



Executive Summary

This evaluation sought to identify how WFP’s school feeding might effectively address the needs of people in emergency contexts, with a view to learning from current practices and improving future implementation. Three field studies, desk research and a survey questionnaire constituted the basis of the evaluation. Being a thematic evaluation, its scope called for findings and conclusions brought to a corporate level.

The evaluation found that school feeding projects implemented in emergencies are challenging for WFP, as the Programme faces constraints that are specific to these settings. Security restrictions and limited accessibility to affected areas, often combined with low capacities of local partners and governments, make a timely response to large-scale needs particularly challenging, especially so when there is limited technical expertise available in WFP country offices. In situations where WFP cannot manage these challenges, the responses developed can be problematic, particularly with regard to appropriate targeting of support, the proper alignment of Emergency School Feeding (ESF)¹ programmes with education sector support programmes and the smooth implementation of school feeding projects. In order to develop an effective and efficient programme, WFP must be able to clearly articulate and consider the specific comparative advantages of ESF programmes in its own strategic planning and in its interaction with partners; doing so will necessarily increase the technical demands on WFP staff.

The evaluation identified locally driven programme planning as a key element for responding to these emergency-related implementation challenges. Here, WFP often has to “compensate” for the lack of strategic direction from government partners, who otherwise (i.e. in more stable “development” situations) would play a greater role in defining the key parameters of the school feeding intervention. In the absence of reliable educational data from the government, WFP has to develop other strategies to acquire the necessary understanding of the educational challenges and relevant objectives for support. In particular the targeting of school feeding projects has to be based not only on an understanding of the nutritional needs but, more importantly, the educational needs of the affected population. One possible approach is to seek closer strategic partnerships with organizations that are supporting primary education in the given context.

In the design of its ESF projects, WFP also has to find ways to systematically address the implementation constraints hindering support to the most vulnerable groups of school-aged children. First, the choice of ESF implementation modalities (e.g. biscuits vs. cooked meal) has to take better account of the infrastructure-related constraints at school level (cooking facilities, etc.) to avoid delays and irregularities in the distribution of food to the students. WFP has to carefully consider the specific objectives of the project to make sure that the chosen implementation modality and food commodities optimally support the project objectives within the constraints of the school environment. A comprehensive feasibility appraisal is therefore required, which includes the logistical challenges and possibilities for food delivery, in particular to the most remote – and often most vulnerable – schools. Contextual challenges and

¹ The acronym “ESF” will be used throughout the report to refer to school feeding activities as implemented in emergency settings, for purposes of easier reading. However, this does not imply that “ESF” should be understood as a programming category in itself.



their budgetary implications have to be considered in the customized and locally driven project planning process, and sufficient funds have to be made available to finance the adopted strategies.

Governments tend to play a more limited role in the implementation of school feeding projects in emergencies compared to their implementation in development situations. Nevertheless, it remains important for WFP to seek as much government cooperation as possible. ESF projects can provide opportunities for capacity building within government agencies and departments which can be built upon in a longer-term strategy for the education sector.

Ultimately, there is no definitive line between school feeding as implemented in emergency or development contexts; both contexts may have many similar challenges. WFP rather should recognize that in addition to specific emergency-related challenges, constraints present in development situations will almost inevitably be exacerbated in emergencies. Thus, in order to fully support school feeding in emergencies, WFP will need to provide comprehensive guidance to staff members managing ESF projects,