

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Decentralized Evaluation

Programme Activity Evaluation of Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) Project in South Sudan

March 2016 to December 2019

Evaluation Report

March 2021

Commissioned by WFP South Sudan Country Office

Evaluation Managers: Wilson Kaikai (and Elliot Vhurumuku)

Prepared by

David Coombs, Team Leader

Mike Brewin, International Evaluator

Marwa Bouka, International Evaluator

Christine Abina, National Evaluator



World Food
Programme

Acknowledgements

The Evaluation Team is particularly grateful for the efforts provided by the three national experts: Modi Charles Victor Moini, Ivu Charles Kenyi and Peter Majur Ador, recruited into the team to undertake the field visits. Their role in data collection and direct observations was essential to the successful completion of this mission.

The Evaluation Team also appreciates the assistance provided by Wilson Kaikai, Elliot Vhurumuku and Sujin Pak of the WFP South Sudan Country Office, their many colleagues there and at the Regional Bureau, and the numerous government, multilateral, bilateral and NGO informants and beneficiaries who gave generously of their time and advice during this mission. Thanks too to Juliet Laguna who organised and booked the necessary UNHAS flights at the last minute for the field teams.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the Evaluation Team, and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Food Programme. Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report rests solely with the authors. Publication of this document does not imply endorsement by WFP of the opinions expressed.

The designation employed and the presentation of material in maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory or sea area, or concerning the delimitation of frontiers.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Overview of the Evaluation Subject	1
1.2. Context.....	2
1.3. Evaluation Methodology and Limitations.....	4
2. Evaluation Findings	7
2.1. Evaluation Question 1 – Relevance	7
2.2. Evaluation Question 2 - Effectiveness.....	13
2.3. Evaluation Question 3 – Efficiency	21
2.4. Evaluation Question 4 – Impact.....	24
2.5. Evaluation Question 5 - Sustainability	28
2.6. Evaluation Question 6 - Coherence.....	31
2.7. Lessons Learned	33
3. Conclusions and Recommendations	34
3.1. Overall Assessment/Conclusions	34
3.2. Recommendations	37
Annex 1: Terms of Reference	39
ToRs Annex 1.a: Map for FFA Coverage	55
ToRs Annex 1.b: Main livelihood zone by county overlaid with settlements and their corresponding ICA categories ranking.....	56
ToRs Annex 2: Logical Framework	57
ToRs Annex 3: FFA Theory of Change.....	60
ToRs Annex 4: Evaluation Schedule.....	62
ToRs Annex 5: Eligibility Criteria for FFA	62
ToRs Annex 6: Membership of the Evaluation Committee	63
ToRs Annex 7: Membership of the Evaluation Reference Group.....	63
ToRs Annex 9: Data Sources.....	64
ToRs Annex 10: List of FFA Cooperating Partners in South Sudan	65
ToRs Annex 11: Deliverables	65
ToRs Annex 13: Summary of Gender analysis	67
Annex 2: Documents consulted/ Bibliography.....	70
Annex 3: List of stakeholders interviewed.....	72
Annex 4: : Methodology	75
Annex 5: Table of Qualitative Interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Beneficiaries, Government, Cooperating Partners and WFP Field Staff	76
Annex 6: Household Quantitative Survey.....	77
Annex 7: Evaluation Questions	78
Annex 8: Evaluation Matrix.....	79
Annex 9: Guiding questions.....	91
Annex 10: GEEW Specific Indicators	96
List of Acronyms used	97

List of Tables

Table 1: Planned beneficiaries, outputs and costs of the FFA project.....	1
Table 2: States / Counties visited by Evaluation Team	5
Table 3: Location of beneficiary households sampled for household survey.....	5
Table 4: Awareness of targeting criteria	10
Table 5: Planned and actual beneficiaries from 2016 to 2019	14
Table 6: Distributions and costs of the FFA project 2016 - 2019.....	14
Table 7: Summary of key outputs completed.....	16
Table 8: Beneficiaries' perceptions of the value of assets	17
Table 9: Increase in beneficiaries' annual income (2019) due to FFA project (in South Sudanese Pounds (SSP)	17
Table 10: Beneficiaries' preference of transfer modality (percentage)	19
Table 11: Comparison of transfer modalities	19
Table 12: Amounts of cash transferred to FFA beneficiaries 2016 - 2019	22
Table 13: Preferred transfer modality vs actual transfer modality.....	23
Table 14: Gender differences in decision making for the use of cash and food transfers.....	26
Table 15: Percentage of responses of beneficiaries regarding value of assets	27

