



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

## WFP EVALUATION

# SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

## Lessons from WFP Programmes in Niger

### CONTEXT

In 2022, as Niger was facing an unprecedented food crisis, WFP scaled up its life-saving assistance to reach those in critical need, whilst also reinforcing resilience activities to ensure hard-won development gains were not lost and that communities were able to withstand the crisis without needing humanitarian assistance. In coordination with the Government and partners, WFP assisted close to 4.2 million people through direct food and nutrition assistance under both emergency and resilience activities (WFP Niger Annual Country Report, 2022).

The World Food Programme (WFP) is currently working in Niger under its 2020-2024 Country Strategic Plan (CSP). The CSP has three main pillars: emergency response, integrated resilience programmes (which seek to enhance livelihoods and reduce humanitarian needs in times of shock), and shock-responsive social protection. These are implemented through four types of activities: (a) emergency food/ cash assistance, including through anticipatory/ forecast-based actions; (b) treatment and prevention of malnutrition, with a focus on community-based nutrition and local production of nutritious food; (c) school meals and scholarships for girls; and (d) rural development (land rehabilitation and support to smallholder farmers). Cross-cutting priorities across these activities are gender and protection, as well as enhancing access to clean energy. The CSP has a strong focus on strengthening national capacities to ensure the sustainability and ownership of zero hunger solutions, at both the central and local level.

Commissioned by the WFP Niger Country Office

### KEY LESSONS

#### 1 Integrated resilience approaches are generally successful in Niger.

There is considerable evidence of the effectiveness and impacts of WFP-integrated resilience programming in Niger. The evidence highlights positive effects on agricultural production and food security, but also on reduction in migration, increased women's empowerment and enhanced social cohesion, as well as extension of school infrastructure and awareness on hygiene, health, nutrition.

#### Conditions of success

- Collaborative programme design and implementation between different development partners – including other UN agencies – and synergies developed between partners at the global, national and local level.
- Adequate and specific budgeting for integrated resilience programmes.
- Strategic relationships between WFP and government partners.
- Engagement with national and local partners (civil society organizations, local communities, farmers organizations and other labour organizations, local public institutions like schools).
- Local ownership and active community involvement in programme design and delivery.

#### Aspects requiring further investments

- Effective country capacity strengthening support for resilience programming, with well-documented capacity needs assessment and long-term investment in relationships with institutional and organizational partners.
- Access to predictable multi-year funding, to enable long-term planning and implementation cycles.
- Ability to support the integration of vulnerable groups into higher segments of food value chains in a systematic way. Different projects are promoting local production of nutritious food as a way to decrease WFP dependency on supply from abroad and support local production and economy.

November 2023



## **2 Government-led school feeding programmes are more sustainable in the long term.**

Limited recent evidence has been found related to emergency school feeding in Niger and conditions of these programmes' success. Lessons from other contexts highlight the critical importance of integrating emergency school feeding programming in wider Government-led school feeding strategies and programmes, and, as well as for longer-term school feeding strategies, integrated emergency school feeding into multisectoral and multi-actor strategies. Moreover, joint programming with other UN agencies for school-based programmes in emergency contexts contributes to make school feeding part of a more comprehensive school-based support package



## **3 Nutrition programming is more successful when combined with other interventions.**

Evidence demonstrates that when implemented as a stand-alone intervention, nutrition-specific programmes are not the most effective to reach prevention objectives. The evidence on the other hand underlines the benefits of implementing nutrition-specific activities as part of an integrated package, including livelihoods activities.

Moreover, while WFP has been implementing community-based approaches for the treatment and prevention of malnutrition for several years in Niger, more research is needed to document results of these approaches and identify pathways for adapting and/ or scaling them up.



## **4 Specific analytical work is needed to document WFP effectiveness in strengthening National Social Protection systems and to support Niger's engagement in this domain.**

The development of shock-responsive safety nets systems with increasing attention and support in Niger, with WFP engaged in a coalition of actors to support the development and implementation of national strategies in this area. Still, evaluation evidence on this area of work is limited.

Nevertheless, some key lessons learnt concerning social protection systems in other countries in the region can be applied to Niger:

- a. Effective support to national safety nets starts from the consideration of the priorities and strategic objectives of the government in terms of implementation of social security measures, and such priorities may differ from one country to the another and need to be adapted to financial capacities. Financing remains a major challenge for the development of sustainable safety nets in Niger.
- b. Alternative sources of financing and appropriate budgeting need to be supported.
- c. The strong partnerships (coordination and collaboration based on value added) with other institutions and stakeholders can be an important factor in facilitating the development of national social protection programmes.
- d. Adopt a long-term approach (a decade or more) to allow the development of effective and impactful social protection programmes; rethink objectives, strategies, operational framework, timeline and feasibility locally; promote a shift from emergency approaches to resilience and social protection logics, through a long-term intervention.



