



Executive Summary

This thematic review of WFP's experience of targeting food aid in relief situations (EMOPs and PRROs) was based on case studies in Ethiopia, Darfur in the Sudan, Kenya, Malawi and Myanmar and on a peer review workshop held in Rome in June 2005. As targeting is both a critical and very difficult aspect of WFP's relief work, it is encouraging that the review found WFP to be making substantial progress towards effective targeting in the five case study countries visited. The Review found WFP's targeting to be particularly successful at forming consensus-building targeting bodies, and in achieving consistent and substantial improvements to targeting over time and in all types of emergency operation. However, the reviewers found that WFP could make better use of its unique and extensive experience of targeting to overcome recurring difficulties. In forming these views, the Review Team was conscious that the limited sample of case studies could not be assumed to be fully representative of WFP's current targeting practice and that many strong and perhaps weaker aspects of targeting may be present in operations that were not selected for this review.

Although WFP has profound experience in targeting food aid within a variety of relief contexts, it has still to develop a consolidated policy and comprehensive guidance material on targeting. As a consequence targeting approaches tend to depend upon the individual experience of the responsible staff and fail to take full advantage of WFP's and other agencies' wider experience. A more systematic analysis of WFP's targeting experience followed by directed research to resolve recurrent issues in targeting could improve WFP's targeting practice. Such efforts should focus on further improvements to strategy development, continued policy development, and enhancement to guidance materials. Accurate and flexible needs assessment is fundamental to successful targeting. The Team is aware that concurrent with the Review WFP has published revised guidance materials that include some aspects of targeting and note that these take WFP staff support some way towards the comprehensive guidance recommended by this Report.

In the past decade, WFP has made two substantial steps forward in targeting practice: supporting multi-agency targeting structures to develop and implement targeting methods and programme design, and the adoption of community-based targeting and distribution (CBTD). Multi-agency targeting structures promote co-ordination, utilisation of inter-agency experience and stakeholder buy-in to the method. CBTD empowers the community to identify the neediest while reducing agency costs associated with administrative targeting and food distribution. However, CBTD may not work in all contexts and there needs to be far greater analysis of experience (including information on human and financial costs) in order to inform decisions as to where the approach is most appropriate.



Two weaker areas within WFP's targeting are the rather indiscriminate use of multiple food aid modalities such as vulnerable group feeding/general food distribution, supplementary feeding and food for work, which can lead to double coverage and excessive administrative demands on WFP and its partners, and the weak and inconsistent application of monitoring of targeting and its outcomes. It appears that multiple food aid modalities are employed in relief programmes more as a matter of course than of considered strategy. There are several drawbacks with this approach; multiple programme objectives are invoked with little or no prioritisation, the specific strengths and weaknesses of different modalities with regard to targeting are not considered, and there is no cost-benefits analysis undertaken.

The Review found good examples of monitoring community-based targeting but there were also weaknesses. These included; lack of monitoring of geographical targeting outcomes, no collation of coverage information for institutional feeding (school and supplementary and therapeutic), an imbalance between resources for collection and analysis of monitoring data, and methodological uncertainties around the analysis of targeting information. Generally, there seemed to be a lack of priority and programme resources allocated to monitoring targeting.

The review team recognizes that ideal targeting assumes ideal working environments that often do not exist, particularly in an emergency context, so some of the recommendations in this report might only be feasible in operations with long lead times, long duration, abundant funding and resources, cooperative governments and partners, and adequate data and infrastructure. In less than ideal contexts, the recommendations should at least help managers to take account of a broader range of factors in deciding targeting strategies and methods. In practice, targeting decisions must be made by the managers responsible for the operation: policy and guidance can set parameters, raise issues and suggest techniques, but judgment will always be required as to the right course of action in the context.

Acknowledging that targeting food aid is a not an easy process and generally takes place within complex and dynamic political and social environments, more can be done to strengthen practice. A key to improved future practice is the development of practitioner-based guidance material drawing on the substantial experience of WFP.