List of Figures

Figure 1: Percentage of participants knowing the reasons for their own inclusion.....	9
Figure 2: Beneficiaries' perception of targeting of project participants.....	11
Figure 3: Female participants' inclusion in the community structure	11
Figure 4: Mean Food Consumption Scores 2016-2020 (in percentages)	15
Figure 5: Mean Consumption Coping Strategy Index Score 2016–2020	15
Figure 6: Mean seven-day Dietary Diversity Score 2016–2018 & 2020	15

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This decentralized activity evaluation was commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) South Sudan Country Office and covers the Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) project for the period from 2016 to 2019. The fieldwork was originally planned to take place in February/March 2020 but was postponed until November 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The food security and nutrition situation in South Sudan has deteriorated progressively since the post-independence conflict, which started in 2013. The acutely food-insecure population has doubled, increasing from around 3.5 million people before the 2016 conflict to an estimated figure of seven million in 2019.¹ The chronically food-insecure population has increased in the last five years, with almost half of the vulnerable population facing recurring food insecurity conditions.
3. The Food Assistance for Assets project was designed to promote the restoration of livelihoods and enhance the resilience of the targeted communities against future man-made or natural shocks in areas of high food insecurity. It was implemented in eight states targeted on the basis of Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, with households in IPC Phases 3 and 4 included. The project reached between 405,000 and 588,000 beneficiaries in each of the years under review and was mainly funded by the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and Japan with an overall programme cost (2017-2019) of US\$101 million.

Purpose and objective

4. The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the implementation of the FFA programme in the next Country Strategic Plan (CSP) cycle, from 2023; it serves the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning. Users of the results, who are expected to be interested in the operational performance and learning from the project, include staff from the WFP Country Office, Regional Bureau Nairobi and Headquarters, beneficiaries, the Government of South Sudan, the United Nations Country Team, non-governmental organizations and donors.
5. The evaluation was tasked with considering the results of the project related to the evaluation criteria of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. The findings below are therefore presented under each of these criteria.

Methodology

6. The evaluation was based on four sources of data: i) project documentation supplied by the CO; ii) interviews with staff from the Country Office, the Regional Bureau, and other key stakeholders, carried out remotely by the main evaluation team; iii) qualitative fieldwork carried out by four national evaluators (262 interviews); and iv) an outsourced quantitative survey of 465 households (156 female headed households) managed and run by a sub-contracted specialist company. The field surveys covered six of the nine States in which FFA interventions had occurred, and included a range of livelihood zones, IPC categories, transfer modalities, asset types, and stages of project maturity. The evaluation answered 19 questions provided by WFP covering the key standard evaluation criteria.² Gender was mainstreamed in the evaluation through the collection and analysis of disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data. All aspects of the evaluation were guided by the internationally agreed principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. No major limitations were encountered, and although the international members of the team were unable to visit South Sudan (due to COVID-19 restrictions), national evaluators were able to collect data in the field, and Juba-based interviewees were all available for remote interview.

¹ South Sudan IPC Analysis, January 2019

² Evaluation criteria as defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee

Findings

7. **Relevance:** The provision of food assistance to food insecure and vulnerable people is highly relevant and produces immediate advantages to food security and nutrition by filling food gaps and supporting asset creation. The activities (restoration of productive arable land, building and improving community infrastructure, climate change adaptation and capacity building and skills development) met the needs of beneficiaries and contributed to food security and resilience. Targeting was carried out, in line with international humanitarian principles (IHPs), through at village level through a Community Based Participatory Approach and at household level through a separate targeting committee, to ensure community engagement and was widely appreciated by stakeholders and the targeted communities themselves. Gender was mainstreamed through: i) equal representation of women during planning and management; ii) ensuring at least 50 percent of project participants were women; and iii) implementing gender sensitive/ responsive approaches in relation to all activities. Women confirmed that the processes had been carried out well, and that they are now heard and included in the community structures better than before.

