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| Evaluation title | Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant in Laos | |
| Evaluation category and type | Decentralized - Activity | |
| Post Hoc Quality Assessment (PHQA) – overall rating | Satisfactory: 83% | |
| <p>The report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant in Laos presents credible evaluation findings that can be used with confidence for decision-making. The findings respond to all evaluation question and sub-questions, drawing upon qualitative and quantitative data collected through various relevant methods that were informed by an adequate assessment of available data. The report puts forward nine prioritized recommendations with realistic timelines. It is written in clear, understandable language, makes good use of tables to complement narrative sections, and meets WFP requirements on length. The report could have been strengthened by detailing how the theory of change was used to assess and build a credible story about the project's contribution to outcomes. Key findings could have focused on relevant analytical aspects rather than on presenting information in a descriptive manner. They would have also benefited from specifying stakeholder groups when referencing qualitative sources and from representing the voices of marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities, more clearly. Furthermore, conclusions could have done a better job to articulate strategic implications of the findings; and lessons should have focused on replicable learnings rather than project-specific observations. Finally, the linkages between some recommendations, findings and conclusions could have been made more explicit.</p> | | |
| CRITERION 1: REPORT SUMMARY | Rating | Satisfactory |
| <p>The summary provides a concise overview of key evaluation features, context and subject. It sums up the main evaluation findings by evaluation criteria and reflects all recommendations. It could have been strengthened by more clearly distinguishing summarized findings from conclusions, ensuring that all recommendations clearly derive from the summarized findings/conclusions, and that they are realistic and feasible.</p> | | |
| CRITERION 2: CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION SUBJECT | Rating | Highly Satisfactory |
| <p>The report provides a clear overview of the evaluation subject, as well as of relevant aspects of the project context. The description strikes a good balance between conciseness and detail, drawing upon relevant and authoritative sources. The context section might have benefited from providing some additional information on the work of other development partners in areas such as nutrition, and by expanding on relevant external factors beyond COVID-19.</p> | | |
| CRITERION 3: EVALUATION RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES, AND SCOPE | Rating | Highly Satisfactory |
| <p>The report provides a clear and concise overview of the evaluation rationale, objectives, and scope. Gender equality and human rights were mainstreamed across the overarching objectives of accountability and learning. Identifying a specific objective related to gender equality and human rights would have given more prominence to these dimensions.</p> | | |
| CRITERION 4: METHODOLOGY | Rating | Highly Satisfactory |
| <p>The evaluation's mixed methods approach that drew upon a variety of primary and secondary data sources was appropriate for answering the evaluation questions in a systematic and unbiased fashion. Processes for data collection included document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. The evaluation adhered to WFP and UN system ethical standards, and all stakeholder groups were treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality. The report could have further explained how the team used the project's theory of change to assess its contribution to outcomes and how data sources were synthesized to build a credible contribution story.</p> | | |
| CRITERION 5: FINDINGS | Rating | Satisfactory |
| <p>The report presents evidence-based findings on all evaluation questions and sub-questions, triangulating diverse data sources and reflecting the voices of several stakeholder groups. Findings address both strengths and weaknesses of the</p> | | |

project and discuss how recommendations made at baseline were addressed during implementation. The section could have been strengthened by ensuring that all findings are analytical rather than descriptive, and detailing stakeholder groups when referencing qualitative primary data sources. Furthermore, the analysis presented in the findings would have benefited from selective use of comparisons with national averages to bolster claims about project contributions. Finally, it would have been beneficial to represent the voices of marginalized groups more clearly.

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| CRITERION 6: CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS | Rating | Satisfactory |
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The conclusions connect findings across evaluation criteria and questions, providing a balanced view on both strengths and weaknesses of the subject and identifying some forward-looking implications. They logically flow from the presented findings and include reflections on gender equality dimensions. The report also articulates five lessons that are grounded in the findings. The conclusions could have benefited from consistently identifying strategic implications and exploring gender equality and equity-related aspects in more depth. The lessons could have been enhanced by ensuring that they articulate learning-focused insights with potential for wider application.

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| CRITERION 7: RECOMMENDATIONS | Rating | Satisfactory |
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The report makes nine prioritized recommendations that generally flow from the findings and conclusions reflecting GEWE considerations. Some recommendations could have been further strengthened by ensuring that they clearly flow from the findings, and that they account for contextual factors that may negatively affect their implementation. The report could have benefited by articulating a strategic recommendation on how the project (or future projects) could further strengthen its programmatic approach to gender equality. The recommendations section could have been slightly shortened, for example, by merging two similar recommendations.

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| CRITERION 8: ACCESSIBILITY AND CLARITY | Rating | Satisfactory |
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The report is generally written in clear and professional language and effectively uses cross-references to direct readers to other relevant sections or findings. It visually highlights key findings and makes good use of tables to complement narrative paragraphs. The main report and Annexes meet WFP requirements on length. The report could have benefited from a final edit to catch remaining errors, consistently using bold font to highlight key terms/phrases and insights, including interview and focus group protocols/questions, and referencing all Annexes in the main report and listing them in the order that they are referenced. Some complex tables could have been substituted by graphs/figures.

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| Integration of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) considerations in the evaluation report based on the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) scorecard | |
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| UN-SWAP EPI – individual evaluation score | Meets requirements: 8 points |
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GEWE considerations are well integrated into the report. The chosen mixed methodological approach was based on deliberate considerations on how to effectively integrate GEWE. The evaluation matrix includes two sub-questions on gender. The report drew upon a variety of data sources and processes, thereby facilitating inclusion, accuracy, and credibility. It could have been strengthened, however, by representing the voices of marginalized groups more clearly and consistently. Findings include reflections on GEWE dimensions, and one of nine recommendations addresses gender quality issues. Ethical standards were consistently considered, and all stakeholder groups treated with respect for confidentiality and integrity.

| Post Hoc Quality Assessment – Rating scale and definitions at overall report and criteria levels | |
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| Highly Satisfactory | <i>Definition at overall report level:</i> Evaluation users can rely on the credible and useful evaluation findings provided and can use the evaluation with a high degree of confidence for decision-making. The report is considered an excellent example. |
| | <i>Definition at criterion level:</i> The criterion is addressed without any gaps or limitations. |
| Satisfactory | <i>Definition at overall report level:</i> Evaluation users can rely on the quality and credible evaluation findings provided and can use it with confidence for decision-making. |
| | <i>Definition at criterion level:</i> There are no significant gaps or limitations in addressing the criterion. |
| Partly Satisfactory | <i>Definition at overall report level:</i> Evaluation users can rely on the evaluation findings provided and may use it for decision-making noting that there are some gaps/shortcomings in the information provided. |
| | <i>Definition at criterion level:</i> There are some significant gaps or limitations in addressing the criterion. |
| Unsatisfactory | <i>Definition at overall report level:</i> Evaluation users can use some of the learning from the evaluation, noting that there are significant gaps/ shortcomings in the evaluation findings provided. The report may still contribute to decision making but should be used with caution. |
| | <i>Definition at criterion level:</i> There are critical gaps or limitations in addressing the criterion. Most of the required parameters are not met. |