



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

McGovern-Dole Local and Regional Procurement

The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern-Dole) funded by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) supports education, child development and food security in low-income, food-deficit countries around the globe. Sustainability is an important aspect of McGovern-Dole projects, as a key aim of school meals programs is the gradual hand-over to the host government or local communities. Since 2002, WFP has been one of the implementers of McGovern-Dole projects in countries around the world.

In 2014, the U.S. Congress established the USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP) Program with the objective of “complementing existing food aid programs, especially McGovern-Dole, and to fill in nutritional gaps for targeted populations or food availability gaps generated by unexpected emergencies.” LRP awards were intended to build the capacity of farmers, producers, and cooperatives, in order to assist in meeting quality standards and product specifications to ensure food safety and nutritional content within each project for its beneficiaries, and promote agricultural sustainability, particularly through linkages with school meals programs.

Additionally, through amendments to the 2018 Farm Bill, the McGovern-Dole Program introduced a local and regional procurement component as well. Under this new component of McGovern-Dole projects,

USDA is allowed to obligate up to 10 percent of McGovern-Dole funding to be used for local and regional procurement of commodities.

Summaries of Evaluation Evidence (SEE) provide an overview of evidence from a specific set of evaluations on a particular topic in a concise form. A SEE is not an evaluation but presents an ‘overview of findings’. This SEE focuses on LRP in five countries where WFP has finalized evaluations of LRP components under McGovern-Dole programs, of which four received LRP awards, specifically Cambodia, Kenya, Laos and Rwanda. It aims to complement other summaries of evaluation evidence on school-based programs, including [Home Grown School Feeding \(2024\)](#), [School Feeding in Southern Africa \(2024\)](#) and [School Feeding in West and Central Africa \(2022\)](#).

8 LESSONS

1 A progressive, phased approach to transition is crucial.

Evidence from evaluations in Cambodia, Kenya and Rwanda found that gradual transition models enable smoother handover to national systems. In Cambodia, LRP, as an intermediary mechanism to support the transition from WFP-managed school meals programs to government management, has had a significant positive result in terms of the readiness of schools, broadening the view of what a school meals program can achieve.

2 Technical assistance should be envisaged for a period of time after the transition.

Evidence from Cambodia, Kenya, Nepal and Rwanda highlights that sustained support from WFP is needed post-transition to strengthen systems, refine procurement and pricing processes, and build monitoring and quality control capacities of governments. In Rwanda, WFP's facilitation of evidentiary support through strategic information and analysis appropriately equipped government officials to lead the procurement decision-making process and is a clear example of how the project was designed to set the Government up for success.

3 Cross-sector coordination is essential but challenging.

Evidence from evaluations in Cambodia, Nepal and Rwanda highlighted that closer collaboration between education and agriculture ministries is needed as weak inter-ministerial coordination limited integration of supply- and demand-side interventions. In Rwanda, LRP has ensured broad government engagement by working not only with the Ministry of Education but with other ministries that directly or indirectly support national development goals related to education, gender, health, and agriculture. Senior government officials have become strong home-grown school feeding (HGSF) advocates, largely due to WFP's support through appropriate governance structures, strategies and policies, and analytical work.

4 Interventions should be tailored to account for regional diversity and needs within countries.

Localized needs assessments are vital to informing LRP components. Evidence from the Laos endline evaluation of FY2017/2018 finds that tailored interventions based on local need should be considered over standardized models, as the one-size-fits-all approach (e.g., same seeds and training across regions) failed to account for diverse ecological and market contexts.

5 Procurement processes must be smallholder-friendly to promote inclusion and women's participation.

In Cambodia and Rwanda, evidence showed that complex procurement procedures and delayed payments discouraged smallholder participation. In Cambodia, the midterm evaluation of FY19 LRP award noted that in order to keep credibility of the local procurement as a viable smallholder

market, adjustments may be required in the Government's local procurement procedures to either provide advance funding to small suppliers or more timely or phased payment methods. The endline evaluation further recommended adjusting procurement processes to better match smallholder women production cycles and adjusting payment mechanisms to allow for the participation of smallholder women as suppliers.

6 Building sustainable market linkages takes time.

Evidence from Laos, Nepal and Rwanda highlights that establishing reliable smallholder farmer-school supply chains requires coordinated production, infrastructure, and policy alignment over multiple years. Effects on farmers are often context dependent and influenced by factors, such as local market conditions and proximity to schools. In Laos, LRP's approach of collaborating with multiple stakeholders that brought the demand (community) and supply (government) sides together under the program was identified as a good practice. In future programming, it remains critical to educate farmers about the demand and supply aspects and bring them under one platform to plan potential vegetable production, keeping in mind the demand and supply constraint.

