WFP EVALUATION

Catalysing good food through school feeding programmes in Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, India, and Rwanda (2022-2025):

A Developmental Evaluation

Evaluation report

School Meals and Social Protection Service

DE/SBP/2023/025
September 2025

WFP
World Food Programme
SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Rockefeller Foundation for their financial support and the World Food Programme (WFP) Evaluation Office and Programme Policy and Guidance School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS) for their partnership throughout the evaluation process. The authors would also like to thank the Strategic Learning Community for their active partnership in every stage of the evaluation process. In particular, we are grateful for the assistance and technical contributions of the WFP Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, India, and Rwanda Country Offices. We would also like to thank the WFP nutrition and school meals and social protection services as well as the Regional Bureau Nairobi office for their support throughout the evaluation.

This evaluation benefited from analysis and report writing by Charlotte Lattimer and quality assurance by Sophia Dunn and Belen Diaz. We appreciate the collaboration of The KonTerra Group in providing these specialists.

Finally, our sincerest thanks to developmental evaluators Jordi Del Bas and Josep M. Coll for leading the evaluation alongside the WFP country offices.

Disclaimer

Key personnel for the evaluation

WFP Staff

Carmen Burbano	Chair of the Evaluation Committee
Anna Hamilton, Niamh O'Grady	Evaluation Managers
Mayibongwe Manyoba, Sarah Cruz	Evaluation Coordination Support
Grace Igweta, Mar Guinot	Internal Second-level Quality Assurance

External evaluation team

Jordi Del Bas	Developmental Evaluator
Josep M. Coll	Developmental Evaluator
Charlotte Lattimer	Auxiliary Evaluator
Sophia Dunn, Belén Diaz	Quality Assurance

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

Executive summary

Context and Objectives

1. This decentralized developmental evaluation was commissioned by WFP's Programme Policy and Guidance School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS) to support learning within the "Catalyzing good food through school feeding programmes" projects funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (RF). This portfolio, referred to in this report as the WFP RF projects, encompassed a USD 10.7 million "global" project implemented in Benin, Ghana, Honduras, and India from November 2022 to April 2025 and a USD 3.3 million "regional" project implemented in Burundi and Rwanda from November 2021 to October 2024. The evaluation was conducted between July 2023 and April 2025 to provide timely input into new approaches tested through the two projects in order to help Country Offices (CO) reconsider assumptions, adapt to the dynamic and complex environments of the projects, design project scale-up, and contribute to evidence in the growing field of food systems transformation. This report captures early learnings from this process of testing, adaptation, and expansion.

2. Over the past fifty years, changes in the food system have advanced food security, but the prioritization of yield and calories have also led to negative health and environmental outcomes. School meals can be a platform for food system transformation by providing income to local smallholder farmers and food processors, offering healthy diets in schools, and increasing the availability of healthy food in the food system. WFP and Rockefeller selected Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, India, and Rwanda to test approaches to transform the food system through school meals because these countries were characterized by large-scale government and/or WFP-operated school meals programmes and demonstrated commitment to school meals coverage and quality at the highest levels of government. .

3. The global project consisted of four components: 1. optimizing school menus and strengthening supply/demand chains, 2. assessing barriers to consumption of healthy foods (like whole grains and fortified foods) and developing metrics and indicators for capturing school meal and menu quality, 3. advocacy and support for policy adoption to promote more nutritious, sustainable, and equitable school meals, and 4. the development of a good food scoring framework to rate foods in terms of nutritional value and set priorities. Similarly, the regional project entitled "Scaling up fortified whole meals in school feeding programs in Rwanda and Burundi and supporting an innovation hub in Kenya" intended to scale access to nutritious foods in school feeding programmes through procurement, policy, data, and broader innovation components. The projects did not provide food or resources to individuals directly, but rather enhanced existing school feeding activities. Target beneficiaries included school-aged children reached through school meals, smallholder farmers, caterers and cooks reached through capacity strengthening activities, and other adults reached through social behavior change campaigns.

Strategic learning questions and methodology

4. A developmental approach for the evaluation was chosen due to the project's innovative nature, intent to develop new approaches, and WFP's willingness to learn and adapt throughout implementation. The evaluation included co-design, evidence gathering, and global sensemaking components that were carried out simultaneously throughout the evaluation, as opposed to occurring in consecutive phases. This aligned with the iterative nature of a developmental evaluation approach. . Questions grouped under six strategic learning areas, known as the Strategic Learning Framework, were co-developed by the Strategic Learning Community (SLC), a group of the primary intended users from WFP COs and supporting headquarters and regional office teams, and the developmental evaluators. The evaluation's learning areas and six primary questions were:

    - Local Economies: To what extent and how are innovations in the food supply/value chain, including local/institutional procurement, improving local economic development and for whom?
    - Sustainability: How might WFP adapt and operate differently so that the RF-WFP project innovations can be implemented on a larger scale and in a sustainable manner?

- Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC): How can the programme effectively use SBCC for different groups (geographic, gender, etc.) given the short implementation period and limited funding?
- Partnerships: To what extent and in what ways is the current approach/strategy with respect to government and other key stakeholders appropriate to ensure the scale-up and sustainability of the system that we are putting in place?
- Advocacy: Which specific advocacy approaches are working well for systems change and which do not? And why?
- Gender equality: To what extent and how is the programme integrating gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures/elements?

5. The co-design component continued throughout the evaluation through conversations between COs and the developmental evaluators to prioritize learning questions for each country and through updates to the evaluation's data collection and analysis methods made in response to these priorities and the unique country contexts.

6. The evidence gathering component included initial landscaping of the project during a workshop in September 2023 where the strategic learning questions were also developed; in-person data collection missions to Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, and Rwanda and a virtual mission to India; reflection workshops with country office teams during and after data collection missions; and conversations and written tools to capture project adaptations made in response to the evaluation. Data collection during in-country missions included key informant interviews and small group discussions with stakeholder groups including WFP COs, government representatives, members of farmers cooperatives and millers (depending on country context), and school meal operators and other school officials in addition to document review. Data collection in India was limited to key informant interviews with the WFP CO team and secondary document review. A full list of stakeholders interviewed and data collection and analysis methods can be found in Annex 6.

7. The global sensemaking component included virtual meetings of the SLC where findings and lessons were shared across countries, and the development of short written deliverables following each country mission that summarized context and findings and proposed discussion questions to identify ways forward. An Auxiliary Evaluator compiled evidence from these written documents, recordings of SLC workshops, and other secondary documents to conduct analysis and produce this report, which represents the final piece of the evaluation's global sensemaking component. Intended users of the report include the SLC and other school feeding implementers in WFP and globally, particularly in the School Meals Coalition.

8. Evaluation limitations included the short timeframe of the project, which limited the extent to which the evaluators could iteratively engage with each country office and generate learning following project adaptations. Not all aspects of the learning framework were considered priority in all countries, such as advocacy, SBCC, and gender equality, which limited the evidence and learning generated in these areas. The early stage of project implementation at the time of some of the evaluation visits also affected the amount of learning that could be generated and the extent to which project results had been documented. Projects are likely to have evolved since the data collection missions and drafting of this report and additional learning may exist which is not captured here. The focus of the developmental evaluation was on informing adaptation and generating lessons. Understanding the project's ability to achieve intended results was only considered by the evaluation if pertinent for informing adaptation and learning. For all these reasons, not all strategic learning questions could be answered as written with the data available. Instead, the emphasis was placed on stakeholder perceptions of how adaptations could be made to better achieve results under the six thematic areas.

Findings

SLQ 1. To what extent and how are innovations in the food supply/value chain, including local/institutional procurement, improving local economic development and for whom?

9. The projects were perceived to have had a direct positive impact on incomes of local value chain actors in several contexts, albeit with only early signs of positive change and supported by mostly anecdotal

evidence given the early stage and developmental nature of the projects and evaluation. Stakeholders perceived several other indirect, catalytic effects of the projects, including stimulation of the wider market for fortified foods and improvements in the quality of produce and processing procedures. There was limited evidence of the effects of the projects on vulnerability, diversity and inclusion, mainly due to a lack of focus on measuring these aspects from the outset. There were some examples of positive effects on women, however, including the ability of the stable, institutional market of the school meal to create jobs for women and young people in Honduras. In Benin, there was evidence that the school meal increased women's access to credit and created secondary jobs that were more likely to be filled by women.

10. The evaluators also examined the suitability of the selected commodities to increase healthy food in the food system. For some commodities, such as biofortified beans in Honduras and fortified rice in Ghana, there were signs that they were well received and had potential for broader uptake in each context. Some of the commodities had additional unexpected positive effects, such as evidence that certain varieties of fortified beans in Honduras were more climate resistant than other varieties. Early assessments and discussion with government in India suggests millet may prove promising for inclusion in social protection programmes, given its high nutrition value and low environmental impact.

11. Using fortified commodities to enhance the school meal food basket was also met with challenges, discussed under the sustainability learning area. Allowing flexibility to adapt the commodities used in the school meal, sometimes switching from a single commodity to a dietary diversity approach, was seen as a facilitator of project objectives. There were several examples of pivots in commodity selection and procurement, such as moves towards decentralized procurement in Burundi and Ghana, substitution of cereals in Burundi, and the addition of a new variety of bean in Honduras, which project implementers perceived to improve the reach and economic impact of the project.

SLQ 2: How might WFP adapt and operate differently so that the RF-WFP project innovations can be implemented on a larger scale and in a sustainable manner?

12. Contextual factors were key influencers of project sustainability, especially the existence of supportive policy, regulatory and fiscal environments, the extent to which decentralized procurement models were already in place, and how much capacity existed within the private sector, specifically amongst millers and farmers. The short timeframe of the project was considered insufficient to scale-up and promote sustainability of fortified foods, but the project was instead viewed as an experimental phase to inform future scale-up.

13. Gaps in food safety and quality (FSQ) were present in many countries, especially where work on growing these capacities was just beginning. For example, Burundi and Rwanda lacked capacity for in-country quality testing of imported fortified commodities, delaying product distribution and risking wastage. In India, work on FSQ standards and infrastructure starting before the project and continuing throughout project development and implementation was considered an important enabler of success. The WFP India CO perceived that a driver of their success was their ability to identify and fill important FSQ gaps, such as supporting laboratory capacity for testing and establishing standards for fortification machinery, over years of collaboration with the government.

14. The capacity of smallholder farmers and millers also presented opportunities for adaptation in project approaches. Certification standards in Burundi and Rwanda created barriers for many small millers to fortify maize, and in Ghana, local rice processors initially lacked technical knowledge of fortification processes and did not have the necessary milling equipment. Additionally, smallholder farmers in Benin, Ghana, and Honduras faced barriers to finance and credit, which prevented them from supplying commodities for the school meal at scale. Project implementers were able to confront these barriers by diversifying the food basket through decentralized procurement or adopting nutritious non-fortified commodities while simultaneously working to grow farmer and miller capacity.

15. To adapt and operate differently, the evaluators and learning community emphasised the need to consider feasibility of FSQ from the outset of projects and address FSQ gaps early on. Creating incentives for the private sector to invest in fortification was also perceived as critical, but largely beyond the reach of WFP. Working with other key actors in the food value chain and using social marketing to stimulate broader market demand for fortified foods were considered by the learning community to be promising

ways forward.

SLQ3: How can the programme effectively use SBCC for different groups (geographic, gender, etc.) given the short implementation period and limited funding?

16. Where SBCC activities were prioritized, stakeholders perceived that they had demonstrated positive early results and generated significant learning. Lessons included recognizing the value of contextualization of messages and approaches, effective ways of communicating with children through entertainment and interaction, leveraging multiple stakeholders for a holistic approach to SBCC, and the benefits of focusing on all nutritious foods in the school meal, as opposed to specific commodities. In India, CO informants highlighted the benefits of tailoring SBCC campaigns at state level to improve their relevance and effectiveness. In Honduras, the use of animated characters to represent the milk and fortified beans was considered successful for promoting children's consumption of these foods.

17. The timing of SBCC activities varied between countries, depending on a range of contextual factors. While Benin, Rwanda, Ghana, and Burundi delayed the start of SBCC until other areas of work had progressed and exploratory work had been completed, an early focus on SBCC was found to support project objectives in India and Honduras, though sustained behaviour change is likely to take time beyond the project's implementation to capture.

SLQ4: To what extent and in what ways is the current approach/strategy with respect to government and other key stakeholders appropriate to ensure the scale-up and sustainability of the system that we are putting in place?

18. WFP is well-placed to play a leading enabler role within the RF-WFP projects given its reputation as a trusted partner and its strong relationships with governments. Given the holistic nature of the project, WFP was most effective when it forged relationships with multiple government ministries across different aspects of food systems transformation. The example of India demonstrated how years of partnership and trust building between WFP and the government, combined with strong government ownership, contributed to India's ability to successfully integrate fortified rice in the school meal.

19. WFP and RF have leveraged their comparative advantages to forge a strong partnership. The different nature of the two organizations has caused some tensions at country-level, however, where the dynamic has shifted between that of 'donor & grantee' and 'strategic partners', according to WFP stakeholders. Stakeholders perceive the 'donor & grantee' relationship dynamic has limited the developmental nature of the project and its ability to adapt, which was considered crucial given the complex ecosystems of inter-related actors and diverse country contexts.

20. While working with many stakeholders was perceived to be essential to promote healthy foods throughout the food system, these experiences have highlighted the challenges of working in a complex partner ecosystem, including occasional communication gaps and unclear roles and governance responsibilities. To address these challenges, the developmental evaluation promoted adaptations in several country contexts, such as Burundi and Ghana, to embrace a 'cluster approach', aligning activities with a variety of partners to increase impact.

21. The multi-dimensional nature of work on food system transformation also had implications for the way WFP operates. The evaluation surfaced a need for a 'whole of organisation' approach from WFP – drawing on different in-house skillsets and requiring close coordination to maximise the inputs of technical teams from across the organisation. Adaptations were made in country operations in response to this finding, such as the organization of activities in Rwanda's Country Strategic Plan.

SLQ5: Which specific advocacy approaches are working well for systems change and which do not? And why?

22. The sequencing of advocacy and implementation was key for promoting systems change, albeit outside of explicit advocacy strategies or plans, which had not been developed at the time of the evaluation visits. In Benin, Ghana, Honduras, and Rwanda, advocacy was acknowledged as an important learning area of the evaluation, but not enough learning was generated through data collection and discussion, thus other learning areas were prioritized in written documents and feedback loop exercises.

23. Where advocacy was addressed through the evaluation, one lesson that emerged was that advocacy that started early and continued throughout the project was considered to have contributed to project successes. Additionally, trusted evidence helped to underpin effective advocacy in India, Honduras, and Benin; while the project also provided opportunities to pilot new initiatives and generate evidence on results to support continued advocacy.

SLQ6: To what extent and how is the programme integrating gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures/elements?

24. Gender equality was not systematically and adequately considered early enough in the design and implementation of projects across the six countries, which negatively affected the project's ability to consider how activities could effect men, women, boy, and girls differently during implementation. Countries had attempted to incorporate gender equality thinking in an ad-hoc manner, however. For example, implementing workshops for biofortified bean cooperative members on gender roles and masculinity in Honduras; and involving men in cooking demonstrations and educational activities as part of the rice fortification campaign in India, which was perceived by the CO as a way of challenging discriminatory gender norms. Sharing of those experiences through the developmental evaluation helped stimulate efforts to integrate gender-sensitive approaches in the time remaining.

Conclusions and Lessons:

25. Overall, it was the combination of approaches and innovations – **addressing food systems from different angles (supply and demand)** – that was perceived as generating lessons about the projects' abilities and limitations. Reflecting on the interconnectedness of value chain actors through the evaluation and visualizing these stakeholders, relationships, challenges, and opportunities through the food system models was considered a useful practice by project implementers.

26. **A flexible approach to commodity selection and procurement** was crucial to the project's ability to improve income for local actors and supply healthy food to school meals, especially when millers faced challenges to supplying fortified commodities at scale and FSQ procedures complicated the inclusion of fortified commodities in the school meal in some contexts. The ethos of innovation, learning, and adaptation in the project was apparent in CO's reported adaptations, and stakeholders emphasized the benefits of built-in opportunities for reflection and country-to-country sharing that the developmental evaluation provided.

27. **Rapidly increasing the production, processing, and safety and quality testing of fortified foods was a persistent challenge within the timeframe of the project**. **Capacity gaps were evident throughout the food value chain,** from SHF to food processors, school caterers, and public FSQ regulatory bodies. To sustainably promote nutritious commodities in school meals and the broader food system, work to address these gaps must continue and other markets should be developed to incentivize private sector investment alongside supportive policies and effective regulation. Working with governments to generate evidence of fortification's benefits can help advocate for these policy and regulatory changes. Effectively addressing these barriers is beyond WFP's capacity to do alone. Working with an array of partners through a coordinated approach was considered essential.

28. **Working in a complex ecosystem of partners necessitates careful communication to avoid duplication and requires a more coordinated way of working within WFP, through multi-disciplinary teams primed to adapt to changing landscapes.** Establishing clear and consistent communication channels, managing partner expectations, and clarifying the parameters of WFP's support up-front was considered an important lesson for working in this complex partner ecosystem.

29. WFP and RF brought unique strengths and relationships to the projects. RF's convening power was identified as an asset during project implementation, complementing WFP's role as a trusted technical expert and partner of government institutions. Stakeholders perceived the relationship was most effective when viewed as a partnership with each organization bringing different strengths, rather than as that of a 'donor & grantee.'

30. While influencing healthy eating behaviours was a critical assumption underpinning the projects, the evaluation noted that **SBCC activities were not prioritized early in project implementation and**

sustained behaviour change is likely to take time. Similarly, the evaluation found that **gender equality aspects were not systematically and adequately considered early enough in the design and implementation of projects,** which negatively affected the projects' ability to address inequalities through implementation. Climate sensitivity was also not a demonstrable priority within the projects; however, where gender equality, climate, and SBCC had been considered, examples were shared through the evaluation community that can be used to shape future activities.

31. The SLC appreciated the developmental evaluation approach for its ability to spark discussions across countries, drive project adaptations, provide timely and easy-to-understand feedback, and generate ownership through co-design of strategic learning questions. Lessons for future developmental evaluations included the need to adapt WFP evaluation normative frameworks to accommodate developmental approaches and the need to carefully set boundaries around who are considered the evaluation's primary learners in order to make their continued engagement possible over the course of the evaluation.

32. The evaluation raised **issues for consideration** in future projects or new iterations of the current WFP-RF projects:

- Maximize projects' flexibility and adaptability at the country level, moving towards a 'partner' relationship with funders, rather than that of donor/grantee.
- Allow longer timelines for realizing results when projects are working in complex ecosystems, like these projects' food systems approaches
- Emphasize gender equality, vulnerability, diversity and inclusion aspects earlier and more intentionally in follow-up work, identifying how projects can exacerbate or reduce inequalities and adapting accordingly
- Pursue partnerships with diverse organizations and networks like the School Meals Coalition to expand impact beyond WFP and pursue the idea of food systems clusters where there is interest and capacity
- Continue to generate evidence through studies and pilot testing of new school meals approaches, including in partnership with research organizations and academic institutions, at both national and international levels
- Consider how aspects of the developmental evaluation approach can be replicated and adapted in other WFP initiatives to create opportunities for reflection and cross-country learning. Intentionally select primary users of future learning exercises to ensure ample opportunity for iterative engagement.

1. Introduction

1.1. Evaluation features

1. **Purpose and rationale:** This developmental evaluation was commissioned to support learning and adaptation within the project portfolio entitled, "Catalyzing good food through school feeding programmes", funded by the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) and implemented by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) between November 2021 and April 2025, referred to in this report as the "WFP RF projects." The evaluation was implemented under the Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex 1 and took place between July 2023 and April 2025.

2. Given the innovative nature of the WFP RF projects, which aim to develop new approaches to catalyze food systems transformation, a developmental evaluation (DEV) approach was adopted because it is appropriate for evaluating new initiatives in complex settings. Following the developmental approach, the evaluation was implemented alongside the projects with the objective of enabling a process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change.

3. At the time that the evaluation was commissioned, it was intended to serve three purposes:

    - To provide timely input into the development of new and innovative approaches being tested to catalyze food systems transformation. In particular, the evaluation was intended to help country offices test assumptions and adapt strategies to the dynamic and complex environment in which the WFP RF projects were being implemented.
    - To provide timely input into the design of the scale-up initiative to be developed in a later phase.
    - To contribute with relevant evidence to the growing field of food systems transformation, leveraging the School Meals Coalition's network of governments and partners.[1]

4. **Objectives:** This evaluation serves the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning. However, given the developmental nature of the evaluation, there is a strong emphasis on learning as the primary objective. This includes **strategic learning** to guide programmatic adjustments in real time and into subsequent iterations of the WFP RF projects; documenting **progress towards results** as stories of change, with an emphasis on identifying their contribution to transforming food systems; **wider learning and knowledge generation and sharing** among actors in the food systems field; **horizontal learning** to improve cross-functional collaboration and coordination; **methodological learning** which explores new methods and approaches to developmental evaluations of complex interventions; and **learning on gender equality and inclusion** – understanding how and the extent to which different individuals and groups – men, women, boys and girls, as well as potentially vulnerable or marginalized group, including persons with disabilities, vulnerable ethnic and religious groups, and others, depending on different country contexts – have interacted with and benefited from the projects.[2] All of these types of learning are intended to support use and adaptation.

5. **Scope of the evaluation:** The evaluation covers a portfolio of projects, comprising a global project, entitled "Catalysing good food through school feeding programmes"; and a regional project entitled "Scaling up fortified whole meal in school feeding programmes in Rwanda and Burundi and supporting an innovation hub in Kenya". The scope of the evaluation was directed by the thematic areas in the Strategic Learning Framework (see section 1.4 for more details). Following the learning focus of the developmental approach, lessons and findings occasionally took into consideration activities outside of the Rockefeller-funded

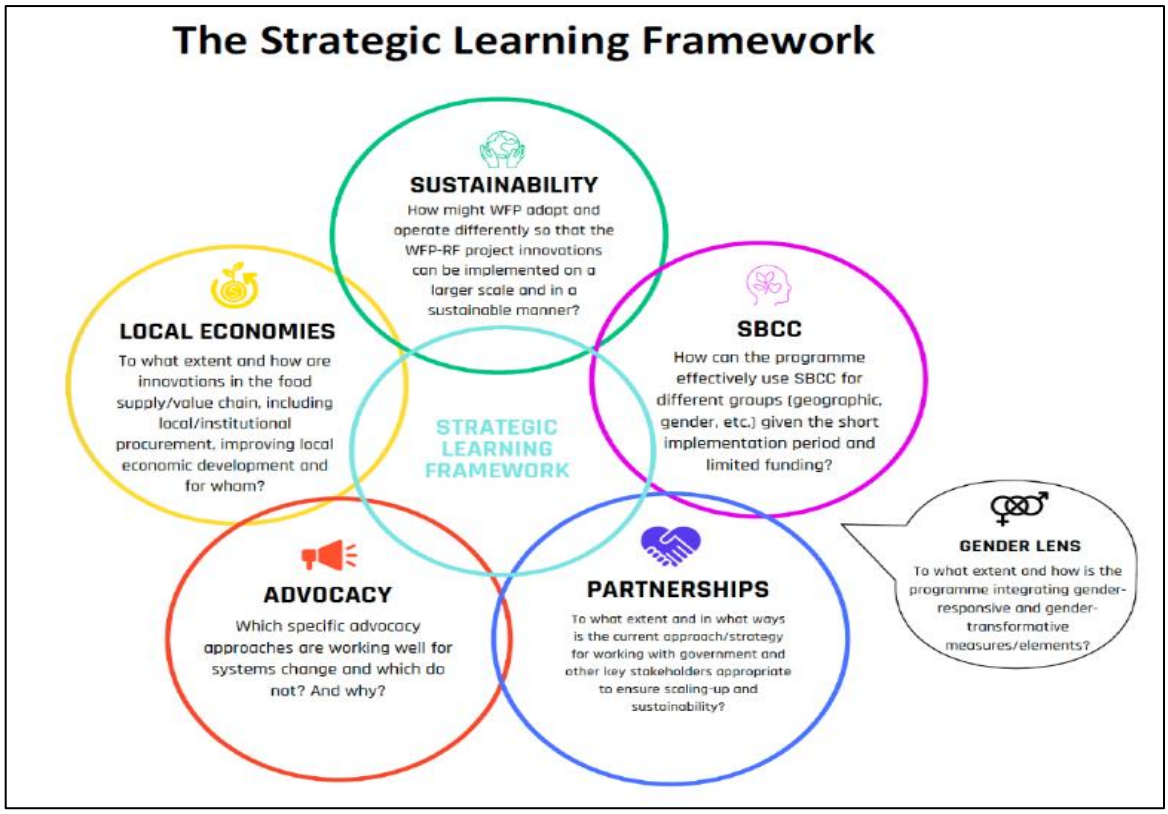
[1] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division
[2] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division

projects that were applicable to answering the learning framework questions.

6. **Geographic coverage** of the evaluation encompassed all areas where the projects were implemented, except for the regional project's innovation hub in Kenya. This included the global project in Benin, Ghana, Honduras and India and the regional project in Rwanda and Burundi. The evaluation sought to harvest learning within and between countries, and across the different project components. In addition, the scope of the evaluation went beyond the global and regional projects and encompassed activities not funded under the RF-WFP partnership, including insights from country-level and global-level discussions and debates, including those generated by the School Meals Coalition (SMC) (and other learning networks for system change).[3]

7. The substantive scope of the evaluation was determined by six priority strategic learning questions, grouped around five strategic areas and one cross-cutting question on gender equality (Figure 1), which were identified at a Strategic Learning Workshop in Nairobi in September 2023. The strategic learning questions are summarized in Figure 1 and described in more detail in section 1.3.

Figure 1: The Strategic Learning Framework



Source: Country-specific Learning Briefs

8. **Stakeholders and users:** Internal primary users of this evaluation are WFP Country Offices (COs) for Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, India, and Rwanda; Regional Bureaus (RBs) for West Africa, East Africa, Central and South America, and Asia and the Pacific, WFP's School Meals and Social Protection Service (PPGS), other WFP technical units in HQ, especially the Nutrition and Partnerships Units, and WFP's Executive Board. These stakeholders (with the exception of the Executive Board) formed the Strategic Learning Community (SLC) that were engaged throughout the evaluation. Within the SLC, Country Offices were

[3] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division

considered the primary users. The users are expected to learn from the evaluation to steer decision-making for continuous improvement, adaptation, and deliberate change of the program during implementation and for the design of subsequent scale-up initiatives. Given the innovative nature of the program and this developmental evaluation, the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) and regional evaluation units are secondary users who hope to learn from the evaluation process on the applicability of the DEV approach to evaluating WFP work, and to inform guidance on innovative evaluations approaches.[4] Key external users of the evaluation are the RF; governments and other partners; beneficiaries; and the School Meals Coalition, who may use relevant findings to inform the design and implementation of other programs and to continue building a body of knowledge in the food systems field. Other external partners, such as research institutions, may also benefit from the learning generated by this evaluation.[5]

9. **Evaluation team:** The evaluation team was comprised of two Development Evaluators who conducted the evaluation design, data collection, data analysis, and feedback loop learning processes, and regularly prepared evaluative learning products on which this final report is based. An Auxiliary Evaluator joined the team in January 2025 to analyze the evidence across countries, synthesize the learning and draft this final Evaluation Report. The Evaluation Managers from WFP's PPGS team managed the evaluation through all phases. Two OEV Evaluation Officers provided second-level quality assurance.

10. An SLC made up of key project stakeholders provided ongoing, timely feedback on findings, learnings and decisions. Lastly, an Evaluation Committee, chaired by School Meals and Social Protection Service Director Carmen Burbano, oversaw the evaluation process, made key strategic decisions and reviewed evaluation products.[6]

11. **Timing of the evaluation:** The evaluation was organized in three main components which were overlapping and built upon each other, as is characteristic for a developmental approach:

    i. **The co-design component**, which began in July 2023 focused on co-creating the Strategic Learning Framework, finalizing the methodological and quality assurance approaches, defining roles and responsibilities, and establishing the SLC, notably at the first Strategic Learning Workshop in Nairobi in September 2023;[7]

    ii. **The evidence gathering and documentation component**, including in-country missions and periodic meetings of the SLC to share ongoing learning, which took place between the third quarter of 2023 and the second quarter of 2025; and

    iii. **The global sense-making component**, focused on aggregating the learning generated throughout the evaluation, synthesizing and sharing it with the SLC and beyond and producing the Evaluation Report. This phase took place between the fourth quarter of 2023 until the publication of this Evaluation Report in September 2025.

12. A timeline of the evaluation can be found in Annex 2.[8]

1.2. Context

The food system and its challenges

13. Over the past fifty years, changes in the food system have led to significant advancements in food security. However, these advancements have been unequally distributed. Many of these changes, which prioritized

[4] The first work stream in WFP Corporate Evaluation Strategy (CES 2022) is on Adaptative and Innovative methods as WFP is committed to ensuring that evaluations adapt to contexts and continue to innovate as appropriate
[5] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division.
[6] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division.
[7] Due to the nature of the Developmental Evaluation, this co-design phase continued throughout the process, allowing the design of the evaluation to be adapted to the different contexts in which the projects were being implemented.
[8] WFP. 2024. Scoping Document Version 2, WFP – Rockefeller Foundation Development Evaluation, March 2024

yield and calories, have created a USD 9 trillion global food system that generates negative health, environmental, and equity externalities estimated at USD 19.8 trillion.[9]

14. Today, 3 billion people have low-quality diets.[10] In many countries, the majority of the population simply cannot afford nutritious foods. In certain regions like Ghana, for example, more than 70% of households cannot afford a nutritious diet.[11] In low- and middle-income countries, over half of young women and adolescent girls are not meeting their micronutrient needs.[12] The prevalence rates of overweight and obesity are increasing in every region and most rapidly in low- and middle-income countries.[13] All countries targeted by the project face serious challenges to food security and nutritious diets. In Rwanda, 20.6% of the population is food insecure. Although the country has made progress on nutrition, especially for children under five, stunting and underweight remain prevalent, particularly in rural areas and for those in the lowest wealth quintile.[14]

15. The food systems in the six target countries exists in unique contexts. Table 1 summarizes key information about each country's demographics, measures of human development and gender equality, economy, food security, health and nutrition, education, agriculture, and WFP work in the country in addition to support for school meals.

