



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Evaluation of Burkina Faso WFP Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023

CONTEXT

A low-income country home to 22.1 million people, Burkina Faso has long been highly affected by food insecurity and acute malnutrition. Compounding systemic challenges, the country has also suffered significant political upheaval in recent years, with subsequent escalating insecurity and the displacements of up to two million people.

SUBJECT AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The Burkina Faso Country Strategic Plan (CSP) (2019-2023) was initially focused on resilience and country capacity strengthening. Driven by increasing food insecurity and steeply rising needs for emergency support connected to recent shocks, WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) evolved through seven budget revisions.

The CSP has six Strategic Objectives (SO) namely:

- SO1: Food and nutrition assistance to IDPs, refugees and host populations (73.9% of budget)
- SO2: Improved access to food for vulnerable households and school-aged children (4.1%)
- SO3: Improved nutritional status of infants, PLWGs and ARV patients (3.5%)
- SO4: Smallholder farmers and communities have more resilient livelihoods (11.8%)
- SO5: CCS on preparedness, food security, gender, nutrition and social protection (0.7%)
- SO6: Partners benefit from common services that improve their access and operations (6%)

The total budget for the CSP as of October 2021 was USD 1.3 billion, targeting 4.8 million beneficiaries. The CSP was 44.9 percent funded by July 2022.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was conducted between April 2022 and January 2023. It covers all the activities carried out by the WFP in Burkina Faso from January 2018 – July 2022 (including the former Transitional –Interim CSP and the CSP itself). It aimed at providing

evidence to inform the design of the next WFP CSP in Burkina Faso. It examined WFP's relevance and strategic positioning; contributions to strategic outcomes; implementation efficiency; and the factors explaining performance.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

Relevance & strategic focus

The CSP's initial orientation towards "changing lives", while appropriate pre-2019, evolved to adapt to new needs related to the escalating emergency. Programmatic shifts were managed through internal budget revisions, and were not adequately discussed with partners.

Solid analysis of agricultural production, market functioning, household vulnerability and overall nutritional and food security in Burkina Faso supported needs identification and WFP's programme planning and targeting. Despite deteriorating security conditions, WFP and its Cooperating Partners (CPs) maintained access to most areas, which also supported appropriate geographic targeting.

WFP's value added in emergency response is recognized and appreciated by all partners, particularly as WFP helped increase humanitarian access to insecurity-hit areas for the benefit of other humanitarian actors. However, results were not well-measured.

WFP continued to pursue resilience support objectives, but did not consistently anticipate the medium-to-long-term issues arising from the crisis and integrate them into resilience support strategies. The continued evolution of the situation raises questions about the relevance of some intervention strategies going forward.

Contribution to strategic outcomes

The CSP contributed to meeting security needs under its large-scale emergency response, although the intensifying crisis continued to fuel food and nutrition insecurity, especially in crisis regions. Conflict-induced disruptions also affected results of the regular school feeding programme, despite increased coverage and adapted modalities as of 2021.

The results of pilot cash transfers to vulnerable families in Ouagadougou were negatively affected by flaws in their intervention logic, targeting and financing.

Under the nutrition intervention, the quality of beneficiaries diets did not improve, but treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition was very positive despite implementation challenges. Resilience activities expanded until 2021 but contextual challenges limited achievement of results.

WFP supported national capacities to respond to food and nutritional security but there was no evidence of institutional improvements, , also reflecting implementation challenges.

While WFP made significant efforts to improve accountability to affected populations, establishing complaints and feedback mechanisms, though gaps in beneficiary awareness remain. WFP strengthened protection capacities and improved conflict sensitivity.

Despite efforts to integrate gender concerns, the transformative potential of the CSP remained below corporate ambitions, , lacking dedicated analyses and programme strategies.

Food Assistance for Assets activities was the main channel for environment attention, with no formal policy for reducing environmental impacts. Efforts to safeguard natural resources, were challenged by the deteriorating security conditions.

WFP established appropriate strategies to operationalize the triple nexus, and their effectiveness has not yet been demonstrated . Contributions to peacebuilding, including stabilization and conflict prevention, appear mixed.

Cost Efficient use of resources to contribute to CSP outputs and outcomes

The use of cash-based approaches increased over time, and contributed to efficiency gains. WFP was timely overall in delivering assistance to crisis-affected areas, in particular for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), though with variance across activities. Delays resulted partly from registration issues, leaving some IDPs without assistance, and partly from misalignment of partner programming strategies, including on targeting, as well as from challenges with the mobile money platform.

Supply chain delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic and insecurities also negatively affected nutrition and resilience building activities.

. WFP adapted intervention modalities in relation to context and needs, with transfer modality (cash or in-kind) playing a significant role in the management of delays.

The introduction of SCOPE was instrumental in managing targeting errors and related risks. Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms also contributed to identifying exclusion errors.

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

Initial Country office capacity challenges were largely mitigated by headquarters and Regional Bureau support . Strong mobilization of financial resources, supported by the Regional Bureau allowed for balanced implementation of the CSP.

WFP also enhanced its data collection and analysis tools, but made limited use of the evidence to inform operational decisions. Monitoring and evaluation data was also poorly suited to assess WFP's contributions to national partner capacities, or the effect of operational decisions such as ration reduction.

Relations with state institutions were affected by the growing crisis and by insufficient communication on CSP evolution.

Disparities in operational capacities amongst UN agencies also hampered partnerships.\

Human resources needs evolved over the years, but WFP faced recruitment challenges staff retention issues. The new corporate staffing framework does not fully accommodate recruitment and staff retention aspects, leading to misalignment between the corporate strategy and Country Office human resource arrangements. Strengthening of staff skills was effective but remained insufficient.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Assessment

The CSP offered an adaptive vehicle for WFP's strategy in a highly volatile context, and despite an initially reactive approach , WFP positioned itself as a strong emergency response lead in the country, demonstrating comparative advantages in Emergency Preparedness and Response and in supporting humanitarian access.

The crisis and CSP strategic reorientations have reshaped WFP's partnership with national institutions, though this was not facilitated by poor communication of its strategic shift

Despite a humanitarian response at scale, the constant deterioration of the security situation led food insecurity to rise. The negative effects of contextual changes on resilience building achievements raises questions on the validity of these approaches going forward

Investments in protection, community engagement and attention to inclusion and gender were appropriate for the context, though are still to demonstrate their potential. Investments in human resources, though significant, also need further attention to sustain operations in a complex context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. WFP should continue investing in its preparedness for future shocks

Recommendation 2. WFP must develop its Nexus approach by giving priority to operational and technical support.

Recommendation 3. Regarding partnerships, WFP must be more structured in its commitment to localization, more proactive in its communication with government institutions and more consistent in its relations with other UN agencies.

Recommendation 4. WFP should pursue its efforts in terms of accountability, with broader communication about its programmes, targeting and feedback mechanisms, and with a design of its interventions that is more gender-transformative and financially inclusive.

Recommendation 5. Programmatic and strategic decisions should be further based on available evidence and analysis, and Results Assessment and Monitoring data should be used more optimally to contribute to operational and strategic decision-making.

Recommendation 6. In a difficult recruitment context in West Africa, the management and structuring of Human Resources in Burkina Faso must be the subject of new investments to facilitate the implementation of operations at the scale