

# Evaluation Brief

## Evaluation of Joint Resilience Programme in -Somalia, 2018-2022

### CONTEXT

Somalia has been experiencing great multi-sectoral challenges since its 1991 started civil war. The lack of public sector has pushed international organizations to provide lifesaving aid in response to famines, disease outbreaks, lack of education and livelihood opportunities.

The Joint Resilience Programme in Somalia targeted over 3.8 million beneficiaries between 2018 and 2022 across Banadir, Gedo, and Jubaland, with funding of €90.6 million in two phases. Phase I focused on nutrition, health, and WASH, with Phase II embedding education and livelihoods to the programme. Implemented by UNICEF, WFP and local partners, the programme aimed to address children's vulnerability, malnutrition, and access to education, promoting resilience and community productivity.

### OBJECTIVES AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation, commissioned jointly by WFP and UNICEF's Country Offices, covers activities implemented between January 2018 to December 2022 and was undertaken by an independent evaluation team, SREO Consulting Ltd.

The report provides its main users - including WFP, UNICEF, the Federal Government of Somalia and its relevant ministries and implementing partners - an assessment of the programme's accountability and learning amid Somalia's ongoing challenges of conflict, climate change, and inadequate public services.

### METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team used a mixed methods approach. Qualitative and quantitative methods guided the data collection where material was extracted from primary and secondary sources. The evaluation reached all the target regions for data collection, conducting 1,008 household-level surveys with programme beneficiaries, 29 key informant interviews with programme and government staff, 9 focus group discussions with community groups and beneficiaries, and 28 visual observations of programme sites. Data collection faced challenges from the November 2023 El Niño floods, restricting access to several districts.

The time elapsed since the programme's start affected beneficiaries' recall and data quality, while staff turnover in agencies and government offices reduced access to key personnel involved in programme activities.

### KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

#### Relevance of the programme in relation to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries and country context

The programme was highly relevant to Somalia's context and aligned with the National Development Plan (NDP-9) and national policies on nutrition, education, and gender. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted delivery but was managed well through protective measures and adapted practices, ensuring continuity of some activities.

#### Coherence of the programme in relation to country policy and other initiatives

The programme aligned with ongoing relief and development efforts, fostering collaboration between WFP, UNICEF, and the government. It established foundations for future initiatives through rehabilitated sites and empowering community groups. However, there were concerns about attribution in Gedo and Banadir due to overlapping FCDO and ECHO interventions.

#### Effectiveness of the programme in achieving its intended objectives

The JRP addressed urgent community needs, delivering timely benefits despite concerns about sustainability beyond the programme. Phase I focused on nutrition, health, and WASH, that established a foundation for Phase II's resilience-building efforts in education and livelihoods. Achievements included the establishment of a national school feeding policy and improved school retention during droughts, supported by feeding programmes and teacher incentives. However, the WASH facilities lack quality and coverage, affecting usability and longer-term benefit. While the programme empowered women and girls, accessibility for persons with disabilities remained poor, and minority inclusion was inconsistent across regions.

#### Efficient use of capacities and resources

Partners demonstrated strong capacity to utilize funding, with monitoring mechanisms in place through UNICEF, WFP, and the Ministry of Education. Communities were reached promptly, though concerns remain about the quality of

services, and the programme's sustainability, including reduced school attendance after support ended. High staff turnover and procurement delays further affected efficiency, with calls for increased coordination to enhance oversight and address operational issues.

### Programme impact on the target communities

The programme delivered lifesaving services and provided stability, though its long-term impact on community resilience varies by region. Banadir experienced greater benefits due to its earlier inclusion in Phase I and wider availability of humanitarian assistance, while particularly Gedo faced severe challenges relating to climate change. Across regions, most respondents felt better equipped to handle crises than five years ago.

### Sustainability of the programme

The sustainability of the programme's impacts is uncertain, with gaps in support from government and international actors that can burden communities. Staff turnover and limited local ownership and inclusion from the beginning raise concerns. While community groups like education committees have gained autonomy, their influence remains unclear, and low familiarity of their functioning among beneficiaries suggests limited integration. WASH facilities face sustainability issues due to poor quality and lack of maintenance. The education programme has supported local policies, including in school feeding, but government capacity remains insufficient without continued support. Wide inclusion of girls in the education component, women in livelihoods and in community groups, are likely to contribute to wellbeing and more opportunities for women and girls on individual levels. Schools with improved water access are expected to attract more students and strengthen community ties to water sources

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overall assessment

The JRP demonstrated strong relevance to Somalia's context by addressing both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term poverty prevention. Transitioning from emergency response to sustainable development posed difficulties due to extensive needs and limited national capacities. Significant progress was made in combating malnutrition through partnerships and the establishment of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition (MCHN) centres. School feeding initiatives and WASH programmes further enhanced children's nutrition and improved community health and hygiene standards.

Despite its effectiveness, concerns about sustainability persist, as many observed benefits decreased after the programme's end. However, its community-driven approach was notable, emphasizing local needs and actively involving community members in programme design and beneficiary selection. A focus on gender equality and women's empowerment added value through skills training, livelihood opportunities, and increased educational access

for girls empowered girls to attend school with greater confidence.

The two phases were complementary, but the assessment observed areas for improvement in regional equity. The programme's collaborative, multi-sectoral, and multi-year strategy fostered stability across regions, and provided sense of normalcy to the beneficiaries. The impact of the programme in the regions varied based on their inclusion in the two phases and external factors. Livelihood activities, particularly cash assistance and agricultural support, played a crucial role in enhancing food production capacities and household food security. Overall, the programme's second phase strengthened JRP's commitment to recovery and development, offering a holistic approach that contributed to its success.

**Recommendation 1.** WFP and UNICEF should reinforce and align monitoring and quality control of services carried out by the agencies, IPs, community groups and government stakeholders.

**Recommendation 2.** WFP and UNICEF should provide children with disabilities with more meaningful and tailored support as part of the education component and promote access and increase attention to disability inclusion for WASH in schools and healthcare facilities.

**Recommendation 3.** WFP and UNICEF should improve targeting of beneficiaries by conducting analysis of different vulnerable groups, conducting needs assessments, and developing selection criteria that specifically target the most vulnerable, including minorities. Additionally, WFP and UNICEF could increase linkages and oversight of different community groups to ensure that there is knowledge sharing and cooperation across various locations and sectors.

**Recommendation 4.** WFP and UNICEF should integrate gender equality and social inclusion across all programme activities to shift attitudes and change gender relations while simultaneously promoting financial literacy and women's empowerment.

**Recommendation 5.** WFP and UNICEF should incorporate water point rehabilitation, borehole construction, and other water-related initiatives into their education interventions.

**Recommendation 6.** WFP and UNICEF should integrate sustainability principles into programme design and implementation, emphasizing long-term resilience-building measures to empower vulnerable populations and enhance their capacity for self-reliance in the face of future challenges, while also considering appropriate exit strategies, reinforcement, and leveraging of programme efforts beyond the programme's lifecycle.