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Muzaffargarh, Punjab

Evaluation of Humanitarian Response Facilities Network in Pakistan from January 2014 to September 2020

Decentralized Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

This independent evaluation assesses the Humanitarian Response Facilities (HRF) network constructed by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Pakistan to determine its effect on capacities for emergency preparedness and response, and the degree of integration with national disaster management systems. The evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Pakistan Country Office.

The purpose of this decentralized evaluation was to:

- Measure WFP's contribution to emergency preparedness and response in Pakistan through the HRF network and provide accountability for results as a capacity development partner to the Government of Pakistan
- Identify key enabling factors for capacity development initiatives
- Provide evaluation evidence, learning and recommendations to guide WFP's programming and to support the uptake of HRFs within existing disaster management systems
- Provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the HRF network has been integrated within the local government system.

This evaluation covers the period from January 2014 to September 2020 in the provinces and regions of Pakistan where the intervention took place: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). It covers the technical assistance to the Government of Pakistan in the form of HRFs and associated support for effective supply chain management and commodities handling.

The primary internal users of the evaluation are the WFP Pakistan Country Office, the Regional Bureau in Bangkok and HQ divisions and the WFP Executive Board. External users include the Government of Pakistan, affected populations, WFP's partners in Pakistan and relevant NGO/INGOs.

Context

Pakistan is a lower-middle income country that ranks 154th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index. Natural disaster management is led by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), with provincial and district efforts carried out by Provincial/State Disaster Management Authorities (P/SDMAs) and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs).

Recent events with significant humanitarian consequences have informed WFP's work in Pakistan. These include: extreme snowfall with avalanches; a locust outbreak and heavy monsoon rains; rapid urbanization and population growth coupled with the influx of 100,000 temporarily displaced persons; 1.5 million refugees from Afghanistan in 2020; effects of climate change; and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government of Pakistan faces a shifting humanitarian landscape as traditional humanitarian donors transition from direct humanitarian assistance to technical assistance and capacity strengthening.

Subject of the evaluation

The Government of Pakistan requested WFP's support to build a network of warehouses at strategic locations to improve disaster risk management, preparedness, and response capacity. Over the past decade, WFP constructed eight HRFs to provide rapid, coordinated, and cost-effective emergency response and relief. After HRF construction and capacity strengthening activities, the HRFs were handed over to PDMAs. There was no available data on numbers of beneficiaries served by the HRFs; 15,542 community members (10,832 male; 4,710 female) participated in training delivered as part of the project. Very little data was available on financials related to the overall HRF intervention. USD 642,000 out of the total budget of USD 9,666,690 was expended by end of 2016 (some of the underspending was due to delays in construction of two HRFs, see Table 1.1); financial data for the 2017-2020 period was not available.

Methodology

The evaluation was guided by an evaluation matrix outlining the evaluation questions (on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability), data sources and methods of analysis.

- EQ1 – Relevance: To what extent was the HRF project relevant to national disaster management policies, plans, strategies, and goals, including achievement of Vision 2025 and national Sustainable Development Goals?
- EQ2 – Effectiveness: How did HRF interventions contribute to the overall capacity enhancement of disaster management authorities and to timely emergency response?
- EQ3: Efficiency: To what extent have the humanitarian response facilities delivered benefits efficiently, and were utilized optimally, in contributing to country disaster management capacity?
- EQ4: Coherence: What are the factors that explain HRF performance and coherence, and the extent to which they have improved government disaster preparedness and response capacity?
- EQ5: Sustainability: To what extent have the HRFs fulfilled (or not fulfilled) the government's present and foreseen needs for sustainable disaster preparedness and response capacity?

Data was collected from September to November 2021 through i) desk review of available documentation, ii) 81 stakeholder consultations in the form of 76 key informant interviews (62 male, 12 female, 2 mixed) and five focus-group discussions (3 male and 2 female), and iii) site visits to HRFs in four provinces. Key informant interviews were conducted remotely in two regions (Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir). Consulted stakeholders represented diverse perspectives to the extent possible, and were assured that their individual responses would remain confidential.

The evaluation team used several techniques for data analysis, including descriptive analysis, content analysis, efficiency analysis, effectiveness analysis, comparative analysis, and gender analysis. NVivo software was used to code qualitative data. Data from various sources was triangulated to ensure reliability of information and to increase the validity of findings and conclusions.

The main limitations to the evaluation were: Covid-19 restrictions which did not allow for international travel (thus assignment of field data collection to national consultants); challenges in arranging interviews with government and WFP stakeholders, which nearly doubled the timeline for data collection; lack of data to assess the cost-efficiency of HRFs; and difficulties identifying women respondents and providing opportunities for their participation in the evaluation.

Summary of Findings

Finding 1. The HRF project is aligned with the Government of Pakistan's priorities and the sustainable development goals, and aims to fulfil critical emergency response capacity needs in relation to pre-positioning and storage, operational capacity, and institutional capacity of the government. HRFs were relevant to, and utilized for, relief operations for several emergencies, including Pakistan's response to COVID-19. (EQ1.1)

Finding 2. The HRF project's focus on strengthening the Government of Pakistan's capacity was aligned with

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