



Final Evaluation of the WFP School Feeding Response Activity Project (2019 -2021) in Colombia

May 2022

Scope and aim What have we evaluated and what for?

The School Feeding Response Activity Project 2019-2021 (SF Project) implemented by WFP Colombia contributed to the efforts of the Government of Colombia (GoC) to expand access to the national school feeding program (PAE, in Spanish) by providing complementary food assistance to migrant, Colombian and returnee students in Riohacha, Cúcuta, Barranquilla, Santa Marta and Arauquita. This decentralized evaluation had as its object of study the SF project, which consisted of three main components:

- Nutritious food for migrant children not targeted in the national school feeding program.
- Capacity building for national and local institutions to ensure that the school feeding project for migrant children is inclusive, transparent and efficient (including community-based models).
- Community integration and prevention of xenophobia, violence and discrimination.

This evaluation assessed the SF Project against the criteria of relevance and adequacy, coherence, effectiveness, sustainability / connectivity and protection, gender, human rights and equity, driven by WFP's aspiration for both accountability and learning.

Results What have we learned?



Relevance

The SF project was designed based on the national policies of the PAE as a basis and particularly addressing the humanitarian crisis of migration. As such, the main need evaluated and addressed by the SF project was the inclusion of migrant children and adolescents in the PAE, considering the capacity and limited budget within the GoC to address the

increasing demand for school feeding, both in response to the new inclusive policy and the increasing migrant population.

Although the design of the SF project was realistic and based on what was agreed with the donor, the pandemic forced WFP, as well as all the entities involved in the PAE, to restructure the delivery modalities. WFP's experience in school feeding positively permeated the agility of the GoC and local entities to adapt to changing circumstances.

The SF project was aligned with Colombian legislation, as well as with targeting, prioritization, and assistance modalities, adhering to the technical guidelines for the PAE.



Coherence

WFP's intervention has been coherent with the policies and programs of other regular WFP partners that are operating in the same context. Inter-institutional collaboration allowed WFP to support broader initiatives with similar objectives, expanding its reach to a greater number of migrant children.

WFP's intervention, through the three components, was consistent with the GoC's vision to provide attention to the migrant population, and in particular to migrant children and adolescents and their incorporation into the educational system. Without more public resources to increase the number of rations, WFP's intervention to alleviate this demand, and this right of the migrant population, was substantial.

WFP supports and complements the national and local actions of government entities regarding the social protection of the beneficiary population of the SF project. Although the levels of synergy and collaboration between the different actors was varied, there was alignment in the missions of each organization, which led to the implementation of actions in favor of the migrant population.



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Effectiveness

WFP was able to adapt logistics in a rapidly changing context with COVID-19, and ensured that committed rations reached recipients with high satisfaction rates in all regions. Satisfaction rates only decreased in response to ration quantities, largely reflecting the precarious food security situation of migrants.

However, there was inconclusive evidence on the effectiveness of the different delivery modalities. Industrialized rations were considered less nutritious by engaged stakeholders, especially considering that the rations were reported to be shared amongst the full household, and thus their nutritional value diluted. Meanwhile, ready-to-eat school meals had mixed reviews on variety and quantity but provided motivation for students to attend school as that might be their only meal of the day. There was evidence that dietary diversity increased among children, especially those who received industrialized rations. Such relationships demand further exploration in the near future.

Training was mainly aimed at food handlers, and the evidence suggested that their knowledge and skills have increased to practice biosecurity measures and keep children safe in the context of the PAE. Operators and School Feeding Committees (CAEs, for its acronym in Spanish) also noted an increased ability to monitor beneficiary feedback and adherence to protocols, which had a positive effect on beneficiary satisfaction in the project's transparency and responsiveness. At the national level, WFP provided policy inputs related to training for consideration by the Special Administrative Unit for School Feeding (UAFA), although follow-up by WFP in this regard is still pending.