Table 1: Country-specific statistics

Table 1: Country-specific statistics

Country-Specific Statistics						
	Benin	**Burundi**	**Ghana**	**Honduras**	**India**	**Rwanda**
Population, *2023* [15]	14.1 million	13.7 million	33.8 million	10.6 million	1.4 billion	14.0 million
Human development index ranking, *2022*[16]	173	187	145	138	134	161
Gender inequality index ranking, *2022*[17]	160	128	130	102	108	98
Economy and poverty[18]						
Headcount ratio at $3.65/day 2017 PPP, *2024*	36%	95.6%	29.9%	22.7%	7.1%	57.9%
Adjusted GDP growth,	-2%	-8.2%	-3.3%	-3.5%	-1.3%	-2.8%

[9] United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS.2021). The True Cost and True Price of Food

[10] Haddad, L., Hawkes, C., Waage, J., Webb, P., Godfray, C. and Toulmin, C. 2016. Food Systems and Diets: Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century. London, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.

[11] Global Nutrition Report 2018. Available at: https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/global-nutrition-report-2018/

[12] Haddad, L., Hawkes, C., Waage, J., Webb, P., Godfray, C. and Toulmin, C. 2016. Food Systems and Diets: Facing the Challenges of the 21st Century. London, Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition.

[13] The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report. Lancet. 2019 Feb 23;393(10173):791-846. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32822-8.

[14] Ravesloot, B., Downen, J., Barber, H., Finan, P., Haddad, R., and Mueller, M. 2023. Mid-term Evaluation USDA McGovern-Dole Grant for WFP Home-Grown School Feeidng Project in Rwanda (2020 to 2025).

[15] World Bank. 2025. Population, total. Accessed from: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL

[16] UNDP. 2022. Human Development Insights. Accessed from: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks

[17] UNDP. 2022. Gender Inequality Index (GII). Accessed from: https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII

[18] Sustainable Development Report. 2025. Country Profiles. Accessed from: https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles

2022						
Government spending on health and education (as % of GDP)	3.5% *2022*	7.1% *2021*	5.1% *2022*	8.8% *2022*	5.8% *2021*	7.7% *2022*
Food security, nutrition, and health[19]						
Undernourishment, *2021*	9.9%	NA	4.9%	18.7%	16.6%	31.6%
Stunting	32.2% *2018*	55.8% *2022*	17.5% *2017*	18.7% *2019*	35.5% *2020*	33.1% *2020*
Wasting	5.0% *2018*	4.9% *2022*	6.8% *2017*	1.9% *2019*	18.7% *2020*	1.1% *2020*
Percent of population in crisis phase of hunger[20]	4%	10%	3%	19%	NA	NA
Population using basic drinking water services, *2022*	67.5%	62.4%	88.4%	95.8%	93.3%	65.1%
Population using basic sanitation services, *2022*	19.5%	45.7%	28.6%	84.4%	78.4%	73.8%
Education[21]						
Net primary enrolment rate	94.6% *2022*	80.3% *2022*	88.7% *2021*	77.6% *2021*	98.5% *2023*	91.2% *2021*
Literacy rate overall	66.4% *2022*	93.6% *2022*	85.9% *2022*	96.1% *2019*	97% *2023*	90.0% *2022*
For women[22]	59.1%	93.2%	82.8%	97.3%	96%	92%
Lower secondary completion rate overall	29.1% *2022*	28.9% *2022*	74.1% *2019*	36.5% *2023*	85.5% *2023*	32.3% *2023*
For women[23]	27.7%	32.6%	73.5%	40.4%	86.5%	35.7%
Agriculture						
Percent of population employed in	28%	85%	35%	23%	44%	55%

[19] ibid
[20] IPC. 2025. IPC Mapping Tool. Accessed from: https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/ipc-mapping-tool/
[21] Sustainable Development Report. 2025. Country Profiles. Accessed from: https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles
[22] World Bank. 2025. Literacy rate (5). Accessed from: https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/se-adt?age=15-24&gender=total
[23] World Bank. 2025. Lower secondary completion rate, total (% of relevant age group). Accessed from: https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/indicator/se-sec-cmpt-lo-zs?view=trend&geos=WLD

agriculture, *2023*[24]						
Percent of women employed in agriculture[25]	15%	92%	30%	5%	61%	65%
Percent of GDP from agriculture, *2023*[26]	25.4%	25.2%	21.1%	12.0%	16.0%	27.1%

Other WFP work in the country	
Benin[27]	In addition to working with the government to include nutrition-sensitive interventions as part of the school meals programme, WFP partners with the government to facilitate an emergency nutrition response to complement cash-based transfers to shock-affected people. WFP also supports women living with HIV to implement income-generating activities like market gardening and processing agricultural products. Smallholder agricultural market support programmes include helping producers and processors ensure supply of nutrient-rich foods such as yellow maize, red cowpea, unpolished parboiled rice, and fortified maize flour and infant flours. WFP also supports the government to manage food security monitoring and early warning systems and emergency preparedness systems.
Burundi[28]	WFP provides food and cash assistance to 120,000 refugees and asylum seekers in camps and transit centres and emergency food and cash assistance to over 430,000 returnees and severely food insecure households. WFP works with the Government to integrate refugees into the national social protection system. In partnership with the Government of Burundi, WFP grows smallholder farmers' capacities in food systems, climate-smart agricultural practices, and post-harvest handling and storage. WFP also reinforces national emergency preparedness and response capacities and supports vital logistics and supply chain services across the country, ensuring the prompt delivery of life-saving assistance through storage and transport of essential goods and fuels. In 2024, WFP reconditioned 25,000 tons of maize with modern techniques and trained warehouse staff in safe, efficient stock handling in order to strengthen the capacity of the national food reserve agency.
Ghana[29]	WFP works with the Ghana Refugee board and other partners to provide cash to host communities and asylum seekers fleeing insecurity in Burkina Faso. Capacity strengthening for emergency preparedness, risk reduction, and response for partners such as the National Disaster Management Organisation. WFP provides nearly 5,600 women and children in a highly food-insecure district with food assistance and training on digital finance and climate-smart agriculture WFP trains government partners who train smallholder farmers in post-harvest management. They also provide services for humanitarian partners

[24] World Bank. 2025. Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (modelled ILO estimate). Accessed from: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS
[25] World Bank. 2025. Employment in agriculture, female (% of total employment) (modelled ILO estimate). Accessed from: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.FE.ZS
[26] World Bank. 2025. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP). Accessed from: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS
[27] World Food Programme. 2025. Benin. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/benin.
[28] World Food Programme. 2025. Burundi. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/burundi
[29] World Food Programme. 2025. Ghana. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/ghana

	such as transport, procurement, logistics, data analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and digital services.
India[30]	WFP works to improve the efficiency, accountability and transparency of India's own subsidized food distribution system, which brings supplies of wheat, rice, sugar and kerosene oil to around 800 million poor people across the country. Support reaches food-based social protection systems, climate resilience building, and integrated risk management. WFP's Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping software allows for better targeting of food relief work and policies. Additionally, WFP is working with the government to establish a state-level food security analysis unit.
Honduras[31]	WFP provides life-saving food assistance to complement government responses to sudden and slow-onset disasters. In addition, WFP helps strengthen national protection systems and policies and supports the government to enhance climate-smart emergency preparedness, planning, and response capacity. WFP provides food and technical assistance to vulnerable urban and rural populations. This includes supporting smallholder farmers to adopt climate-resilient practices and empowering women and youth through training in entrepreneurship, vocational skills, and financial literacy. WFP targets children from 6-23 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls to prevent stunting and micronutrient deficiencies. Additionally, they empower households – particularly women and youth – through training in entrepreneurship, vocational skills and financial literacy. WFP also supports smallholder farmers in adopting climate-resilient practices and improving crisis management to reduce migration pressures.
Rwanda[32]	WFP provides cash-based transfers to help refugees and returnees purchase food. WFP works with the Government to improve its emergency preparedness and response policy framework and systems, and on strengthening disaster risk management approaches and systems. They are also supporting resilience to disasters in partnership with the government through projects such as land terracing, restoring marshland, and strengthening national social protection programmes. WFP is supporting children aged under 5, adolescents, and pregnant and nursing women and girls, through improved access to nutritious foods, to reduce chronic malnutrition. WFP provides support for the design, implementation, and scale-up of national food security and nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes.

16. All six countries have experienced challenges affecting the food system. In Burundi, a food-deficit country, increases in the price of basic food commodities in 2022 caused by the global food price crisis were exacerbated by a rain deficit and resulting reduction in harvests. The country has seen a 3% increase in

[30] World Food Programme. 2025. India. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/india
[31] World Food Programme. 2025. Honduras. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/honduras
[32] World Food Programme. 2025. Rwanda. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/rwanda

chronic malnutrition from 2020 to 2022 and over half of children under 5 are stunted.[33] A fuel shortage has also led to regular power cuts, which affected the capacity of farmers and processors to produce food.[34] Benin also faces challenges to food security. Almost 10% of the population face acute malnutrition and one in four households are moderately or severely food insecure.[35] In India, the government operates the world's largest food-based social protection system, which reaches more than 800 million people per month. Despite this, food and nutrition insecurity remain a challenge, with the country ranking 107 out of 121 countries on the 2022 Global Hunger Index.[36] In Honduras, the combined impact of malnutrition, overweight, and obesity represents a large cost to the country. A 2017 study estimated that the dual burden of malnutrition in the country generates USD 618 million in annual costs, approximately 2.7% of the yearly GDP.[37]

17. In 2014, the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition released its technical brief titled, How Can Agriculture and Food System Policies Improve Nutrition?[38] In it, the Panel recommends the implementation of policies across the food system to reduce undernutrition and growing overweight, obesity and other diet-related non-communicable diseases. Some of the policy recommendations include making better use of existing public food distribution programs such as school meal interventions, ensuring that they are agriculture-supportive and nutrition-sensitive;[39] integrating nutrition education into all available national services to reach consumers; expanding agriculture-supportive social protection programs; and focus on improving the diets of adolescent girls and adult women. This wide consensus on the multisectoral investment that school meal programmes represent was reaffirmed during the 2023 Food Systems Summit +2 stocktaking event. If food and education systems are simultaneously failing, then the way to a more sustainable future starts by addressing these systemic challenges.[40]

18. Today's food systems must be transformed if the global community is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, especially SDG 2 to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030.[41] Climate change is having profound effects on food systems, while food systems contribute to a changing climate. For example, in Honduras, recurrent droughts and floods have reduced food availability, especially for smallholder farmers who rely on agriculture as their livelihood.[42] Food systems are also responsible for the accelerated pace of natural resource degradation while also being inherently affected by this decline.[43]

School meal programs as platforms for food system transformation

19. School meal programmes can support local agriculture, markets, and healthier diets for schoolchildren while simultaneously improving their health, nutrition, and education, thereby making communities more resilient. These programmes can transform lives, particularly those of women, and communities and serve as platforms to address some of the challenges of food systems described in the previous section. There is robust evidence that school meals programmes are one of the most effective tools to address

[33] WFP. 2023. Burundi: Annual Country Report 2022. Available at: https://www.wfp.org/annual-country-reports-2022

[34] Coll, J., DelBas J. February 2024. Burundi Food System Model.

[35] WFP. 2023. Benin: Annual Country Report 2022. Available at: https://www.wfp.org/annual-country-reports-2022

[36] WFP. 2023. WFP India Country Brief. Available at: https://www.wfp.org/countries/india

[37] WFP. 2023. Honduras: Annual Country Report 2022. Available at: https://www.wfp.org/annual-country-reports-2022

[38] Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition. 2014. Summary Brief: How can Agriculture and Food System Policies Improve Nutrition? Available at: https://www.panita.or.tz/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/panita_intenternational_9.pdf

[39] The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition published a 2015 policy brief titled Healthy Meals in Schools: Policy Innovations Linking Agriculture, Food Systems and Nutrition. The Panel finds that "evidence from around the world on locally-sourced school meals reveals a multiple-win opportunity for policymakers with important benefits for school achievement, employment and national economic growth" Available at: https://www.glopan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HealthyMealsBrief.pdf).

[40] UNFSS, 2023. School Meals Powering Food System Transformation (unfoodsystemshub.org)

[41] HLPE. 2020. Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome

[42] WFP. 2023. Honduras: Annual Country Report 2022. Available at: https://www.wfp.org/annual-country-reports-2022

[43] HLPE. 2020. Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome

barriers to education for girls. Some of the most common health conditions affecting access to education, such as hunger and malnutrition, are more prevalent in girls, and gender inequalities and exclusion can place girls at greater risk of ill health, neglect and hunger.[44] For example, women and girls are, for physiological reasons, more likely to experience higher rates of anaemia, than are men and boys.[45] In fact, women and girls represent 60% of all undernourished people in the world.[46] When girls are out of school, they are more vulnerable to forced marriage, early pregnancy and violence.[47] But school meal programmes have demonstrated effects on reducing malnutrition and anaemia in primary school-aged children and adolescent girls.[48] A recent United Nations agency review of evidence finds that school meals are among the two interventions with the strongest evidence of impact on equity and inclusion in education (the other one being conditional cash transfers).[49]

20. Lower-middle- and low-income countries increasingly see home-grown school meal programmes as an opportunity to improve the livelihoods of local farmers and communities and to strengthen the nexus among nutrition, healthier diets, agriculture and social protection. The predictable demand that these programs represent can create structured and dependable markets for local food production and private sector enterprises. Local procurement can also be a strategy for diversifying school meals with fresh, nutritious, locally fortified and/or indigenous food commodities and for promoting healthy eating habits among schoolchildren, while boosting women's empowerment through targeting the critical role they play in food production and preparation.

Partnership and WFP work

21. In the six countries where the global and regional projects operate, WFP has been working with governments to support school meals for decades. One of the criteria for country office selection for the global project was WFP capacity, positioning, and partnerships. COs with strong experience in home-grown school meals, with in-country capacities, strong relationships with the government and partnerships, and where school meals represent a large portion of the country portfolio were considered.[50]

22. Each of the countries selected for the project are also characterized by large-scale government and/or WFP school meal operations and by potential enabling environments for introducing nutritious foods in the school meal, such as private sector capacity and interest. In each country, WFP works with a variety of partners to support school meal implementation.[51] A full list of partners engaged through the Rockefeller funded project in each country is included in Table 2.

23. WFP's involvement in school meals varies across country contexts. In Benin, Burundi, Honduras, and Rwanda, WFP plays a dual role of providing technical assistance and capacity strengthening to the national programme as well as directly providing school meals. In India and Ghana, WFP acts as a technical assistance provider to the government and does not directly implement school meal procurement or delivery. In all six countries, WFP works with smallholder farmers to supply local produce to schools.

---

[44] Bundy, D.A.P. 2011. Rethinking School Health: A Key Component of Education for All. Directions in Development; Human Development. Washington, DC, World Bank.

[45] Bundy, D.A.P., Schultz, L., Sarr, B., Banham L., Colenso, P. and Drake, L. 2018. The School as a Platform for Addressing Health in Middle Childhood and Adolescence. In D.A.P. Bundy, N. de Silva, S. Horton, D.T. Jamison and G.C. Patton, eds. Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition): Volume 8, Child and Adolescent Health and Development. Washington, DC, World Bank.

[46] FAO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. Available at: http://www.fao.org/3/I9553EN/i9553en.pdf

[47] Wodon,Quentin T.; Male,Chata; Nayihouba,Kolobadia Ada; Onagoruwa, Adenike Opeoluwa; Savadogo,Aboudrahyme; Yedan,Ali; Edmeades, Jeff; Kes, Aslihan; John, Neetu; Murithi, Lydia; Steinhaus, Mara; Petroni, Suzanne. Economic impacts of child marriage: global synthesis report (English). Economic Impacts of Child Marriage, Washington, D.C. : World Bank Group.

[48] Adelman, S., Gilligan, D.O., Konde-Lule, J. and Alderman, H. 2019. School Feeding Reduces Anemia Prevalence in Adolescent Girls and Other Vulnerable Household Members in a Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial in Uganda. The Journal of Nutrition, Volume 149, Issue 4, April 2019, Pages 659–666, https://doi.org/10.1093/jn/ nxy305.

[49] Mundy, K. and Proulx, K. 2019. Making Evaluation Work for the Achievement of SDG 4 Target 5: Equality and Inclusion in Education. UNESCO, NORAD, World Bank Group, UNICEF.

[50] WFP. 2022. Proposal submitted to The Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing good food through school feeding programmes.

[51] Ibid

Growing momentum for school meal programmes worldwide

24. There is considerable and growing political support for school meals, which translates into increasing commitment to establish school meals programmes. It is difficult to find a country that is not attempting to provide school meals to a proportion of the school age population. In 2022, there were about 418 million children benefiting from school meals globally, an increase from the 388 million children observed in 2020. In 2022, more children received school meals than at any time in human history, making school meals the most extensive social safety net in the world. This growth reflected a widespread institutionalization of these programs as part of government policies for national development. More than 90 percent of the cost of school meal programmes comes from domestic funds, and almost all countries have formally adopted national policies that will help ensure these are continuing commitments.[52] Within the six countries, this project supports existing school meal activities by funding social behavior change communication, fortification, and other auxiliary interventions, rather than directly purchasing food for school meals. Some other school meal donors in these countries include the United States, Saudi Arabia, France, Germany, Netherlands, Korea, Monaco, Japan, China, private donors, host governments, and others.

25. The African Union Malabo Declaration of 2014 renewed the political commitment toward the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, including utilizing home-grown school meals to support local and rural economies. In addition, during the 2016 ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, a decision was passed wherein the African Union Assembly of Heads of State recognized the importance of home-grown school meals to access education and to supporting local and rural economies. Translating policy statements into action, African Union member states increased the number of children receiving school meals from 38.4 million individuals in 2013, up to 87 million in 2024, representing a 127% increase over the period.[53]

26. Governments are prioritizing these investments because they have significant social and economic returns. Initial cost–benefit analyses carried out across 18 countries by WFP, assessing both WFP-led and nationally-led school meal programs, found that every USD 1 invested in school meals programs would yield an economic return of USD 3 – USD 10 from improved health, education and productivity.[54] Additionally, preliminary results of a cost–benefit desk analysis in 14 low- and middle-income countries pointed to an economic return of up to USD 9 for every USD 1 invested. This represents a substantial return on investment, comparable in magnitude to several of the best-buy intersectoral interventions highlighted by seminal cost-benefit analysis exercises such as those from the Copenhagen Consensus exercise.[55] This large scale of benefits reflects the potentially additive (if not multiplicative) returns on investment to multiple sectors: health and nutrition, and education – through human capital development; local economy – via local procurement and local employment (providing new farming jobs and wages); and social protection – through substantial in-kind resource transfers to households, especially the poorest. The boost of the local economy has a direct effect on women empowerment. School meal-based programmes have created about 4 million direct jobs in 85 countries, most of them for women.[56] In addition to the multiplicative benefits of school meals, food fortification has an estimated benefit-cost ratio of 27 to 1, making it another promising investment for governments.[57]

Government support for school meals in the intervention

---

[52] WFP. 2022. State of School Feeding Worldwide.

[53] African Union. March 2025. 10th African Day of School Feeding Commemorated in Bangui with Renewed Commitments to Expanding School Meal Programs Across Africa. Available from: https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250305/10th-african-day-school-feeding-commemorated-bangui-renewed-commitments#:~:text=The%20Executive%20Director%20of%20the,from%2066%20million%20in%202022.

[54] WFP, 2017. Counting the Beans: The True Cost of a Plate of Food Around the World. Rome: WFP. https://www.wfp.org/publications/2017-counting-beans-true-cost-plate-food-around-world

[55] Copenhagen Consensus Center: https://www.copenhagenconsensus.com

[56] School Meals Coalition (July 2023)

[57] Garrett, G. et al. "Doubling Down on Food Fortification to Fortify the Future." Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. 2019.

27. Government commitment to school meals and nutritious diets for children was a key criteria for country selection in the global project. In each of the countries where the global and regional projects operate, the government is a member of the SMC and/or is politically involved in school meals at the highest levels of government. In all countries, governments have expressed political commitment to advancing the quality and coverage of school meals programmes and have made concrete evidence of commitments, including budgetary allocations, presidential statements, and commitments under the School Meals Coalition.

28. **Benin:** There is high level political support for school meals coming from President Talon, backed by a significant financial commitment. The ambition of the Government is to reach 100% of the public-school children by 2026 (from 75% of children in 2022). Since 2017, WFP Benin has implemented the school canteen program on behalf of the Government, which provides USD 84.9 million per year. Currently, 5,709 schools (over 75% of public primary schools) and 1,400,000 schoolchildren were supported by the program with the aim of reducing the dropout rate, improving academic performance, ensuring a suitable nutritious meal to beneficiaries, and developing local agriculture.[58] The Government of Benin was working towards taking over operational support for school meals under its National Agency for Nutrition and Food Security (ANAN) by October 2024. As at the time of writing this report, the national school meal programme has been fully transferred to ANAN.[59] However, WFP continues the direct implementation of the programme in some schools thanks to the funding of Netherland, with introduction of Cash Based Transfer allowing schools to buy locally nutritious food, including vegetables and animal proteins (eggs).

29. **Burundi:** WFP works with the Ministry of Education to support the government-led school meal programme, which provided nutritious meals to over 700,000 school children in 2024 and supported smallholder farmers through local procurement. That same year, the Government of Burundi contributed USD 9 million to the school meal programme, tripling its previous allocation.[60] The government is a member of the SMC and signed commitments to enhance school meals quality and coverage in 2023.[61]

30. **Ghana:** Ghana's national home-grown school meals programme was one of the first to be established in Africa among low and lower middle-income countries and is an example of sustained national commitment to school meals. The national school meals coverage at the time of the project proposal included 3.5 million of 5.1 million primary learners at a cost to government of over USD 94.4 million per year.[62]

31. **Honduras:** The national school meal programme is the largest social protection program in Honduras and a key tool for the development of children in the country. For 180 days a year, approximately 1.3 million children (representing 100% of learners) in 21,000 public schools nationwide, benefit from school meals, at a cost to Government of USD 40 million, with another USD 51,000 in external funding. WFP has been supporting the Government of Honduras with the implementation of the national school meals programme for more than 20 years and has established an important network of local, private sector, academia, and international cooperation partners for the implementation of school meal activities.[63]

32. **India:** India is among the world's largest economies and is a food surplus nation. The country also has some of the world's largest food-based social protection programs, investing over USD 1.6 billion per year to reach 118 million children with hot cooked school meals, as part of subsidized monthly rations to more than 800 million individuals, including 90 million women and young children, with targeted supplementary

---

[58] WFP. 2022. Proposal submitted to The Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing good food through school feeding programmes.

[59] WFP. 2025. Benin Annual Country Report 2024. Available from: https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000165343/download/?_ga=2.261152589.1331466572.1751528131-1172443947.1746622946

[60] WFP. 2024. Burundi Annual Country Report 2024. Available from: https://www.wfp.org/publications/annual-country-reports-burundi

[61] SMC. 2024. Commitment: Burundi. Available from: https://schoolmealscoalition.org/member/burundi#:~:text=Commitment&text=Gradually%20increase%20school%20feeding%20coverage,feeding%20through%20the%20Finance%20Act.

[62] WFP. 2022State of School Feeding Worldwide 2022.

[63] Ibid

nutrition. Yet, a significant proportion of India's population of 1.3 billion people still suffer from food and nutrition-related challenges. Although the Government has been upgrading their transportation systems and supply chains, they still face challenges of efficiencies and grain loss due to inadequate storage and variations in commodity quality. WFP's core strength in India is its strong connection and ability to work closely with the national and state governments to meet their strategic priorities, utilizing WFP's unique global and technical experience and skills.[64]

33. **Rwanda:** The Rwanda National School Feeding Programme (NSFP) provides daily school meals to over 4 million children nationwide, with extensive technical assistance from WFP. To ensure NSFP's long-term sustainability, the Government of Rwanda approved a National School Feeding Strategy and a Financing Strategy in 2024, jointly developed by WFP, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN). These strategies aim to secure full and sustainable funding for the NSFP over the next decade. For the 2024/2025 school year, the Government raised the annual school meal budget to RWF 94 billion (USD 72.4 million), up from RWF 89.9 billion (USD 69.2 million) in 2023/2024. Rwanda is also a part of the Eastern Africa School Meals Coalition network.[65]

The catalytic role of the School Meals Coalition

34. A prime example of the growing momentum for global school meals is the success of the SMC. This global initiative was established in 2021 by a group of countries, mobilized and supported by WFP, at the UN Food Systems Summit in New York. As of April 2025, the SMC comprises 108 member countries, 6 regional bodies and more than 140 non-state partners,[66] all of whom have resolved to ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive a healthy, nutritious daily meal in school by 2030.

35. In their founding charter, the governments declare three specific goals:

- **Restore what we had:** Support all countries to re-establish effective school meal programs and repair what was lost during the pandemic:
- **Reach those we missed:** Reach the most vulnerable schoolchildren in low and lower middle-income countries, estimated at 73 million, that were not reached even before the pandemic.
- **Improve our approach:** Improve the quality and efficiency of existing school meals programs in all countries. Ensure that nutrition-sensitive approaches are linked to nutrition education and other health interventions.

36. This evaluation is intended to leverage the catalytic role of the Coalition to share the wider learning across the network of governments and partners, and to leverage data and insights collected by the Coalition where relevant.[29]

1.3. Subject being evaluated

37. The subjects of the developmental evaluation are the approaches and innovations tested and developed within the RF-WFP partnership portfolio entitled, "Catalyzing good food through school feeding and food programmes". This included the approaches tested within the 'global' and 'regional' projects, and the innovative nature of the RF-WFP partnership overall.

38. The portfolio of projects under review was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, in two grants: USD 3.3 million was granted for 3 years (November 2021–October 2024) for the regional project and USD 10.7 million was granted for 2.5 years (Nov 2022-April 2025) for the global project.

Overall project objectives and activities

[64] WFP. 2022. India Annual Country Report 2022. Available from: https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000147959/download/?_ga=2.189955691.1331466572.1751528131-1172443947.1746622946

[65] WFP. 2024. Rwanda: Annual country report 2024. Available from: https://www.wfp.org/publications/annual-country-reports-rwanda

[66] See: https://schoolmealscoalition.org/about

39. The overall objectives of the projects were to improve the nutritional quality of diets, food-based safety net sustainability, equity of national food systems, and positive economic impact for local communities (Global Project); and to scale access to nutritious foods in school meal programmes (Regional Project). The two projects aimed to develop and test approaches to shift towards more nutritious options for school meals which boost local economic opportunity and increase environmental sustainability.

40. Table 2 summarizes the two projects that form the basis of WFP and RF's joint work at country level, while the descriptions below provide more detail of the scope of each project, including their respective timeframes, partners, beneficiaries and themes covered by the evaluation. Annex 7 summarizes the expected and actual project outcomes and outputs for both projects at the time of the inception of the evaluation. Project targets and actuals for the Burundi project were not available to evaluators, but project indicators have been included in Annex 7. Table 2 also provides an overview of the project outcomes and outputs. Within the overall project outcomes and outputs, each participating country identified their own project targets.

