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DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION FOR EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

Decentralized Evaluation

Final evaluation of the USDA-supported Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) project in Kenya FY 2017-2020

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Overview of the evaluation subject	2
1.2	Context.....	4
1.3	Evaluation methodology and limitations	8
2	Evaluation Findings	13
2.1	Overview of surveyed beneficiaries	13
2.2	Evaluation Theme 1: Relevance	15
2.3	Evaluation Theme 2: Effectiveness	18
2.4	Evaluation Theme 3: Efficiency	36
2.5	Evaluation Theme 4: Impact	38
2.6	Evaluation Theme 5: Sustainability	41
3	Conclusions and Recommendations	42
3.1	Overall Assessment/Conclusions	42
3.2	Recommendations	44
4	Annexes	46
5	List of Acronyms	123

List of Annexes

Annex 1: Endline evaluation terms of reference	46
Annex 2: Key LRP stakeholders and their interest in the endline evaluation.....	59
Annex 3: Graphic representation of the relationship between project stakeholders.....	60
Annex 4: Results Framework – LRP Kenya.....	61
Annex 5: Completed LRP Performance Monitoring Plan	62
Annex 6: List of LRP baseline recommendations (2018)	64
Annex 7: Maps of Kenya showing WFP and government supported school feeding activities during LRP baseline (March 2018) and at endline (October 2019).	65
Annex 8: Evaluation Matrix	66
Annex 9: List of data and documents provided to the evaluation team by WFP Kenya	70
Annex 10: Quantitative survey tools	71
Annex 11: Description of the calculation of the evaluation indices	94
Annex 12: Qualitative data collection tools	96
Annex 13: Silhouette measure of cohesion and separation.....	100
Annex 14: List of surveyed LRP and non-LRP comparison schools.....	101
Annex 15: Detailed description of the original (baseline) school sampling methodology.....	104
Annex 16: Evaluation field mission schedule	106
Annex 17: Stakeholders Interviewed	108
Annex 18: Additional findings from the Farmer Organization survey.....	110
Annex 19: Additional findings from the trader survey.....	115
Annex 20: Additional findings from the school survey.....	117
Annex 21: Bibliography	121

List of Tables

Table 1: Planned LRP activities.....	3
Table 2: LRP locations.....	4
Table 3: Number of Farmer Organizations and traders participating in the LRP, by county.....	4
Table 4: Timeline of emergencies in LRP counties – 2017-2020	5
Table 5: Preliminary Key Evaluation Questions.....	9
Table 6: Number of LRP and non-LRP schools surveyed at endline evaluation, by county.....	12
Table 7: LRP Targeted traders included in the evaluation survey	12
Table 8: Characteristics of surveyed Farmer Organizations, by county.	13
Table 9: Gender of surveyed traders supported by the LRP	14
Table 10: Business information of surveyed traders, by county	14
Table 11: Characteristics of surveyed schools, by county	15
Table 12: Planned vs actual delivery of food commodities acquired by WFP through forward delivery contracts (Turkana only)	19
Table 13: Number of participants attending training on HGSMMP management (2017-2018).....	20
Table 14: Number of policies/strategies supported as a result of USDA assistance	22
Table 15: Percentage of LRP traders who received training on procurement processes.....	22
Table 16: Number of participants in workshops to develop new school meal menus	24
Table 17: Number of individuals benefiting from this USDA funded intervention	24

Table 18: Commodities grown by FOs.....	25
Table 19: Ensuring quality products for sale	25
Table 20: FO sales of members' commodities	26
Table 21: FO sale of commodities in last one year.....	26
Table 22: Number of FOs with sale contracts and value addition enterprises.....	27
Table 23: Volume and value of sales by LRP FOs.....	27
Table 24: Percentage of traders selling commodities to schools through competitive tenders.....	28
Table 25: Total estimated volume of commodities sold per year	29
Table 26: Percentage of traders reporting barriers to purchasing from local farmers	29
Table 27: Main source of food for school lunches (Term 3, 2019).....	30
Table 28: Percentage of schools reporting providing a school meal every school day	31
Table 29: Reasons for not providing school meals.....	31
Table 30: Change in Nutrition Score: Baseline vs. Endline	32
Table 31: Mean volume of food per child received.....	33
Table 32: Change in Cost-effectiveness Score.....	34
Table 33: Average number of days after start of Term 3, 2019 that food was delivered	37
Table 34: Change in Timeliness Score	37
Table 35: Change in Impact Score	38

List of Figures

Figure 1: Average time the FOs have been established	14
Figure 2: FO members' average use of own production	26
Figure 3: Percentage of traders reporting their main source of commodities.....	28
Figure 4: Percentage of traders reporting selling to the following buyers.....	28
Figure 5: Percentage of traders reporting sale of staple crops	29
Figure 6: Percentage of traders reporting sale of pulses	29
Figure 7: Percentage of surveyed schools reporting developing new school menus since start of LRP	31
Figure 8: Percentage of schools reporting using food commodities for their school lunches - Term 3, 2019.....	32
Figure 9: Percentage of schools reporting food procurement process completed before start of Term 3, 2019.....	36
Figure 10: Percentage of schools reporting that school lunch commodities from non-MoE sources were delivered before the start of Term 3, 2019.....	36

