaas Nashonuma and other programmes, WFP also improved its approach and reach to stunting prevention.

Under SO4, WFP supported emergency response capacity at the provincial level. Such support holds considerable promise, but pilot projects need to be scaled up to deliver greater results. This was not possible due to limited funding.

Capacity strengthening under SO5 identified capacity development needs for specific activities. However, the absence of a comprehensive capacity gap assessment covering all relevant areas that could comprehensively inform Country Capacity Strengthening activities was a challenge. Trainings were nonetheless relevant, and appropriately targeted, and enabled changes at operational level.

Progress was made in integrating gender considerations into activities. The CO signed up to the WFP's corporate Gender Transformation Programme which provides an opportunity to address more structural issues. This work should continue to involve key actors, including men, to foster an environment that favours gender equality.

Indicators on Accountability to Affected Populations improved, and feedback mechanisms are in place, but more can be done to ensure accessibility and cultural appropriateness.

Where government is a major partner, such as in social protection, sustainability prospects are good. For other activities, there is limited indication that results will be sustained.

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

WFP generally delivered crisis response on-time. However, support to root causes and resilience building activities could not always be delivered as expected due to insufficient funding and earmarking in favour of crisis response.

Coverage, in terms of total beneficiaries reached, was consistently lower than planned. Looking at absolute numbers over the years, the highest number of beneficiaries was for crisis response (SO1).

Several activities were extremely small-scale, in many instances limited to a single village, a school or a small group of beneficiaries and there were no clear plan for drawing key lessons to inform their replication or scale-up by the Government.

Overall, the CSP design was cost-efficient, and WFP made good use of resources across all activities. A large percentage of the operational budgets for in-kind food distributions and CBT was delivered into the hands of beneficiaries, averaging 78 percent for in-kind food and 91 percent for CBT.

Factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP

The CSP was informed by a nutrition and food security analysis, but there was limited evidence that monitoring informed decision-making.

Funding declined during this CSP, with a large part of it earmarked towards crises response, this limited WFP's flexibility.

WFP is commended for its responsiveness to emerging needs notably during the pandemic. However, despite a move towards emphasizing resilience and root causes, a crisis response management approach, including short implementation timeframes, has been consistently used for all activities affecting the effectiveness of interventions. Addressing root causes and building resilience require consistent long-term support with multi-year funding.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

Overall the CSP positioning was relevant to national policies and aligned with the UNSDF.

WFP made progress in several areas, although unevenly across the SOs. Under SO1, unconditional food transfers contributed to stabilized and improved food security of TDPs. Under SO2 (social protection), several pilot efforts were developed, but WFP's engagement remained largely operational. Under SO3, WFP supported the Government to move from short term emergency MAM treatment to multisectoral integrated programming which is positive given the aim to prevent stunting and address nutrition in a more holistic way. The treatment of acute malnutrition was effective. However, the coverage of MAM treatment and prevention of malnutrition programmes were below targets. Under SO4, multiple small-scale efforts were conducted to achieve resilient food systems, but these require upscaling for them to lead to wider results. Under SO5, the support provided in trainings and infrastructure hand over were relevant, but a comprehensive plan for strengthening capacity of national institutions was lacking.

The CSP placed specific attention on supporting women and girls. However, this alone is not a demonstration of a gendered approach.

Although the CSP signaled a shift towards a more strategic level support, WFP's partnership with the Government has been more operational than strategic (adapting and improving system wide responses to known challenges).

The process of decentralisation calls for more contextualised support in order to ensure that WFP activities meet local needs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Support the Government in developing strategies to enhance food and nutrition security, while keeping the ability to respond to crises. CCS needs should be jointly identified, with the Government taking into consideration the decentralized nature of the Government system in Pakistan

Recommendation 2. Review the fundraising, partnerships, and advocacy plan with a view to exploring new funding sources and further leveraging domestic financing.

Recommendation 3. Deepen WFP's strategic and operational partnership with government partners and civil society organizations.

Recommendation 4: Intensify WFP's efforts in promoting gender equality, accountability to affected populations and protection.