Table 2: Summary of relevant project information[67]

Project shorthand	**Global Project**	**Regional Project**
Project Title	**Catalyzing good food through school feeding and food-based programs**	**Scaling up fortified whole meal in school feeding programs in Rwanda and Burundi and supporting an innovation hub in Kenya**
Timeframe	November 2022 to April 2025	November 2021 to October 2024
Geographic coverage	**Benin:** Nationwide coverage **Ghana**: All components implemented across Upper East, Northern, Ashanti, and Greater Accra regions. **Honduras** Biofortified beans purchased in Catacamas, OlanchoMilk processing in Pespire, Choluteca Pasteurized milk and bean provision to school meals in northern Choluteca cone (Pespire, San Jose, San Isidro, San Antonio de Flores) **India:** • SBCC activities in Bihar, Assam, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh states • School kitchen garden pilot in Rajasthan • Technical assistance for rice fortification in Tripura, Assam, and Maharashtra.	**Burundi:** Ngozi, Kirundo, Muyinga, Bujumbura, Cibitoke, and Bubanza provices **Rwanda:** Nationwide capacity strengthening support. Funding complemented ongoing WFP school meals implementation in Burera, Gasabo, Karongi, Kayonza, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, and Rutsiro (and Kenya innovation hub, not covered by the scope of this evaluation)
Project aim	Improve the nutritional quality of diets, food-based safety net sustainability, equity of national food systems, and positive economic impact for local communities	Scale access to nutritious foods in school meals programmes
Expected	Increased institutional and public demand for nutritious school meals, which are equitably and	

[67] Sources: Project proposals submitted by WFP for the two respective projects; WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division.

outcomes	sustainably produced.	
	Strengthened capacities of smallholder farmers, food producers, processors, and providers of school meals to deliver safe and more nutritious food	
	Improved policies and/or practices for healthy diets and equitable food production, procurement and/or preparation	
Expected outputs (selected)	Relevant evidence is increasingly produced along with better measurement of results to inform decision-making on nutritious menus, effectiveness and efficiency. See Annex 7 for a complete list of expected and actual outputs.	
	286,000 boys and girls receiving nutrient rich and fortified food enabled through catalytic funding 16,023 metric tons of nutrient rich and fortified food provided for girls and boys benefiting from school-based programming enabled through catalytic funding 246,000 people reached through interpersonal SBCC approaches promoting nutrient rich and fortified foods 10,161 smallholder farmers, food processors, and providers of school meals engaged in capacity strengthening to deliver safe and nutritious food 8 national policies, strategies, and programmes in the field of school health and nutrition strengthened/developed, enabled through catalystic funding	Number of schools having received fortified whole grain maize flour Number of schools using biofortified beans in school meals 10 people engaged in capacity strengthening initiatives facilitated by WFP to enhance national stakeholder capacities contributing to zero hunger and other SDGs 14,000 of people reached by interpersonal SBCC approaches 6 knowledge products produced 2 national policies, strategies, and programmes in the field of school health and nutrition, strengthened/ developed, enabled through RF catalytic funding
Key implementation partners	**Benin:** Directorate of Food and Applied Nutrition (DANA), Benin Food Safety Agency (ABSSA), Ministry of Industry and Trade (ANM), International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), National Agency for Food and Nutrition (ANAN), UAK, FSA/UAC, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), AGSOL, Intellecap, local NGOs **Ghana:** Food and Drug Administration (FD), Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Food Research Institute, National Food Fortification Alliance (NFFA), Ghana Health Service (GHS), Ghana Education Service (GES), FAO, Africa Nutrition Society **Honduras:** Secretary of Social Development (SEDESOL), National Agricultural Health Service (SENASA), International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA), Directorate of Agricultural Science and Technology (DICTA), ADEPES, PROLANCHO, National University of Agriculture (UNAG) **India:** Department of Food and Consumer Protection, Bihar; Departments of Food, Education, Women & Child Development,	**Burundi:** Government of Burundi Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, and Trade and Industry, National Multi-sectoral Platform of Food Security and Nutrition, Centre National de Technologie Alimentaire, Burundi Bureau of Standards, UNICEF, FAO, UNDFW, World Bank, IFAD, Swiss Development Cooperation, Scaling up Nutrition Business Network, Buja-Hub, IITA, ILRI, GAIN, DSM. **Rwanda:** Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, National Child Development Agency, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Gardens for Health International (GHI), Vanguard Economics (VE), Educational Consulting Success (ECOS) Ltd. **Kenya:** Tukalime

	Chhattisgrh; Rajasthan School Education Department, SKNAU, GAIN, Institute of Health Management and Research, UNICEF Key collaborators at the global level also Fortified Whole Grain Alliance and the School Meals Coalition.	
Budget	USD10.7 million	USD3.3 million
Donor	Rockefeller Foundation	
Target beneficiaries *See Annex 7 for actual beneficiaries*	In Benin, Ghana and Honduras combined, pilot projects aimed to benefit 1,104,000 school-age children, as well as smallholder farmers in the vicinity of schools, caterers and cooks; and indirectly benefit 4.35 million children. In India, the project aimed to directly benefit 325,000 children through school gardens and 107 million people through SBCC; and indirectly benefit 110 million school children through whole grain flour and rice fortification and 800 million through advocacy campaigns.	The project aimed to reach 166,500 school-aged children and 50,000 adults through evidence-based implementation and innovation, improved capacity for nutritious and safe food, improved supply chain management and procurement, increased demand for nutritious food, and strengthened public food procurement and school meal policies.
Targeted nutrient-rich or fortified commodities *See Annex 7 for planned and actual transfers enabled through the project*[68]	**Benin:** Parboiled unpolished rice, yellow maize grain, Fortified cottonseed oil, Fresh foods, Fortified rice, Fortified wholegrain maize flour, red cowpeas, and eggs. **Ghana:** Fortified, parboiled, unpolished rice, parboiled unpolished rice, soya beans, tomatoes, onions, peppers. orange flesh sweet potatoes. **Honduras:** Bio-fortified beans, fortified pasteurized milk **India:** Fortified rice, fortified wheat flour, millet	**Burundi:** Fortified wholegrain maize meal **Rwanda:** Fortified wholegrain maize meal

41. Project activities were intended to address micronutrient deficiencies, improve schooling effectiveness, and improve intergenerational opportunity for populations in conditions of vulnerability, particularly young girls. This in turn was expected to have a ripple effect in the overall food system, as the demand for nutritious foods signals for supply chains to shift to be responsive. Through this influence, WFP also intended to support local value chain actors, including smallholder farmers and caterers, and have a significant impact on their inclusion in markets, economic empowerment, and livelihoods. In countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, and India, the vast majority of these value chain actors are women.

42. The approaches tested and developed as part of the projects assumed that leveraging institutional food procurement mechanisms, strengthening supply chains, and influencing healthy eating behaviours through food-based programmes, primarily school meal programmes, would improve diet quality, sustainability of food-based safety nets, and equity of national food systems and would result in positive economic impacts for local communities.[69]

[68] Due to the catalytic nature of the project funding, no transfers were directly financed by the project. However, the project helped enable food transfers financed through other resources.

[69] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division.

43. Both the global and regional projects involved a combination of direct implementation to scale action and parallel work to build knowledge and evidence, test metrics, and advocate for change in healthier diets. For example, the global project activities were designed and implemented along four main components, explained in Table 3. Specific activities in each country for the global and regional projects are described in Annex 11.

The Global Project

Table 3: Global Project Components and Key Activities

Components	Activities
Component 1: Optimization of school menus and strengthening of demand and supply chains	Social behaviour change communication to influence attitudes and behaviours around the use of new products. Develop new recipes and cooking methods, support more holistic nutrition education and ensure equitable, inclusive and meaningful participation of women and underserved groups. Leverage and/or diversify existing procurement channels including fortified wholegrain flour, fortified brown rice and/or other bio-fortified foods, fruits, vegetables, legumes and animal-sourced protein (in certain contexts). Support Governments at national, sub-national and school level to connect school meal programs to local food production including a focused effort to involve women farmers/producers. Develop food quality and safety standards for cooks and other food handlers along the school meal supply chain, including private sector enterprises engaging in local fortification or the production of fortified wholegrain flour and Specialized Nutritious Foods. Introduce wholegrain and fortification technologies to food processors and build capacities of smallholder farmers, ensuring targeted participation of women. Broker investments and technical assistance towards small and medium enterprises focused on the supply of nutritious foods, such as fortified whole grain flours and rice, prioritizing those that deploy equal and fair employment practices for women and men.
Component 2: Assessment, metrics, and indicator development;	Develop and implement new metrics to capture several dimensions of meal and menu quality, reflective of diet-related risks associated with both undernutrition and overnutrition Undertake Fill the Nutrient Gap Analysis to identify the barriers faced by the most vulnerable to accessing and consuming healthy and nutritious foods. Conduct formative assessments of barriers linked to acceptability and consumption of whole grains, fortified foods and a more diverse diet among school age children as well as market and food supply chain analyses to better understand data on prices, food availability and food supply chains. Link and harmonize the use of WFP tools such as School Menu Planner PLUS and Enhance (Fill the Nutrient Gap 2.0) with dietary quality indicators, including Global Meal Quality Score and Global Diet Quality Score. Include disaggregated information on the involvement of men and women in the production process and value chains, to ensure an inclusive and equitable program design for both school children and local smallholder farmers.
Component 3: Advocacy and support for policy adoption and change	Promote policies, practices, programs and funding, globally and in the 4 proposed country contexts that promote more nutritious, sustainable and equitable approaches to school meals. Channel the products, achievements and tools developed through this partnership at the global level. Disseminate learning through the SMC to encourage other countries and partners to adopt the approach of this project. Connect the achievements of this project to global events. Support governments to design and adopt or amend specific procurement and fortification policies, school meals policies, healthy eating policies, and to adopt the indicators developed under component 1, among others.
Component 4: Development of the Good Food Scoring	Develop an understanding of whether and how the Good Food Scoring Framework, a framework for setting priorities and rating foods in terms of nutritional value, can be developed and used in Low and Middle Income Countries

Framework	Review the methodology for the Good Food Scoring Framework and map domains / principles and values that appear of interest to Low- and Middle-Income Countries Identify opportunities and challenges to its local adaptation and effective use. Potential for adoption through the SMC platform will also be assessed. Form an advisory committee at the global level for the framework.

44. For the global project, the subject of the evaluation was the approaches developed and tested to shift to more nutritious school meal options that promoted local economic opportunities and improved environmental sustainability.

45. In partnership with governments and private sector actors, the global project aimed to transform food systems in the four countries where it was implemented. Food systems work encompassed understanding the interrelations between the economic system, the sociocultural system, the ecological system and the educational system. Delivering more nutritious foods through school meals (educational system) entailed the following systemic work:

    - Strengthening local value chains and economies (economic system);
    - Introducing and adapting fortified foods to social behaviors and local cultural contexts, including gender equality issues (socio-cultural system); and
    - Producing food in a sustainable and climate resilient and responsive manner (ecological system).

46. The project combined direct implementation of project interventions with parallel knowledge and evidence creation, metrics testing, and advocacy for healthier diets and a strengthening of public policy, food procurement, and school meals. Annex 7 summarizes the expected and actual project outcomes.

47. The global project aspired to address issues of gender equality, equity and inclusion. This included a focus on actions that are known to predominantly affect women and girls, such as micronutrient deficiencies, access to education, and lack of inherited wealth.

The Regional Project (East Africa)

48. For the regional project, the subject of the evaluation was the approaches tested and developed to catalyze a food systems transformation approach that link innovations in agriculture with health, nutrition, and education (see Table 2).

49. These innovations were developed to improve the diets of people in the most extreme conditions of vulnerability in Rwanda and Burundi while developing markets for nutrient-rich foods. The project was implemented under four main pillars:

    - Good Food Procurement;
    - Good Food Policy;
    - Good Food Data; and
    - Good Food Innovation.

50. Overall, the regional project set out to leverage existing partnerships and generate new partnerships with government and private sector actors by implementing gender-transformative programming and integrating gender equality indicators, sex and age disaggregated data, gender equality analysis and products.[70]

Project innovations

51. Each country piloted a series of innovations under the project components. The projects took a "catalytic" approach in which funding was provided for auxiliary activities such as technical assistance and research,

[70] WFP proposal submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation "Scaling up fortified whole meal in school feeding programs in Rwanda and Burundi and supporting an innovation hub in Kenya", 1 October 2021

rather than directly supporting transfers to beneficiaries. Viewing the school meal as an institutional market within which the overall food system could be influenced was in itself an innovative approach. While using school meals as institutional markets to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and other value chain actors, such as cooks or caterers, is an objective of many school meals projects, a unique aspect of the WFP-RF projects was the aim of influencing the quality of the food available in the wider food system through the institutional market of the school meal.

52. Note that Innovations described in Table 4 are specific to the WFP-RF project at the time of project design. Absence of a check mark does not indicate that countries were not implementing similar activities through different initiatives.

Table 4: Country-specific innovations tested

Innovation tested	Benin	Burundi	Ghana	Honduras	India	Rwanda
Cash-based transfer pilot for school meal procurement with training of smallholder farmers, processors, and canteen committees and development of a toolkit for food safety and quality management.	✓					
Introduce wholegrain and fortification technologies to food processors and build capacities of smallholder farmers on biofortified food.	✓	✓				✓
Design of SBCC approaches to promote new nutritious products based on formative assessments of barriers, acceptability, and consumption among school age children.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Develop new recipes and cooking methods to enhance nutrition and reduce environmental footprint.	✓		✓			
Develop and implement metrics to capture dimensions of quality and capacity development	✓					
Integration of biofortified high iron beans to the food system through WFP's home-grown school feeding programme.	✓			✓		
Impact local economies through decentralized milk procurement for school meals.		✓		✓		

Pilot the Global Meal Quality Score (GMQS) system for measuring nutritional value of school meals.		✓	✓			
Develop and support guidelines and standards on school meals nutrition, food quality, and safety.			✓	✓		
Pilot fortified parboiled unpolished rice in school meals working with local rice millers and with the Ghanaian government to develop fortification standards.			✓			
Link and harmonize the use of WFP tools such as School Menu Planner PLUS and Enhance (Fill the Nutrient Gap 2.0) with dietary quality indicators, including GMQS and Global Diet Quality Score			✓			
Identify nutritious commodities for procurement by National Food buffer stock to benefit local economies. Disaggregate information on the involvement of men and women in the production process and value chain			✓			
Update nutritional guidelines and menus for school meals, perform analysis to understand the nutritional content of biofortified beans and milk to be included in the meal.				✓		
Continue the pilot-to-scale approach for promoting healthy food in school meals. This includes studies under the Rockefeller project on specific food baskets and activities such as school gardens for nutrition education.	✓					✓
Conduct campaigns to increase the production of high-iron beans.						✓
Conduct a market assessment for the National School Feeding Programme and a feasibility study on the inclusion of animal source foods in school feeding.	✓					✓

Develop formative research and strategy for SBC for good nutrition behaviors.	✓		✓	✓		✓

53. The evaluation focused on learning within and between components that are directly related within the projects, such as food fortification and advocacy activities (components 1 and 3 of the global project, respectively) and local economies and sustainability (components 1 and 2 of the global project, respectively).

The RF-WFP partnership as an innovation

54. The partnership between RF and WFP began in 2020 with a pilot project in Rwanda under the RF's Power of Procurement for Nutrition (PP4N) initiative. The regional project built on the results of the pilot in Rwanda, and the initiation of the global project was a further extension of the opportunities offered by the partnership between RF and WFP.

55. The strategic RF-WFP partnership is considered an innovation, particularly for WFP, given the new ecosystem of partners that it brought to WFP[71], its emphasis on co-creation, and the new ways of working that such an approach implies. While the partnership was used to put new approaches into practice at country level, it also provided an opportunity and a platform to draw from experiences and learn about approaches to food systems transformation globally. For these reasons, the innovative character of the RF-WFP partnership was also considered within the scope of this developmental evaluation.

Previous Relevant Evaluation Evidence

56. While there were no previous evaluations of the Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding project, school meal programmes, including home-grown school meals, is one of the areas of WFP work that is most evaluated including in the countries targeted by the RF-WFP projects. As reported in the summary of evaluation evidence on homegrown school meals (2018-2023), only India and Ghana did not have school meals specific evaluations, with Benin having two evaluations.[72] Additionally, there was an evaluation of a fortification project as part of a mid-day meal programme in India's Odisha state in 2019.[73]

57. The only prior information on the WFP Rockefeller school meals collaboration comes from a case study of the pilot in Rwanda which informed the expansion of the project to Benin, Honduras, Ghana, and India. The pilot's endline survey found that 73 percent of students understood that wholegrain flour was healthier than refined flour, compared with only 32 percent of students who did not participate in the pilot. Preference for wholegrain flour increased from 29 percent at baseline to 97 percent at endline.[74]

Scope of the evaluation

58. **The temporal scope** of the evaluation covers the period from November 2021 to April 2025. While April 2025 was the cut-off for including evidence in this evaluation report, the evaluation team recognizes that learning continued after this point as project initiatives were adapted and lessons were incorporated into other related projects.

59. **The geographic scope** covers the six countries participating in the global and regional projects: Benin, Ghana, Honduras, India (Global project), Burundi, and Rwanda.

---

[71] This ecosystem of partners came from WFP/RF collaboration on an initiative outside of this project, originally known as the "big bet," which focused on supporting governments to meet their commitments made under the School Meals Coalition via a network of partners.

[72] Summary of Evidence: Homegrown School Feeding, Sept 2024. : docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000161452/download/

[73] Assessment of fortification of Mid-Day Meal Programme in Dhenkanal, Odisha, Sept 2019: https://www.wfp.org/publications/india-fortification-mid-day-meal-programme-dhenkanal-odisha-evaluation

[74] WFP. 2022. Rwanda: Reflections on a fortified wholegrain maize meal pilot in school meals. Accessed from: https://www.wfp.org/publications/2022-rwanda-reflections-fortified-wholegrain-maize-meal-pilot-school-meals

60. **Strategic scope:** Determination of the scope for this evaluation was guided by the principles of developmental evaluation.[75] The learning objectives were determined at the kick-off Strategic Learning Workshop in Nairobi in September 2023, structured around a Strategic Learning Framework (SLF) with six strategic learning questions (Figure 1). The scope evolved during the evaluation process (see Section 1.4).

    SLQ 1 (Local economies). To what extent and how are innovations in the food supply/value chain, including local/institutional procurement, improving local economic development and for whom?

    SLQ 2 (Sustainability). How might WFP adapt and operate differently so that the RF-WFP project innovations can be implemented on a larger scale and in a sustainable manner?

    SLQ 3 (SBCC). How can the programme effectively use SBCC for different groups (geographic, gender, etc.) given the short implementation period and limited funding?

    SLQ 4 (Partnerships). To what extent and in what ways is the current approach/strategy with respect to government and other key stakeholders appropriate to ensure the scale-up and sustainability of the system that we are putting in place?

    SLQ 5 (Advocacy). Which specific advocacy approaches are working well for systems change and which do not? And why?

    SLQ 6 (Gender equality). To what extent and how is the programme integrating gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures/elements?

61. The scope of the evaluation went beyond global and regional project activities, creating two directional links between country- and global-level learning. Lessons will be shared with the SMC and other global stakeholders through the evaluation report and subsequent presentations and discussions of findings.

62. Also of importance to the strategic scope of this evaluation was the extent to which evaluation findings were perceived as useful and led to adaptation. This follows the utilization-focus principle of developmental evaluations (see "learning and adaptations" in Section 2 for more information). Three types of use were considered:

    - Conceptual use: the evaluation's contribution to new ways of perceiving prioritized project challenges amongst users
    - Process use: increasing capacity to learn, curiosity, and confidence, and
    - Instrumental use: using data to inform decisions, new actions, or behavior change.[76]

63. The evaluation scope was contextualized to each country, allowing in-country stakeholders and the evaluation team to prioritize topics according to the circumstances of the respective countries and the emphasis of their project activities. This resulted in some questions within the SLF receiving more or less attention and generating more or less learning than others. For example, the topics of SBCC and advocacy were less prioritized in three countries (Ghana, Rwanda and Burundi). The scope of each country visit conducted by the developmental evaluators, and therefore the focus of the learning documents that the evaluators generated, is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Focus on strategic learning questions by country[77]

Country	Focus of learning	Out of scope/lesser priority
Burundi	The visit by the developmental evaluators focused on: (i) scaling up and **sustainability**; (ii) **partnership**s; (iii**)**	The area of **SBCC** was less advanced and not considered a priority during the visit.

[75] Patton, M. Q. (2011). Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use. United Kingdom: Guilford Publications.
[76] UNFPA Evaluation Office. 2020. Assessing the quality of developmental evaluations at UNFPA.
[77] Adapted from the evaluation scoping document addendum, revised February 2025.

	local economies, focusing on innovations in procurement and commodity selection; (iv) policy and **advocacy**, which was seen as critical by the country office; and (v) how to incorporate a gender lens.	
Rwanda	The focus of the country visit was on: (i) **partnerships**, with a focus on the evolution of the partnership between the WFP and RF and the impact of the project on the partnership with the government in the area of school meals; (ii) **sustainability**, exploring how the country office could adapt and scale up while strengthening its role as a convener; (iii) **local economies**, particularly the economic impact on cooperatives selling commodities to the WFP platform and the impact of local procurement by the government; and (iv) **gender equality**.	It was considered too early to examine the **SBCC** area in Rwanda as formative research was still ongoing and the development of an SBCC strategy was planned for after the visit of the developmental evaluators. **Advocacy** was not considered a priority in early discussions with the WFP Rwanda CO, as there was no explicit advocacy pillar in the Rwandan intervention. However, learning on advocacy did emerge from the Rwanda visit and was captured in the various deliverables for the benefit of cross-country learning.
Benin	The primary learning priorities of the country visit were: (i) **local economies**, given the strong links with smallholder farmers' market access and public procurement in the national school feeding program; (ii) **gender equality**; and (iii) **SBCC. Sustainability** and **partnerships** were considered secondary priorities during planning for the visit but emerged as key learning areas during the mission.	**Advocacy** was covered during interviews with key stakeholders but was not prioritized as a stand-alone learning area during the country visit.
Ghana	The focus of the country visit was on: (i) **partnerships**, particularly in terms of working with multiple implementing partners, synergies between donors and expanding partnerships with the private sector; (ii) **sustainability**, including addressing challenges in rice production, financing for school meals, and private sector involvement in fortification efforts; (iii) **local economies**, such as leveraging local industries for rice production in times of high rice imports; and (iv) **gender equality**, given that rice farming is predominantly done by smallholder women farmers.	**SBCC** and **advocacy** were acknowledged as important areas and aspects of both topics were covered during interviews with key stakeholders. However, not enough learning was generated to warrant dedicated sections on either topic in the deliverables from the country visit.
Honduras	The country visit focused **on all six areas** of the Strategic Learning Framework to greater and lesser extents.	Although the developmental evaluation team examined aspects of **advocacy**, discussions focused comparatively less on this area than on others
India	The remote mission initially focused on: (i) **sustainability**; (ii) **SBCC**; and (iii) **partnerships**. Later exchanges with the WFP India CO expanded the focus to include (iv) **advocacy** and (v) **gender equality**.	**Local economies** were excluded as the food procurement process is entirely managed by the government in India and no interviews were conducted with government officials, compromising learning in this area.

64. Project theories of change (ToC) were within the scope of developmental evaluation, but not a central tool used by the evaluation.[78] There were at least three sets of theories of change associated with the subject

[78] While each country office held a workshop to develop their ToC, other concept mapping exercises were used throughout the evaluation to understand the food system and visualize the potential for the projects to improve. For example, rich pictures used during the Nairobi workshop and food system models

of this developmental evaluation:

i. the revised theory of change for the RF - catalyzing project (2023);
ii. the corresponding six country-level theories of change; and
iii. the theory of change and theory of action for the WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020-2030.

65. These theories of change were used in the evaluation to identify assumptions, expected outcomes, and outcome pathways to inform some of the strategic learning questions.[79] See Annex 8 for the overarching ToC for the RF-WFP portfolio. The learning accrued throughout the evaluation process did not inform adjustments to the Global Project's ToC nor the corresponding six country-level ToC, as initially intended. Rather, the evaluation developed food system models (in all countries except India) to visualize the interaction of stakeholders within the food system and identify challenges, leverage points and gaps.

66. **Out of evaluation scope:**

- The evaluation scope did not include analysis of the extent to which the two projects achieved their anticipated results in terms of achievement of specific project outputs and outcomes; those details can be found within the respective progress reports and annual reports for the two projects.
- Performance data, including monitoring data was used as background to identify patterns and gain insights, but not to make summative judgments about project performance.
- The activities implemented by a local non-governmental organization (NGO) through an 'innovation hub' in Kenya were not included within the scope of the development evaluation.

1.4. Evaluation methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

Developmental evaluation approach

67. The evaluation followed a developmental approach which WFP and RF considered appropriate to the flexible, innovative and adaptive nature of the subject of the evaluation (RF funded activities comprised of the global and regional projects and the RF-WFP partnership).

68. The developmental approach had a utilization focus, used systems thinking, with continuous engagement and learning throughout project implementation. It included adaptive inquiry and timely engagement and feedback loops, reflective discussions, decision-making and follow-up on decisions made. Project feedback was continuous, as was engagement and learning.

69. The developmental approach allowed the evaluation to integrate feedback from several evaluative processes and learning products over the course of project implementation, enabling the project processes and approaches to be reviewed and updated regularly as needed. The promotion of real-time learning based on critical observation and active engagement of WFP and external stakeholders was essential.

70. **Evaluability assessment**: the developmental evaluators and WFP assessed the extent to which the developmental evaluation principles could be adhered to in this particular evaluation – an exercise referred to in the co-authored ToR as the "fidelity challenge." Overall, it was determined that the evaluation had the potential to adhere to the eight principles of developmental evaluation approach. Table 6 describes the extent to which the principles were adhered to in practice throughout the evaluation. While each principle was incorporated to some degree, decisions in the evaluation process and external factors prevented the implementation of a purely developmental approach. These limitations are described in Annex 6.

developed by the evaluators to identify bottlenecks, challenges, and leverage points within the school meal food system. The evaluation did not use a theory-based approach and no updates were made to the ToC through the evaluation process.

[79] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division.

Table 6: Adherence to developmental evaluation principles[80]

DE Principle	How the DE principle was implemented
1-Developmental purpose *The evaluation aims to illuminate, inform, and support what is being developed, by identifying the nature and patterns of development (innovation, adaptation, systems change), and the implications and consequences of those patterns.*	The evaluation accompanied the WFP-RF partnership as it evolved and accompanied the respective projects as they were implemented in the six countries. The evaluation highlighted learning that could support the adaptive nature of the partnership and the projects. The intent of the evaluation was to inform the development of food systems approaches in the six country offices, which aligns with the "developmental purpose" principle.
2-Evaluation rigour *Ask probing evaluation questions, think and engage evaluatively; question assumptions; apply evaluation logic; use appropriate methods; and stay empirically grounded – that is, rigorously gather, interpret and report data.*	The evaluation initiated the development of the SLF through a consultative process. Priority questions focused on identifying where WFP can take action so that innovations could be implemented and sustained on a larger scale. Lead inquiries were used by the developmental evaluators as threads for data collection. While the lead inquiries were addressed during the data collection, they were not necessarily answered, depending on the country context and identified learning needs (thereby supporting the utilization focus principle). Instead, they were used as the starting point for exploring priority questions. A range of methods were used to gather information and analyse data and perceptions (see Annex 6 for more details). Feedback loops including in-country workshops, joint reflection sessions, and deliverable commenting processes provided multiple opportunities for stakeholders to validate evaluation findings. Further analysis and sense-making was conducted by an additional expert (the Auxiliary Evaluator) at the reporting stage to ensure rigour.
3-Utilization focus *Focus on intended use by the intended user, from beginning to end, facilitating the evaluation process to ensure utility and actual use.*	WFP COs were prioritized as the main users of the evaluation throughout the process. They fed into the design of the evaluation itself, the formulation of the Strategic Learning Framework and the focus of country visits. Other users, including WFP headquarters and RF representatives were also engaged throughout to strengthen the uptake of learning. Description of learning and adaptation that resulted from the evaluation is included in the findings section under each of the strategic learning questions. In particular, the format of the country-level deliverables was perceived to promote utilization.
4-Innovation niche *Elucidate how the change process and results being evaluated involved innovation and adaptation, the niche of developmental evaluation.*	The WFP-RF partnership itself is innovative, as were the projects implemented through the partnership. The evaluation encouraged innovation through a process that consistently emphasized learning as a priority, providing stakeholders with space to innovate and adapt interventions at country level. The nature of the project as "catalytic" funding, implemented in combination with other existing school feeding projects rather than as a stand-alone initiative, was an innovative approach.
5-Complexity perspective	The SLF was designed to be adaptive and to respond to the complexity of different contexts,

[80] Adapted from the evaluation terms of reference: WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division. Limitations and the process described come from the scoping document, Evaluation Manager observations, feedback received during the final SLC meeting, and adaptation templates completed by the country offices. Definitions of evaluation principles from Quinn Patton, M. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*. (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications

Understand and interpret development through the lens of complexity and conduct the evaluation accordingly. This means using complexity premises and dynamics to make sense of the problems being addressed: to guide innovation, adaptation, and system change strategies; to interpret what is developed: to adapt the evaluation design as needed; and to analyze emergent finding.	including shifts within those contexts. Different sense-making and analysis tools were used during the evaluation process to accommodate the diverse views of different stakeholders and to consider the complexity of the contexts in which the projects were implemented (see annex 6 for additional details). While some level of consistency was applied to all country visits, the evaluation team also learned and innovated as they gained experience, adapting the evaluation design as they progressed from country to country. For example, a case story was used to capture learning in India as opposed to a food system model because of the perceived ability of India to generate learning for other country offices from their advocacy model, among other reasons. Learning briefs and food system models also captured the complexity perspectives in different contexts by describing tensions and dilemmas and proposing questions to learners to discuss the way forward. A example can be found in the Rwanda learning brief in Annex 13, Volume II.
6-Systems thinking *Think systemically throughout, being attentive to inter-relationships, perspectives come with boundaries, and other key aspects of the social system and context within which the innovation is being developed and the evaluation is being conducted.*	The evaluation used systems thinking to map the links between different elements of the food value chain in each country and understand the relationships between different stakeholders, perspectives and aspects of the socio-economic system. This work formed an important foundation for the country visits. Selected food system models are included in Annex 13, Volume II.
7-Co-creation *Develop the innovation and evaluation together – interwoven, interdependent, iterative, and co-created – such that the developmental evaluation becomes part of the change process.*	Co-creation was fundamental to the evaluation from the outset. Early consultation with WFP COs and the initiation of the strategic learning community and feedback loops allowed for users to co-create changes to the evaluation as lessons emerged. The strategic learning community in-person workshop in Nairobi was particularly well-received by participants and viewed as an important step to creating ownership in the evaluation and generating understanding of the developmental evaluation process and purpose.
8-Timely feedback *Time feedback to inform ongoing adaptations as needs, findings, and insights emerge, rather than only at pre-determined times (e.g., quarterly, or at mid-term and end-of-project).*	Country visits were planned to provide rapid feedback and validation of learning to ensure that the learning was captured and acted on in real time. The evaluation design included a series of feedback loops, timed to quickly share emerging insights between countries and with global-level stakeholders to inform iterative adaptation throughout the evaluation.[81] As the regional project began implementation before the global project, country visits to Rwanda and Burundi were prioritized at the outset, followed by Ghana and Benin due to their location in the same geographic region, which facilitated mission logistics. India and Honduras missions were conducted last by default. Timing of the evaluation missions allowed for informing several key decisions and strategic documents including: - Rwanda's country strategic plan and a school meals project proposal - Benin's prioritization of pilot projects during the school meals programme handover to government (ANAN). - Burundi's national government financing plan, elaborated with the sustainable

[81] While feedback loops were intended to provide real-time feedback, they were somewhat delayed in practice. In practice, there were at least three "feedback loops" per country to discuss evaluation findings, but opportunities to support iterative development by following-up on the outcomes of adaptations were limited. See Annex 6 for more information on the limitations for timely-feedback.

	financing initiative of the School Meals Coalition

Strategic Learning Framework

71. The focus of the evaluation was determined by an SLF developed at the initial strategic learning workshop held in Nairobi in September 2023. The workshop brought together stakeholders from the six country offices engaged in the RF-WFP partnership, as well as WFP staff from Regional Offices (ROs) and HQ.[82]

72. The SLF and the strategic learning questions (SLQ) and lead enquiries within it were reconsidered and adapted by the Developmental Evaluators at the outset of the developmental evaluation. While the thematic substance of the questions was maintained, the developmental evaluators adapted question language immediately following the workshop for clarity and to make questions appropriate for a developmental evaluation. For example, questions which asked to assess project results ("what"-focused questions) were adapted to capture "how" and "why" different outcomes arose. These adaptations were shared with the SLC via email and discussed at an online SLC workshop in November 2023. During the online workshop, the last modifications to the SLF were made in order to better capture the objective of advocacy activities. The themes and questions/inquiries agreed at that time are summarized in Table 5 (the full SLF, including indicators clarifying the scope of each question, is included in Annex 3).[83] The collaborative process to develop the questions and reach a consensus made it difficult to update the questions in practice. The co-design process was democratic, and there was a sense amongst the evaluation managers that altering the questions would undermine that consensus. Revising the questions through group discussion was challenging considering the difficulty of gathering all stakeholders together. As a result, the focus of the questions was adapted for each country context (see Table 5), but written updates to the questions were not captured.

