



Final Evaluation of McGovern-Dole-supported School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh 2015 - 2017

BACKGROUND

Bangladesh is highly densely populated with 260 million people. With almost 22 million children in pre-primary and primary ages and enrolment rates of more than 95 percent, the provision of education of quality is a key challenge for the Government of Bangladesh. In response, WFP Bangladesh established its first school feeding programme in 2001, which McGovern-Dole first supported in 2006.

Through the School Feeding Programme, WFP-McGovern-Dole aim to improve literacy, reduce malnutrition and hunger and increase the use of health and dietary practices through: 1) the provision of high energy biscuits (HEB) and complementary activities to pre-primary and primary school students, with the aim of reducing undernutrition and hunger, improving literacy and increasing the use of health and dietary practices; and 2) the provision of technical support to the Government of Bangladesh by constructing institutional capacity and strengthening the school feeding legal framework.

OBJECTIVE

WFP Bangladesh commissioned an evaluation of the WFP-McGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme to facilitate accountability and learning. The evaluations specific objectives are to: 1) assess and report on the performance and results of the programme; 2) assess if the expected results as outlined in the results framework were achieved; 3) determine the reasons why certain results occurred or did not occur; 4) draw lessons to generate good practices and pointers for learning; 5) provide recommendations for future food assistance and capacity building programmes; and 6) examine if the mid-term evaluation recommendations were integrated into programme implementation and if so, explore its effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was designed to assess the WFP-McGovern-Dole SF Programme (2015-2017) in Gaibandha district in relation to its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team used mixed methods, applying triangulation of the available sources and voices. The extensive desk review (quantitative and qualitative), combined with the information from interviews with 607 persons were used to evaluate the programme's relevance and also if the planned outputs and outcomes were attained.

LIMITATIONS

Time constraints and the language barrier were limitations during the fieldwork. They were addressed, respectively, by restricting some activities at the school visits and using an interpreter. Likewise, the lack of a comprehensive school database and unified information limited the analysis, and the lack of a counterfactual baseline limited demonstrating attributions. The evaluation team made explicit the data limitations and developed some recommendations to improve monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

KEY FINDINGS

In response to the first evaluation criteria of **relevance**, the evaluation found that it was relevant to choose the Gaibandha district as the one to receive the benefits from the programme as it had the conjunction of poverty, malnutrition, and flood-prone area. Furthermore, the WFP-McGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme Framework was fully aligned with the National Education Policy (2010) and the Primary Education Development Programme (2011-17).

Regarding the criteria of **efficiency**, the relation between WFP and implementing partners (RDRS and BRAC) contributed to the success of the programme. RDRS brought years of experience working in the HEB distribution and the daily

activities with the schools. BRAC provided the technical support that WFP needed in the quality of education issues. Furthermore, HEB were distributed to all the students that attended the targeted schools during the implementation of the programme with no gender or socioeconomic differentiation. HEB supplied each student with 337.5 kilocalories and 14 essential vitamins and minerals. Compared to other school feeding modalities, HEBs are highly efficient and equitable. There is evidence that HEB intake reduces short-term hunger and increases attendance and attentiveness. Capacity building and Government technical support was also successful in many aspects: the handover of all the public and madrasah schools to the Government; the WFP-Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) trustful relation; and the school feeding policy construction.

In terms of *impact*, outcome indicators showed improvements (more in girls than in boys) with exception of those related to dietary diversity. Although the literacy outcome improved from 25.5 percent to 28.4 percent, it did not accomplish the planned target (50 percent). It is important to highlight that the nutrition and the literacy outcomes indicators included in the framework highly depends on external factors out of WFP control. Teacher's shortage, precarious school infrastructure, and overcrowding affected the improvement of the literacy outcome accomplishment.

In regard to *sustainability*, the programme implemented successful sustainability strategies such as: the strong collaboration with DPE providing technical support for programme implementation, the development of a National School Feeding Policy, the role and capacity of the schools and community members to strengthen school management, and the reinforcement of gender equality awareness. The programme adopted sustainability strategies, as most of the schools were handed over to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME)/DPE.

LESSONS LEARNT

- The delivery of the full learning package had some inefficiencies such as having numerous activities and short-term teachers' training, which are lessons learned for future programmes. External factors such as floods, political unrest, and school's structural limitations were negative elements for the Programme's performance.
- The WFP McGovern-Dole School Feeding Programme was effective in Government strengthening. At schools, the programme accomplished the following planned targets:

students benefitted with biscuits and extra-curricular activities, schools benefitted with vegetable gardens and parent-teacher associations' trainings. However, targets related to teachers' and administrators' trainings were poorly attained. There was improvement in students' attendance, attentiveness, and also in hygiene, nutrition and dietary practices, and gender equality awareness. Though, the literacy outcome improved, it did not reach the target. These results offer lessons for the future programmes framework, value chain and for the design of outcome indicators and targets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: WFP-DPE partnership must continue, and as the school feeding policy is approved, WFP respectful advocacy and technical support should remain to help the Government to construct and implement a feasible and sustainable school feeding project.

Recommendation 2: WFP staff need to be strengthened to be able to properly supply the technical support required at the national and local level to implement the school feeding policy and to accomplish the Country Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

Recommendation 3: The HEB distribution should be a modality of the school feeding policy, because of its nutritional contribution to children. In addition, it is preferred by students, teachers and parents because of its simple process of storage and distribution. Even in emergency situations it is a cost-efficient mechanism of short-term hunger reduction.

Recommendation 4: For Cox's Bazar district, WFP should: construct a rigorous value chain with explicit assumptions; prioritize activities such as enforcing teacher's trainings and awareness campaigns; reinforce WFP advocacy with the Government to improve school infrastructure water and sanitation facilities; strengthen school management committees (SMC)/parent teacher associations (PTA) involvement; enhance women participation; and review M&E indicators and database.

Please find more information here:

WFPgo:

<http://newgo.wfp.org/documents/bangladesh-school-feeding-programme-2015-2017-an-evaluation>

Extranet:

<https://www1.wfp.org/publications/bangladesh-school-feeding-programme-2015-2017-evaluation>

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