Executive Summary

1. This report is the endline activity evaluation of the World Food Programme's (WFP) Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Programme (LRP) in Kenya. The programme is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is implemented in three arid counties in north-west Kenya: Baringo, Turkana and West Pokot. The evaluation is commissioned by the WFP Kenya Country Office and follows a baseline assessment conducted in April 2018 by the same evaluation team.¹ The main objective of the final evaluation is to assess the performance and results achieved through the LRP in the three targeted counties over the project period from September 2017-March 2020. The evaluation serves the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning.
2. The LRP was implemented from October 2017 to March 2020 using a grant of USD 1 million. The LRP was specifically designed to support the implementation of the Government's Home-Grown School Meals Programme (HGSMP) by supporting farmers, farmer organizations (FOs) and local traders to produce and provide sufficient food for the ongoing school feeding activities in the three targeted counties. USDA also gave approval for WFP to locally purchase sorghum and cowpeas from FOs for use in the school feeding programme. There have not been any budget revisions or changes to the programme design since it was approved in September 2017, and there are no sub-recipients under this agreement. No other donors have contributed funds to the LRP per se, however some of the FOs supported under the LRP have also benefitted from support from other donors. The LRP is implemented directly by WFP Kenya, in close collaboration with the Ministries of Education (MoE), Agriculture and Irrigation (MoA) and Health (MoH), at county and sub-county levels.
3. The key objectives of the LRP are as follows:
 - Improve effectiveness of food assistance by improving cost-effectiveness and improving timeliness.
 - Increase the capacity of suppliers and school meals procurement committees to effectively and efficiently procure local commodities for school's meals, promoting sustainability of school feeding;
 - Strengthen local and regional food market systems, improving access to culturally acceptable commodities and connecting them to Government of Kenya HGSMP; and
 - Improve nutrition of students by increasing access to and use of various high quality, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods in school's meals.
4. To achieve these objectives, the LRP has five main activities: 1. Assessment of local food systems, 2. Capacity building for national and county institutions, 3. Capacity strengthening for local traders and FOs, 4. Develop school meal menus using local and nutritious produce, and 5. Procure locally produced, drought-tolerant crops. The main users of this evaluation report are WFP Kenya and USDA, both of whom have a responsibility to ensure that the evaluation proceeds as per the programme agreement between the two parties. There are also several other internal and external stakeholders with an interest in the evaluation findings including the MoE, MoA and MoH and other WFP offices.
5. **Context:** WFP and the MoE have jointly implemented a school meals programme in Kenya since 1980, targeting the most food-insecure counties with the lowest enrolment and completion rates and high gender disparities. Initially, school meals used an in-kind modality with food commodities provided directly by international donors including the USDA/McGovern-Dole. In 2009, the Government of Kenya started the national HGSMP to provide meals to children at school, using a cash transfer modality, providing cash to schools to enable them to buy their food directly from local traders and farmers. The HGSMP stimulated local agricultural production through purchase of food from smallholder farmers and local traders. The arid counties in Kenya's north were the last to transition to cash-transfers, to give adequate time to assess the local markets and ensure they would be able to cope with the demand of school feeding. All the targeted LRP schools in Baringo and West Pokot were handed over to the HGSMP in September 2017. WFP officially handed over all remaining WFP-supported schools, including the LRP schools in Turkana to the

¹ Dunn, S & Otsola, J (2018) Baseline of the Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Project in Kenya, 2017-2020. June 2018.

government's HGSMF in June 2018. This was on the understanding that the government would provide cash to schools to procure their own food for school meals.