8. **Effectiveness:** The programme reached between 400,000 and 600,000 beneficiaries per year (54 percent women and girls), 86 percent of the project target. Between 2017 and 2019 the programme distributed 62 percent and 78 percent of planned food and cash respectively. Food Assistance for Assets helped to reduce the prevalence of poor and borderline food consumption from 70 percent in 2016 to 46 percent in 2018 among FFA supported households. Data collected by the household survey suggested that 83 percent of households had a poor or borderline food consumption score (with the worst scores in Jonglei and Unity States), which aligns with the latest Famine Early Warning Systems Network³ outlook, though probably results partly from COVID-19. Some 66 percent of beneficiaries had completely or significantly improved their livelihoods as a result of the assets. Livelihood-based coping strategies increased from 2018 to 2019 indicating worsening food security but the project improved household income through increased crop production (81 percent of households).

9. **Efficiency** was achieved through the large scale of the programme, efficient targeting and the use of cash wherever appropriate and possible. WFP's SCOPE beneficiary and transfer management platform has been successfully used for cash transfers and the cards (and even just the registration with FFA) provide evidence of identity which, in turn, allows easier access to credit. Delays in food delivery due to poor roads and pipeline breaks, late seed and tool delivery and flooding (in 2019) all reduced the efficiency of the programme, but good collaboration with cooperating partners and government extension workers had a positive effect. Flexible donor funding enabled multi-year field level agreements with partners and closer relationships with communities.

10. **Impact:** Beneficiaries reported improved food security as a result of higher food production from farms, gardens and fish ponds, increasing the quantity and diversity of food at household level and generating income from sales of produce and fish; this was more marked in those areas with a higher potential for productive farming, lower initial vulnerability status and greater support from government organisations. Despite some assets being in poor condition, beneficiaries reported 88 percent were still functioning as intended. Improved roads brought many benefits to the whole of the community, including easier access to markets to sell excess production and greater opportunities for more diverse income generation.

11. As a result of participation in the project, women said that they no longer needed to go the bush to collect wild food and firewood for selling to buy food in the market; instead, they can work on their farms and sell produce in the market to support their families, and can now make decisions on spending income on food and non-food items. Women also felt empowered as they participated in the Project Management Committees, became economically stronger in small scale business and gained leadership skills that will continue beyond the project's duration.

³ The United States Government's system for providing early warnings on food security

12. Intangible benefits included an increased culture of work, the sharing of food, knowledge and equipment between participants and improved social cohesion. On the negative side, large-scale land clearance activities for new crop production (more than 103,000 hectares in total) risks environmental degradation. Small-scale irrigation could be used in some locations to intensify production, thereby reducing the total area needed for cropping. It would also reduce the burden of hand-watering crops.

13. **Sustainability:** A strong sense of asset ownership by beneficiaries and communities has been achieved. Asset Management Committees have been set up, though they vary in their degrees of achievement. The level of local government engagement with the FFA work varied from very strong to very weak, partly as a result of their chronic lack of resources. National government authorities are strongly supportive of the change from relief to development support. Ensuring the ongoing maintenance of the assets is a significant problem, but despite problems, overall the roads were widely assessed positively by beneficiaries for long term-benefit to the community despite the lack of equipment, knowledge and skills required to maintain the larger physical infrastructure (such as roads and dykes). Beneficiaries also clearly stated that they would continue to benefit from the improved food quantity and quality, and knowledge and skills gained through the project.

14. The criteria for exiting the programme has not been clear to all beneficiaries, although all leave after three years. This period is ample for beneficiaries in some areas (Western Equatoria) but may be insufficient in the north; 90 percent of all those who exited the programme reported that they could sustain themselves from their crop farm without further assistance. Former FFA participants were linked to the WFP supported Smallholder Agricultural Market Support in West Equatoria. Longer-term development objectives were pursued by embedding nutrition advice and behaviour change communication and gender issues directly in the project.

