



World Food Programme

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Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition

CONTEXT

The WFP Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition (the 'resilience policy' hereafter) articulates WFP's resilience-building role as centred around food security and nutrition.

Resilience is considered in global policy agendas and frameworks as a critical step towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustaining Peace Agenda.

The resilience policy spans three strategic plans which over time have gradually emphasized the importance of resilience.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The policy provides the normative framework for WFP's work on resilience. Resilience is seen to be a means to achieving and sustaining food security and nutrition in the face of shocks and stressors, in line with conceptualising resilience as a capacity and an intermediate outcome and mechanism through which outcomes and longer-term results are supported and achieved.

The evaluation assessed the quality and results of the policy, along with the factors that enabled and hindered those results. It covered the period 2015-2022.

OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation served the dual objectives of learning and accountability. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division, which comprises the Resilience and Food Systems Service as policy owner, as well as various thematic units and divisions responsible for gender, nutrition, school-based programmes, social protection, climate and disaster risk reduction, as the resilience policy

established clear programmatic links for each of these units, as well as regional bureaux and country offices, the WFP EB and senior management.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

How good was the policy?

The resilience policy performed well against the criteria related to the design of the policy, its relevance, its scope and its internal coherence. It provides a valued and strategic overview of WFP's vision for resilience programming and is comparable in quality to the resilience policies of the organizations selected for comparison. However, critical gaps were noted, including ill-defined and confusing terminology, lack of a clear theory of change, practical guidance and an accountability framework.

What results has the policy achieved?

The results were assessed at four levels: the design of interventions that support resilience building under country strategic plans (CSPs); the implementation of interventions that support resilience; the contribution to improved resilience capacity (absorptive, adaptive and transformative); and adaptation and response to context.

Design: although the policy has not directly driven CSP design, most resilience programmes are aligned with resilience policy principles. Activity-centred approaches dominate programmatic areas compared to outcome and systems-oriented framing for resilience-focused programming.

Programme implementation: many of the programmatic elements of resilience-building highlighted in the resilience policy are well understood and widely implemented by WFP. However, the continued "siloing" of work, organizational culture, senior management choices, donor

funding conditions, and lack of sufficiently flexible medium and long-term funding affect integrated programming.

Contribution to improved resilience capacities:

performance indicators cover several activities and have changed frequently over time, making it challenging to measure changes in resilience capacities. Most of the evidence available is related to absorptive capacity for which some positive results were identified.

Adapting and responding to context: a context-specific resilience lens is applied in relevant programme design, however adaptive programming in the face of contextual changes has been limited.

What were the enabling or hindering factors for results achievement?

Since the 2019 Strategic Evaluation WFP has done much work to guide the implementation of the resilience policy working on various initiatives across the organisations. In 2021 a Resilience and Food Systems Service was set up with the ambition to ensure further integration.

While funding for resilience increased since 2015, the funding gap is still acute. Resource availability also varied across regions.

WFP's corporate reporting and monitoring systems did not capture resilience achievements effectively. Most indicators are designed mainly to track key activities that can reasonably be assumed to influence a household's ability to anticipate, absorb and adapt to shocks and stressors. The resilience monitoring and measurement approach is expected to help facilitate specific reporting and performance analysis of WFP's resilience generation under Country Strategic Plans.

Limited dissemination of the policy has impeded ownership and frequent staff turnover hindered progress in implementation, leading to varying points of view about how the policy should be implemented.

While the resilience policy has contributed to a major push towards increased Rome-based agency collaboration in some countries there is little evidence that it has had an impact on the way in which new partnerships are designed at country level. However, in many countries WFP is making significant efforts in that area, engaging with actors from civil society, national governments and the private sector.

WFP is making promising progress in establishing processes for integrated programming at the humanitarian-development nexus that also supports resilience programming. However, those processes are undermined by a broader corporate pattern of the continued "siloing" of work and the tendency to dichotomize humanitarian and development into separate strands.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

While a resilience policy is relevant to WFP's mandate, it no longer fulfils its role in positioning WFP in the resilience landscape and should be updated for greater conceptual clarity. The lack of an accountability framework has impeded systematic uptake across the organization.

Increasing support across all the programming areas to achieve resilience objectives will help WFP play a more effective and enabling role across the nexus. Guidance is also needed to facilitate integrated programming and to better consider gender and social inclusion aspects.

WFP has achieved some consistent outcomes in absorptive capacity. However, evidence of WFP's contribution to other resilience capacities is yet to be fully demonstrated.

Monitoring and reporting frameworks do not adequately support the measurement of resilience results, though improvements are underway.

WFP needs to reconsider its organizational structures, human resources, funding, and partnership strategies, to truly embrace a resilience agenda.

Lack of long-term and multi-year funding sources constrains progress in resilience. While leveraging humanitarian funding can offer an interim solution, forward planning is required to ensure medium-term programming and funding intentions are aligned.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: WFP should update the resilience policy.

Recommendation 2: Promote a culture of shared ownership of integrated resilience programming, with particular emphasis on rolling out the forthcoming resilience guidance.

Recommendation 3: Drawing from the recent policy and programme strategic workforce planning exercise, prioritize and implement a set of actions that will ensure that sufficient staffing, capacity and skills are in place at the global, regional and country office levels.

Recommendation 4: Prioritize and advocate resources for resilience monitoring measurement and learning from WFP-supported resilience-focused interventions.

Recommendation 5: Take steps to increase access to more diversified and multi-year funding for resilience