## **5 WFP's added value in emergency programming is well accepted and builds on WFP global capacities, but there is a need to further invest in data management and protection capacities.**

Despite the considerable WFP experience and footprint related to emergency programming, there was relatively limited Niger-specific evaluation evidence in this domain, except

in relation to lean season response. In particular, the effectiveness, value-added, and lessons learned from the implementation of RRM in Niger appear scarcely documented. Challenges still persist in the integration of digital technologies in emergency response in Niger, where its use is much more limited due to barriers such as weak physical infrastructure and human and financial resource constraints. Staff training in technologies, skills reinforcement and the recruiting of technology experts represent key elements to overcome current challenges.

Yet, evidence in Niger demonstrates WFP's added value to contribute to effectiveness of the lean season response in the country. In Niger, WFP put in place three different activities during lean season: unconditional transfers, blanket feeding, distribution of iron to girls targeted by the adolescent programme. Concerning the effectiveness and the challenges of the programme the following key elements can be highlighted:

- Financing constraints have negatively impacted intervention modalities; finding alternative sources of financing still represents a major challenge;
- Timeliness of response and effective targeting represents major factors for granting effective lean season support programmes. In the case of the ISPR programme, some groups have been integrated too late in the process as beneficiaries, resulting in low distribution rates.
- The geographical targeting of these lean season interventions (unconditional cash transfer) does not always correspond to the zoning carried out by the early warning system, nor to the criteria based on the nutritional situation.

Good practices are documented: WFP has practically adapted the targeting system to the specific situation of pastoral communities to face the pastoral crisis. Moreover, evidence from Mauritania highlights positive results of creation, use and amelioration of the Social Register to make it more efficient in targeting beneficiaries for shock response. The Social Register has proven to be an effective instrument for shock response, but also comes with challenges, particularly in terms of coverage and updating data.

An additional key factor for effectiveness has been access to the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF).



## **6 Knowledge gaps.**

More systematic evidence collection is needed to fully demonstrate the outcomes of WFP interventions in Niger on the following topics:

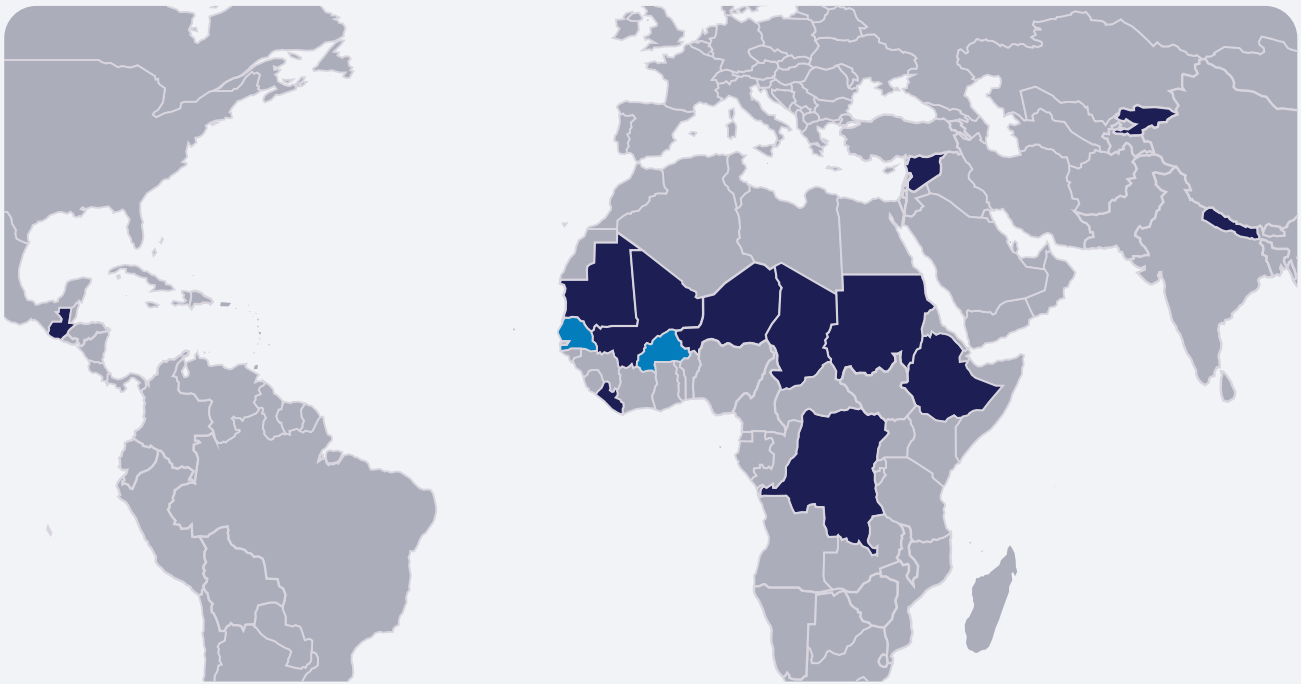
- Small Agriculture Market Support programmes: evidence on the effectiveness and impact of the different activities on resilience outcomes.
- Nutrition programmes: assessment of the effectiveness of community-based approaches compared to provision of specialized nutrition foods for prevention and effectiveness of nutrition treatment programmes.
- Support to national safety nets: evidence on the effectiveness and impact of WFP country capacity strengthening activities in Niger, including WFP's value-add within a coalition of actors.
- Transitioning from protracted emergency assistance to nexus and resilience building programmes: evidence on the effectiveness and lessons learned from conflict affected areas in Niger.