15. **Coherence:** The project is based on a resilience policy shared with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The FAO was a partner in the United Kingdom-funded element of the programme and added value to the project; however, coverage by other development actors, and indeed the Government of South Sudan, is thin in many parts of the country. Some of the larger cooperating partners were able to make complementary interventions with the same communities.

Conclusions

16. The project was **relevant** to beneficiary needs through the provision of food assistance to food insecure communities and the creation of assets to encourage longer-term resilience. The robust and transparent CBPP process design was successful (although with some weaknesses in implementation). Women's participation in the planning and management processes was empowering.

17. The project was **effective** in reaching almost all of its programme targets and improving household food security, agricultural productivity, incomes and community cohesion (although disputes between crop farmers and pastoralists were reported), and reducing the extent to which households had to use negative consumption-based coping strategies. Interventions focusing on increasing productivity were largely successful in increasing land cultivated, food production, skills development and improved livelihoods. The recent deterioration of beneficiaries' food consumption scores and increased use of negative coping strategies as a result of climatic shocks point to the overall conclusion that the gains achieved between 2016 and 2019 are fragile.

18. **Efficiency** was achieved through the large scale of the project and by the increasing use of the cash modality rather than food. Further efficiency gains might be achieved through reducing the costs associated with cash transfer. SCOPE (and even just FFA) registration is a valuable asset on its own as it brings easier access to credit. The greatest gains for food security were achieved in the first two years of the activities, so shortening the involvement to two years could be considered in Western Equatoria, where overall vulnerability is lower.

19. The project has had a positive **impact** on the lives of beneficiaries through increased food (including fish) production, household food security, improved access to markets and services like health

and education, asset accumulation, shifts in mindset related to work culture, and enhanced women's participation and empowerment. Income from productive assets was used to further develop commercial food production and diversify income sources. The project has succeeded in all regions, even in those ICA zones with high risk and/or persistent food insecurity and merits continuation and scaling up if resources allow.

20. **Sustainability** was fostered through a strong sense of ownership in the project's aims and activities by communities, and a commitment to maintaining the individual and community assets beyond the project. The ability of local government to engage with the project varied widely but they support WFP's continuing shift from unconditional aid to conditional resilience-building activities. The sustainability of some assets is questionable, because of the quality of the initial construction and lack of on-going maintenance as neither local government nor beneficiaries have the resources to manage the maintenance, particularly of roads. Despite this, it is likely that many benefits will remain. Small-scale irrigation could be introduced in some locations to intensify production and reduce land clearance. It would also reduce to burden of watering by hand.

21. Strong **coherence** was realised through WFP's ability to align the project with the United Nations Cooperation Framework and with the WFP Smallholder Agriculture Market Support programme. Beneficiaries, local governance structures and government stakeholders were involved in the design of the project and the CBPP process played a particularly important role in identifying community needs and priorities.

Recommendations

R1: The Country Office should examine the reasons why some Asset Management Committees are unable to ensure that infrastructure is properly maintained by the community, and then follow up with appropriate remedial action.

R2: The Country Office should consult with the government over support for the purchase of equipment suitable for carrying out maintenance work on roads and dykes as the need for improved maintenance using machinery is high. The Evaluation Team recognizes that the recommendation carries significant initial purchase costs and a comprehensive plan to ensure equipment would be available for the long-term operation and maintenance would be required.

R3: The Country Office should continue to look for improvements to support gender transformative changes. Gender analysis of the FFA project has identified many elements of the programme that supported female community members. In addition, the Country Office should ensure that i) female change agents are identified and empowered to take on leadership roles in the community; and ii) fully implement the recommendations of the 2019 rapid gender assessment.

R4: The Country Office should consider piloting - in collaboration with FAO - the introduction of small-scale irrigation systems, adapted to local hydrological conditions at selected FFA project locations. Introduction of larger-scale farming together with vegetable gardening is very laborious, especially for

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_3588