[82] Drawn from WFP. 2023. The Nairobi Report. How did we co-create the Strategic Learning Framework? World Food Programme – Rockefeller Foundation, Developmental Evaluation, December 2023

[83] WFP. 2024. Scoping Document, Version 2, Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025. March 2024.

Table 7: Summary of the Strategic Learning Framework, Data Sources, and Data Collection, Analysis and Synthesis Methods

Strategic Learning Questions and Key Inquiries	**Data sources[84]**	**Data collection methods**	**Data analysis and synthesis methods**	
SLQ 1. To what extent and how are innovations in the food supply/value chain, including local/institutional procurement, improving local economic development and for whom? **Lead inquiries:** 1.1 To what extent and how are innovations in procurement of fortified food generating effects on local economies (including increasing the market for nutritious foods)? 1.2 How does the program address vulnerability, diversity, and inclusion to improve opportunities for rural communities-especially young girls? 1.3 To what extent are the selected commodities best suited to achieve the intended outcomes?	- Benin FS model - Benin learning brief - Ghana food system model - Ghana learning brief - Honduras FS model - Honduras learning brief - Rwanda FS model - Rwanda learning brief - Burundi FS model - Burundi learning brief - Adaptations template - SLC workshop recordings - Program documents and secondary sources (see Annex 4) - Key informants (see Table 8 and Annex 10)	<u>Observation through visit to farmer cooperative:</u> Benin, Ghana, Honduras Rwanda <u>Observation through visit to millers and other processors:</u> Benin, Ghana, Honduras <u>Observation through visit to school:</u> Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda <u>Key informant interviews:</u> All countries	<u>Pattern analysis</u>: All countries <u>System mapping:</u> Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda <u>Rich pictures:</u> Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda <u>Value chain analysis</u>: Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda	**<u>Cross-cutting Analysis and synthesis methods</u>** <u>Leverage points and horizon scanning:</u> Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda <u>Options analysis:</u> Rwanda, Burundi <u>Critical path method:</u> Benin, Ghana <u>Dilemmas:</u> Ghana
SLQ 2. How might the WFP adapt and operate differently so that RF-WFP project innovations can be implemented on a larger scale and in a sustainable manner?	- Burundi learning brief - Rwanda learning brief - India learning brief - Honduras learning brief	<u>Desk study:</u> all countries	<u>Pattern analysis:</u> All countries	

[84] Learning briefs and "FS" or "food systems" models refer to country-level deliverables produced by the evaluation. These are further described in section 1.4 (see paragraph 101).

Lead inquiries: 2.1 How can WFP become an enabler/convener for wider systems change without compromising identity? 2.2 How do current Rockefeller Fund interventions contribute to the intended/unintended effects/influences of climate change?	- Honduras FS model - Ghana learning brief - Ghana FS model - Benin learning brief - Benin FS model - Adaptations template - SLC workshop recordings - Program documents and secondary sources (see Annex 4) - Key informants (see Table 8 and Annex 10)	Semi-structured group discussions: All countries	System mapping: Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda Rich pictures: Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda Value chain analysis: Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Honduras, Rwanda	Agile methodology: Benin Strategic decision-making: Honduras Debriefing sessions and joint reflection workshops: all countries Triangulation: All countries
SLQ 3. How can the programme effectively use SBCC for different groups (geographic, gender, etc.) given the short implementation period and limited funding? **Lead inquiries:** 3.1 What social behaviour changes can realistically be achieved in a short time frame and how? 3.2 To what extent and how can school children influence good eating habits and demand for nutritious foods in their communities/households?	- Benin FS model - Ghana FS model - Ghana learning brief - Honduras FS model - Honduras learning brief - India learning brief - Adaptations template - Program documents and secondary sources (see Annex 4) - Key informants (see Table 8 and Annex 10)		Pattern analysis: Honduras, India System mapping: Honduras Rich pictures: Honduras Value chain analysis: Honduras	Storytelling and sensemaking: India Marketing process, intersectionality framework, and the "six Ws": Honduras
SLQ 4. To what extent and in what ways is the current approach/strategy for working with government and other key stakeholders appropriate to ensure scaling-up and sustainability?	- Benin fs model - Ghana fs model - Ghana learning brief - Honduras FS model - Honduras learning brief		Pattern analysis: All countries Creative tensions: Rwanda, Burundi	

Lead Inquiries 4.1 How does WFP's role and approach to interacting with food systems affect programme implementation and results? 4.2 How can the project best balance the dynamics of stakeholders at different levels (Rockefeller Foundation, governments, private sector), including potential contextual factors?	- India learning brief - Rwanda FS model - Rwanda learning brief - Burundi learning brief - Adaptations template - SLC and CO workshop recordings - Program documents and secondary sources (see Annex 4) - Key informants (see Table 8 and Annex 10)			
SLQ5. Which specific advocacy approaches are working well for systems change and which do not? And why? **Lead Inquiries** 5.1 To what extent and how does the current engagement strategy effectively influence government and other relevant actors? 5.2 How can the **SLQ5.** Which specific advocacy approaches are working well for systems change and which do not? And why? Rockefeller Fund act as a catalyst for change to influence policy at the national level?	- Burundi learning brief - Rwanda learning brief - India learning brief - Honduras learning brief - Ghana FS model - Benin learning brief - Benin FS model - Adaptations template - SLC workshop recordings - Program documents and secondary sources (see Annex 4) - Key informants (see Table 9 and Annex 10)		Pattern analysis: All countries	
SLQ6. To what extent and how is the programme integrating gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures/elements? **Lead Inquiries** 6.1 What are the enabling and inhibiting factors playing a role in incorporating a gender lens, and	- Benin FS model - Ghana learning brief - Honduras learning brief - India learning brief - Rwanda learning brief - Burundi learning brief - Adaptations template		Pattern analysis: All countries	

what could be done to enhance the possibilities of success? 6.2 To what extent and how is the project affecting women's economic empowerment in a way that shifts the unequal gender dynamics in their households and communities?	- SLC workshop recordings - Program documents and secondary sources (see Annex 4) - Key informants (see Table 8 and Annex 10)			

Data sources and data collection methods[85]

73. The evaluation included regular engagement with project stakeholders throughout project implementation. This required multiple data collection methods and tools – some to answer to the SLQs, and some to facilitate reflection, iteration, learning and action. A description of the data collection tools is included in Annex 9

Secondary document review

74. Secondary document reviews were conducted for all countries, drawing on WFP and externally produced documents, both those in the public domain and unpublished resources. The list of secondary documents reviewed for the evaluation can be found in Annex 4.

Primary data collection

75. Primary evaluation data collection was generated from each of the key developmental evaluation events as set out in Table 8. The fieldwork agenda for each country visit is included in Annex 10.

Table 8: List and timing of key evaluation data collection events

Timeline	Key evaluation data collection events
September 2023	Strategic Learning Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya to establish the SLF and shape the SLC
November 2023	SLC Feedback Loop 1 (refinement of the SLF)
27 November – 1 December 2023	Rwanda country visit
4-8 December 2023	Burundi country visit
6 March 2024	Rwanda CO workshop
12 March 2024	Burundi CO workshop
4 April 2024	SLC Feedback Loop Workshop 2
24 – 28 June 2024	Ghana country visit
1 – 5 July 2024	Benin country visit
25 July 2024	Honduras catch-up meeting to share SLC Feedback Loop Workshop 2 results
8 October 2024	Ghana CO workshop
9 October 2024	Benin CO workshop
23 October 2024	SLC Feedback Loop Workshop 3
28 October – 1 November 2024	Honduras country visit
25 – 29 November 2024	India (remote country visit)
15 January 2025	Honduras CO workshop
17 January 2025	India CO workshop
26 February 2025	SLC Feedback Loop Workshop 4
March/April 2025	WFP COs completed a Development Adaptations template
15 April 2025	SLC Feedback Loop Workshop 5 (focus on HQ and RB learning)
24 April 2025	SLC Feedback Loop Workshop 6 (focus on developmental evaluation process and usefulness; WFP evaluation office also attended)

76. **Workshop and meeting notes and reports:** These events included learning within countries and between countries. In-country visits allowed the evaluators to work closely with WFP CO units and teams to generate learning. Cross-country learning took place during SLC workshops. Primary data included

[85] Evaluation scoping document addendum, revised February 2025

meeting minutes and reports, SLC workshop presentations and meeting notes, project progress reports, and country-specific deliverables.

77. **In-country visits:** Country visits (including a remote mission for India) were conducted according to the timeline set out in Table 8, contributing to an accumulation of relevant data, which was progressively analysed, shared and discussed throughout the evaluation process. Given the earlier start date of the Regional Project, the country visits to Rwanda and Burundi were conducted first, in late 2023.

78. **Key informant interviews:** Key informant interviews and structured group discussions were conducted with internal (WFP) and external stakeholders – including government representatives, partner organizations, smallholder farmers (SHF)s, academia and others – except in India, where only WFP staff were interviewed due to WFP India's approach and activities. (see Annex 5 for a list of all stakeholders interviewed). See Table 9 for the number of key informants interviewed in total and by country.

Table 9: Key informants interviewed by stakeholder group

Stakeholder Group	Number of key informants interviewed, total and per country
WFP CO staff	Total = 72
	Rwanda = 14; Burundi = 16; Ghana = 11; Benin = 20; Honduras = 9; India = 13
Government representatives	Total = 58
	Rwanda = 4; Burundi = 8; Ghana = 32; Benin = 9; Honduras = 5; India = 0
Implementing partner organizations	Total = 31
	Rwanda = 4; Burundi = 9; Ghana = 1; Benin = 6; Honduras = 11; India = 0
SHF organizations	Total = 40
	Rwanda = 15; Burundi = 0; Ghana = 9; Benin = 11; Honduras = 5; India = 0
Private sector organizations	Total = 20
	Rwanda = 1; Burundi = 7; Ghana = 3; Benin = 3; Honduras = 6; India = 0
School staff	Total = 28
	Rwanda = 3; Burundi = 6; Ghana = 15; Benin = 0; Honduras = 4; India = 0
Academia	Total = 8
	Rwanda = 0; Burundi = 0; Ghana = 3; Benin = 2; Honduras = 3; India = 0

79. **Country-specific deliverables:** A core set of documents was produced for each country and have been used as key source of data for this evaluation report:

- **A Food System Model** document describing the way a food system behaves in a given context and analysing the interdependent dynamics of different elements in the food value chain. For five of the six countries, the model included school meals as the platform generating institutional markets that drive the demand of food and, therefore, incentivize the entire supply chain to produce, process and bring fortified and other nutritious foods to feed school children. For India, a **case story document** was produced instead of a Food System Model document, reflecting the uniqueness of India and the role that WFP plays within India's food safety net system, as well as the limitations of the methodology in India, which excluded key informant interviews with external (non-WFP) stakeholders.
- **A Learning Brief**, tailored to each country and the learning questions that were adapted to the country context and the national focus of the project.
- A **Pathways to Innovation** document, grounded in the Food System Models and Learning Briefs, designed to provoke reflection and discussion and stimulate adaptations during the remaining

timeframe of the projects.

80. WFP COs were also asked to complete a 'Development Adaptations' template in March/April 2025, at the time that this report was being compiled, with updates on actions that had been taken subsequent to country visits and SLC meetings, as well as any plans for further action.

Integration of gender equality, equity and inclusion

81. The SLF included a dedicated question on gender equality to emphasise learning on this aspect and stimulate adaptations to further the integration of gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures/elements within the projects. WFP defines gender-transformative initiatives as those that promote changes in unequal gender relations by challenging deeply entrenched and discriminatory gender norms, biases and stereotypes to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making and support for women's empowerment. Integral to this is moving beyond the individual to address the root causes that underpin inequalities. Gender-responsive initiatives are those that recognise and take action to address the different needs, interests and realities of men, boys, women, and girls. Unlike gender-transformative initiatives, they do not address underlying gender-based inequalities, including the unequal distribution of power between women and men, and girls and boys.[86]

82. In addition, aspects of gender equality, equity, and broader inclusion were integrated into all other strategic learning questions as appropriate. For example, the inclusion of women in the project's economic impact was considered under the "local economies" strategic learning question.

83. During the evaluation process, the evaluators incorporated a gender lens when assessing progress toward results and generating learning. The different perspectives of men and women were sought through interviews and group discussions with stakeholder groups such as farmers, cooperatives, and millers and the influence of gender on the experiences of those reached through the WFP RF projects was considered in the learning products developed. Specific marginalized groups beyond women that were considered included youth milk processors in Honduras. The evaluation collected most primary data from government and project implementers, in addition to secondary document review, which limited the extent to which experiences of stakeholders from vulnerable or marginalized groups were captured.

84. The learning interests of the SLC drove the content of the evaluation deliverables and discussions, in keeping with the developmental evaluation approach, which is focused on utilization.[87] The operational nature of these questions, especially given the catalytic funding (without direct transfers), limited the breadth of findings on disability and wider inclusion issues.

Data analysis[88]

85. Various methods were used for qualitative data collection, analysis and synthesis in the respective countries as shown in Table 7 and described in more detail in Annex 6.

86. At the end of each country visit, the evaluation included immediate reflection and learning through in-country joint debriefing sessions, remote joint reflection workshops and the "what, so what, now what" framework for reflective inquiry (further details of the methodology is included in Annex 6).

87. The SLC convened at designated points in the evaluation process to share new insights and learning and progressively analyse emerging evidence to respond to the strategic learning questions (see Table 7). 'Feedback loop' meetings of the SLC were organised in April 2024 (to share learning from Burundi and Rwanda), October 2024 (to share new learning from Ghana and Benin), and February 2025 (to share new

[86] WFP. 2024. Gender Equity Terminology.

[87] Beter Evaluation. November 2021. Developmental evaluation. Accessed from: https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/developmental-evaluation

[88] Evaluation scoping document addendum, revised February 2025

learning from Honduras and India).[89] Participants included WFP representatives in the six project countries, RBs and HQ. The virtual workshops aimed to generate further learning through joint discussions using the "What, So What, Now What" reflection framework.

88. The Auxiliary Evaluator conducted a subsequent step of sense-making and analysis during the preparation of the report. Evidence from the country-specific deliverables, the SLC workshops and additional project-related background documents was extracted and organized in an evidence matrix, structured around the main SLQs. Common patterns and themes were identified to form the findings and conclusions presented in this report.

Triangulation and validation[90]

89. Two evaluators were present to lead most of the interviews and group discussions to cross-check and validate notes, facts and interpretations.[91] The data gathered was triangulated to compare and validate evidence and perspectives across different stakeholder groups and between different sources - comparing individual and group discussions with documents and factual records. Primary qualitative data collected through interviews was compared with secondary data (from documentary sources). In addition, the accuracy of the data was checked by the CO staff at two points in time: when the preliminary findings were presented at the end of the country mission and after the CO staff had read and checked the three country-specific deliverables. In the case of India, triangulation was limited by the fact that data was collected from WFP staff in-country only. The Auxiliary Evaluator further triangulated the evidence across countries to identify common issues emerging across countries.

Ethical issues and safeguards

90. The developmental evaluation conforms to WFP and the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards and norms. The Developmental Evaluators were responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics during the conduct of the evaluation. This included, but was not limited to, informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation resulted in no harm to participants or their communities. Because of the developmental approach utilized in this particular evaluation, privacy and confidentiality were essential to protect in order to create a safe space for learning and candid reflection amongst evaluation informants and users. One example of a practice implemented by the Developmental Evaluators to safeguard confidentiality was to seek consent from project implementors before sharing country deliverables and discussions with external audiences. Only learning and adaptation which SLC members consented to share publicly is captured through this report.

All members of the evaluation team abided by the 2020 UNEG Ethical Guidelines, including the Pledge of Ethical Conduct as well as the WFP guidance including on gender equality.

Evaluation limitations and mitigations

91. Some of the potential risks identified in the evaluation Terms of Reference were mitigated and ultimately did not present significant limitations to the quality of the evaluation. These included:

    - The risk of insufficient stakeholder engagement, which was mitigated through a respectful approach that acknowledged the busy schedules of key informants and engaged stakeholders as efficiently as possible, maximizing their engagement with the evaluation. Feedback from WFP COs also indicated

[89] Timing of the SLC feedback loop meetings was determined by the length of time it took to develop and validate the country-level deliverables following each set of missions, rather than by the timing of specific key decisions which were to be made by members of the SLC. The limited timeframe of the project and the evaluation, combined with the number of planned data collection exercises, led to this approach to feedback loop scheduling. See Annex 6 for more information. Two additional SLC meetings were held in April 2025, one focusing on lessons for HQ/regional bureaux and another to generate lessons for the WFP evaluation function.

[90] Evaluation scoping document addendum, revised February 2025.

[91] Due to scheduling conflicts, there were occasional debrief meetings where only one evaluator was present. Documentation of exactly which debrief meeting did not have both evaluators present is not available.

that the developmental nature of the evaluation and its emphasis on real-time learning motivated their active engagement in the evaluation process.[92]

- Sudden significant changes in context were mitigated by an adaptive approach to the evaluation, which remained flexible to react to contextual shifts. Where sudden changes did occur within countries during the timeframe of the projects, the evaluation was able to highlight valuable learning on the need to assess risk before embarking on initiatives and the benefits of scenario planning to minimize the risks of project progress being derailed (see Section 2.2).
- The fact that the developmental evaluators were embedded in the projects did not significantly compromise their impartiality or independence, since their role was clearly focused on the evaluation process and not on other project-related aspects of the RF-WFP partnership.
- The short timeframe for the remainder of project implementation was a challenge for the projects overall (see Section 2.2), and also presented some limitations to the promotion of learning and use within the evaluation (see Annex 6). The end date of the regional project meant that country visits to Burundi and Rwanda were prioritised first to maximise the time remaining and allow for adaptations prior to termination of the project.
- The risk of the evaluation not meeting stakeholder expectations was mitigated by setting clear parameters for the evaluation at the start of the process and repeating these throughout.

92. Internal and external factors limited the extent to which the evaluation was able to uphold the developmental principles in practice. These limitations to the developmental approach and the ways in which they were mitigated (as applicable) are further discussed in Annex 6.

93. Other limitations that arose during the evaluation were mitigated as follows:

- Not all aspects of the SLF were considered priority in all countries, meaning that some areas – such as advocacy, SBCC and gender equality – generated less evidence and learning than others. Fewer country-generated evidence means that there is less confidence in the findings under these areas. The evaluation mitigated this limitation by clearly stating the gaps up-front (in this report).
- The evaluation accompanied the projects in real time and generally provided snapshots of progress and learning at the time of the developmental evaluators' visits. This reduced the evaluation's ability to generate learning in certain strategic areas where activities were not yet implemented at the time of the evaluators' visit (see sections 2.3 and 2.4 for more information). Meetings of the SLC provided opportunities for countries to update the group on progress and challenges; and countries were asked to provide updates on adaptations that they had initiated after the visits. To the extent that these responded to the learning questions, the inputs from these deliverables were integrated into this report. However, the evaluation team acknowledges that the projects are likely to have evolved since the drafting of this report and additional learning may have been generated that is not captured here.
- The emphasis of the developmental evaluation was on learning and much of the information gathered during the process was perception-oriented, gathered through interviews and group discussions. The methodology placed less emphasis on documentary (verifiable) evidence. This is reflected in the findings of this report, which draws heavily on the perceptions of stakeholders as well as the views of the developmental evaluators themselves, and less on published documents and other resources. Where findings are supported by documentary evidence, this is noted in footnotes and the report text. As a result, while not all findings are based on triangulated evidence, they are considered reasonably robust nevertheless and valuable for learning purposes and to support project adaptation. Where there are gaps in evidence to support the findings, these are noted.

[92] This feedback was noted within several of the 'Development Adaptation' documents from WFP COs.

- The focus of the developmental evaluation was not primarily on documenting results, which limited the extent to which strategic learning questions that inquired about results, could be answered. Instead, the emphasis was placed on stakeholder perceptions of how adaptations could be made to better achieve results under the six thematic areas.

2. Evaluation findings

94. A selection of learning briefs containing country-specific findings can be found in Annex 13, Volume II.

2.1. Strategic Learning Question 1: Local economies

SLQ 1. To what extent and how are innovations in the food supply/value chain, including local/institutional procurement, improving local economic development and for whom?

95. While this question on the effect of the projects on local economies and markets for nutritious foods is important, there is limited evidence in response (as summarized below). Instead, the emphasis of the evaluation was on understanding how different actors within complex food value chains (including WFP) leveraged local procurement for school meals to generate positive effects, and the different factors that either enabled or hindered the project from stimulating local economies. These aspects are covered in more detail under other strategic learning areas, particularly under Section 2.2 on sustainability. The findings for this evaluation question should be viewed as early lessons from the development of a new approach, as opposed to an assessment of the projects' contributions to results.

1.1 To what extent and how are innovations in procurement of fortified food generating effects on local economies (including increasing the market for nutritious foods)?

Finding 1: The WFP RF projects perceived to have had a direct positive impact on incomes in several contexts, albeit with only early signs of positive change and supported by mostly anecdotal evidence. Stakeholders perceived several other indirect, catalytic effects of the projects, including stimulation of the wider market for fortified foods, improvements in the quality of produce and processing procedures. These early perceptions signal the potential for school meals to improve local economic development.

96. Across most of the countries covered by this evaluation, key stakeholders pointed to positive effects on incomes, and by extension local economies, albeit only nascent effects in most cases. Overall, the SLC reported that the RF-WFP project interventions had generated immediate, direct and indirect economic benefits in the agribusiness sector in Burundi, Rwanda, Benin and Ghana through the placing of larger, more predictable orders to smallholder farmers (SHF), by raising the quality of production through increased attention to food safety and quality (FSQ), and increasing the knowledge and expertise of SHF and processors by accompanying them with technical assistance on specific aspects of production and processing.[93] The long-term economic effects beyond the lifespan of the projects is not known. Examples of reported positive effects in specific contexts include:

- In **Benin**, where prior to the RF-WFP project, farmer organizations and processors typically received and responded to small to medium orders, the orders generated through the project were relatively large. One cooperative of parboiled rice processors in Dassa estimated that WFP's order of

[93] WFP – Rockefeller Foundat. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024.

unpolished parboiled rice accounted for 73 percent of their annual production of processed rice.[94] For a SHF organization participating in the project, they estimated that WFP's order of red beans comprised 20 percent of their total annual production.[95] Not only did the scale of the orders boost the incomes of farmers and processors, but the predictability of purchases created confidence, with quantities and prices agreed in advance and payments made within a reliable 30-day timeframe. This in turn facilitated access to credit and was perceived as stimulating investments in the sector.[96]

- In **Honduras**, producers noted that they could generate higher and more reliable revenues with the biofortified beans promoted through the project than with the traditional variety, largely because WFP placed contract-based orders with suppliers and offered higher prices than on the open market. Within the fortified milk pilot project in Honduras, local stakeholders who were interviewed reported early positive impacts on local economies, even before the milk had been supplied to schools.[97] Approximately 118 milk producers noted economic benefits from the pilot project, and specialists, such as cow milkers, made reference to other benefits, such as improved milking and other livestock practices. Female, small-scale livestock farmers who participated in the pilot noted a significant improvement to the quality of their produce, and subsequently, an increase in the price that they were able to receive from the local dairy processing plant.[98]

97. Beyond the reported direct economic effects of the RF-WFP project interventions, several other catalytic results were highlighted by stakeholders in different project contexts, which can be expected to contribute to positive effects on local economies in due course.

98. In Ghana, for example, interviews with government stakeholders and implementing partners, as well as WFP personnel, described the important role that the RF-WFP project had played in strengthening the capacity of SHF and rice processors in the production of nutritious rice (parboiled unpolished rice and fortified rice). They perceived that the project had increased demand through awareness raising about the health benefits of eating nutritious foods – increasing the market for nutritious foods – and credited the project with convening key stakeholders within the food system to meet the increased demand for nutritious foods. In an update on progress since the developmental evaluators conducted their mission to Ghana, the WFP CO noted that the project had catalysed efforts to broaden the market for fortified rice and generate ongoing incentives for millers to continue investing in this area.[99] That said, and despite this promising example, the need for further market development beyond school meals was consistently raised as a challenge (see Section 2.2).

99. Other catalytic effects included improvements in the quality of produce and production processes, as reported by smallholder producers in Benin, as well as improved FSQ standards in the country, in large part due to WFP's work on supporting suppliers for the school meal programme.[100] Diversification of the school meal food basket in Burundi and Rwanda through the introduction of more fortified commodities, such as iron-rich beans and milk, was also highlighted as an important catalytic benefit of the project.[101]

100. The case of Burundi demonstrated the importance of contextual factors in determining the extent to

[94] Source: Group interview with members of the CCER Dassa cooperative (WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[95] Source: group interview with members of the CCPM of Klouekanme (WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[96] WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.
[97] Source: interview with AGAAPES and ADEPES (WFP. 2024. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[98] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.
[99] The WFP Ghana CO noted in an informal update that the project had been important in identifying the need for developing other markets (beyond the schools engaged in the project) as an incentive for millers to continue engaging. While this was not possible during the timeframe of the RF-WFP project, the CO were seeking to mobilize additional funding from other sources to continue focusing on market expansion for fortified foods (WFP. 2025. Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations, 7 March 2025)
[100] Interviews with SHF, processors and WFP staff in Benin indicated a commonly held perception that the WFP-RF project has been catalytic in preparing the school-based food system for more nutritious school feeding through strengthening the supply chain (identification and capacity building of suppliers) and generating a better understanding of the food system by commissioning studies on nutrition, fortification, gender and SBCC by local research institutions. WFP. 2024. Benin Food system model Revised Final.
[101] WFP. 2024. Strategic Learning Community Feedback Loop, April 2024.

which the project can generate impacts for the local economy. Farmers in Burundi produce grain, but due to a shortage in the country, the grain for the FWG maize meal was mainly imported from Tanzania and Uganda.[102] Farmers also faced low prices for products in the overall market, storage problems, high production costs due to the fuel shortage, and impacts of climate change, such as heavy rains and locust infestation of maize crops, which reduced local maize available for milling[103]. These barriers made it challenging to establish links between local cooperatives and milling companies producing the FWG maize flour. In interviews with the developmental evaluators, milling companies identified that a key factor for their ability to supply FWG maize meal was WFP's purchasing of the product directly from millers at a competitive price. In order for production to be sustainable, the milling of FWG must be profitable without WFP support – a challenge given the low prices in the overall market.

101. It is noteworthy that the evidence of effects on the local economy captured through the evaluation were primarily based on perceptions and anecdotal experiences of the stakeholders interviewed. An impact evaluation and Value for Money study were both ongoing in Burundi at the time of the evaluation mission, but the Value-for-Money faced challenges to measure impact given the changing economic context. These studies demonstrated the cost, time, and the challenges of quantifying economic effects.[104]

1.2 How does the program address vulnerability, diversity, and inclusion to improve opportunities for rural communities-especially young girls?

Finding 2: There was limited evidence of the effects of the WFP RF projects on vulnerability, diversity and inclusion, mainly due to a lack of focus on these aspects from the outset in the project design. Anecdotal examples of positive effects, including unexpected results, indicate potential for greater benefits in the future.

