



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Evaluation of the Egypt WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2023

CONTEXT

Egypt is a lower-middle-income country with low rates of severe multidimensional poverty (0.6 percent). After a period of steady economic growth, Egypt suffered a series of shocks, starting with the January 2011 revolution and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic leading to a GDP decline to 3.3 percent in 2021. However, there have been substantial improvements in female literacy and labour force participation rates. More than half the population depends on agriculture for livelihoods, but Egypt has a high degree of risk of natural hazards and is very vulnerable to climate change impacts.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The CSP continued the strategic shift towards strengthening of national capacities to address food insecurity and malnutrition and strengthening of resilience amongst food-insecure/malnourished populations but also put the spotlight on south-south cooperation and technological support. Strategic Outcomes 1 and 2 respectively aimed to improve access to food for food insecure and vulnerable families and children, and for refugees, displaced persons and host communities; Strategic Outcome 3 focused on improved nutritional status of targeted populations by 2030; Strategic Outcome 4 aimed for improved livelihoods resilience of vulnerable farmers and Bedouin communities, while enhanced government capacity to achieve zero hunger was the aim of Strategic Outcome 5.

The total budget for the CSP was USD 586.4 million, of which 42 percent was funded until April 2022.

OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was commissioned by the Office of Evaluation to provide evaluative evidence for accountability, learning and to inform the design of the next CSP in Egypt. It covers WFP activities implemented from 2018 to March 2022.

It was conducted between November 2021 and November 2022 to assess WFP's strategic positioning and role and the extent to

which WFP made the strategic shift expected by the CSP; WFP's contributions to strategic outcomes; efficiency and factors that explained WFP performance. The main users for this evaluation are the WFP Egypt Country Office, the Regional Bureau in Cairo, WFP headquarters technical divisions and a range of external stakeholders.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

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

The CSP was aligned with national priorities, including Egypt's Vision 2030. Four out of five Strategic Outcomes were integrated to national social protection programmes. For this reason, targeting appropriately used government beneficiary lists; however, there was no evidence of WFP ensuring that the most vulnerable were reached through these lists.

Coherence and alignment with the wider UN system was attained; strategic partnerships were formed, but with few UN agencies.

WFP successfully responded to COVID-19 by modifying support type to unconditional assistance and adding an activity to better respond to the pandemic.

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

Under Strategic Outcome 1, school feeding supported positive school attendance and retention outcomes, and take-home rations and cash-based transfers (CBT) enabled households to better cope with COVID-19. Women's participation through the microloan programme helped some women to increase incomes. Gender equality awareness was promoted among schools and capacity strengthening provided to lawyers on support to gender-based violence victims.

Under Strategic Outcome 2, cash vouchers and Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC) contributed to improved nutrition, although, a cap on CBT restricting it to only five members per family constrained its effectiveness.

Outcomes of resilience building and integration of refugees into host communities were not systematically assessed but most participants successfully completed livelihood training courses and received monthly household assistance to improve their nutrition.

Under Strategic Outcome 3, WFP supported national social protection programs via development of nutrition counselling material, provision of nutrition messaging and food vouchers and fostering policy dialogue, for instance, through organizing high-level ministerial conferences. The programme improved the nutritional status of beneficiaries. WFP became the strategic partner for key national programmes for nutrition.

Under Strategic Outcome 4, support to communities in Upper Egypt on adaptation to climate changes and shocks showed clear indications of improving resilience in the longer term. Support to Bedouin communities in infrastructure through food for assets activity led to increased agriculture production. However, this support lacked some key elements to ensure sustainability of activities strengthening resilience.

Under Strategic Outcome 5, support for development of a geospatial platform strengthened the capacities of government staff to undertake analysis of data on social protection, and for informed policymaking. Partnerships and the Luxor Centre have the potential to be effective mechanisms for knowledge-sharing and innovation, but more time is required to assess their effect.

Cross cutting issues

Women were supported through CBT and capacity strengthening to supplement their incomes, but WFP lacked sufficient human and financial resources for effective gender mainstreaming.

By and large, the protection concerns of beneficiaries were effectively addressed though dignity was not consistently upheld, for example during cumbersome processes for receiving assistance.

Regarding Accountability of Affected Populations (AAP), some beneficiary consultations were done at the intervention design stage, but these were not always followed upon, and information provision was inconsistent.

Climate-related practices and capacity support were effectively provided in Upper Egypt, and also within country capacity-strengthening activities.

The CSP did not explicitly focus on the nexus but the One Refugee Programme and support to youth employment have potential for humanitarian-development linkage.

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

Support was generally provided on time, but lack of timely resources, COVID-19 and use of some national administrative processes created some delays.

Lower than planned operation scale due to funding constraints, some government procurement challenges, and price and fuel increases affected cost efficiency.

WFP generally reached the most vulnerable, but the scale varied across the strategic outcomes, determined largely by funding.

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

WFP was responsive to contextual changes, principally COVID-19, by increasing its beneficiary base and reach (activity 9) and switch to CBT modality.

WFP had a strong partnership with government though more limited engagement with civil society organizations. Collaboration with some UN agencies saw positive results, but not all long-term opportunities were capitalized upon.

Challenges in securing funding, reliance on very few donors and donor fatigue makes WFP vulnerable to limited resources.

Targeted studies and assessments informed practice on the ground, but lack of monitoring resources limited WFP's ability to continually assess all activities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

WFP has supported the government in Egypt on child and maternal nutrition, food security of refugees, the response to climate change and the use of technology and innovation. It is on track to achieving CSP outputs and outcomes.

However, a fragmented approach to identifying and delivering interventions, alongside donor preferences, risk limiting overall performance.

Use of national beneficiary identification systems helped ensure sustainability, but WFP's own capacities to identify the most vulnerable were not fully used.

Strong partnerships with government helped mainstream WFP's activities into national systems but created challenges for cost efficiency and in reaching the most vulnerable.

Limited human and financial resources hampered the monitoring of activities, AAP and gender mainstreaming. Monitoring data were not fully utilized.

Sustainability of WFP activities is threatened by an unclear funding scenario, with ramifications particularly for resilience-building interventions

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: WFP should review its support from strategic and operational stand points with a view to streamline and consolidate the number of interventions

Recommendation 2: WFP should support government in refinement of its beneficiary identification mechanisms

Recommendation 3: WFP should review its partnerships (including UN and the private sector) for their strategic potential under the new country strategic plan.

Recommendation 4: WFP should ensure that it has adequate capacity in place to effectively monitor and follow-up WFP supported interventions including consistent measurement of progress of WFP support to country capacity strengthening

Recommendation 5: WFP should ensure that it has the capacity and ability to mainstream gender into WFP supported interventions.