



WFP EVALUATION



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



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IMPACTS OF WFP-UNICEF JOINT RESILIENCE PROGRAMME IN SOUTH SUDAN

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have promoted an integrated approach to resilience building through a joint programme in South Sudan.

Under this programme, communities and households receive sustained support in the form of a bundle of activities, including livelihoods support or Food Assistance for Assets (FFA), education, health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition support, with the aim of strengthening households' ability to withstand shocks.

The first phase of the joint resilience programme started in January 2020 with the implementation of activities in the peri-urban settings of the Juba, Torit, and Yambio counties. In January 2021, the project was extended to include the Northern Bahr el Ghazal state.

To understand the impact of this comprehensive programme, South Sudan's WFP and UNICEF offices requested support from WFP's Office of Evaluation to conduct an impact evaluation to examine effects on household resilience, in partnership with the World Bank's Development Impact Evaluation (DIME) department and with generous support from BMZ Germany.

KEY EVIDENCE

The programme had positive impacts on food security. However, improvements in food security were not consistent throughout the year, as bigger impacts were observed during the post-harvest season, and no significant impacts were observed during the lean season.

Almost two years after the start of the intervention, programme-supported households adopted their livelihood strategies in a variety of ways: WFP beneficiaries earned more agricultural revenue, harvested more crops, owned more farm assets, were more likely to own livestock, and earned more from wage labour. However, landless, and female-headed households did not benefit equally from the agricultural focus of livelihood activities.

The UNICEF education package helped more children stay in school, although impacts were larger in the first year of the programme than in the second one. Moreover, children living in households receiving livelihood support were more likely to be in school compared to households without this support. A potential unintended consequence of the programme is the higher student-to-teacher ratios resulting from greater enrolment.

Health and nutrition outcomes were lower for families living further away from nutrition facilities and healthcare centres, suggesting a need to increase access to such services.

WFP and UNICEF are already using evidence from the impact evaluation in South Sudan to design a new phase of the resilience programme. For instance, efforts are underway to provide every community with close access to a health facility, improve school and teacher retention rates, and guarantee timely cash transfers before the lean season.

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WFP/Eulalia Berlanga

KEY FINDINGS

1 What is the impact of livelihoods programming on household resilience?



Livelihoods interventions improved food security, measured by the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). Livelihoods improvements were significant and happened through various channels. Depending on the household, some grew more food, earned more from agriculture, invested in livestock, and/or increased wage income. These diversified activities led to small improvements on multiple dimensions of income and assets, rather than large improvements on any single income source.

Food security impacts from livelihood activities were biggest after the harvest rather than during the lean season. Households produced an additional 60 kg of food per year, or 8.5 kg per household member, boosting post-harvest food security, but not necessarily sustaining year-round food security, as this translates to only an additional 0.7 kg of food per member per month.

2 What is the added value of asset activities beyond the impact of transfers alone?



Not all beneficiary households were required to work to receive their payments, which made it possible to compare between the impacts of **Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) and Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCTs).** Both increased food security, but FFA had a stronger impact on agricultural production, while UCTs more effectively increased asset ownership and wage labour outside of the household. Given FFA's higher implementation costs, tracking long-term livelihood strategies would be important to understand future returns from increased agricultural production.

3 What is the impact of the UNICEF education package on top of WFP school programming?



The UNICEF education package helped more children stay in school. Children going to a UNICEF-supported school during the 2021 academic year were 15 percentage points more likely to still be in school at the start of the 2022 academic year, compared to children going to comparison schools. However this impact became smaller when measured again at the start of the 2023 academic year. There was no observed impact on test scores.

Children's education outcomes improved because of livelihoods programming (FFA). A child from a household receiving livelihood support was about 12 percentage points more likely to be in school compared to household without this support.

Considering that UNICEF-supported schools offered a range of benefits to children, the fact that the transfers from the WFP interventions relaxed households' financial constraints and enabled parents to send children to school, indicates gains from joint programming.

4 How does distance from health and nutrition facilities influence take up and use of the assistance provided?



Health and nutrition outcomes were lower for families living further away from nutrition facilities and healthcare centres, suggesting a need to increase the mobility of such services to reach more households in large clinic catchment areas.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1 PROVIDE TIMELY AND ADEQUATE LEAN SEASON SUPPORT.

To sustain households' food security all year, programmes could consider making transfers more regular and providing a greater share of funds at the beginning of the transfer period, during the lean season. This could help households cope with difficult lean season months.

2 BALANCE AND PRIORITIZE OTHER ASSETS THAT BENEFIT THE MOST VULNERABLE (FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS, LANDLESS HOUSEHOLDS) AND THAT ALSO SUPPORT NON-AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES.

Not all households benefit equally from the agricultural focus of asset activities, such as landless and female-headed households. Future programmes should consider balancing and prioritizing other assets that are locally viable, gender-sensitive, and support non-agricultural livelihood strategies.

3 EVALUATE RELATIVE COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF FFA COMPARED TO UCT OVER TIME.

UCT and FFA have their respective merits given the objectives they were each set out to accomplish. Based on data from two years of programming, we cannot yet say which of these is more cost-effective in the long run. A follow up survey would help understand whether higher implementation costs from FFA are offset by more sustained impacts, following the increased agricultural production caused by FFA.