102. The developmental evaluation found limited evidence of the effects of the projects on vulnerability, diversity and inclusion, including for young girls. This does not necessarily mean a lack of positive results in these areas; but rather, historic oversights in the initial design of the two projects, with only a minimal focus on these aspects and limited ability to track progress and/or learn from experiences (see Section 2.6 for more details).

103. Despite a lack of comprehensive evidence, the developmental evaluation highlighted at least two anecdotal incidences of efforts to address vulnerability, diversity and inclusion.

- In **Honduras,** a focus on producing fortified pasteurized milk was perceived as having a positive effect on the local economy in terms of creating jobs for young people, including young women, who may otherwise have migrated from the area due to lack of employment opportunities. A young and inclusive-oriented organization was selected to oversee the dairy processing plant under the management of a female General Manager and a diverse young workforce comprised of four young women and two young men. The organization purposively adopted an innovative social entrepreneur approach within its operations, with a view to retaining and building young talent from within the community and creating opportunities. While only a small-scale initiative in Honduras at the time – making it difficult to attribute any demonstrable change to the pilot – the experience has the potential to be taken to scale at a later stage and to generate greater impact for underserved groups in rural communities, including young girls.[105]

[102] East Africa Cross border Trade Bulletin (April 2024, page 5) and interviews with WFP country office team.

[103] World Bank Group. N.d. The World Bank Group and the locust crisis. Accessed from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/the-world-bank-group-and-the-desert-locust-outbreak#:~:text=Climate%20change%20is%20a%20key,locust%20outbreak%20in%20East%20Africa.

[104] School Meals Coalition. 2025. Étude Coûts-Bénéfices du Programme National d'Alimentation Scolaire au Burundi. Available from : https://schoolmealscoalition.org/value-money-school-feeding-burundi-working-paper-french

[105] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.

- In **Benin**, where access to credit for women farmers is a particular challenge,[106] interviews with SHF and processers described how local procurement by WFP on behalf of the Integrated National School Feeding Programme (PNASI) had enabled SHF, including women, to access loans from microfinance institutions using procurement contracts as guarantees. Wider spill-over benefits for communities, including women, were also observed in Benin as a result of the project, which were largely unanticipated during project design. For example, key informant interviews identified an increased demand for labour, such as cleaning within school canteens, which benefited women from female-headed households, for example, albeit only within the informal economy.[107]

1.3. To what extent are the selected commodities best suited to achieve the intended outcomes?

Finding 3: Early uptake of the selected commodities in several contexts indicates their suitability for achieving intended outcomes. Where there have been challenges related to uptake of the selected commodities, this has contributed to adaptive approaches and collective learning.

104. Project commodities were selected by each WFP country office in partnership with various stakeholders considering factors such as availability, nutritional value, and acceptability. For example, In Rwanda, commodities were chosen in accordance with the Government of Rwanda's School Feeding Operational Guidelines. Burundi selected fortified maize and milk due their integral role in the Burundian diet and their availability locally, especially in rural areas. In Ghana, rice was already served at least three times a week in basic schools, which led to the selection of fortified or parboiled unpolished rice to enhance the nutritional quality of school meals. Similarly, more nutritious versions of existing commodities in the Benin food basket were targeted for the project (white maize, milled rice and white cowpeas were substituted for yellow maize, fortified wholegrain maize flour, unpolished parboiled rice, and red cowpeas). African leafy vegetables and eggs were also added to the food basket as these commodities are part of Beninese diet, available, and cheaper when compared to other vegetables and protein from animal sources. Biofortified beans were selected in Honduras due to cultural acceptability. The government's "glass of milk" law and past initiatives to strengthen small milk producers led to the inclusion of pasteurized milk.

105. Within several countries, there were early signs of consensus and uptake about the choice of selected commodities. In Honduras, the new variety of biofortified beans[108] selected for the project was relatively quickly and widely accepted by food producers, in large part due to positive results from the first harvest.[109] Moreover, bean production is already a significant source of income for farmers in the project area of Olancho, Honduras, where beans produced by SHF account for approximately 40 percent of the country's national production.[110] School Feeding Committees consulted during the developmental evaluation echoed their support of beans as the selected commodity, as they perceived successful results among school children, including reduced absenteeism, better participation in the classroom and signs of improved health, such as less cases of diarrhoea among students and stronger immunity.[111] It is too early to say whether the choice of fortified milk in Honduras is appropriate, given delays with the supply of the commodity to schools,[112] but initial work on social behaviour change related to both fortified commodities – beans and milk – would indicate early acceptance among school children, teachers and School Feeding Committees.[113]

[106] WFP (2023) Benin country strategic plan (2024–2027), November 2023, WFP/EB.2/2023/7-A/1
[107] Reported by the International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC), implementer of the ACMA project; the ANAFEA; and members of the CCPM of Klouekanme (SHF organization) and CCER Dassa (parboiled rice processing cooperative). (WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[108] The seed variety is known as 'Honduras Nutriva'.
[109] Source: Interviews with food producers' association (WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[110] The Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project funded by the European Commission. https://cdais.net/home/pilots-countries/honduras/beans-niche/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[111] Source: Interviews with School Feeding Committees, the representative education department from municipality of San Antonio de Flores and WFP Honduras CO field staff (WFP. 2025. Honduras Food system model. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[112] At the time of the visit by the developmental evaluators, JOGAPES, the dairy processing plant, was waiting for the final food safety and quality approval for the fortified milk from relevant authorities.
[113] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.

106. There was less consensus on the selection of commodities in Rwanda, where in-country stakeholders debated the feasibility of achieving different goals within the project with the selected commodity of FWG maize meal. On the one hand, the high nutritional value of FWG maize meal was widely accepted, but with concerns raised about how a strong emphasis on FWG could potentially undermine the uptake and consumption of other nutritious foods.[114] On the other hand, there were questions about its potential to impact positively on local economies compared with other commodities, due to its short shelf-life[115] and relative cost compared with other fortified commodities, such as refined maize flour.[116]

107. Different perspectives on the selection of commodities in Rwanda highlighted the benefits of identifying and discussing different preferences and approaches early and focusing on common objectives to reduce tensions. WFP's supply chain approach does not promote single products, emphasizing public procurement processes. In contrast, partner organizations were more at liberty to focus on one product and support specific food processors. Ultimately, the evaluation served as a vehicle for discussion of these dilemmas and to find common ground across different organizational perspectives, primarily by focusing on the same end goal i.e. improved food and nutrition security and resolving tensions by highlighting how different approaches could contribute to the same set of positive outcomes. To adapt following these discussions, the Rwanda CO worked with smallholder farmers to diversify the food basket with nutrient-rich and resilient commodities while also addressing challenges to increasing the production of fortified whole grain maize meal.[117]

108. In Ghana, interviews with WFP staff and implementing partners indicated a growing demand for rice within the country. The choice of fortified rice as the most appropriate vehicle for improving nutrition through school meals was, therefore, widely accepted among key stakeholders,[118] and WFP research within its 'Fill the Nutrient Gap' work concurs that a focus on fortified rice through institutional demand for school meals can stimulate production and impact on local economies in Ghana.[119] That said, there was subsequent learning regarding the use of parboiled unpolished rice (PUR) for plain rice meals, and the need for better education of cooks on appropriate cooking methods for PUR and combining of recipes to encourage greater uptake.[120] Concerns were also raised internally within WFP about the lack of local production of fortified rice kernels and the cost of importation, potentially disincentivizing the private sector from expanding fortification.[121]

109. There was evidence of adaptive programming in several contexts in relation to selected commodities. In Burundi, for example, WFP flexibly adjusted the food basket to avoid physical and financial losses. While the cereal component of the food basket during the lifetime of the project was 80 percent maize flour and 20 percent rice, those percentages were reversed in November 2024, moving away from fortified maize flour due to contamination and supply chain constraints. Despite the higher cost of rice, the longer shelf life and reduced risk of contamination reduced the risk of product spoilage, which the CO reported improved their ability to provide food to schools. The CO continues to explore how to support stakeholders to produce high-quality, safe fortified maize flour, but adaptation was deemed necessary to achieve project outcomes.[122] Rwanda and Benin country offices also reported changes to their food basket to incorporate a wider variety of nutritious food options, such as eggs, fruit, and vegetables, in order to enhance the nutritional value of the meal despite challenges to scaling-up fortified

[114] WFP. 2024. Rwanda Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.
[115] WFP. 2022. Rwanda's wholegrain trailblazers: Reflections on a fortified wholegrain maize meal pilot in school meals, August 2022.
[116] Source: Interviews with the National Child Development Agency (NCDA) and Gardens for Health International, Rwanda (WFP. 2024. Rwanda Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[117] WFP Rwanda CO: Rwanda Development Adaptations. received April 2025;
[118] Source: Interviews with WFP Ghana CO, private sector associations, implementing partners and research institutions WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[119] WFP & National Development Planning Commission, Ghana. 2023. Fill the Nutrient Gap Ghana Report, May 2023.
[120] WFP (2024) 2023 Annual Report WFP; Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes; Reporting Period: November 2022 – December 2023, January 2024
[121] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations, 7 March 2025.
[122] WFP Burundi CO: Burundi Development Adaptations received April 2025.

commodities.[123]

110. In India, while the emphasis of the project was on continuing the uptake of rice fortification for school meals[124], the WFP CO also scoped the potential for creating demand for millet through social protection programmes, given that millet requires significantly less water during production compared to rice and offers relatively higher nutritional value, including in micronutrients such as calcium, iron and phosphorus.[125] The work was still at a formative stage at the time of the evaluation, but early assessments and WFP discussions with government have already generated learning on factors influencing millet consumption and its potential as a food commodity to be included in food safety nets.[126]

111. Lessons from the different contexts included the value of openly airing different perspectives on the promotion of commodities and the importance of focusing on common objectives to build consensus and reduce tensions. The investigation of the "local economies" theme also surfaced the need for capacity building on how to integrate new commodities into healthy diets; and the importance of balancing trade-offs and prioritizing flexibility and adaptation when considering which commodities to promote within the projects. Flexibility to adapt the commodities used to promote nutrition and boost the local economy were seen as a facilitator of project objectives.

Finding 4: There are signs of additional catalytic effects from promotion of certain commodities in different contexts, including unexpected positive effects. These included challenging stigmas related to fortified foods and stimulating innovation.

112. In several countries, there were early signs of positive results indicating that the selected commodities were not only well-suited to achieving the intended outcomes but had also begun to generate other catalytic and sometimes unexpected effects. This was the case in Honduras, for example, where yields of the new variety of fortified beans were showing signs of being more climate resistant than other fortified varieties (as described in Section 2.2). In Burundi, piloting of FWG maize meal through the project was considered by government stakeholders to have contributed to broader WFP efforts to advocate for fortification, and its support for the governments' development of a fortification strategy, as a way of reducing micronutrient deficiencies and hidden hunger, and to challenging stigmas related to fortification in the country.[127] It is not clear from the available evidence whether this effect was unique to FWG maize meal, or if it would have arisen if another fortified commodity were promoted. Due to the challenges connecting maize farmers with millers (see finding 1.1), the developmental evaluators believed that the prospect for impact on the local economy may be greater for the milk value chain than for FWG maize meal.

113. In Benin, WFP's support encouraged the development of new product categories and innovations. A cooperative of parboiled rice processors in Dassa began producing unpolished parboiled rice (UPR), where they had previously produced polished parboiled rice. At the time of the developmental evaluators' visit to Benin, the cooperative was exploring avenues to obtain certification to enter the commercial UPR market, noting that continuous technical support from WFP had been instrumental in helping them to innovate and expand their production beyond the project. The production of UPR for the cooperative was considered an innovation in and of itself, since previously they had only produced polished parboiled rice [128]

Learning and adaptation

114. Specific innovations were observed within different country contexts which have generated important

[123] WFP Rwanda CO: Rwanda Development Adaptations. received April 2025; WFP Benin CO: Benin Development Adaptations received March 2025

[124] For which there was an evaluation in 2019 docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000115539/download/

[125] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.

[126] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement..

[127] Source: Interview with the management (Director) of the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP) at the Ministry of Education (WFP. 2024. Burundi Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

[128] Source: Interview with the Cooperative of Parboiled Rice Processors in Dassa (CCER Dassa) (WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

learning. This includes the work in India on School Nutri-Gardens (see Section 2.2 for more details); and 'vertical integration of food processing' in Rwanda, whereby a cooperative of SHF intended to integrate food processing into the workflow of farmers, potentially boosting incomes.[129] Learning on cultivation practices for specific commodities in Honduras, such as new varieties of beans, was positively highlighted.[130] In Ghana, the early roll-out of a school meals application provided useful learning, particularly given that there were several issues affecting its use and utility.[131]

115. Several country offices reported the utility of analyzing the value chain from different perspectives through the food system models – an important aspect of the evaluation approach under local economies. Identifying gaps, barriers, and leverage points for influencing the supply chain were considered key lessons by evaluation participants. The Ghana CO commented that for them, the evaluation highlighted the need to pause, reflect on project implementation, and adjust. The Country Office reported, "Real-time and continuous learning through feedback loops (from millers, government agencies, and WFP teams) have helped refine strategies and address bottlenecks more effectively."[132]

116. Country offices also reported adaptations in their approach to influencing local economies arising from the developmental evaluation findings. In Ghana, the evaluation highlighted the importance of the decentralized procurement system. According to the CO, through discussions sparked by the developmental evaluation, the National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO), a company owned by the Government of Ghana which purchases excess produce from farmers to reduce post-harvest losses, agreed to procure food for school meals within catchment areas for this project.[133]

117. WFP Burundi expanded the use of voucher commodity model of delivering school meals from a pilot in 50 school to implementation in 264 schools. WFP staff attributed learning through the developmental evaluation process with this decision to hasten the transition of schools from an in-kind modality for school meal procurement to a commodity voucher modality. More information can be found in Box 1. Burundi also adjusted the food basket for their in-kind procurement model in November 2024 to move cereals from majority maize to majority rice (see paragraph 106 above). From this experience, the Burundi CO considered the importance of implementing a flexible approach as a key learning from the developmental evaluation process.

Box 1: Adaptation in Burundi's school meals procurement modality[134]

WFP Burundi uses two kinds of procurement modalities for school meals. Through the in-kind modality, WFP procures commodities regionally or internationally from neighboring countries such as Uganda and Tanzania. WFP then conducts processing and FSQ in Mombasa, a process which takes two to three weeks, before delivering food to schools through NGO partners once it is deemed safe. The majority (623 out of the 887) of schools reached by WFP continue to receive commodities under this approach. As WFP must deliver food to all schools, the in-kind approach is fuel intensive – a scarce and expensive resource during the period covered by the WFP-RF project under evaluation. In addition to high costs, the country office reported food loss due to aflatoxin contamination of the maize during processing – another challenge of the processing of grain under the in-kind modality.

Under the commodity voucher modality, money is sent to the provincial education entity, which then calls for a tender, and smallholder farmer cooperatives apply. A provincial committee then selects the winning cooperative,

[129] WFP. 2024. Rwanda Food system model, February 2024. An update from the WFP Rwanda CO indicated that while they have not not directly pursued the recommendation of vertical integration of processing into farmer's coops, under another project, WFP's support has shifted to go beyond smallholder farmer coops to 'farmer service centers', within which a range of services can be offered e.g., transport/shipping, inputs, extension services, education, etc. (WFP Rwanda CO: Development Adaptations, received April 2025).

[130] Source: beneficiaries' association – ASOPROGABT (WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

[131] The School Meal Planner Plus (SMP+) in Ghana is an application that the project unofficially tested for meal optimization at schools. Despite interest from stakeholders, there were several challenges with the application, including its offline accessibility, the need to incorporate better data within the app on micronutrients, and information on food prices (WFP (2024) Ghana Food system model: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes and Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.)

[132] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations received March 2025.

[133] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations received March 2025.

[134] WFP Burundi CO: Burundi Development Adaptations, 2025.

and the cooperatives aggregate commodities from their members to supply schools with ingredients for the school meal. Farmer cooperatives provide maize and/or rice, depending on availability. FSQ testing is done by a national lab before safe food is delivered to schools.

Due in part to the challenges of the in-kind procurement model identified through the developmental evaluation discussions, the CO expanded the commodity voucher pilot from 50 schools in the 2022-2023 school year to 264 schools in 2024, over 100 more than originally planned. The commodity voucher modality placed schools closer to cooperatives, reducing fuel needs. The FSQ testing was also done locally through the commodity voucher approach, enhancing efficiency and expanding shelf life of school meal commodities.

The commodity voucher modality originally represented a trade-off for the CO, as maize included in the food basket is not fortified. Moving from fortified to whole-grain maize meal under this model, however, was perceived by the country office to increase school feeding days while still offering nutritional value.[135]

118. There were also examples of barriers to change identified by country offices. In Ghana, the project team intended to create a rotating fund for smallholder farmers in order to provide capital for investments in school meal commodity production – overcoming the resource barriers identified through the evaluation. Investments from the fund would be repaid upon farmer receipt of payment for products for the school meal. Unfortunately, the CO was unable to find a donor interested in providing capital for such a fund.[136]

119. Innovations such as these were shared and discussed during periodic meetings of the SLC for the evaluation, facilitating a transfer of knowledge within and between countries and with global stakeholders. While not enough data are available to separate out learning arising from the SLC meetings from learning generated from the evaluation as a whole, the SLC meetings were positively received by participants and were considered a good practice to carry forward into future projects.[137] Stakeholders in the six COs report that the specific theories of changes for each country context were not updated as part of the evaluation process. This is perhaps a missed opportunity to capture lessons and changes in project theory.

2.2. Strategic Learning Question 2 (Sustainability)

SLQ 2. How might WFP adapt and operate differently so that the RF-WFP project innovations can be implemented on a larger scale and in a sustainable manner?

2.1 How can WFP become an enabler/convener for wider systems change without compromising identity?

120. The flexibility of the developmental evaluation approach allowed for this question to be adapted, with a stronger focus on understanding the overall enabling and hindering factors and WFP's ability to adapt in different contextual settings to work in a sustainable manner. As such, the findings presented below do not strictly respond to the original question but are considered relevant for the purposes of responding to the identified learning needs of key project stakeholders and for facilitating adaptations to the project.

Finding 6: Supportive policy, regulatory and fiscal environments are critical to the sustainability of RF-WFP project innovations, but can be undermined by unexpected events, such as political change. In some countries, strong evidence on the benefits of nutritious foods and their cost helped build credibility for RF-WFP interventions within government constituencies, translating into more national and institutional support for the agribusiness sector.

121. All countries illustrated the importance of supportive policy and regulatory environment for enabling

[135] The WFP Burundi CO reported that both in-kind and commodity voucher food baskets were made identical in the 2024-25 school year, despite the changes in cereal types and the flexibility of the voucher model. The change was made to avoid misinterpretation or overemphasis on "fortification" in the school meals.

[136] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations received March 2025.

[137] Source: feedback from SLC members during the sixth learning community meeting in April 2025.

RF-WFP project innovations. The strongest positive example of this was perhaps India, where national policies provide the parameters for the government's own food-based safety net – one of the largest in the world, reaching nearly 800 million people in conditions of vulnerability every month,[138] as well as a national policy mandating fortified rice distribution in all national safety net programmes.[139] The government is active at all levels within the safety net, including production, procurement, storage and transportation. Fortified rice is a key commodity within the system, distributed through an established network of over half a million shops at subsidized prices, as well as through schools and maternal and child health and nutrition centres.[140] Within this context and for over more than fifty years, WFP has been working in partnership with the Government of India, positioning itself to support the strengthening of government-run systems to make them more nutritionally effective, efficient and targeted to reach those most in need.[141]India's ability to produce fortified kernels nationally was an enabling factor that did not exist in the other five countries.[142]

122. There were other examples of the how positive policy and regulatory factors enabled WFP's ability to implement pilot interventions and affect change. For example, in Rwanda, the policy and regulatory environment for the project was perceived by the developmental evaluators as highly conducive to making sustainable progress. Food fortification is mandatory in Rwanda and food fortification regulations have been in place since 2020.[143] Beyond that, a comprehensive national school feeding policy has been in place since 2019 and operational guidelines for school meals were agreed in 2021, which include the possibility of procuring FWG maize meal for schools.[144] Likewise, in Honduras, the national school meals programme enjoys strong political support at the highest level, including endorsement by the president, [145] and is supported by a legal framework for school meals that promotes local food procurement.

123. In Burundi, the developmental evaluators noted several indications of a supportive contextual environment for the project, including political will (exemplified by the first lady's public support for school meals and Burundi's ambitious SMC commitments),[146]a favourable regulatory framework (such as a decree on fortification),[147] government commitment to increase the budget for the school feeding programme, and a fortification strategy in development.[148] These factors provided a solid basis upon which WFP could push for further system change. Despite the demonstrated political will and more advanced regulatory policies, sustainability of FWG maize meal in Burundi was hampered by contextual factors that impact production and distribution, such as the energy and fuel shortage. While regulatory policies are needed to ensure the quality of fortified foods, they represent a barrier for small millers to supply the fortified meal and inability to enforce the standards nationally has led to delays in supplying FWG maize meal to schools (see findings 8 and 9). The developmental evaluators highlighted that a supportive regulatory environment and government commitment is not enough to rapidly scale up fortification without a sufficient level of economic development, food availability, and capacity of the food processing sector.

---

[138] WFP. 2024. WFP India country brief October 2024. Available from: https://reliefweb.int/report/india/wfp-india-country-brief-october-2024

[139] Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. 2024. Nutritious Boost: Free Fortified Rice for a Healthier India, 11 October 2024. See: https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=153272&ModuleId=3&reg=3&lang=1

[140] WFP. 2025. India Case-study: Developing a Culture of Innovation through the Pilot to Scale Approach. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.

[141] WFP. 2024. WFP India Country Profile. Available from: https://www.wfp.org/countries/india#:~:text=As%20the%20world's%20most%20populous,and%2067%20percent%20of%20children

[142] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 4 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024

[143] Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority. Regulations N° CBD/TRG/003 Rev. N°1 Governing Food Fortification in Rwanda (Rwanda FDA law N°. 003/2018 of 09/02/2019, Article 8). See page ii, section on "adoption and approvak of the regulations"

[144] Ministry of Education, Republic of Rwanda. 2021. Rwanda School Feeding Operational Guidelines.

[145] Source: Interviews with SEDESOL (Director of the PNAE); WFP project team; an echoed in the national media.

[146] La Présidence. 2 March 2021. The first lady calls on all Burundians to support the school canteen program. Available from : https://presidence.gov.bi/2021/03/02/the-first-lady-calls-on-all-burundians-to-support-the-school-canteen-program/

[147] Décret n° 100-68 du 18 mars 2015 portant réglementation de la fortification des aliments au Burundi." This decree regulates the fortification of various foods including maize flour

[148] WFP. 2024. Burundi country strategic plan (2024–2027), WFP/EB.1/2024/6-A/2, February 2024.

124. Other contexts were equally nuanced and complex. In Ghana, for example, progress on the project was challenged by political change. A change in government during early 2023 meant that WFP and partners had to restate the importance of school meals priorities and persuade the new administration to continue supporting project innovations.[149] This instance, as well as lessons learned at the global level,[150] highlight the need to assess political risk when embarking on initiatives, as well as the importance of actions to minimize the risk of quality school meals and economic improvements being undermined by political change and the shifting priorities of incoming administrations, such as the inclusion of fortification in government policies, which may be more difficult to overturn. In Benin, the government demonstrated strong political will for the expansion and enhancement of school meals, but the rapid transfer of the PNASI from WFP to government control hindered the ability to complete and scale pilots for fortified rice, maize flower and UPR in the school meal. The developmental evaluators and WFP Benin CO stakeholders perceived that there was not enough time to implement pilot projects, generate evidence, and discuss results with ANAN within the project timeframe. Similarly, Honduras faced a short timeframe to complete their pilot projects but were able to advance further in the pilot projects because they built upon previous initiatives. For example, the biofortified beans pilot built upon previous work carried out by the MAS+ project in Olancho from 2017 to 2022, implemented by TechnoServe and funded by the US Department of Agriculture's Food for Progress program.

125. Basing pilot initiatives on trusted evidence was a key enabler of success and potential sustainability of the work. While pilots of new commodities were complete in Benin at the time of the mission, studies were completed that were highly valued by key stakeholders. Within the first year of the project, a series of important research streams produced evidence that amplified the messages of the project and helped convince government stakeholders of the value of investing in the agribusiness sector. In particular, WFP's 'Fill the Nutrient Gap' (FNG) analysis was cited by multiple key informants in Benin as useful in terms of estimating the cost of nutritious diets.[151] Other studies included a study on animal protein introduction in the school feeding programme, a study on formative research, a fortified food acceptability study, and a study on gender equality and the rice/maize value chain in Benin. Similarly in Ghana, evidence created through research and studies at the outset of the project generated a level of credibility and support for the pilot initiatives.[152] The WFP India CO also considered studies in the preparatory phase to be fundamental to the success of pilots in India, enabling the WFP India CO to explore new areas to inform practical implementation. These included a feasibility study on mainstreaming fortified whole wheat flour within one of India's food-based social protection systems; a 'menu mapping' study on school meal food baskets to assess their nutritional and dietary standards; and an assessment on creating demand for millets in meal programmes.[153]

Finding 7: The extent to which decentralized procurement models for school meals were already in place or were in the process of being established was an important enabling or hindering factor for WFP's ability to generate sustained results and contribute to food systems transformation.

Table 10: School meal procurement models and adjustments within the WFP-RF project

Country	Project procurement adjustments
Benin	Prior to the project, the food procurement for school canteens was done by WFP, with efforts made to maximize purchase of imported milled rice and white cowpeas from local traders. Since 2019, WFP has worked with smallholders farmer to improve their

[149] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations 7 March 2025
[150] WFP (2024) 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024
[151] Source: Interviews with the Secretariat of the Food Council and Nutrition (SP-CAN), which played a key role in the PNASI prior to the establishment of ANAN, the MAEP, the main WFP partner for the implementation of PNASI's local procurement strategy, and academia.
[152] Relevant research in Ghana included: WFP & National Development Planning Commission, Ghana. 2023. Fill the Nutrient Gap Ghana Report, May 2023; CSIR-Savanna Agricultural Research Institute. 2023. Report on the Study on Landscape Analysis and Potential Fortification in Ghana, June 2023.
[153] WFP India (undated). Report on the feasibility study on mainstreaming fortified whole wheat flour (formal title not known); WFP. 2024. Landscape Analysis of Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) Scheme: Leveraging the PM POSHAN Scheme to Address Malnutrition. November 2024.

	access to this market. In 2021, the first purchases of white maize (300 MT) from smallholder famers began. Through the project, the CO was able to support many other smallholder farmers, enhance their capacity, thereby increasing quantity and quality of locally produced commodities purchased by WFP for the school meal. The project also enabled a cash-based pilot with direct purchase of yellow maize, parboiled rice, red cowpeas, African leafy vegetables and eggs by school canteen committees from local producers.
Burundi	Both local procurement through cash vouchers and centralized procurement existed before and during the project, but the cash voucher model was expanded more rapidly than anticipated due, in part, to the evaluation. In-kind food procurement shifted from maize to rice due to food safety and quality (FSQ) issues during the transformation of maize into maize meal (see section 2.1 for more information).
Ghana	WFP-assisted local rice millers within communities implementing the project to directly supply PUR/FPUR to Senior High Schools as opposed to the existing centralized procurement arrangement where suppliers were contracted at the national level to distribute commodities to schools across the country. Procurement modalities at the basic school level where caterers purchased commodities from the open market remain unchanged.
Honduras	A dry ration which includes beans, flour, rice and oil is centrally procured and delivered by WFP in 21,000 schools while a fresh ration encompassing fruits, vegetables, eggs, and dairy products is also de-centrally procured from local producers selected by School Feeding Committees in approximately 7,000 pilot schools. The project adapted commodities available in the fresh and dry rations but did not alter procurement structure.[154]Dry ration beans were replaced with biofortified beans and pasteurized milk was included in the purchasing model for small producers as an additional product beside the fresh produce ration in the intervention region.
India	The project made no changes to the government's public distribution system which currently supplies school meals but introduced a pilot project to test school kitchen gardens in the Jaipur district of the Rajasthan state.
Rwanda	All commodities were procured by the school through school feeding procurement committees prior and during the project. The government revised the previous model during the project by centralising long-shelf-life commodities such as MML, maize, beans, oil, salt etc at district level and maintaining procurement of fresh commodities, like fruits and vegetables, by schools.

126. In Ghana, where procurement was typically centralized, discussions between WFP and the National Food Buffer Stock Company enabled the decentralized procurement of food for school meals within catchment areas for the project, allowing WFP to link its engagement in school meals with positive impacts on local

[154] WFP. 2025. Honduras Food System Model. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes.

communities and support the sustainable growth of local economies.[155] In Burundi, a decentralized procurement model was already in place, enabling WFP to test innovations within the project to further stimulate local economies.[156] In Rwanda, WFP supported the government to transition to a new decentralized (district level) school meals procurement model.[157] However, while these decentralized models in Burundi and Rwanda aspired to generating benefits for local economies by creating sustainable markets for locally produced, nutritious foods, it was not yet clear whether they had increased local purchasing of fortified foods, nor whether any potential gains had been sustained.[158]

Finding 8: Pre-existing capacity within the private sector, especially amongst SHF and small processors, was perceived to influence sustainability of project interventions across countries. Creating incentives for the private sector to invest in fortification was perceived by the SLC as critical, but largely beyond the reach of WFP.