6. **Methodology:** This evaluation uses the OECD-DAC² international evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact to evaluate the implementation of the LRP project. The evaluation team has also ensured that gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) was mainstreamed through the evaluation approach and methodology by ensuring that whenever possible, men and women, boys and girls from different stakeholder groups, participated in the evaluation, and data has been gender disaggregated when possible. Where possible, the evaluation has also tried to assess whether the project had different impacts on male and female farmers and traders. The evaluation used mixed methods and collected both quantitative and qualitative primary data to answer each of the evaluation questions including - 1. Was the project designed to reach the right people with the right type of assistance? 2. Is the project aligned with national government's relevant policies and strategies? 3. To what degree have the interventions resulted in the expected results? 4. Did assistance reach the right beneficiaries at the right time? 5. Were there any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative? 6. What internal and external factors affected the project's results? 7. To what extent is it likely that the benefits of the project will continue after the end of the project? And 8. What are the key factors that affect the likelihood of sustainability of the results of the project?
7. The evaluation also utilized WFP Kenya's own project monitoring data, to complete the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) required by USDA. The evaluation includes three quantitative surveys: FOs, local traders and schools, as well as qualitative field interviews and focus group discussions, to assess the effect of the program against the LRP objectives. The evaluation methodology has three identified limitations: Firstly, that two schools from the original baseline sample were not included at endline.³ These two schools were replaced with schools with 99% matching characteristics⁴ to the original schools, so there should not be any effect on the group comparison of results from baseline. Secondly, that the school survey was partially conducted during the Term 1, 2020 half term holidays. This meant the survey teams had to organize times with each school to conduct their visit, to ensure that appropriate school personnel would be available to answer the survey questions. The mitigation measures were successful, and personnel from each school were located to participate in the survey. Lastly, although there is some gender disaggregated data available from WFP, the LRP Results framework does not include gender indicators. Furthermore, the beneficiary units are largely genderless (schools and farmer organizations). This has limited the gender-related findings of the evaluation.
8. **Key findings: Evaluation question 1: Was the LRP relevant?** The LRP was designed in collaboration with MoE, MoA and MoH and the evaluation found the design to be relevant to support HGSMF transition in the three targeted counties. The planned modality of cash-transfers for providing school meals was the preferred option of all evaluation key informants, as it not only supports local farmers and trader, but aligns well with the government's existing HGSMF. Overall, the endline evaluation found that the LRP complements the HGSMF, and aligns well with key Government of Kenya policies, strategies and framework, as well as WFP's own policies and with the direction of other United Nations actors in Kenya.
9. **Evaluation question 2: Was the LRP effective?** WFP and partners implemented most of the LRP project activities as planned. However, because of the 2017/18 drought, the MoE decided not to transition the targeted LRP schools onto cash-transfers as planned, but to keep them on in-kind assistance until food prices reduced. This has had a significant effect on the LRP results and some of the intended school-related objectives have not been achieved. Out of the 191 schools surveyed, only 18 non-LRP schools in West Pokot reported receiving cash-transfers for HGSMF as planned. None of the other schools received any resources (food or cash) from the MoE for school meals for Term 3, 2019⁵ As a result, only around a quarter of schools

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

³ One because a bridge had been destroyed by floods and the school was no longer accessible, and the second due to insecurity.

⁴ The replacement schools were matched using the following attributes: Grouping variable (LRP or non-LRP); County; enrolment levels; the original selection anomaly index, peer ID, and peer size using the silhouette measure of cohesion and separation algorithm.

⁵ Term 3, 2019 was the last school term of the LRP and therefore designated as the endline term for evaluation purposes.

were able to provide lunch every day that term. Although many schools tried to obtain food from other sources to supplement any left-over food from Term 2, many schools (n=75) were unable to provide any school meals during Term 3, 2019.

10. Through the LRP, WFP conducted several formal training exercises and workshops, in collaboration with the relevant government ministries. While the evaluation received positive feedback on all the training work, most participants did not have a chance to put the learning into practice due to schools not requiring local procurement as planned. The exception has been the procurement training for FOs and traders. As the HGSMMP procurement process follows the government's procurement process, traders have been able to use their learning to bid for other government tenders, particularly for food for secondary school and boarding school meals. Similarly, the training for FOs has contributed to more FOs monitoring product quality requirements. The market forums and other support to FOs has also effectively resulted in changes to FO production including a greater percentage of FOs aggregating and marketing members food commodities, and FOs in West Pokot reported selling a greater percentage of their production. This despite the in-kind provision by MoE reducing the potential market opportunities for FOs and acting as a disincentive to produce the promoted crops. The collaborative implementation approach taken by WFP with MoE, with MoA, MoH and MoTIC has also been an effective capacity strengthening approach, providing government personnel with added confidence to provide training on their own in future.
11. **Evaluation question 3: Was the LRP efficient?** One of the objectives of the LRP was to improve the timeliness of procurement of school meals commodities. This was done by providing schools with cash transfers, enabling them to do local procurement of commodities, hopefully resulting in more timely delivery of commodities to the schools. However, since the MoE did not provide any cash resources to LRP schools for Term 3, 2019, none of the LRP schools undertook a procurement process. The target of 90 percent of LRP schools completing procurement before the start of term has therefore not been achieved. Further, none of the LRP schools received any in-kind resources from the MoE for Term 3, 2019, so the target of 90 percent of LRP schools having their food delivered before the start of term has also not been achieved.
12. **Evaluation question 4: What was the impact of the LRP?** The LRP was specifically designed to support the transition to cash-based transfers in the LRP schools. The impact of the LRP was therefore considerably reduced by the MoE's decision to provide in-kind commodities to schools instead of providing cash-transfers to school as planned. As a result, the intended objective of improving the effectiveness of assistance through improved timeliness of procurement and delivery, improved cost-effectiveness has not been achieved. The objective to increase access to, and use of various high quality, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods in school's meals of the school meals by using locally produced crops has been achieved only in Turkana Country and not in Baringo or West Pokot. This is because in Turkana, WFP directly procured and delivered the commodities to LRP schools.
13. The objective to increase the capacity of suppliers and school meals procurement committees to effectively and efficiently procure local commodities for school's meals has been partially achieved. FOs, traders and

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