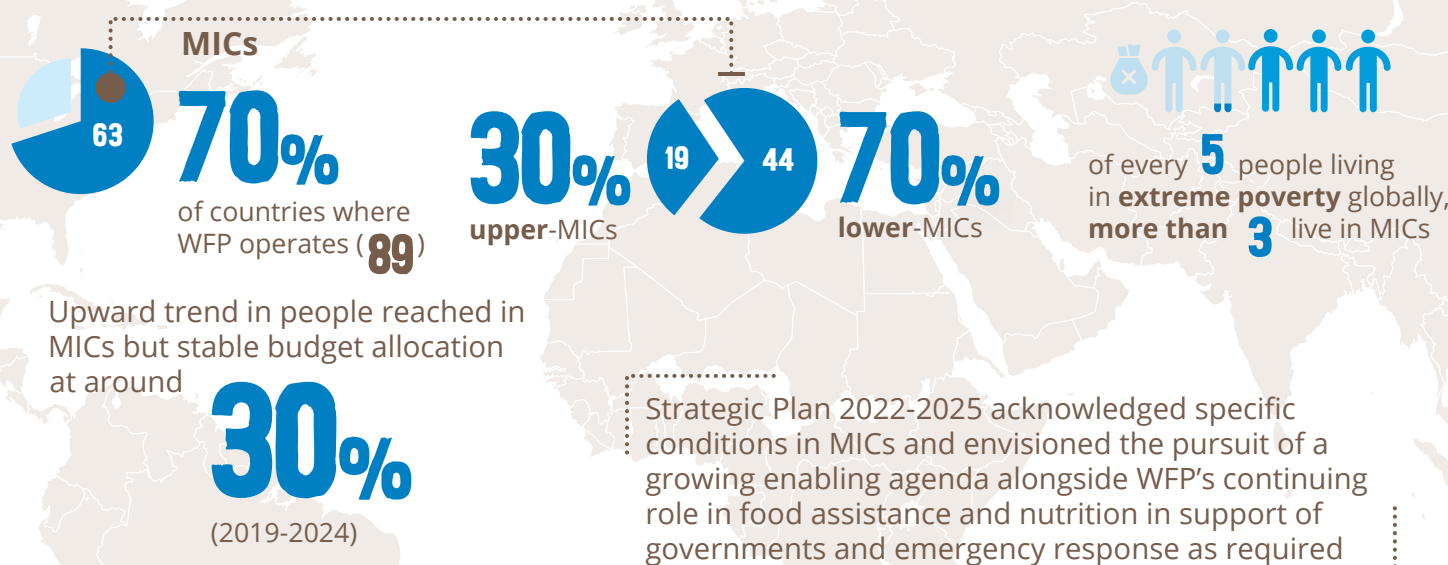
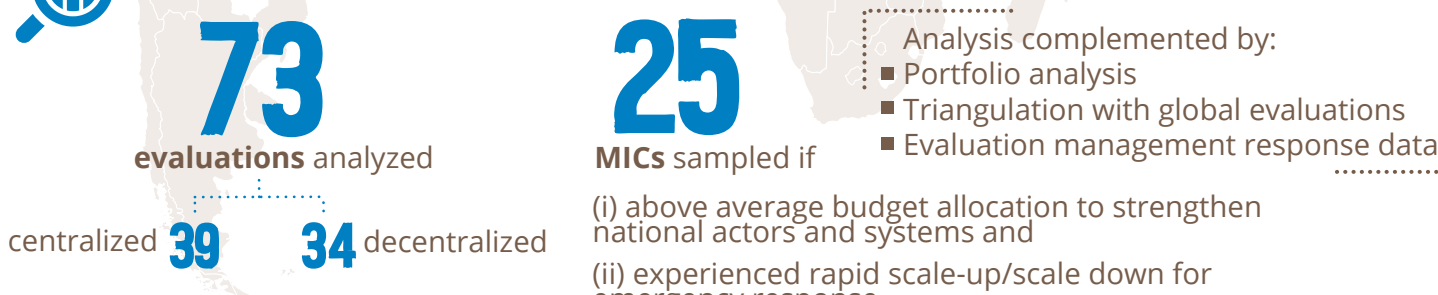


Evaluation synthesis on WFP's engagement in middle-income countries (MICs) (2019–2024)

GENERAL CONTEXT



EVALUATION SYNTHESIS APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY



CONCLUSIONS AND SUPPORTING FINDINGS

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE OF THE MICs CATEGORIZATION

MICs category too broad to inform programming and masks distinct features and challenges

Evidence points to need to better distinguish among diverse group of countries categorized as 'middle income'

- Upper-MICs
- MICs hosting forcibly displaced people
- MICs in transition settings
- MICs where WFP does not target direct beneficiaries

Shift from direct delivery of assistance to strengthening capacities of national systems and filling gaps in government-led responses to address food security and nutrition needs

Diversification and expansion of programme offer (e.g. in climate risk management and smallholder market access support)

PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC SHIFTS

WFP's intended strategic shift broadly realized while retaining central role as emergency responder

Pursue integration of displaced population into national systems

Challenges

- Resourcing in transition contexts
- Strategic partnerships
- Pilots and scalability

CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESULTS

Positive contributions across areas of results articulated in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025

- Matching ambition with activities at scale
- Handover and transition
- Limited resourcing of capacity strengthening

Main areas of results: Emergency response, policy advice, system strengthening, evidence generation / analytical products on food security and nutrition

New areas of programming, some evidence of contribution along the triple nexus (through social cohesion) and gender equality

PARTNERSHIP

Trend towards diversification of WFP's partnerships in MICs, but lacking coherent overarching framing

Evidence of successful collaboration characterised by trust and mutual respect between governments and WFP

WFP's role highly valued by governments, but challenges remain around clarity of entry points in national systems

Overall

- Partnership diversification across all settings (e.g. with academia and private sector)
- In upper-MICs higher-share of partnerships with governments
- In lower-MICs, higher share of partnerships with I-NGOs

PILOTING

Piloting is a key part of WFP's portfolio in MICs

Main shortcomings with systematic approach to learning and planning for scale-up

Different uses of piloting in MICs

- Digitization and analytics in support of national social protection programmes
- Showcasing WFP support and testing innovations

HANDOVER AND SUSTAINABILITY

WFP handed over specific programmes to national actors in MICs but gaps remain in planning for sustainability

Main challenges

- Planning realistic timelines
- Clarity on roles and responsibilities
- Transitioning WFP's role when shifting from WFP-led to government-led activities

FACTORS AFFECTING RESULTS IN MICs

Uncertain financing prospects; Lack of overarching rationale for engagement in MICs

WFP reputation solely as lead agency for humanitarian responses

Mismatch between ambitious capacity strengthening objectives in MICs and staffing profile

Challenges in articulating a narrative on WFP's added value in MICs

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Set out a clearer rationale for WFP's presence and positioning in MICs (in particular in upper-MICs)
- Clarify and strengthen the development and use of partnership strategies in MICs
- Strengthen planning for handover and transition, where relevant, and the pathway to country exit where appropriate
- Enhance the generation of evidence from pilot activities to inform decisions regarding potential scale-up