127. Across countries, food systems were heavily reliant on the production capacities of SHFs. Yet the potential of SHFs was often hampered by low accessibility to key resources in an infant agribusiness sector, presenting a key challenge for the development of local economies and to the ability of WFP to scale-up and sustain the gains generated by the project. Access to key assets and finance/credit for SHFs was an important factor influencing the success of RF-WFP innovations and their effect on local economies. For the most part, lack of SHFs' access to assets and finance was highlighted as a recurring hindering factor. [159] In Benin, the evaluation highlighted lack of access to finance as a major challenge for SHF, particularly women; a challenge echoed in WFP's Country Strategic Plan for Benin (2024-2027), which notes constrained access to land and credit for women farmers as one factor among others limiting Benin's progress towards achieving food and nutrition security.[160] Within this context, WFP's approach of locally procuring food for the national school feeding programme, was perceived by SHF and processors as enabling SHF to access loans from microfinance institutions, using the WFP procurement contract as a guarantee.[161] Poor SHF access to finance and credit were also noted in Ghana as a hindering factor, as well as the capacity of caterers to supply food to primary schools.[162] In Honduras, the WFP CO was able to utilize additional internal resources to partially address some of the capacity and resource limitations of SHFs.[163] For example, by providing equipment to improve production at bean collection centres and the milk processing plant and conducting technical assistance and training activities for small holder farmers and dairy producers.

128. Lack of capacity among food processors – including a lack of technical knowledge of fortification processes and shortages of facilities capable of producing fortified commodities – was similarly challenging. A lack of pre-existing capacity in the food processing sector was similarly perceived as a significant hindering factor for RF-WFP project innovations to demonstrate a catalytic effect and for their sustainability thereafter. Examples include the limited capacity of local rice processors in Ghana, who lacked technical knowledge of fortification processes;[164] a lack of mills with the capacity to produce FWG maize meal in Rwanda;[165] and similar shortages of mills in Burundi, particularly given the relatively high

[155] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations 7 March 2025
[156] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community Feedback Loop, April 2024
[157] Source: interviews with WFP Headquarters and with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) (WFP. 2024. Rwanda Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes.)
[158] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation Strategic Learning Community Feedback Loop, April 2024
[159] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024
[160] WFP. 2023. Benin Country Strategic Plan (2024-2027), WFP/EB.2/2023/7-A/1
[161] WFP. 2025. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement
[162] WFP. 2024. Ghana Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes.
[163] WFP (2025) Honduras presentation made during the WFP – Rockefeller Foundation Strategic Learning Community Feedback Loop, 26 February 2025
[164] Source: Interviews with the Ghana Health Service GHS (GHS) and the National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO) (WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[165] Source: interviews with Vanguard Economics (VE), Minimex Ltd, and the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) (WFP. 2024. Rwanda Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

FSQ standards in-country.[166]In Burundi, milling companies and the WFP country office reported it can take two years for a local miller to obtain the five certificates required to produce fortified wholegrain maize meal.

129. Conversely, pre-existing private sector capacity was perceived as a key enabler in certain contexts. In contexts with stronger capacity among key private sector stakeholders, WFP was able to capitalize on those foundations and focus on filling key remaining capacity gaps. In Honduras, for example, prior experience with fortification of other products within the school basket – notably fortified corn flour and fortified vegetable oil – provided a strong foundation on which RF-WFP innovations then built with the addition of biofortified beans. As fortification was already a familiar practice, the developmental evaluators found that introducing biofortification did not present a new or unfamiliar concept that could encounter resistance.[167] The India experience highlighted the critical importance of a whole ecosystem with capacity to lay down and implement agreed standards for the processing of fortified foods, including government line ministries, academia, millers, fortified rice kernel manufacturers, local government officials, school staff and cooks. Within the ecosystem, WFP was able to identify key areas and actors requiring niche areas of technical support. In the case of rice fortification, for example, WFP filled an important gap by supporting the development of laboratory capacity to test the micronutrient content of rice, by establishing standards for rice fortification machinery, and through capacity-building of millers, manufacturers, government officials, school staff and cooks.[168]

130. The extent to which the private sector is incentivized – both from policy and regulatory perspectives, as well as the provision of financial incentives – was generally found to be a weakness across countries; and where there were attempts to increase incentives, these activities were still in their early stages (see Section 2.4 for further details). Suggestions from within the SLC on how the private sector could be further incentivized included the implementation of favourable tax and import policies, for example, as well as incentives for the local production of fortificants, mandatory requirements for fortification, and stronger FSQ management and procedures, including accreditation.[169] For example, by supporting millers through training and resources to understand and meet FSQ requirements.

Finding 9: FSQ gaps repeatedly hindered the scale-up and sustainability of RF-WFP project innovations. Considering the feasibility of FSQ aspects from the outset and working to develop standards and infrastructure as an integral part of the project throughout helped to overcome the challenges.

131. Across Burundi, Rwanda, Ghana, Benin, and Honduras, FSQ gaps and challenges were highlighted as hindering the scale-up and sustainability of RF-WFP project innovations.[170] This applies to several different inter-connected aspects of FSQ, as shown in Figure 2. Successful accreditation of food processors and suppliers is necessary to ensure that the use of fortified products can be scaled. Without enough accredited processors and suppliers, limited fortified food can be produced and introduced into the food system. Similarly, national standards need to be developed in order for FSQ testing and processing of fortified products to occur within a country. Otherwise, testing must be done externally, which can lead to higher prices that make adoption of fortified foods less attractive and creates delays that shorten the food's shelf life. Without accredited suppliers, national standards, and enforcement, there is a risk that fortified food will not be safe or of high quality.

132. The development of national accreditation processes for fortified foods was an issue in places, including in Burundi, where a lack of in-country capacity to carry out FSQ analysis forced national institutions to rely

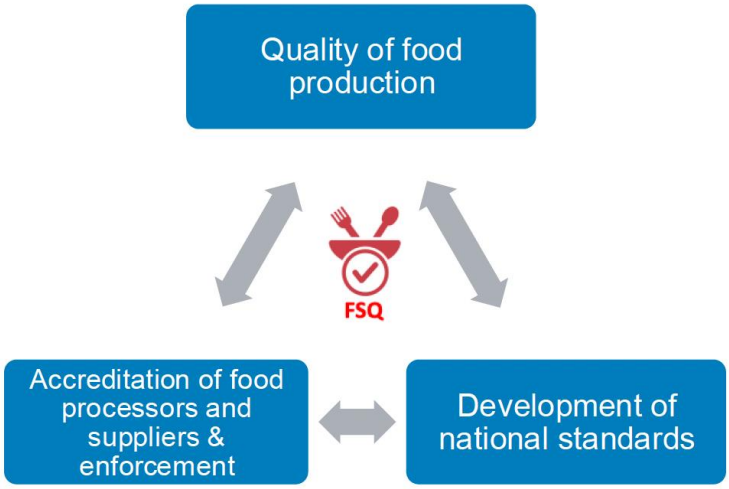
[166] Source: Interviews with WFP country office staff (WFP. 2024. Burundi Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[167] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement
[168] Source: Interviews with WFP India CO (WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[169] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024
[170] The India Learning Brief also notes that many essential standards were not in place when WFP began working with the government to expand fortified rice, but at the time of the WFP-RF project, standards had been established.

on laboratory testing in Kenya. This had delayed the delivery of ready-to-use FWG flour to schools by two to three weeks. In response to these challenges, WFP invested additional financial support and capacity building for national institutions to improve food quality monitoring capacity and production of credible analysis results.[171]

133. In Rwanda, a similar dependence of foreign accreditation processes of FSQ standards for fortified foods had hampered the development of the supply chain. Despite WFP's work with the Rwanda Standards Bureau since 2023 on harmonizing standards for fortified foods, in-country accreditation of fortified foods was still a work in progress.[172] At the time of the country visit, Benin also lacked regulatory standards on fortification of whole corn flour and rice at the national level.[173] While in Ghana, technical capacity is the main constraint, since the national Foods and Drugs Authority (FDA) lacks the capacity to conduct micronutrient analysis, hindering its approval of selected rice producers. In this instance, the FDA's experience with iodized salt – for which the United National Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides test kits to certify quality standards – provided a possible way forward.[174]

134. Elsewhere, in Honduras, the involvement of the specialist team on FSQ from WFP's regional bureau (RB) supported CO staff implementing the project to comply with requirements. Though, according to key WFP stakeholders, earlier involvement of the RB – from the outset of the project – would have been beneficial (see also Section 2.4). In India, the CO considered work on FSQ standards and infrastructure throughout the development and implementation of the project to be an important enabler of success.[175]

Figure 2: Food Safety and Quality (FSQ) aspects



Source: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2025) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 3 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 26 February 2025

Finding 10: The need for market development beyond school meals was frequently highlighted in countries – incentivizing SHF and private sector actors to invest in producing and processing fortified

[171] WFP (2023) Scaling up Fortified Whole Meal in School Feeding Programs in Rwanda and Burundi and Supporting an Innovation Hub in Kenya Regional Interim Narrative Report Reporting Period: November 2022- February 2023; interviews with WFP Burundi CO staff (WFP. 2024. Burundi Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)
[172] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024
[173] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024
[174] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024
[175] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2025) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 3 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 26 February 2025

commodities and developing the capacity of the agribusiness sector to supply nutritious food. This is largely beyond the reach of WFP alone, but has already stimulated important learning, including on the need to partner more effectively with other key actors in the food value chain and work together to stimulate broader market development for fortified foods

135. Without markets beyond school meals, countries faced the repeated challenge of struggling to sufficiently incentivize SHF and private sector stakeholders to invest in fortified commodities, thereby threatening the scale-up potential of RF-WFP innovations and their sustainability. The food processing industry (millers, processors) was perceived as particularly crucial to the success and sustainability of projects, yet incentives for them to invest in fortification were often lacking. Developing other institutional markets – such as in the health and social sectors – and stimulating commercial markets requires supplementary research and expertise.[176]

136. In Honduras, some work had been done with the target organization for the biofortified bean pilot, ASOPROGRABT[177] on market development, such as labelling and nutritional value specifications to facilitate the sale of biofortified beans in supermarkets.[178] Meanwhile, JOGAPES,[179] the milk processing plant that WFP partnered with for the processing of fortified cow's milk in Honduras, was willing to expand operations beyond the initial pilot department, but had yet to conduct an assessment of commercial markets and their potential prospects.[180] An update from the WFP CO in Honduras indicated their intention to continue working with JOGAPES and ASOPROGRABT on the marketing and commercialization of their products, including through an agreement to set up a 'business incubator' entity tasked with strengthening both value chains.[181]

137. In Rwanda, the WFP CO and the key project partner, Vanguard Economics, perceived that the long-term sustainability of FWG maize meal depended on its availability in local markets, not only in schools. Without additional markets, these stakeholders observed that school meals may not be sufficient for small and medium milling enterprises to make a profit. Fortified food markets in Rwanda are largely subsidized by government and donor-funded programs, so it was not clear whether local market demand could be a viable path to sustainability in the near future.[182] In contrast, developing additional markets for fortified commodities was not seen as a barrier to sustainability in India. This was because markets for fortified food already existed through other government food-based welfare schemes where fortification is mandatory. The institutional market for fortified rice was already guaranteed, which the WFP CO perceived led to investment by manufacturers.[183]Lack of additional markets was not raised as a key barrier to sustainability during the data collection mission to Benin.

138. In both Burundi and Ghana, the developmental evaluators highlighted the limitations of WFP to create incentives to stimulate private sector engagement and stimulate market development for fortified commodities. They suggested that WFP exercise its convening power and advocate for a more integrated, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to food systems transformation – labelled as a 'food system cluster approach'[184] – to maximize synergies across organizations, attract and optimize resources, create knowledge, and attract longer-term, more sustainable funding.[185] Developmental evaluators presented examples to the WFP Burundi and Ghana CO of similar coordination approaches in Egypt,

[176] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024

[177] Brisas de Talgua Association of Basic Grain Producers (ASOPROGRABT)

[178] Source: interviews with ASOPROGRABT and Prolancho (WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

[179] Young People Organized by the Pespire Livestock Farm (JOGAPES)

[180] Source: interview with JOGAPES, WFP Honduras CO; and exchanges with the WFP field office in Choluteca (WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

[181] WFP Honduras CO: Development Adaptations, April 2025.

[182] Source: interviews with key informant from the Rwanda Standards Board

[183] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement

[184] The 'cluster approach' referred to here is not the same as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster approach for the coordination of humanitarian assistance, which informs multi-agency response to emergencies.

[185] Burundi and Ghana Pathways to Innovation documents.

China, and Chile to spark discussion on how this integration could be achieved in the WFP-RF countries. In the case of Burundi, the WFP CO proposed that its switch from a project-based to an area-based approach, and its creation of a task force to oversee the integration of activities within defined areas of operation, was as a step towards a more integrated approach in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the food system.[186] For example, the NGO Amazi Water has co-located their projects to bring water to target schools in Burundi. In Ghana, the CO had taken time to understand existing opportunities to interact with a wider set of stakeholders to stimulate market development, including the Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network[187] and UNICEF's first food initiative,[188] before embarking on the creation of a new cluster or other coordination mechanism.[189]While there was a global consensus on the importance of market development and diversification for scale-up and sustainability,[190] actual progress on developing new markets beyond school meals was limited. Not only does it go beyond the scope and capacity of the project and the reach of WFP, but there are other significant obstacles, such as the generally subsidized nature of fortified food markets – which are often supported by governments and external donors – raising questions about the viability of stimulating local market demand through projects such as these in the future.[191]

Finding 11: Working towards sustainable change in nutritious food systems takes time. The short timeframe of the WFP RF projects created challenges, as did a lack of predictable, longer-term funding.

139. One of the most frequently recurring challenges raised by project implementers and partners regarding the sustainability of project innovations was the short timeframe in which pilot initiatives were being implemented. This was particularly raised by those working in countries covered by the global RF-WFP project. For many stakeholders in those countries, not only was the timeframe considered limiting in terms of achieving project objectives and generating tangible outcomes, but it was also perceived by WFP stakeholders as insufficient in terms of allowing the necessary time for preparatory work (such as baseline assessments), building relationships, motivating counterparts, securing approvals and accommodating unforeseen challenges, such as political and administrative changes.[192] As observed by an HQ team member during the fifth SLC workshop, "it's difficult to fully identify results that are more systemic in nature…. Some of these can only be seen in the longer term, but at the same time, we have a very short timeline, where we are designing the project and then jumping right into it. One of the learnings is that perhaps some of the studies that were part of the project and part of the implementation phase but have an impact on the implementation, should be taken into account earlier as part of the design phase. It was a little bit of ambitious to have those phases in parallel."

140. Financial resources were also raised as an important factor in determining the sustainability of project innovations. In Honduras, WFP's timely allocation of additional and complementary resources for FSQ-compliant infrastructure was considered critical for successful implementation of the pilot initiatives, contributing to a solid foundation for their later scale-up.[193] Elsewhere, there were concerns about mobilizing longer-term funding beyond the project for ongoing work led by national stakeholders. In

[186] WFP Burundi CO: Burundi Adaptations Document received April 2025.

[187] The SUN Network was launched in 2024 by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) with support from the WFP Ghana. See: https://sunbusinessnetwork.org/national_pages/ghana/?q=about-us

[188] See: https://www.unicef.org/wca/documents/first-foods-initiative

[189] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Adaptations Document, received March 2025.

[190] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024; WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2025) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 3 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 26 February 2025

[191] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024
Mkambula P, Mbuya MNN, Rowe LA, Sablah M, Friesen VM, Chadha M, Osei AK, Ringholz C, Vasta FC, Gorstein J. The Unfinished Agenda for Food Fortification in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Quantifying Progress, Gaps and Potential Opportunities. Nutrients. 2020 Jan 29;12(2):354. doi: 10.3390/nu12020354. PMID: 32013129; PMCID: PMC7071326.

[192] Specifically noted in Learning Briefs for Benin, Ghana and India.

[193] Source: Interviews with WFP Honduras CO staff (WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.)

Ghana, for example, at the time of the evaluation visit, WFP was planning to conduct a landscape analysis of potential funding sources and opportunities for sustainable investments in nutritious food – not necessarily for its own future work, but in support of the National Food Fortification Alliance Technical Working Group. The Ghana CO reported in March 2025 that they had secured funds from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) which they plan to use to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of fortification in Ghana.[194] At the time of writing this report, the CO reported that a contractual agreement was being finalized with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) to support the cost-benefit analysis.

141. Updates on project progress from some countries included details of successful efforts to mobilize additional funding to continue and expand on pilot initiatives. In Burundi, for example, the WFP CO successfully secured multi-year funding to build on the work initiated through the RF-WFP partnership.[195] Similarly in Rwanda, WFP integrated learning from the RF-WFP-funded project into a larger programme with additional funding, as well as incorporating elements of the work into its overall draft Country Strategic Plan.[196]

2.2. How do current Rockefeller Fund interventions contribute to the intended/unintended effects/influences of climate change?

Finding 12: While there were several examples of ad-hoc innovations to integrate climate-sensitive thinking into RF-WFP projects, climate change was not systematically incorporated into the WFP RF projects as a priority.

142. The developmental evaluation found several ad-hoc examples of efforts to integrate climate mitigation and resilient food production and processing practices into project innovations. In Burundi, for example, where millers faced challenges due to frequent power cuts, WFP and RF engaged in discussions with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet to explore the transition of WFP-supported millers to renewable energy.[197] At the time of writing this report, there was no evidence of whether this transition had occurred. In both Burundi and Rwanda, WFP COs shared examples of attempts to modify pilot interventions to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as through improved irrigation systems and broader agroecological farming.[198]

143. In Honduras, WFP partnered with the National University of Agriculture (UNAG), albeit late in the project's implementation, to explore opportunities to integrate climate-sensitive approaches into the project. UNAG delivered several workshops for food producers on sustainable food system practices, including on the use of water, agroecological techniques, and the use of land soils. The workshops were positively received by participants and discussions are underway between WFP and UNAG on continued collaboration.[199] The successful partnership with UNAG has also sparked the WFP Honduras project team to recognise the benefits of identifying and working with academic partners more systematically, prompting them to consider seeking out a knowledge partner in the Choluteca region to support implementation of the fortified milk pilot.[200]

144. In India, the WFP CO experimented in various ways to both adapt to the effects of climate change and to lower the ecological impact of pilot interventions to avoid further negative climatic effects. Firstly, the WFP India CO collaborated with the government to explore the potential of introducing millet as a

[194] Source: Interviews with WFP Ghana CO staff (WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.); WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Adaptations Document, received March 2025.
[195] WFP Burundi CO: Burundi Adaptations Document, received April 2025.
[196] WFP Rwanda CO: Rwanda Adaptations Document, received April 2025.
[197] WFP. 2023. Scaling up Fortified Whole Meal in School Feeding Programs in Rwanda and Burundi and Supporting an Innovation Hub in Kenya. Regional Interim Narrative Report Reporting Period: November 2022- February 2023
[198] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2024) Strategic Learning Community, Feedback Loop, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes and Institutional Procurement, 4 April 2024
[199] WFP. 2025. Honduras Food System Model, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes and Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation
[200] [200] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement

nutritious and climate-resilient crop. Other project activities in India included school nutrition gardens, which were perceived by WFP as addressing climate change through the provision of locally-sourced vegetables with a lower carbon footprint than those sourced through markets, and vermicomposting techniques in the gardens to act as carbon sinks by capturing and storing carbon in the soil.[201]

145. While initiatives such as these are positive and deserve further attention for learning purposes and possible scale-up and replication, the developmental evaluation did not observe a more systematic effort within the RF-WFP projects to explore the impact of food value chains on climate change. Climate adaptation was not mentioned as an objective within the global or regional projects' proposal, which may explain why climate-sensitive thinking was not more systemically integrated into RF-WFP projects. Existing examples show promise for the potential of future work to integrate climate-adaptive crops or reduce the carbon footprint of school meals.

Learning and adaptation

146. COs reported instances of learning and adaptation in order to address barriers to intervention scale-up and sustainability. In Rwanda, the evaluation generated insights about the importance of integrating nutritious commodities in the school meal food basket beyond fortified maize meal. As reported by the CO, "*Fortification shouldn't just be focused on MML [FWG maize meal] alone. The project's innovative food systems approach integrates a focus on nutrition at every step, emphasizing the importance of fortification and nutritional aspects for cooperatives and smallholder farmers. The CO plans to work with smallholder farmers to diversify the food basket with nutrient-rich commodities to promote nutritious meals and integrate environmentally friendly food crops*."

147. Based on insights presented in the evaluation's food system model, the Rwanda Country Office conducted capacity strengthening trainings with cooperatives to address challenges, including the shortage of accredited suppliers, short shelf life of fortified maize meal, and certification standards that were challenging for small processors to meet. In addition, they conducted food safety and quality trainings as part of the national school feeding programme.[202]

148. In Ghana, the evaluation identified the development of other markets, beyond the institutional market that the school meal provides, as an important incentive for millers. In the lifetime of this project, the CO reported that it was not possible to adjust focus on market development, but it had secured funds from the United Kingdom's Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office to implement a similar fortification project, which included an activity to design market development strategies for millers. The CO also highlighted that a key lesson from the evaluation was the importance of investigating ways to produce Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) in Ghana to avoid expensive imported kernels.[203]

2.3. Strategic Learning Question 3 (SBCC)

149. Evidence to support responses to SLQ 3 was relatively limited, due to the learning-centred approach to the evaluation, which focused less on SBCC questions in three countries (Burundi, Rwanda, Ghana) and more on other aspects of the evaluation in response to the priorities set by WFP COs. This was partially due to the late start of SBCC activities and the timing of the evaluation missions. More specific limitations and gaps in the evidence are noted below.

SLQ 3. How can the programme effectively use SBCC for different groups (geographic, gender, etc.) given the short implementation period and limited funding?

[201] WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024

[202] WFP Rwanda CO: Rwanda Adaptations Document, received April 2025.

[203] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Adaptations Document, received March 2025

3.1. What social behaviour changes can realistically be achieved in a short time frame and how?

Finding 13: Where SBCC activities were prioritized, stakeholders perceived that they had demonstrated positive early results and generated significant learning, including on contextualization of messages and approaches, effective ways of communicating with children through entertainment and interaction, leveraging multiple stakeholders for a holistic approach to SBCC, and the benefits of focusing on all nutritious foods.

150. In countries where SBCC has been prioritized, including India and Honduras, there is evidence that it can and has played an important role in the acceptance and uptake of nutritious food, contributing to greater demand for fortified commodities.

151. In India, for example, WFP carried out an SBCC rice fortification campaign in Bihar in support of government messaging as it incorporated fortified rice across all its food-based safety nets.[204] While there was no formal evaluation of the success of the information campaign, anecdotal evidence from WFP field staff indicates that it resulted in a better understanding of the use of fortified rice kernels and less wastage. An indicator of success is that WFP's pilot campaign is reportedly being adopted and scaled up by the central government, with funding allocated to state governments to replicate the campaign locally.[205]

152. Additionally, in Honduras, WFP worked closely with School Feeding Committees to co-create an SBCC campaign linked to acceptance of both biofortified beans and fortified pasteurized milk. The campaign disseminated messages to school children, teachers, cooks, families and communities on the benefits of consuming the fortified commodities via flyers, videos and social media posts. While there may have been multiple factors influencing the success of the project, the SBCC campaign was perceived by key stakeholders as fundamental to the integration of fortified commodities in the school meal basket.[206]In Ghana, campaigns conducted within the parameters of the project – including cooking demonstrations and training of caterers – were perceived by key stakeholders as generating acceptance of fortified and nutritious foods at school. At the time of the evaluation mission to Ghana, the formative assessment had only been completed two months prior, and SBCC activities had just begun. Despite the nascent intervention, there were early signs of positive effects. Teachers, caterers, school children and their families were all reportedly more positive about the selected commodities after the SBCC activities had been conducted.[207]

153. Despite only partial results in this area, there is already evidence of important learning that can benefit the WFP RF projects as they continue and beyond. From the perspective of the developmental evaluators and the SLC, the main learning points to emerge on SBCC so far include:

- Contextualize SBCC messaging and approaches: Experiences in India particularly highlighted the benefits of tailoring SBCC campaigns at state level to different socio-cultural realities to improve their relevance and effectiveness. In one state, faith leaders developed jingles to incorporate into daily prayers, and more generally, communication materials were translated into different languages for easier state-to-state uptake.[208] In Honduras, an SBCC campaign co-designed by target groups (parents and teachers) deliberately grounded messages in local realities and socio-cultural dynamics,. Capacity, motivation, and opportunity barriers, such as lack of fortified bean availability,

[204] A 2019 Evaluation of rice fortification commissioned by WFP India CO made some recommendations related to SBCC docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000115539/download/

[205] Source: Interviews with WFP India CO staff (WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation)

[206] Source: observations by the Development Evaluators, interviews with School Feeding Committees, the representative education department from municipality of San Antonio de Flores and WFP CO field staff (WFP. 2025. Honduras Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation)

[207] Interviews with government agencies, school district and school visit in Tolon (WFP. 2024. Ghana Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation)

[208] Source: Interviews with WFP India CO staff (WFP. 2025. India Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation).

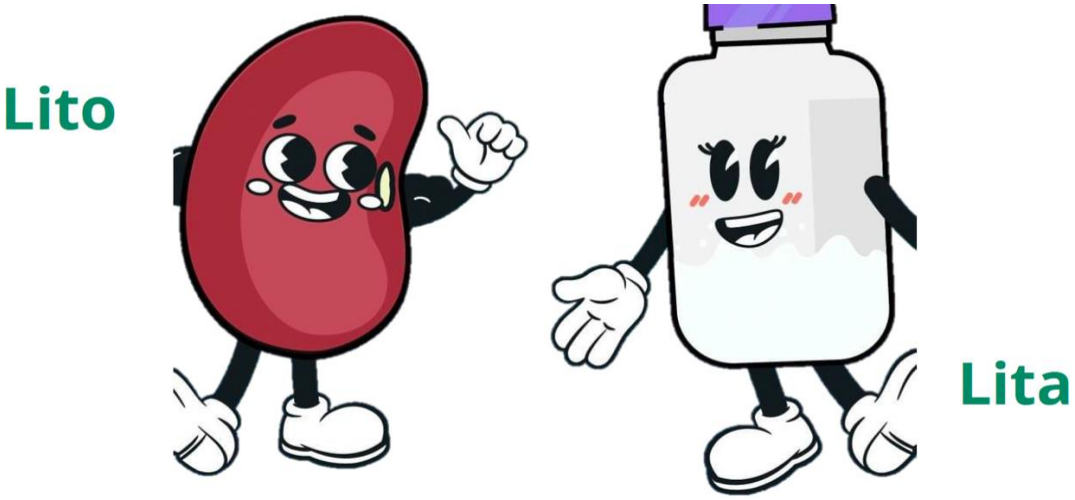
unfamiliarity with fortified beans, or beliefs that they were less natural, were identified through a formative research study. Misinformation about milk consumption, such as a belief that it would lead to "engorgement" if children consumed too much, was also identified. Examples of socio-cultural dynamics that were taken into account included trust in health personnel (encouraging their use as messengers) and gender dynamics, which was perceived as inhibiting fathers' participation in school meal committees. This approach was considered helpful for identifying and overcoming myths and incorrect beliefs about milk handling and associations between biofortification and transgenic effects.[209]

- Combine education with entertainment for effective communication with children: In both India and Honduras, informal and entertaining approaches were used to transmit important messages to children and their families. In India, the SBCC component of the school nutrition garden used an entertainment-education approach, including a high level of interactive engagement with children, unlike more formal communications typically deployed in government schools.[210] In Honduras, the use of animated characters (see Figure 3) was considered successful in terms of communicating with children in a fun way and building momentum for the project, even before fortified milk had been added to the fresh ration in school meals.[211]
- Success rests on the combined efforts of multiple stakeholders, including those beyond the project: A successful SBCC campaign in India deployed a '360 degree' approach, incorporating mass media (talk shows, radio jingles, media hoardings and billboards), local government officials and leveraging of 'champions' – block-level civil servants working at grassroots level who continued to reinforce key messages to sustain positive behaviours after the campaign. The WFP India CO partially credited the success of the campaign to this multi-channel approach, which used different materials and communication methods to reach different audiences.[212]
- Broaden the focus to all nutritious foods: Learning from Rwanda emphasized the benefits of SBCC messaging promoting the consumption of all nutritious foods (not just fortified foods), within the overall school meal. While initial SBCC activities during the 2021 pilot focused exclusively on FWG, this was later expanded to focus on all nutritious foods, which was found to be more effective.[213] While this aspect was highlighted as an important learning for Rwanda, it was not widely picked up or incorporated in learning in other contexts or in cross-country discussions.

154. It is difficult to attribute changes in perceptions and behaviors to the SBCC approaches in the examples above with the information available. Systematic data collection on knowledge, attitudes, and practices before and after SBCC interventions was not conducted. Evidence of effectiveness is largely anecdotal, based on the perceptions of field staff and observations of the developmental evaluators during field visits. Despite the lack of secondary or primary quantitative data to triangulate findings, the lessons were perceived as valid and useful by SLC participants.

[209] Source: interview with WFP field staff
[210] Source: Interviews with WFP India CO staff (WFP. 2025. India Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation).
[211] Source: observations by the Development Evaluators (WFP. 2025. Honduras Food system model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation)
[212] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation
[213] WFP. 2023. Scaling up Fortified Whole Meal in School Feeding Programs in Rwanda and Burundi and Supporting an Innovation Hub in Kenya. Regional Interim Narrative Report, Reporting Period: 1 November 2021- 31 October 2022

Figure 3: Animated characters developed for SBCC campaign, Honduras



Source: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation (2025) Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 3 Recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 26 February 2025

Finding 14: The timing of SBCC activities varied between countries, depending on a range of contextual factors. Some countries delayed the start-up of SBCC until other areas of work had progressed, and exploratory work had been completed. Elsewhere, an early focus on SBCC was found to support project objectives, though sustained behaviour change is likely to take time to evidence.