Further research is recommended to fill these knowledge gaps and promote a comprehensive analysis of WFP interventions in Niger. Investing in evidence building on these priority areas of intervention will be critical.

## BREADTH OF EVIDENCE

This Summary of Evaluation Evidence brings together evidence from 17 evaluations, of which 15 were WFP-commissioned decentralized and centralized evaluations and rated of satisfactory quality in the independent post-hoc quality assessment system. Added to complement the analysis are three WFP Evaluation synthesis, and other relevant studies and reviews from other institutions and the baseline report for an ongoing WFP-commissioned impact evaluation.

The summary offers lessons to inform the formulation of the new Niger Country Strategic Plan (2024-2027) on the following five priority areas: integrated resilience programmes, school feeding in emergency, nutrition, safety nets and emergency response



*The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.*

## THIS SUMMARY APPLIED THE FOLLOWING APPROACH AND METHODS:

- i. A universe of evaluations and other sources of evidence which included information relevant to the programmatic areas of interest (covering the period 2018 – 2023) was collected;
- ii. An analytical framework around the five aforementioned areas of inquiry was developed, each divided into sub-themes against which evidence was plotted;
- iii. Systematic data extraction was applied to documents, distinguishing between evaluations and other sources of evidence;
- iv. Analysis was carried out by looking across the fields laid out in the analytical framework to identify common patterns and drawing key messages for each line of inquiry;
- v. A report summarizing key findings and lessons was developed, commented upon by stakeholders, and finalized in June 2023.

## Evaluations

- [Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Building Resilience for Food Security and Nutrition](#)
- [Institutionalizing Social Protection for Accelerated SDG Implementation in Nigeria - 2020 - June 2022](#)
- [Nigeria, Formative Evaluation of Livelihoods Activities in Northeast Nigeria 2018-2021](#)
- [Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Use of Technology in Constrained Environments](#)
- [Evaluation of WFP's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Joint evaluation of collaboration among the United Nations Rome-Based Agencies](#)
- [Evaluation décentralisée de la contribution du PAM au Système de Protection Sociale Adaptative \(SPSA\) en Mauritanie depuis 2018](#)
- [Global End-term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda from 2014 to 2020](#)
- [Niger, School Feeding in Emergencies: an evaluation](#)
- [Strategic Evaluation of Funding WFP's Work](#)
- [Strategic Evaluation of WFP Support for Enhanced Resilience](#)
- [Evaluation à mi-parcours de l'intervention prolongée de secours et de redressement \(IPSR\) Niger 200961 \(Janvier 2017 – Décembre 2019\) et de la dernière année de l'IPSR 200583 \(Janvier 2014 – Décembre 2016\) Rapport d'évaluation](#)
- [Evaluation of WFP Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts](#)
- [Evaluation of the WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy](#)
- [Impacts of the World Food Programme Intervention to treat malnutrition in Niger](#)
- [Evaluation finale du projet Appui au renforcement de la cohésion sociale dans les communes de Bosso, Toumour, Kablewa, Gueskéro, Chétimari de la région de Diffa](#)
- [Évaluation du projet «Prévenir les conflits intercommunautaires et contribuer à la consolidation de la paix à travers le développement d'un pastoralisme résilient dans la zone transfrontalière de Diffa et du Kanem \(Niger/Tchad\)»](#)
- [Sahel Resilience Impact Evaluation – BASELINE REPORT](#)
- [Synthesis of Four Evaluations of the Impact of WFP Programmes on Nutrition in Humanitarian Contexts in the Sahel](#)
- [Synthesis of Evaluations Evaluation Series on Emergency School Feeding in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Niger and Syria \(2015-2019\)](#)
- [Synthesis of evidence and lessons on country capacity strengthening from decentralized evaluations](#)

## Other sources

- [Niger: Improving social protection systems for food Niger: Improving social protection systems for food security and nutrition \(WFP\)](#)
- [Evidence from WFP's Integrated Resilience Programme in the Sahel Equipping Communities to Withstand Food Crises \(WFP\)](#)
- [Preliminary Resilience Evidence from Niger \(WFP\)](#)
- [Do Cash Transfers Foster Resilience Evidence from Rural Niger \(The World Bank\)](#)
- [Behavioral Change Promotion, Cash Transfers and Early Childhood Development: Experimental Evidence from a Government Program in a Low-Income Setting \(The World Bank\)](#)
- [Social protection in Niger: what have shocks and time got to say \(The World Bank\)](#)
- [Preventing Acute Malnutrition among Young Children in Crises: A Prospective Intervention Study in Niger](#)
- [Assessing impact of agroecological interventions in Niger through remotely sense changes in vegetation](#)
- [Assets for Alimentation? The Nutritional Impact of Assets-based Programming in Niger](#)
- [An emergency cash transfer program promotes weight gain and reduces acute malnutrition risk among children 6-24 months old during a food crisis in Niger](#)

## WFP EVALUATION

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