



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of WFP Jordan Country Strategic Plan 2020-2022

CONTEXT

Jordan is an upper-middle-income country hosting more than 1.36 million Syrian refugees. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased poverty and food insecurity in rural and urban areas for both Jordanians and refugees. In addition, climate change has serious impact on water resources and food insecurity.

The Government has several frameworks that guide the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and a framework for addressing the Syrian crisis.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The Jordan CSP continued the shift towards the building of resilience and livelihoods, the development of common delivery platforms and expansion of capacity strengthening support. Through four Strategic Outcomes, the CSP aimed to support the Government in addressing food security and social protection challenges and provided large-scale humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees and other population groups.

The total budget for the CSP was USD 753 million, of which 55 percent was funded by October 2021.

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 Jordan. It covers WFP activities implemented under the transitional interim CSP (2018–2019) and the CSP between 2020 and mid-2021.

It was conducted between May 2021 and March 2022 to assess

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 country office, the Regional Bureau for the Middle East, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe, headquarters divisions and other stakeholders.

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 facilitated a rebalancing of WFP's portfolio towards the provision of capacity strengthening support for Jordan thereby strengthening the relevance of WFP's operation. This was coherent with national priorities and strategies as they evolved in response to a protracted refugee crisis.

WFP made systemic efforts to collect high quality data on the needs of vulnerable Jordanian and refugees which informed its programmes and targeting.

WFP successfully adapted to deepening national vulnerabilities during COVID-19 and drew from its comparative advantage to support the government's operational systems while maintaining effective collaborations with other UN partners.

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

Under Strategic Outcome 1, general food assistance in the form of cash-based transfers was a vital source of life-saving support for the most vulnerable refugees, preventing a steeper deterioration of their food security during increased shocks such as inflation and COVID-19. Achievements at outcome level were undermined by various stressors affecting

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food security and limited availability of funding, which constrained both modalities and value of transfers.

or Strategic Outcome 2, early indications suggest WFP's positive contribution to enhance national social protection systems for vulnerable Jordanians. WFP's contributions to school feeding were also recognized both in increasing school retention and attendance and provision of technical assistance to Government.

For Strategic Outcome 3, less solid progress was made in support for a pathway towards sustainable livelihoods owing to funding shortfalls and an insufficiently rigorous strategy.

Under Strategic Outcome 4, WFP co-led with the Government and FAO the development of a national food security strategy.

WFP adhered to the humanitarian principles. Accountability to affected populations, protection and gender issues were addressed but would benefit from further consideration. Action is being taken to tackle barriers to women's empowerment.

Capacity strengthening provides a legacy to support the national social protection system and national frameworks.

WFP's focus on self-reliance and resilience is increasingly important. Targeting both Jordanian and refugee vulnerable families contributes to social cohesion.

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

Investments in technology innovation and digital solutions contributed greatly to increased cost-efficiency, and the switch from voucher to cash distributions in host communities facilitated timely and efficient delivery. Cost to transfer ratios were kept at a reasonable level, in line with typical ratios observed for other large-scale refugee responses.

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

Resource mobilization: The country office was actively engaged in resource mobilization to respond to growing risks of unstable funding. Yet, inflexible and short-term funding hindered achievement of tangible results in areas requiring long-term support.

Partnerships: WFP directed significant attention to partnerships with the Government and other stakeholders including innovative parts of the private sector. Further improvement, including in leveraging the expertise of non-governmental organizations is needed.

Use of technology: WFP's use of technology strengthened its ability to respond to the needs of beneficiaries in a timely and efficient manner.

Use of evidence: The CSP is based on solid analysis of the needs of targeted populations. The high quality of WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping, and monitoring and evaluation data was recognized, however limitations in staffing

and data ownership meant the data did not always support evidence-based programming, other than for General Food Assistance.

Human resources: the country office is taking steps to better understand and mobilize the workforce capacity needed to support the implementation of the next CSP.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

Overall, the CSP is aligned with the direction of the government and has remained a relevant approach to supporting the government to meet food and nutrition needs of refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. During the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP adapted its delivery processes to ensure the continuation of assistance despite reduced direct contact with beneficiaries.

WFP maintained an essential humanitarian response during the protracted Syrian refugee crisis as the vulnerabilities of Syrian refugees and Jordanians deepened. However, there were shortcomings in communicating the targeting methodology among beneficiaries.

To bridge the humanitarian–development divide, WFP provided capacity strengthening for national institutions and worked to harmonize its approach with national systems.

WFP evolved further in the transition from the use of unconditional cash assistance to resilience and self-reliance activities and the development of more predictable social safety nets in partnership with the Government and other actors.

WFP took steps to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of its operations, but monitoring and learning were not carried out systematically during CSP implementation.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Develop and monitor the next CSP based on a more integrated framework with a clearer and realistic focus on selected transformative dimensions.

Recommendation 2. Ensure WFP has the necessary in-country expertise to match its ambitions.

Recommendation 3. Use the existing platform for a coherent strategy to address, in partnership with others, external barriers to harmonization and transitioning to meet beneficiary needs.

Recommendation 4. Enhance accountability to affected populations through inclusive community engagement and improved complaints and feedback mechanisms.

Recommendation 5. Support increased capacity strengthening of a national social protection system for vulnerable population groups.

Recommendation 6. Continue the development of a dual livelihoods approach that works across the food security/water/climate change nexus and supports transitioning of refugees from unconditional food assistance to self-reliance.