7 Adaptive management is critical for navigating complex, changing environments.

Adaptive management, including contingency planning, is vital for navigating complex, changing environments and ensuring sustainable outcomes. WFP's flexibility in adapting to policy and operational shifts helped maintain momentum despite setbacks, as evidenced in Cambodia (e.g. shifting to take-home rations during the Covid pandemic) and Kenya (e.g., expanding LRP to early childhood development centres).

8 Strong monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management systems are essential for adaptive programming and scaling.

A key lesson drawn from the Laos LRP Endline was that a strong monitoring system is key to provide quick checks to assess the direction of the program and improve the response time to issues. A structured knowledge management and learning plan is also essential for adaptive programming and scaling. In Rwanda, to the endline evaluation highlighted the importance of documenting lessons to inform future strategies.

KEY MESSAGES



LRP as a valuable tool supporting transition

LRP demonstrates potential for strong efficiency, serving as a strong introductory model for transitioning schools to manage purchases themselves and broadening the understanding of what school meals programs can achieve, especially in promoting local procurement and community ownership.



Capacity building is effective but needs reinforcement

The duration of LRP projects, on average 2 years, was too short to ensure sustainable transition and inter-ministerial coordination. Long-term planning and embedded technical assistance are needed post-transition. Effective cooperative participation in supply chains requires more than training—it needs continuous investment, mentorship, and institutional support. WFP should continue to add value through post-transition support as governments continue to scale up national school meals programs.



Strong government engagement is crucial

WFP's technical responsiveness and policy alignment won government trust and leadership buy-in. In Rwanda, high-level government ownership of school meals evolved due to WFP's support via governance structures and evidence-based policy input. However, shifts in government leadership can reverse or stall progress (e.g., return to in-kind aid or delay of smallholder procurement strategies). WFP and partners need contingency plans to navigate leadership transitions.



Further effort is needed to transform approaches to social inclusion and women's empowerment are embedded in LRP

Evaluations highlight the success of WFP's efforts in actively identifying and encouraging women participation in LRP activities. While LRP has gender-sensitive elements, more intentional efforts are needed to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) is embedded from the outset in LRP designs. WFP should continue to prioritize women's empowerment across all components of LRP activities, intentionally challenging and shifting gender norms and power dynamics, as well as embed gender equality goals and indicators in its strategy, M&E, and partnerships.



Complex procurement systems limit inclusion of smallholder farmers

Procurement regulations often favored larger suppliers due to capital requirements, price ceilings, and short timelines, which do not align with smallholder production cycles. Smaller suppliers and farmer organizations struggled to compete due to lack of access to credit and inputs, undermining the local procurement goals of LRP.

BREADTH OF EVIDENCE

This summary brings together evidence from 15 WFP-commissioned independent evaluations focused on McGovern-Dole school meals, and specifically LRP, which cover the period 2017-2024 and were rated 'satisfactory' or above by WFP's external post-hoc quality assessment (PHQA). The summary covers WFP intervention in 5 McGovern-Dole project countries (Cambodia, Laos, Kenya, Rwanda, and Nepal).

Of these, 14 evaluations were decentralised evaluations of activities, and one was a strategic evaluation. Evidence was systematically extracted from the evaluations using an analytical framework reflecting key areas of interest identified at framing stage. Evidence was analysed and clustered around the main focus areas with key patterns and findings identified.



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

ANNEX ■ EVALUATIONS CONSULTED

- [Endline Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Grant \(LRP-442-2019-011-00\) for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia](#)
- [Baseline Activity Study of USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP School Feeding in Cambodia October 2022 to September 2027](#)
- [Endline Evaluation of USDA McGovern Dole Grants FFE-442-2019-013-00 in Cambodia, 2019-2023](#)
- [Mid-Term Evaluation of USDA Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement LRP-442-2019-011-00 in Cambodia, 2019-2023](#)
- [Endline evaluation of WFP'S USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program's Support in Kenya, 2016-2022](#)
- [Final evaluation of the USDA-supported Local and Regional Procurement \(LRP\) project in Kenya, 2017-2020](#)
- [Mid-Term Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant in Laos \[FY 2020-25\]](#)
- [Baseline Evaluation of WFP School-Feeding Program for USDA McGovern-Dole Grant \[FY 2020-25\]](#)
- [Endline Evaluation of USDA Local Regional Procurement project in Nalae District, Luang Namtha Province in Lao PDR, 2016-2019](#)
- [Baseline Study USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Programme in Nepal, 2020-2024](#)
- [Mid-Term Evaluation of USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program in Nepal 2020 to 2024](#)
- [Midterm Evaluation USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Project in Rwanda \(2020 to 2025\)](#)
- [Baseline Study: USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP Home-Grown School Feeding Program in Rwanda \(2020 to 2025\)](#)
- [Endline evaluation of USDA's Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program in Rwanda, 2017-2019](#)
- [Strategic evaluation of the contribution of school feeding activities to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)


WFP EVALUATION

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