The anti-discrimination strategy had only recently been implemented and, as such, significant progress towards changing mentalities and behaviors and reducing xenophobia had not yet been realized. However, there was broad consensus on the value of the campaign in its ability to promote equal rights in the context of education, school feeding and child nutrition.

Protection, gender, human rights and equity



Principles of accountability to affected populations ensured adequate mechanisms for collecting and responding to participant feedback and protection concerns were in place, in particular the Helpline and regular follow-up through satisfaction surveys.

The project was able to provide access to the PAE in a safe and equitable manner to all groups; however, there was risk that these conditions would not be maintained when the project ends.

The project considered gender issues through data disaggregation incorporation of training topics among other elements. However, progress towards gender goals was not adequately defined nor monitored, and mainstreaming efforts did not intentionally seek transformational change towards equality and empowerment.



Sustainability

WFP's intervention led to the establishment and institutionalization of good practices, focusing on reducing the needs of the beneficiary population in the face of the emergency. The potential for the sustainable implementation of good practices in the national PAE was noted, but there is an absence of exit strategies in the framework of the SF project implemented by WFP so that the migrant population continues to benefit from the school feeding program.

While the social and behavior change communication (SBCC) strategy, 'What does equality taste like?', had not realized outcomes due to its recent implementation, it provided the tools and materials to be adopted and adapted to school contexts.

Recommendations What has been suggested to be continued, improved or changed in the future?

- 1 Socialize the SF project with other organizations and potential donors (IFAD, World Bank, UNDP, among others), and with the private sector with the aim of continuing to support a strategy for mobilizing financial and in-kind resources to support migrant and Colombian children and adolescent returnees who were served by the PAE.
- 2 Continue the alliance with the GOC, and especially cultivate the relationship with the UApA, so that the products of the SF project can be taken into account as inputs in the elaboration of guidelines in informed decision-making, which allow to enhance the PAE in its different dimensions.
- 3 WFP to encourage a comprehensive study at the national level in close coordination with the GoC and when feasible, to identify the impact of the PAE on school permanence/retention.




- 7 Strengthen the development and integration of gender analysis and social inclusion in a transversal way, particularly in the design phase of any plan for project continuation, including specific gender considerations in planned activities and outcomes as well as their follow-up through monitoring.
- 8 Develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring system, and ensure that the monitoring system and impact measurement strategy is more intentional about defining indicators and metrics that can be measured and captured the desired outcomes based on a Theory of Change.


- 4 Socialize the impact and material of the strategy 'What does equality taste like?' designed and implemented by the WFP for the prevention against xenophobia and violence, considering a possible reduction in the number of beneficiaries due to the discontinuation of the WFP SF project.
- 5 Expand the development of installed capacities, incorporating and reinforcing topics in the trainings with specific topics, such as prevention of discrimination, human rights, gender equity, xenophobia and violence, to deepen each one and continue developing the installed capacity with respect to the training implemented.
- 6 Disseminate and socialize the seven reports generated within the framework of the SF project, which serve as input for public policy, to a broader group of interested parties, such as: local government, ETC, Secretariats of Education, school community operators, among others.

Methodology How we carried out this evaluation?

The evaluation used a non-experimental design with a mixed-methods approach, including the collection of qualitative insights through interviews and focused discussions, combined with a collection of quantitative data through surveys and a review of WFP monitoring data and reports.

 **5 schools per city visited:**
Riohacha, Cúcuta, Barranquilla

 **51 in-person and remote interviews**
with key informants in Riohacha, Cúcuta, Barranquilla, Santa Marta and Bogotá (71% women and 29% men)

 **In-person surveys with**
281 caregivers (87% women and 13% men)
106 food handlers (100% women)

 **28 focus group discussions**
153 boys, girls and adolescents
(52% women and 48% men)

References:

Full evaluation report and the WFP Management Response are available at: <https://www.wfp.org/publications>

For more information, contact the Evaluation Office at wfp.decentralizedevaluation@wfp.org