155. In some countries, it was considered too early to embark on any significant SBCC activities before other elements of the project had progressed. This was the case in Benin, for example, where both WFP and government stakeholders sequenced the SBCC component to commence after the handover of responsibility for the national school feeding programme from WFP to the government had been completed, and after formative studies had been conducted and shared.[214] In both Rwanda and Burundi, while formative work on SBCC was ongoing, SBCC activities were not yet advanced enough at the time of the evaluation to explore progress in any detail. Since the mission, WFP Benin has reported that 140 SBCC sessions were held and training has been provided to partners and beneficiaries, including schoolchildren, parents, cooks, and community agents. However, the timing of the evaluation visit prevented the inclusion of learning from these activities in the report.

156. Where SBCC activities were prioritized early, they generated important learning on the timing of engagement. In Honduras, rapid start-up of SBCC initiatives demonstrated what could be achieved within a relatively short timeframe. Shortly after the roll-out of the SBCC campaign, some schools had already integrated bio-fortified beans within school meals, and, despite delays to the introduction of fortified milk, which had not yet been given final quality approval, key stakeholders at school level indicated that they were already primed to add it to the fresh ration within school meals. School Feeding Committees consulted during the developmental evaluation credited the bio-fortified beans and the accompanying messaging campaign with multiple positive results, including reduced absenteeism, better classroom participation, and signs of improved health among school children.[215] Contextual factors were key, however, and the quick acceptance of biofortified beans can partly be attributed to the familiarity of

[214] Preparatory meeting with the WFP Benin CO; WFP. 2025. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation..

[215] Source: Interviews with School Feeding Committees, the representative education department from municipality of San Antonio de Flores and WFP Honduras CO field staff (WFP. 2025. Honduras Food system model. Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement.). These perceived results were not verified through secondary documentation.

fortified foods within school meals and the prior inclusion of beans within the school meal food basket.[216]

157. Experiences in India were somewhat contradictory, pointing to the need for longer timeframes to effect and evaluate sustained behaviour change. Even with anecdotal evidence to support the perception that SBCC work had been effective in a short six- to eight-month period, a later and more comprehensive evaluation was considered necessary to determine whether behaviour change had been sustained over time.[217]

3.2. To what extent and how can school children influence good eating habits and demand for nutritious foods in their communities/households?

Finding 15: There is little evidence, other than two examples, of a transfer of good eating habits and demands from school children to their households and broader communities. The lack of more detailed information also means limited learning on how to leverage the nutritious habits of children.

Limited evidence exists to respond to this question. In Ghana, SBCC activities carried out in schools, such as cooking demonstrations and competitions, were perceived to have had positive effects in terms of generating a positive outlook among school children, as well as among their families, teachers and caterers.[218] According to WFP, in India, community engagement activities such as street plays, cooking demonstrations and school rallies were considered effective for generating awareness within communities and strengthening their engagement and participation.[219] Beyond these perceptions of respondents, however, no evidence was collected to demonstrate the extent to which influencing the good eating habits of school children has translated into an increased demand for nutritious foods within their families and communities, or how it could be done more effectively.

Learning and adaptation

158. COs did not report specific lessons or adaptations related to SBCC resulting from this evaluation in Developmental Adaptations templates (described in paragraph 102). Late starts to SBCC components and the fact that other learning areas were prioritized over SBCC in many country missions may have contributed to the lack of reported adaptation. In Benin, where the evaluation mission identified SBCC as an important component to include in pilots, a lack of CO and RB capacity was cited by the CO as a barrier to adaptation. Due to the transfer of school meal programme implementation from WFP to the Government's National Agency for Nutrition and Food Security, many key staff working on the WFP-RF project left the Benin CO, including the nutrition officer, which delayed the CO from following up on SBCC recommendations.

2.4. Strategic Learning Question 4 (Partnerships)

SLQ 4. To what extent and in what ways is the current approach/strategy with respect to government and other key stakeholders appropriate to ensure the scale-up and sustainability of the system that we are putting in place?

4.1. How does WFP's role and approach to interacting with food systems affect programme implementation and results?

Finding 16: WFP is well-placed to play a leading enabler role within the RF-WFP projects given its reputation as a trusted partner with external stakeholders in the areas of school meals and food

[216] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[217] WFP. 2025. India Food System Model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[218] Source: interviews with school staff and school district officials (WFP. 2024. Ghana Food System Model, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.)
[219] WFP. 2024. 2023 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2022 – December 2023, January 2024.

systems. In particular, its strong relationships with governments in various countries ideally positions WFP to effectively implement the projects and generate results. Given the holistic nature of the project, WFP was most effective when it forged relationships with multiple government ministries across different aspects of food systems transformation.

159. Overall, WFP demonstrated that it is well-placed in all RF project contexts to play a leading, catalytic role within the projects and its approach to interacting with food systems has been largely effective. This may be due to the RF project using WFP and government cooperation for school meals as a selection criterion for project countries. External stakeholders in a range of contexts commented on WFP's suitability to lead the projects. In Ghana, a wide range of partners commented on WFP's valued role as an enabler and facilitator, particularly given its key role in supporting the reactivation of Ghana's National Food Fortification Alliance (NFFA).[220] WFP's broader role beyond the WFP RF projects was seen as an asset by many, including in Honduras, where WFP's extensive experience of school meals (as the direct implementer of the national school feeding programme) was considered important.[221] Also in Burundi, government stakeholders and other development actors noted WFP's value as a trusted partner in the broader food system – citing WFP's involvement in other fortification projects and its collaboration with a wide range of partners in the food system as critical indicators of WFP's suitability to lead this scope of work.[222]

160. WFP's relationship with governments in countries where the projects are being implemented was considered particularly critical for its ability to interact effectively with food systems and affect change. In Benin, a transfer of leadership for the national school feeding programme from WFP to the government was underway at the time of the evaluation visit, in line with WFP's global school feeding strategy, which emphasizes the importance of a scale-up and transition of school meal programmes to national ownership wherever possible.[223] In the Benin context, the transfer of ownership has been accompanied by a shared roadmap and action plan, as well as an emphasis on joint learning . This strong collaboration and day-to-day engagement between WFP and government counterparts generated a learning space for innovations during the transition, including opportunities for testing of new approaches within the RF-WFP project, [224] including the use of cash-based transfers as a modality for school meals, the introduction of unpolished parboiled rice and fresh foods into the food basket, and dissemination of heat retention cooker bags to school canteens.[225] On a practical level, it also facilitated access to lists of national agrifood processors, which WFP was then able to use to test out their potential involvement in food fortification processes.[226]

161. In India, the partnership between WFP and the government has benefited from years of investment and trust building. WFP has successfully leveraged this capital for the benefit of the RF-WFP project and has strengthened engagement through the secondment of key personnel to government departments, which key informants in the India CO perceived as helpful in terms of staying up to date with government priorities and effectively advancing the agenda of the RF-WFP project.[227]

162. Food system models developed through the evaluation identified the large number of stakeholders

[220] Source: Interviews with government officials (WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.) ; RF-WFP. 2023. Stakeholders Engagement Reactivation of the National Food Fortification Alliance (NFFA), Activity report, 4 July 2023.
[221] Source: Interviews with WFP Honduras CO staff (WFP. 2025. Honduras Food System Model. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.) WFP staff perceived that their role as the implementer of the government's school feeding programme uniquely positioned them to implement changes in the school meal to influence the food system under the WFP-RF project .
[222] WFP. 2024. Burundi Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[223] WFP. 2020. A Chance for Every Schoolchild: Partnering to scale up school health and nutrition for human capital. WFP School Feeding Strategy 2020-2030, January 2020.
[224] WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024.
[225] WFP Benin CO: Benin Adaptations Document.
[226] WFP. 2024. 2023 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2022 – December 2023, January 2024.
[227] WFP. 2024. 2023 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2022 – December 2023, January 2024.

involved in the food system and therefore influenced by the project. To effectively work with governments to influence the food system through school meals, ministries in many sectors needed to be engaged, including ministries of health, education, agriculture, finance, and others. The diversity of stakeholders within governments – the range of government ministries and departments that WFP engages with on different aspect of the project in different countries, at both national and sub-national levels – was also perceived as a facilitator of effective project implementation. Beyond the obvious engagement with Ministries of Education for advances on school meal programmes, WFP COs have partnered with other government ministries, emphasizing the holistic nature of work on food systems. In Rwanda, for example, WFP's Nutrition Division worked with the National Child Development Agency and the Ministry of Education to find ways to integrate nutrition data in a way that improves the nutrition sensitivity of the government systems.[228] Conversely, in Honduras, the lack of engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture from the outset was identified as a missed opportunity to leverage resources and find common synergies between government ministries for the benefit of the project.[229]

4.2. How can the project best balance the dynamics of stakeholders at different levels (Rockefeller Foundation, governments, private sector), including potential contextual factors?

Finding 17: A diverse set of stakeholders are directly and indirectly engaged in the portfolio of projects, making up a complex ecosystem of inter-related actors. While the SLC perceived working with many stakeholders to be essential to achieve project goals, these experiences have highlighted the challenges of working in a complex partner ecosystem, including occasional communication gaps and unclear roles and governance responsibilities.

163. Engagement, buy-in, and action from a wide range of actors across the value chain as well as within governments (see above) have been essential enablers of project results. These actors make up a complex ecosystem. Beyond the direct implementers of the project i.e., WFP and RF, and in addition to the central partners within the pilot initiatives – including SHF, processors and other private sector actors – some of the other main stakeholder groups that have engaged with the project and affected its success or otherwise are as follows:

- Community and grassroots organizations: Several contexts demonstrated the value of effective engagement with grassroots organizations as well as the challenges. In Honduras, WFP's consistent presence and partnership with local organizations in the pilot project area was considered important for gaining traction at the local level. Regular interactions had fostered strong relations with local implementing partners, as well as with milk and bean producers and local authorities. The day-to-day contact between stakeholders enabled WFP to deepen its understanding of the operational context in which the project was being implemented and engage with implementing partners on detailed aspects of project implementation.[230] Experiences in India demonstrated the value of engaging community members as champions of change for the project (see also Section 2.3). WFP similarly recognized the value of engaging at grassroots level in Burundi, including with farmers' cooperatives and millers, through capacity building activities on topics such as logistics, entrepreneurship, business management and marketing. However, WFP stakeholders also acknowledged the significant remaining capacity gaps of those groups, which were greater than originally anticipated, resulting in a scale-up of capacity building activities during project implementation to ensure efficient implementation of decentralized procurement processes.[231]
- Academia and researchers: Experiences in Honduras demonstrated the potential value of partnerships with academia. In that case, the partnership between WFP and UNAG (see Section 2.2

[228] WFP. 2024. Rwanda Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[229] WFP. 2025. Honduras Food System Model. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[230] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[231] WFP. 2023. Scaling up Fortified Whole Meal in School Feeding Programs in Rwanda and Burundi and Supporting an Innovation Hub in Kenya. Regional Interim Narrative Report, Reporting Period: 1 November 2021- 31 October 2022.

for details) highlighted the importance of actively exploring and fostering such alliances from the outset.[232] Experiences from Benin, Ghana and India of rooting the project in strong evidence, conducted by and in collaboration with trusted researchers, showed how credibility for the RF-WFP initiatives was enhanced through the development of research and studies on topics related to the projects, thereby supporting the uptake and sustainability of pilot initiatives (see Section 2.2).

- Donors, including non-traditional donors and partners: Other donors engaged in related projects and initiatives were perceived to have indirectly contributed to the success of the RF-WFP project. In Ghana, for example, WFP managed and coordinated several rice fortification initiatives and deliberately fostered links between them to manage resources efficiently. During the visit of the Developmental Evaluators, the WFP CO were in discussions with a bilateral donor government to synergize their contribution with the resources available within the RF-WFP project and to strengthen the capacities of an overlapping set of project partners (rice processors in this instance) with complementary support. Parallel work was also underway to make deliberate links between the RF-WFP project and an initiative supported by a different donor to extend training on digitalization and modernization of the agricultural sector designed for women SHFs to rice processors and school caterers.[233] Similarly, in Honduras, the WFP capitalized on complementarities between the RF-WFP project and a related project funded by another donor. In this case, funding from the other donor covered aspects of the project that were not included within RF funding, such as infrastructure and assets (including technical fortification equipment), allowing project staff to combine the two resource streams for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.[234]

164. Despite the positive aspects of multi-stakeholder and multi-level engagement and partnership, the wide range of actors involved had led to communication gaps and confusion at times. This was the case in Ghana, for example, where the National Food Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO) and the Ghana School Feeding Programme team (GSFP) were unaware of the reactivation of the National Food Fortification Alliance (NFFA), although they were particularly interested in it. Both the GSFP and the Ghana Education Service (GES) were also unclear about upcoming project activities. The GES expected to receive the recipe guides after training the caterers but was unsure about the timeline and the procedures to be followed. Schools in Tolon district were unaware of project delays and had been waiting for the pilot to be initiated for months.[235]

165. Partnership governance also proved to be difficult in some instances. In Rwanda, the organizational boundaries and working methods were not always clear in a context characterized by the interaction of multiple partners of very different nature. Several organizations were involved in the partnership in Rwanda: the RF, Vanguard Economics (VE) – another partner of the RF and grant recipient – and WFP. The partnership was also indirectly influenced by decisions of the regional offices (RF, WFP) and developments in the Fortified Whole Grain Alliance (FWGA). In this environment, roles and responsibilities as well as institutional representation were sometimes diluted and ambiguous (e.g. the boundary between VE and RF responsibilities was unclear). The fact that the relationship between the WFP and the RF was a grant maker – recipient relationship at country level and a high-level strategic relationship at the headquarters added to the complexity (see also Finding 20).[236]

Finding 18: The multi-dimensional nature of work on food system transformation worked best when a 'whole of organisation' approach from WFP was applied – drawing on different in-house skillsets and requiring close coordination to maximise the inputs of technical teams from across the organisation.

[232] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[233] Source: Interviews with WFP CO staff (WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.)
[234] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[235] Source: interviews with NAFCO, GSFP, and GES. Staff, and field visit to Tolon primary and secondary schools. (WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief, Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.)
[236] WFP. 2024. Rwanda Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.

166. The RF-WFP portfolio of projects is a food-system oriented initiative with a cross-cutting character. As experiences in different countries have shown, work on the value chain spans the responsibilities of many different WFP units and organizational levels. In Burundi, the developmental evaluators observed that the project was the first food systems initiative for WFP to bring together staff working on nutrition, school meals, procurement, supply chain, FSQ, fortification and resilience (energy and water). At the time of the evaluation visit, the WFP CO were exploring the establishment of an internal Task Force for Food Systems Transformation to coordinate efforts and maximise the inputs of different units and experts.[237] In Rwanda, WFP were integrating different programmatic aspects – such as school meals, food systems, smallholder farmer support, conservation agriculture, fortification and behaviour change – into a follow-up initiative, funded separately, in part due to learning from the experience of the RF-WFP project. According to CO staff, a more collaborative approach, including through multiple planning workshops involving WFP staff across diverse functions, had resulted in the drafting of a more integrated and collaborative project proposal and project plan for the new initiative.[238]

167. In Honduras, WFP regional staff with FSQ expertise were brought into the project, but only after the crucial design stage. An important lesson learned in this instance was that earlier involvement of in-house FSQ experts, and earlier consideration of the feasibility of FSQ requirements, could have avoided later problems and delays with the delivery of fortified milk.[239]

168. To better facilitate the high level of cross-team collaboration needed for a food systems approach, the developmental evaluators proposed that WFP adopt the "Agile" project management methodology in two country offices, Benin and Rwanda, following the respective country missions.[240] The "Agile" method combines techniques such as working in "sprints" where complex projects are broken down into short cycles of work with purposeful efforts for cross-team face-to-face communication. Self-managed, multi-disciplinary teams work in tandem on different aspects of a project, as opposed to other project management methods where work is sequential. The Agile approach also encourages experimentation and iterative development to respond to complex and constantly changing environments.[241] Following the evaluation mission, the Benin CO experimented with the Agile methodology by setting up a task force (covering school meals, nutrition, supply chain, vulnerability assessment and analysis, and field office focal points) to work towards common goals and to forge connections between projects.[242]

Finding 19: There are strong examples of how the project has utilized existing platforms and networks to coordinate initiatives and share knowledge at country level. There is room to expand multi-stakeholder engagement at the global level to share project learning and scale-up approaches to food system transformation beyond project countries.

169. The multi-dimensional nature of the project, and the variety of different organisations and institutions involved, means that coordination is highly necessary, though challenging. Country teams have found various ways to link with work in partnership with other actors, including by engaging through existing platforms and networks to avoid duplication, forge synergies and share knowledge. In Benin, for example, WFP has collaborated with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), which has been implementing a project in the country since 2023 to fortify maize meal in support of the national school feeding programme. Through their collaboration, WFP and GAIN have identified synergies between projects eg. WFP has focused on building the capacity of food processors while GAIN has concentrated on improving laboratory testing equipment and capacities and combining their complementary skillsets to

[237] WFP. 2024. Burundi Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[238] WFP Rwanda CO: Rwanda Development Adaptations received April 2025.
[239] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[240] WFP. 2024. Benin Pathways to Innovation; WFP. 2024. Rwanda Pathways to Innovation. Adaptations were proposed by the evaluators following country missions and initial discussion of preliminary findings with WFP Country Office teams. The Pathways to Innovation proposals were discussed further with WFP Country Office teams in subsequent feedback loop workshops.
[241] WFP. 2024. Benin Pathways to Innovation.
[242] WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.

address common challenges in food fortification.[243]

170. In other contexts, the Developmental Evaluators proposed national forums for sharing experiences and initiating dialogue on the way forward; or proposed that WFP initiate a 'cluster approach' to collectively strengthen school-based nutritious food systems, such as in Ghana and Burundi (see Finding 10 for further details). These proposals were captured in the Pathways to Innovation documents and discussed with country offices following each country mission.

171. At a global level within WFP, the PPGS knowledge management team established the 'knowledge sharing network' to facilitate learning and sharing of best practices between COs in the RF projects through a series of virtual sharing sessions. This included a dedicated session on themes related to lessons learned on procurement, fortification, SBCC practices and gender equality approaches in Benin, Ghana and India.[244] Based on the positive feedback and demonstrated value of the Knowledge Sharing Network, it was scaled up and formally adopted as a service offered globally across WFP through PPGS. The new global platform, called the WFP Global School Meals Community, was established in February 2025 and connects over 250 school meals officers across more than 80 country offices. The platform includes a hotline-modelled Microsoft Teams chat, a weekly School Meals newsletter, and monthly knowledge share-out sessions covering a diverse set of themes. As of April 2025, seven sessions have been conducted under this new umbrella, covering food fortification and innovations, Home-Grown School Feeding, national school feeding policy developments, and digital solutions for school meal planning.

172. Globally, and beyond WFP, the RF-WFP partnership connects with the SMC (see Section 1.2). Indeed, this evaluation is intended to leverage the catalytic role of the Coalition to share learning from the project across its network of governments and partners. There were examples of links between the project and the SMC at country level, including in Burundi, where the government committed to developing a sustainable financing strategy for school meals in October 2023 and references to the preliminary evaluation findings were made during a financing strategy planning meeting in February 2024.[245] Also in Ghana, the WFP CO successfully encouraged the government to join the SMC and linked government institutions to the SMC's sustainable financing initiative.[246]However, there was no engagement of the SMC during the evaluation thus far, highlighting a missed opportunity to share project learning with a broader set of stakeholders. WFP intends to use this final evaluation report to communicate lessons with the SMC; however, broader sharing of lessons at the global level is yet to occur.

Finding 20: WFP and RF have leveraged their comparative advantages to forge a strong partnership, particularly for effective global-level advocacy. The different nature of the two organizations has caused some tensions at country-level, however, where the dynamic has shifted between that of 'donor & grantee' and 'strategic partners', according to WFP stakeholders. Stakeholders perceive that this has limited the developmental nature of the project and its ability to adapt and highlighted the value of taking time to contextualize the nature of the partnership in different country contexts

173. The partnership between WFP and RF itself has generated learning on how different types of organizations can work together effectively and maximize their comparative advantages. WFP as a multilateral organisation and RF as a private philanthropic donor have forged an important relationship that has been impactful and successful when the different assets of each institution have been leveraged effectively. At a global level, WFP and RF have joined forces to convey effective advocacy messages at different events around the world – leveraging WFP's expert authority and influence and the RF's network

[243] WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[244] WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024.
[245] WFP Burundi CO: Burundi Development Adaptations received April 2025
[246] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations 7 March 2025.

capital and its ability to convene and convince stakeholders.[247]

174. At country level, there was some evidence that WFP and RF had similarly leveraged their partnership for the good of the projects but also instances where different ways of working had caused tensions. In Rwanda and Burundi, for example, the evaluation noted that the dynamic between RF and WFP operated differently at different levels of WFP's organisation. Whereas the relationship between WFP HQ and Rockefeller was perceived by WFP stakeholders as more strategic and partnership-oriented, the relationship at the country office level as viewed by WFP stakeholders as a more transactional 'donor' and 'grantee' relationship, with agreed activities and targets. This difference in ways of working introduced complexity into the partnership, making it difficult to navigate at times. In Rwanda, evaluators identified different perspectives between WFP and RF on the pace of scaling up the inclusion of nutritious foods in school meals, the selection of commodities, and approaches to combating nutritional deficiencies. While WFP stakeholders preferred a dietary diversity approach to improving nutrition without a focus on single products, RF believed in the benefit of using fortified whole rain maize meal as a product which could quickly be scaled to efficiently address micronutrient deficiencies. The high expectations for targets related to fortification was perceived as a challenge to adaptation and harmonizing these different perspectives, especially when challenges were faced to scaling fortified commodities (see section 2.1 for more details on challenges).[248]

175. Similarly, in Honduras, the evaluation identified pathways to innovation including undertaking a gender equality assessment and embarking in capacity strengthening work with young entrepreneurs. As these activities were not initially outlined in workplans, WFP stakeholders at the country office level were not initially confident if the adaptations could be accommodated within the confines of the agreement.[249]

176. Across countries, there were occasional different partner perspectives on key aspects of project implementation, including the pace of scale-up, ways of combating nutritional deficiencies and the selection of commodities.[250] Based on these experiences, the evaluation highlighted the value of purposively contextualizing the partnership in different countries, spelling out what makes the RF-WFP partnership strategically valuable in each country and clearly defining the terms of engagement.[251]

Learning and adaptation

177. In response to partnership findings, COs reported that they adopted new ways of working within the country office and with partners. In response to the suggestion of utilizing the 'Agile' working methodology in Benin (see finding 19), the CO reported that they established a taskforce team involving multiple CO units to implement the cash-based transfer pilot. At the time of the writing of the report, no evidence was available on the impact of the Agile approach on pilot implementation or results.

178. The WFP Rwanda CO reported that they adapted ways of working within the country office in response to the evaluation. Under their new Country Strategic Plan, school meals and support for smallholder farmers were integrated under food systems and human capital objectives. This change also encompassed a change in reporting structure, with previously separate teams now combined, which was perceived by key informants in the Rwanda CO to improve coordination.

179. WFP Ghana reported that they had taken steps to better communicate with partners following the communication gaps identified through the evaluation. This included scheduling additional engagements with the Minister of Education and initiating a monthly partners meeting with the wide variety of

[247] Events included the 2024 AfDB Annual Meetings, G20, African Day of School Feeding and School Meals Coalition, UNGA's Organization of African First Ladies for Development event (WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024.)

[248] WFP. 2023. Rwanda Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.

[249] Source: Honduras feedback loop workshop recording. January 2025.

[250] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Feedback Loop, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes and Institutional Procurement, 4 April 2024.

[251] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Feedback Loop, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes and Institutional Procurement, 4 April 2024.

organizations they work with to implement school meals.[252] While the CO reported these meetings were useful for coordination, no evidence was gathered during the evaluation on their frequency or the perceptions of other partners of their effectiveness. The CO perceived that the evaluation helped them better align with other actors in the sector to avoid duplication of activities. For example, the CO identified that they were able to harmonize formative assessments for fortification with the Fortified Whole Grain Alliance, avoiding duplication between the studies.

180. Country-to-country learning has been an integral part of the RF-WFP partnership, facilitated by the Developmental Evaluators in meetings of the SLC (see Section 1.4). In addition, more spontaneous country-to-country knowledge sharing occurred during project implementation, notably in the case of the WFP India CO, which took an active role in initiating South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). Documentation of the rice fortification initiative in India highlighted the important role that SSTC played in informing technical aspects of the initiative and generating support from government decision-makers, notably through WFP-facilitated visits by Indian delegations to countries with successful fortification programmes already in place, including Thailand, Singapore and Costa Rica. India's participation in the "Scaling Up Rice Fortification" workshop in Bangkok, was credited with attracting a high level of interest in large-scale rice fortification from the government and providing an opportunity for officials to learn about global evidence for rice fortification as well as the technical aspects of policy formation.[253] India has since participated in knowledge exchanges to learn about cold storage systems from other countries, such as Finland and Japan.

181. In turn, WFP's shift from a provider of food aid to a provider of technical assistance to the Government of India has attracted interest from several other countries in the region and beyond. For example, a high-level Nigerian delegation visited India in 2023 to learn about its rice fortification journey, and other representatives from South Asian countries, including Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, have also benefited from India's experience in rice fortification.[254] Some of the benefits cited from these missions include enhancing Sri Lanka's knowledge base on fortified rice policy through meetings with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and visits to fortified rice kernel manufacturing units, better understanding of SBCC campaigns and incorporation of lessons learned from these campaigns in Bhutan's National Nutrition Strategy, and facilitating conversations between Bangladesh and officials from the Department of Food and Public Distribution on production and distribution of fortified rice in social protection schemes.[255]

2.5. Strategic Learning Question 5 (Advocacy)

SLQ 5. Which specific advocacy approaches are working well for systems change and which do not? And why?

5.1. To what extent and how does the current engagement strategy effectively influence government and other relevant actors?

Finding 21: The sequencing of advocacy and implementation was key, albeit outside of explicit advocacy strategies or plans, which had not been developed at the time of the evaluation. Advocacy that started early and continued throughout the project was considered to have contributed to project successes.

[252] The CO noted that meetings have sometimes been skipped, but they still perceived that the establishment of this mechanism was useful for coordination. No evidence was gathered on frequency of these meetings or the perceptions of other partners of their effectiveness.

[253] WFP. 2023. Journey of rice fortification in India. WFP, August 2023 (developed by the India country office); WFP (2022) The proof is in the pilot: Nine insights from india's rice fortification pilot-to-scale approach. A Case Study, July 2022

[254] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.

[255] WFP. 2023. Journey of rice fortification in India. WFP, August 2023 (developed by the India country office); WFP (2022) The proof is in the pilot: Nine insights from india's rice fortification pilot-to-scale approach. A Case Study, July 2022

182. The advocacy component of the RF-WFP project was pursued somewhat separately to other components and within a different timeframe. At the time of some of the country visits by the Developmental Evaluators, work on advocacy had only recently begun or was just about to start; in which case, advocacy was not prioritised by the SLC for investigation and discussion during this evaluation. In Benin, for example, at the time of the Developmental Evaluators' visit, a mission by an external consulting team had just taken place, the outputs of which – a landscape analysis of the school meals environment and a draft advocacy plan – were still under review by the WFP CO.[256] Advocacy was considered during the mission, but not as a core component.[257] This was also the case in other contexts, including in Ghana and Rwanda. Despite the peripheral focus on advocacy during this evaluation, several key learning points on this theme did emerge.

183. Despite the lack of explicit advocacy strategies at the time of evaluation visits, some countries embedded advocacy components within project implementation.[258] In India, as part of the pilot-to-scale approach, advocacy began early and evolved throughout the project. Evidence generated by demonstration pilots was built into an ongoing technical dialogue with the government, including through regular exchanges and technical debates. The WFP India CO considered this form of incremental and evidence-based advocacy to be effective in terms of strengthening the government's confidence in pilot initiatives and influencing their willingness to scale-up and sustain the work.[259]

184. In Honduras, advocacy and stakeholder engagement plans were developed towards the end of the project rather than at the start. In hindsight, the WFP project team reflected that an earlier focus on advocacy may have helped to create the conditions for scaling up the pilots. In particular, the involvement of key government agencies in the pilots from the start as a form of incremental advocacy was perceived by the CO as important for ensuring their full understanding of the process and the challenges, allowing them to play a stronger role in advocating for the inclusion of pasteurized fortified milk in the fresh ration.[260] During project implementation in Ghana, certain key topics were identified for targeted advocacy with the government, including on the need for a policy shift on mandatory fortification and tax incentives for fortification. By the time that these topics were identified, however, the project was well underway with little remaining time to make progress.[261] In this case, upfront identification of key policy areas for focused messaging could have helped guide WFP's advocacy efforts earlier.

Finding 22: Trusted evidence helped to underpin effective advocacy in several contexts; while the project itself also provided opportunities to pilot new initiatives and generate evidence on results to support continued advocacy.

185. The need for evidence to support effective advocacy was highlighted in several country contexts. In Burundi, a value for money study on the cost benefits of school meals was perceived by one key government stakeholder as having contributed to increased political acceptance of school meals, including acceptance and uptake of the RF-WFP project.[262] Other examples of evidence-based advocacy, describing how related research and studies helped to build credibility for the project in Benin, Ghana and India can be found in Section 2.2 (see Finding 6).