4 ADDRESS CONSEQUENCES OF HIGHER STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIOS, FOR EXAMPLE, BY INCREASING THE FOCUS ON CHILDREN AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT.

As a potential unintended consequence of the programme, greater school enrolment has led to higher student-to-teacher ratios. Consider focussing on the quantity and quality of teachers in schools where enrolment is expected to increase. This can support improvements in learning outcomes and retention rates.

5 ADDRESS THE NEGATIVE CORRELATION BETWEEN NUTRITION AND HEALTH OUTCOMES AND DISTANCE TO FACILITIES.

Findings point to the need to assess the number and coverage of community nutrition volunteers and improve community-based workers' participation in the delivery of nutrition and health interventions.

6 MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF JOINT PROGRAMMING BY ENSURING SCHOOL CAPACITY IN LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTION AREAS.

The joint programme has demonstrated its ability to support household food security and agricultural production, as well as increasing access to education for boys and girls in South Sudan. However, to benefit from the increased enrolment that results from livelihood interventions, future programmes should consider increasing the number and capacity of teachers in schools near joint resilience programmes.



ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

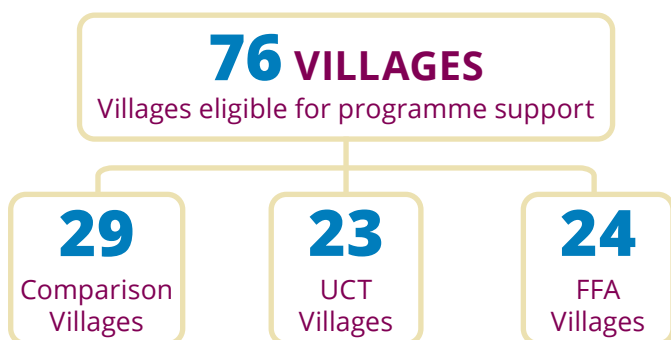
The **integrated resilience** package included multiple components:

- **LIVELIHOODS COMPONENT (FFA):** The poorest households received conditional cash transfers of approximately US\$40 or food transfers of sorghum, beans, oil, and salt per month, for working on community assets. The duration of work was three-year cycle for six months during each cycle, which generally coincides with the lean season. This component was implemented by WFP.
- **EDUCATION COMPONENT:** Implemented by UNICEF and WFP, this intervention intended to create safe, productive learning spaces through school meals, educational activities, and behavioural interventions. In 2021, the programme targeted 53 schools, expanding to 84 by 2023, providing various educational supplies and training.
- **HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND WATER, SANITATION, AND ADEQUATE HYGIENE (WASH):** These interventions, implemented in healthcare and school facilities, included improving health services, promoting best practices in hygiene and nutrition, and enhancing access to water and latrines. The programme supported 50 health care facilities and 74 nutrition facilities.

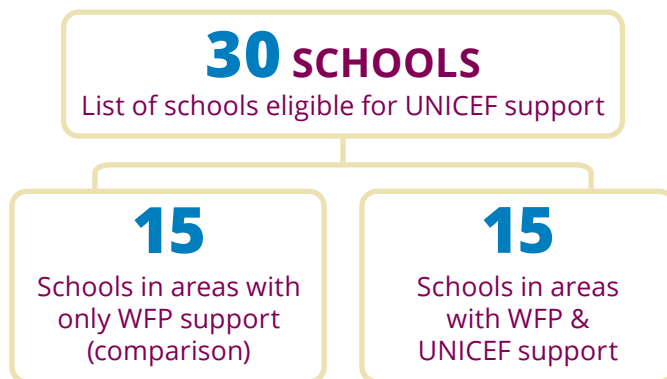
EVALUATION DESIGN

The impact evaluation design uses randomized controlled trials (RCTs), comparing households assigned to programme and comparison groups, and complementary quantitative and qualitative methods.

Experimental livelihoods component (RCT): Evaluating the impact of WFP's cash and food assistance interventions. It involved 76 villages across five counties, with data collected from 1,050 households. The design compared households receiving unconditional transfers (UCT), those working on assets for food or cash (FFA), and a comparison group receiving no support.



Experimental education component: Assessing the impact of the UNICEF education package integrated with WFP's school-based interventions. Thirty WFP-supported schools in Northern Bahr el Ghazal were included, with 15 schools randomly assigned to receive the additional UNICEF package.




Non-experimental quantitative analyses: Assessing health and nutrition outcomes for children in relation to the distance to the different services, to understand how these two factors are correlated.

Impact measurement strategy: Data collection included a baseline survey that was implemented before the intervention, four to six rounds of high-frequency surveys every two months during the intervention, and an endline survey after the 2022 programme cycle ended. The impact evaluation also benefited from qualitative data that was collected in March-April 2023 and administrative records from programme teams.

Ethics: The impact evaluation upheld United Nations Evaluation Group ethical standards and complies with local laws. It received ethical approval by an Association for Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programmes fully accredited Institutional Review Board and from local institutions in South Sudan.

CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE IMPACT EVALUATION WINDOW

The joint resilience programme falls within the [Climate and Resilience Impact Evaluation Window](#) created by the WFP Office of Evaluation's Impact Evaluation Unit, the WFP Asset Creation and Livelihood Unit, and the Climate and Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, in partnership with the World Bank's Development Impact (DIME) department. South Sudan is unique in the Window in that the project and impact evaluation were implemented jointly with 

WFP EVALUATION In partnership with



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