186. Experiences in India demonstrated how technical assistance and advocacy can effectively progress simultaneously when there is an emphasis on generating and sharing evidence. Implementation of the pilot projects (such as the school kitchen gardens) in close collaboration with school management

[256] Visit by the Global Health Advocacy Incubator consulting firm under Component 3 of the global project
[257] WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[258] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Feedback Loop, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes and Institutional Procurement, 4 April 2024.
[259] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[260] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation
[261] WFP Ghana CO: Ghana Development Adaptations 7 March 2025.
[262] Government of Burundi, WFP & Analytics and Metrics. 2025. Étude Coûts-Bénéfices du Programme National d'Alimentation Scolaire au Burundi, Research Working Paper, 29 Janvier 2025; WFP. 2024. Burundi Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.

committees and government officials, and sharing of ongoing progress of these new approaches, was perceived by WFP stakeholders in-country as an effective example of 'bottom-up advocacy' – combining action on the project with simultaneous advocacy on its effectiveness.[263] In Benin, the project included the commissioning of several important studies on nutritious school meals (see Section 2.2). However, at the time of the Developmental Evaluators' visit, project implementors had not yet started implementing new approaches, such as the integration of micro-milling machines in schools. According to government staff and WFP CO personnel, this meant that they were unable to gather feedback on the effectiveness or otherwise of this innovative approach and, therefore, lacked the necessary evidence to generate support for its application.[264]

5.2. How can the Rockefeller Fund act as a catalyst for change to influence policy at the national level?

Finding 23: WFP and RF have collaborated effectively on advocacy at the global level, but this was not consistently the case at national level. Moreover, there has been a disconnect between global and national collaborative advocacy efforts.

187. Project reports note the effective collaboration between WFP and the RF for advocacy at the global level. On several occasions, the two organizations operated in a complementary manner, leveraging WFP's expert authority and influence together with RF's convening and messaging power.[265] The evaluation did not find significant evidence of consistent joint advocacy between WFP COs and the RF at national level, however, other than limited, one-off engagements and joint field missions. This was considered a missed opportunity.[266] Nor were there consistently strong links between global and in-country advocacy efforts as documented through the developmental evaluation process. Project reports noted that more could have been done to draw on project experiences to boost global advocacy and, in turn, capitalize on global advocacy to support advocacy priorities at the country level. The example of the 'planet-friendly school meals agenda' in Kenya was cited as a positive example of linking country and global advocacy approaches, albeit one beyond the scope of this evaluation. Within the initiative, advocacy on a global issue had helped frame priorities at the country level in Kenya, while national advocacy had focused on advancing uptake of the project locally and served as an example for replication in other countries.[267]

Learning and adaptation

188. The Ghana CO identified two key lessons for advocacy stemming from the developmental evaluation: the importance of evidence for influencing policy and the identification of political risk stemming from leadership changes within government. Based on these lessons, the CO reported that they held discussions with Ghana's National Food Fortification Alliance to identify the most needed kinds of evidence to promote fortified foods. Through future work, they hope to promote mandatory food fortification with tax incentives, which could provide continuity through future administrative changes.

2.6. Strategic Learning Question 6 (Gender equality)

To what extent and how is the programme integrating gender-responsive and gender-transformative measures/elements?

[263] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[264] WFP. 2024. Benin Food System Model. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[265] Examples include the 2024 AfDB Annual Meetings, G20, African Day of School Feeding and School Meals Coalition, UNGA's Organization of African First Ladies for Development event (WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024.)
[266] WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024.
[267] WFP. 2024. 2023 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2022 – December 2023, January 2024; WFP. 2024. 2024 Annual Report: WFP – Rockefeller Foundation: Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, Reporting Period: November 2023 - October 2024, December 2024.

6.1. What are the enabling and inhibiting factors playing a role in incorporating a gender lens, and what could be done to enhance the possibilities of success?

6.2. To what extent and how is the project affecting women's economic empowerment in a way that shifts the unequal gender dynamics in their households and communities?

These two learning questions were considered together as there was a lack of strong evidence to respond to question 6.2 in particular.

Finding 24: Several approaches to incorporating gender equality thinking into the projects were observed at country level, albeit mostly in their early stages. Late consideration of gender equality aspects was identified as a hindering factor in some contexts, where the focus has latterly been on integrating gender-sensitive approaches in the time remaining to influence work beyond the timeframe of the projects.

189. Several interesting approaches to contribute to gender responsive and gender transformative results were observed at the time of evaluation visits, albeit in their early stages of application. For example:

- **Working with men to counter prevailing discriminatory gender norms** was highlighted in several countries as an important way of beginning to allow better access to productive resources and economic opportunities for women within the food value chain. In India, engaging men within the rice fortification campaign and nutri-garden educational activities – for example, by involving men in cooking demonstrations and campaign posters – was perceived by the CO as a way of challenging discriminatory gender norms through the project.[268] In Honduras, capacity building activities on gender and masculinity in the bean value chain incorporated elements to challenge entrenched and discriminatory gender norms, biases and stereotypes that have perpetuated women's limited control of resources and decision-making power.[269] The project incorporated three workshops about gender and masculinity for male and female members of the biofortified bean cooperative in Olancho, which is one of the areas with a higher incidence of violence against women in the country. The workshops introduced concepts such as positive masculinity, emotional repression or control in men as a harmful gender expectation, and the rejection of violence, control and abuse. Reportedly, the workshops also discussed aspects of 'economic violence' and income distribution at household level, including how the income from bean cultivation is distributed and the current inequalities between men and women.

- **Working directly with women's organizations to build capacity and showcasing their successes** was perceived as another positive approach, including in Rwanda and Burundi, where the project had supported SHF cooperatives mainly represented by women and millers with strong female representation. In Benin, this was done through knowledge sharing and the provision of equipment to women's organizations to allow them to operate at scale, including working with small female-driven processing groups who risked being excluded from the project due to their limited production capacities. Support for one particular women's cooperative of rice farmers was considered a success case, with a significant increase in their capacity following support from WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, resulting in a contract to provide UPR to the national school feeding programme.[270] Women in other SHF cooperatives emphasized the need to highlight successes such as this to demonstrate what female entrepreneurship can achieve.[271]
- The **use of community-led, gender-sensitive project tools** was planned in some contexts at the

[268] WFP. 2025. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[269] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[270] Source: Interviews with the women's cooperative and The National Association of Women Agricultural Entrepreneurs (WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.)
[271] WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.

time of evaluation visits. In Ghana, the WFP CO was intending to use the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology to engage communities and highlight the structural and social factors hindering women's empowerment.[272] In Honduras, WFP planned to enhance its existing gender equality analysis by applying a deeper intersectional analysis to understand and respond to the inter-linking factors affecting women's economic empowerment, including age, education and socio-economic status. Intersectionality was perceived by CO key informants as particularly important in the Honduras context, given limited economic opportunities for women, as well as others structural gender inequalities and the resulting pressures to migrate.[273] The direct application of gender-sensitive approaches to project implementation was perceived as positive in the case of India. There, for its formative study on millets, the WFP CO paid close attention to gender-sensitive enumerator and data training. This allowed the enumerators to engage both men and women on topics related to the disparity of harvesting, cooking and consumption of millets between men and women, and to make sense of the data that they collected.[274]

- In Benin, the **development of a Gender Equality Action Plan** together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries was considered promising by the Developmental Evaluators. Its validation by national stakeholders after the time of the evaluation visit was seen as an important starting point for articulating a gender transformative approach within the remaining timeframe of the project.[275]

190. According to the Developmental Evaluators, the main inhibitor of incorporating a gender lens in the project in some contexts was the lack of a strong emphasis on gender equality from the outset. In the case of Burundi and Rwanda, where the project was well underway by the time of the developmental evaluators' visits, the question was framed around how to incorporate gender equality into the food value chain towards the end of the pilots, noting the limited timeframe and budget remaining. In other words, the evaluators asked what 'seeds' could be planted in the time remaining to build the foundations of a more gender-responsive/gender-transformative approach in the longer-term, beyond the lifespan of the project.[276] Similarly, in India, the CO reported that intended adaptations to the project to better integrate gender-transformative approaches had been slower moving and more limited than desired, as a result of implementing the work within government programmes and subject to time and resource limitations.[277] Despite these perceived limitations, the India CO also reported successful examples of working with the government to integrate gender equality into activities. For example, the CO reported that the government approved educational materials for cooking demonstrations which challenged gender norms and encouraged the participation of male audiences.

Learning and adaptation

191. Based on the evaluation's findings in the gender equality learning area, WFP Honduras is conducting an intersectional gender equality study in the remaining months of the project. The study was still ongoing at the time of writing this evaluation report. The purpose of the study is to generate a clearer idea of the relationship between gender and the rest of the social categories or dimensions, and to determine mechanisms for prevention, attention and accompaniment of cases of gender-based violence and identify specific groups that require special attention.[278] While gender equality integration was also identified as an opportunity for improvement during the evaluation mission to Rwanda, the country office cited capacity as a barrier to making changes.[279] In the adaptation templates, no other country offices cited

[272] WFP. 2024. Ghana Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[273] WFP. 2025. Honduras Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation; WFP Honduras CO: Development Adaptations, April 2025.
[274] WFP. 2024. India Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[275] WFP. 2024. Benin Learning Brief. Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programmes & Institutional Procurement, Developmental Evaluation.
[276] WFP – Rockefeller Foundation. 2024. Strategic Learning Community, Workshop 2 recording, Catalyzing Good Food through School Feeding Programmes, 23 October 2024.
[277] WFP India CO: india Development Adaptations, February 2025.
[278] WFP Honduras CO: Development Adaptations, April 2025.
[279] WFP Rwanda CO: Development Adaptations, April 2025.

adaptation resulting from the evaluation in the gender equality learning area. While it is not certain why more COs did not cite adaptations in this learning area, it is worth noting that gender was not discussed in the Pathways to Innovation documents for any country except Honduras. The Pathways to Innovation tools focused on the topic areas that implementers and evaluators considered most urgent, so the exclusion of gender topics in these documents could be viewed as another indicator their de-prioritization in the WFP-RF projects. This could also explain why few COs reported adaptations under this learning area resulting from the evaluation.

3. Conclusions, lessons and Issues for Consideration

3.1. Conclusions

Through a process of piloting and innovation, the RF-WFP projects tested the overall critical assumption underpinning the RF-WFP projects i.e. that "*leveraging institutional food procurement mechanisms, strengthening supply chains, and influencing healthy eating behaviours through food-based programmes, primarily school meals programmes, will improve diet quality, sustainability of the food-based safety net, equity of national food systems, and positive economic impact for local communities*".[280] The conclusions from that piloting process are set out below. The developmental evaluation does not seek to document the precise results that have been achieved through the projects. Rather, it focuses on informing learning and adaptation within the project. Where results are discussed, the evaluation presents which aspects, approaches and innovations were perceived to have contributed, or are likely to contribute, to positive effects and how.

Local economies

192. **Overall, it was the combination of approaches and innovations – addressing food systems from different angles (supply and demand) – that were perceived as generating lessons about the projects' abilities and limitations in contributing to local economies**. Support for supply side initiatives were widespread and diverse – including support to SHF, millers, school canteens and others – and these had begun to gain traction and generate learning across the project countries and among project stakeholders with the piloting of the production, processing and cooking of new fortified commodities in school meals. On the demand side, workstreams focused on advocacy and SBCC were relatively less advanced due to the sequencing of activities, which placed evidence generation before advocacy. However, where initiatives in these areas had begun, they were perceived to be catalyzing learning in the process (see below).

193. Flexibility to adapt commodities and procurement processes promoted through the project was seen as crucial to supporting local economies, especially given challenges related to fortification. The ability to promote additional healthy commodities and adopt different procurement models allowed the project to provide income-generating opportunities to smallholder farmers within the timeframe of the project while simultaneously working to overcome fortification barriers.

194. The **inter-connectedness of project activities was critical**, demonstrating the need to work across food systems to generate demand, while simultaneously supporting food producers and processors to stimulate supply. Several COs, such as Ghana and Rwanda, reported the **utility of analyzing the value chain from different perspectives through the 'food system models'**. These models, and the process of collaborative design that they entailed, helped to identify gaps, barriers, and leverage points for influencing the demand and supply chain and highlight potential linkages between different project components.

Sustainability

195. **Contextual factors were critical for the successful and sustainable introduction of fortified foods and healthy commodities in the school meal.** Contexts in which there were supportive policy,

[280] WFP. 2024. Developmental Evaluation of Catalyzing Good Food Through School Feeding Programs from November 2022 to April 2025, Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference, WFP School-Based Programmes Division

regulatory and fiscal measures, provided fertile ground for catalyzing good food through school meals programmes, allowing WFP to push for further system change. Where there were barriers, strong evidence, either generated and/or leveraged by WFP on the benefits of nutritious foods and their cost, helped build credibility for RF-WFP interventions within government constituencies, translating into more national and institutional support for the agribusiness sector.

196. **Lack of capacity to scale-up the production, processing, safety and quality testing of fortified foods was a persistent challenge, threatening the sustainability of results**. Capacity gaps were evident throughout the food value chain – from SHF to food processors to school caterers to FSQ capacities, and within both the public and private sectors. WFP took steps to build capacity wherever possible, but the needs often went beyond the reach of WFP and its partners, particularly in terms of addressing capacity gaps within the private sector.

197. Despite the success of the projects in generating increased demand for fortified foods through the school meal, **school meals alone were often considered insufficient to stimulate the necessary investment within the private sector to scale-up production and processing of fortified commodities**. **Broader market development and diversification were considered essential to create greater demand**. Again, this went beyond the reach of the RF-WFP projects, yet it was considered essential for the sustainability of project results at scale.

198. The **feasibility of achieving sustainable results within the limited timeframe and budget** of the projects was also noted as a constraint, particularly for pursuing scalable outcomes and building strong relationships. The fact that WFP and partners sequenced activities in certain contexts e.g. delaying work on advocacy until other project components had advanced, made it particularly challenging to deliver all aspects of the projects within a relatively tight timeframe. Given these constraints, a **conceptualization of the projects as foundational – sowing the seeds for subsequent, longer-term initiatives (and funding) to transform food systems** – is logical.

Partnership

199. **To effectively influence food systems, WFP cannot act alone. They must engage many different partners and stakeholders, especially given the catalytic nature of the funding and the broad challenges to sustainability that the projects identified**. Partnership was cemented into the approach from the beginning through the underlying agreement between WFP and RF. Other partners were also mobilized to support the objectives of the projects; there were several examples of where the projects stimulated innovation within the broader school meals and agribusiness communities. However, the projects demonstrated that that **a broader ecosystem of stakeholders needs to come together to collectively address some of the contextual factors beyond WFP's direct control**. This includes development-oriented and private sector institutions, working together with WFP and other humanitarian actors to link project initiatives to developments in the agribusiness sector and efforts to stimulate markets beyond procurement for school meals.

200. **Despite the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, there are certain aspects of the work that WFP and RF were uniquely positioned to contribute.** WFP's reputation as a trusted technical expert and its good relations with government institutions made it ideally placed to lead innovations and stimulate others to contribute, particularly when it drew on expertise across the organization and engaged at country-, regional- and global-levels. RF's convening power was similarly identified as an asset during project implementation, complementing WFP's role, particularly at the global level. Nationally, however, the occasional tendency for WFP and RF to revert to a 'donor & grantee' relationship detracted from the strategic potential of the partnership, hindering WFP from adapting and innovating, given the centering of the partnership around a workplan with agreed targets and deliverables.

Gender equality and climate sensitivity

In theory, WFP's focus on people in conditions of vulnerability and its commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment positioned the organization well to ensure that the project was gender transformative. Despite this, however, the evaluation found that **gender equality aspects were not**

systematically and adequately considered early enough in the design and implementation of projects, which negatively affected the incorporation of a gender lens during project implementation. Countries had attempted to incorporate gender equality thinking into project implementation in an ad-hoc manner, however, and sharing of those experiences through the developmental evaluation helped to foster learning and stimulate efforts to integrate gender-sensitive approaches in the time remaining. **Climate-sensitivity was not a priority in project design nor a demonstrable priority in implementation, despite some promising examples in Rwanda, Burundi, Honduras, and India**. Advocacy

201. In terms of advocacy, the projects demonstrated **the importance of an early and continuous approach to advocacy**. Project experiences also highlighted the value of **advocacy underpinned by evidence**; and in turn, the opportunities that project innovations provided to test new initiatives and gather results on their effectiveness to inform future advocacy. **WFP and RF worked together effectively on advocacy at global level**, combining their different constituencies and leveraging their respective complementary strengths to amplify messages. **This collaboration was less effective at national level**, however, and there were **missed opportunities to connect global- and country-level advocacy initiatives**.

Social Behavior Change Communication

202. While influencing healthy eating behaviours was firmly embedded in the critical assumptions underpinning the projects, the evaluation noted that **SBCC activities were often not prioritized early in project implementation**. In instances where SBCC was carried out early as an integral part of project implementation, such as in India and Honduras, experiences had stimulated learning. This included valuable lessons on the **benefits of contextualizing messages**; the importance of **working collaboratively with communities** to understand attitudes and resistance to certain commodities; and **combining education with entertainment to engage children**. **Sustained behaviour change is likely to take time to evidence**, however, going beyond the timeframe of the projects.

Learning and adaptation

203. The ethos of the projects emphasized **innovation, learning and adaptation**. Updates from countries towards the end of this developmental evaluation demonstrated the extent to which WFP **COs were committed to these principles and willing to apply that learning** even beyond the timeframes of the projects and in relation to other projects. Adaptations included efforts to stimulate local procurement, experiment with different modalities and commodities, introduce new ways of working within COs and with partners eg. adopting the 'Agile' methodology, and invest in research initiatives to support the uptake of fortified foods or to better understand the gender-related aspects of food systems. Despite the changes to project approach, the country level theories of change were not used as a tool to capture these adaptations. This is perhaps a missed opportunity to record changes in project theory.

204. Stakeholders in all six countries emphasized the **benefits of in-built and ongoing learning within the partnership portfolio facilitated through this Developmental Evaluation**. They particularly appreciated this in the context of an innovative area of work where WFP and partners are still experimenting and learning by doing. The **value of country-to-country learning** – facilitated through the SLC and the RF knowledge sharing network – was considered especially valuable.

3.2. Lessons

205. The developmental evaluation and its emphasis on learning resulted in several important lessons during project implementation. Towards the end of project implementation and nearing the end of the evaluation process, COs were asked to describe what lessons they had learned and what takeaways they had gathered. In addition, two SLC feedback loop workshops were organized in April 2025: one for HQ and RB stakeholders to capture their learning; and a second workshop with WFP's Office of Evaluation (OEV) to focus on the usefulness and learning from the developmental evaluation process itself. The lessons shared through these channels include:

Table 11: Lessons Learned [281]

Country Offices
Project lessons • **Flexible project design** offers space and opportunities for WFP and partners to innovate and learn. In Ghana, WFP capitalized on the opportunity of a change of government to experiment with decentralized procurement in project areas. In Benin, a handover of school meals responsibilities to the government and a reduction in WFP's role allowed the CO space to put greater emphasis on pilot initiatives, such as the use of cash-based transfers, changes to the food basket and the introduction of new cooking equipment in school canteens. In Burundi, the CO shifted away from fortified maize meal within school meals due to contamination and supply chain constraints. While the promotion of fortified commodities was a clear focus of the projects, an adaptive management approach allowed the CO to respond to changes in context and take pragmatic decisions to ensure the continuity of school meals despite new challenges. In Rwanda, where gaps in the capacity of millers to process FWG maize meal affected the pace of project scale-up, leading the CO to consider a phased and more strategic approach. Such changes and learning can be used to adapt project theories of change. • Contextual shifts, such as a change in government, can hamper project implementation. It is important to **assess political risks** at the outset of project design. • **Managing expectations** of project stakeholders, including clarifying the parameters of WFP's support up-front, is a lesson learned. In Ghana, for example, millers initially expected WFP to provide costly equipment for parboiling rice – a misunderstanding that was only resolved part-way through project implementation. • **Strong partnerships and communication** can help avoid the duplication of activities, such as assessments and advocacy initiatives. • **Learning** from the projects **can be applied to follow-up/complementary initiatives**, and to broader in-country planning exercises, not just to adaptations in the RF-WFP projects. **Developmental evaluation lessons** • **Developmental evaluation can create a learning environment** appreciated by project implementers. Country missions allowed for focused attention on specific iterations of the project in different settings and SLC workshops provided a structured approach to sharing knowledge between countries. COs emphasized the importance of having time and space to pause, reflect and adjust project implementation, and also valued the opportunity to learn from each other. The Rwanda CO has opted to integrate a developmental evaluation process within phase 2 of a different/related project, based on the value added of this evaluation. • Tools used in the developmental evaluation can **help stakeholders visualize their context and consider options for action in new ways**. The food system model used in the developmental evaluation was appreciated as a way of diagnosing and understanding complex food value chains and the links between different stakeholder groups. The forward-looking nature of the evaluation, especially the 'Pathways to Innovation' tool, was highlighted as a good way of helping COs to think through future plans for food system transformation and categorizing them into short-, medium- and long-term actions. • **Staff turnover, management changes, organizational restructuring, and competing demands made it challenging to continue engagement** of users over the 2.5 years of the

[281] Development Adaptations documents shared by COs in March/April 2025; notes from SLC feedback loop workshops, April 2025

developmental evaluation.

WFP RB and HQ[282]

Project lessons

- The design of the RF project was perceived to **promote interactions** between different WFP HQ teams involved in food systems. Specifically, the fact that focal points across teams were financed and forums for engagement were created. This worked well for facilitating collaboration amongst school meals, nutrition, FSQ, and supply chain actors for achieving a common purpose. This has been a challenge in other food systems initiatives that don't have the clear structure of the RF project.
- The focal points for nutrition components stressed the importance of **landscape review** prior to introducing innovative components, including assessing partnerships and country-level infrastructure to support implementation (i.e. testing and inspection capacity for FSQ and food system readiness for institutional procurement through school meals).
- The HQ school meal leads highlighted the **challenge of the project timeline**, where implementation of pilots and studies of those pilots were conducted in parallel, such as in Benin. There was a sense that studies were needed early to inform implementation, but also that not enough time had passed for studies to be able to capture results.
- Each project occurred in very different contexts. HQ focal points were cautious to apply learnings from country to country given **varying contextual realities**. Because progress is due in large part to enabling environments, outcomes are unpredictable, and expectations should be managed. It is not clear if the same outcomes would emerge if WFP pursued the same activities in a different country context.
- HQ and RB stakeholders recognized the importance of creating opportunities for **cross-country discussion**.

Developmental evaluation lessons

- Stakeholders perceived that the **co-creation** of the strategic learning questions through the Nairobi workshop improved the utility of the evaluation exercise and increased ownership in the evaluation process. Using a targeted workshop or in-person discussion to co-create evaluation questions was considered a good practice to emulate in future developmental and summative evaluations.
- The **iterative joint reflection workshops** helped keep HQ and RB focal points informed of challenges and successes at country level in a timely manner. However, the complex process of the evaluation with many different activities and moving parts made it difficult for stakeholders at HQ and RB to "jump in" to the evaluation process as staff changed.
- The 'developmental' process sometimes created **tensions** as the evaluation was commissioned within WFP's normative evaluation framework, that has a highly structured approach to commissioning, conducting, and managing evaluations and was not necessarily designed for a developmental approach. For example,
    - Tensions between the **definition of evaluation** that includes assessment of levels of achievement of expected and unexpected results[283] and the developmental approach,

[282] Source: discussions during the SLC meetings 5 and 6

[283] WFP evaluation policy defines evaluations as "*… an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of* ***achievement of both expected and unexpected results*** *by examining*

which does not focus on assessing achievement of results.

- Tension around the **independence** principle: developmental evaluators as well as evaluation managers were embedded in the project implementation in line with the developmental approach, yet this may be perceived as not being independent as defined by WFP evaluation normative framework.
- Tensions between WFP's criteria for **assessment of evaluation quality**, which focuses on the written report product with the level to which evaluation questions were answered with evidence-supported findings as the highest weighted criteria and considerations for quality in a developmental evaluation, where the quality of the process, specifically the extent to which it adhered to the eight principles of a developmental evaluation, is most important.
- Tensions between **learning from processes** (i.e. discussions) **and products** (i.e. developmental deliverables), which require different focuses. Learning from discussions is important, but capturing learning in products is essential in WFP's environment where personnel change frequently and learning must be documented for it to have lasting impact. Time spent improving the documentation within the country-level deliverables reduced the timeliness of in-person and virtual discussion.

- Stakeholders in the Office of Evaluation identified that a lesson from these tensions is the **need to adapt** in order to benefit from both the learning potential of the embedded developmental approach without abandoning the benefits of the structured WFP normative framework. Such adaptation could include **mixed evaluation teams** with developmental evaluators embedded and responsible for developmental phase of the evaluation, and an independent evaluator not embedded but part of the process from the beginning, responsible for independent assessment, triangulation of evidence and reporting.
- The **large geographic scope** and **limited time** of the project made implementing a developmental evaluation challenging. The number of stakeholder groups and time available should be considered in future developmental evaluations.
  - Time differences between India and Honduras made it difficult for all six countries to participate in virtual SLC meetings.
  - Time was a constrained resource, including the evaluators' time, the learning community's time, and the number of months available to collect data, make adaptations, and follow-up on outcomes of the adaptations. The need to conduct visits and create deliverables for six country projects prevented the evaluators from conducting more in-depth follow-up with each country, which limited iterative learning.
  - The breadth of project stakeholders meant trade-offs in how time could be used. The focus on country offices as the primary stakeholder group led to limited interaction of the developmental evaluators with secondary users, such as RF, HQ divisions, and RB focal points.

the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful, evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision making processes of organizations and stakeholders." Source: WFP Evaluation Policy, 2022. Page 5

3.3. Issues for Consideration

206. The projects have kickstarted important processes and changes in countries that will take longer to come to fruition. The learning generated during the lifespan of the projects, including through this evaluation, points to the need for several key issues to be addressed in any subsequent iteration or expansion of the projects and the overall RF-WFP partnership.

207. The following issues are not recommendations but issues for WFP to consider as it the current RF-WFP partnership comes to a close and any new iteration of the collaboration is considered. The issues are aimed at stimulating institutional reflection and helping the organization to learn and evolve.

Table 12: Issues for Consideration

Issue	Areas to consider in the future
1. The partnership between WFP and RF for catalyzing good food through school meals programmes has been fruitful and has generated several innovations, including learning approaches piloted within this evaluation, which have begun to gain traction. However, more time and investment is needed to continue and expand the partnership in order to realize its potential.	Clarify the next phase of the RF-WFP partnership, taking into account lessons learned from the current collaboration, including maximizing the flexibility/adaptability of approaches at country-level and emphasizing the strategic aspects of the relationship (moving away from a donor-grantee partnership). This aspect can be applied beyond the RF-WFP partnership to other projects. When operating food-systems oriented projects, consider a flexible, partnership-based approach where each organization's strengths are considered as opposed to more restrictive donor-grantee models. Agree on a timeframe for a next phase of the partnership that is sufficiently long-term to allow all aspects of the work to take hold, generate results and incorporate a reflective/learning-oriented approach. Emphasize gender equality, vulnerability, diversity and inclusion aspects earlier into any follow-up work, ensuring that the most marginalized in societies, including young women and girls, are prioritized and benefit from positive effects on local economies.
2. The RF-WFP partnership has demonstrated the importance of working within a complex ecosystem to effect and sustain change, beyond the limitations of WFP's remit. A wide spectrum of partners need to come together to collectively influence food system transformation, including development-oriented and private sector institutions.	Maximize links with the SMC – in countries and globally – to integrate WFP's work on school meals and food systems with a wider community of interested institutions. Pursue the idea of setting up 'food system clusters' (or link with existing groups already fulfilling that role) in countries where there is interest and capacity, ensuring the participation of agribusiness stakeholders to make the necessary link with the private sector.

3. Evidence has helpfully underpinned project developments and advocacy efforts in several instances, helping to tailor project approaches to the realities of different contexts and secure buy-in from different stakeholder groups. Further research, including research rooted in ongoing/subsequent project interventions, can be used to support advocacy for system change at national and international levels.	Identify research organizations and academic institutions with interest and expertise in supporting relevant research and evidence generation, both at national and international levels.
4. The developmental evaluation approach has received positive feedback from project stakeholders, particularly those at country level. WFP can learn from the evaluation process and incorporate a similar approach within other projects to embed knowledge sharing, learning and adaptability in other longer-term projects and partnerships.	Consider how the developmental approach can be replicated and adapted for other WFP initiatives and partnerships. Incorporate opportunities for frequent reflection, feedback, and course adjustment beyond developmental evaluations. Adapt WFP evaluation quality assurance and assessment tools as appropriate to benefit from the potential of immediate learning of developmental approach, with triangulation and systematic documentation of evidence from a structured approach to evaluation with potential more wider learning and posterity. Continue to create opportunities for countries to continue learning from one another. Examples include the existing WFP global school meals community and expanding opportunities for SSTC. Stakeholders in other countries engaged in similar initiatives may also join and benefit from two-way knowledge sharing.
5. The breadth of project stakeholders meant trade-offs in how time could be used in the developmental evaluation.	Consider intentionally selecting primary users considering the time available for a developmental evaluation. Ensure there is ample time and opportunity for iterative engagement in order to discuss and document adaptations and subsequent lessons.

Annexes

See Volume II