

FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS – EFFECTIVE RESPONSES?

Regional Evaluation of WFP's contribution to Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (2015 – 2022)

Decentralized Evaluation Terms of Reference

WFP Regional Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean



World Food
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Table of Contents

1. Background	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Context	2
2. Reasons for the evaluation	7
2.1. Rationale	7
2.2. Objectives	8
2.3. Stakeholder Analysis	8
3. Subject of the evaluation	9
3.1. Subject of the Evaluation	9
3.2. Scope of the Evaluation	13
4. Evaluation approach, methodology and ethical considerations	14
4.1. Evaluation Questions and Criteria	14
4.2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology	16
4.3. Evaluability assessment	18
4.4. Ethical Considerations	19
4.5. Quality Assurance	19
5. Organization of the evaluation	21
5.1. Phases and Deliverables	21
5.2. Evaluation Team Composition	22
5.3. Roles and Responsibilities	22
5.4. Security Considerations	23
5.5. Communication	24
5.6. Budget	25
Annexes	26
Annex 1: Map – WFP’s Presence in LAC	26
Annex 2: Timeline	27
Annex 3: Role and Composition of the Evaluation Committee	29
Annex 4: Role and Composition of the Evaluation Reference Group	30
Annex 5: Communication and Knowledge Management Plan	32
Annex 6: Bibliography	36
Annex 7: Acronyms	38
Annex 8: Preliminary stakeholder analysis	39

1. Background

1. These terms of reference (ToR) were prepared by the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBP) of the World Food Programme (WFP) based upon an initial document review and consultation with stakeholders and following a standard template. The purpose of these terms of reference is to provide key information to stakeholders about the evaluation, to guide the evaluation team and to specify expectations during the various phases of the evaluation.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

2. These terms of reference are for the regional thematic evaluation of WFP's contribution to Shock-Responsive Social Protection¹ (SRSP) in Latin America and the Caribbean. This evaluation is commissioned by the Regional Bureau and will cover the period from January 2015 to December 2022.
3. WFP has been committed to support social protection systems and has demonstrated a strong belief in social protection as a mean to reduce hunger and malnutrition, that protects livelihoods, builds resilience, and increases human capital. RBP embraced this commitment and, since 2015, invested in social protection and identified pillars of engagement that later would be the basis for the Regional Social Protection Strategy, launched at the end of 2019.
4. WFP's support to government-led social protection has two dimensions²: i. delivering elements of programmes or systems on behalf of governments at their request, in countries limited by capacity or resources, and ii. technical advice, capacity strengthening, advocacy and policy support to advance country-owned programmes.' The latter is WFP's most prominent role in the Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC). WFP's work in social protection in LAC was kick-started by the series of Regional Studies on Shock-Responsive Social Protection and their dissemination. Combining these evidence generation efforts with high level advocacy and tailored technical assistance at country level allowed WFP to support preparedness and response through Shock-Responsive Social Protection in many countries of the region.
5. This evaluation aims to assess WFP RBP's role in shaping the vision and approach to SRSP at the regional (LAC) and global levels while also assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of putting the SRSP framework into practice. Provided that the focus of WFP's work in the region is on technical assistance, policy and strengthening capacities of existing institutions (governments, inter-governmental bodies such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency), these bodies are also the main target group of WFP's work in SRSP. This implies that there is only a limited number of direct individual beneficiaries of these interventions as explained more in detail in the following sections of the ToRs.
6. The evaluation will focus on actions undertaken by WFP in the LAC region, with a limited number of selected country case studies both in WFP presence and non-presence countries. The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean located in Panama currently supports 12 country offices (Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela) and one multi-country office in the Caribbean (see Annex 1). The Caribbean multi-country office covers 22 countries and overseas territories, all of which are classified as small island developing States, namely Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas (the), Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia,

¹ For the purpose of this evaluation the following definition of Shock-Responsive Social Protection is expected to be applied: *'The use of national social protection programmes and administrative capacity to provide assistance to the population affected by a crisis.'*

Source: Beazley R., Solórzano A. and Barca V. (2019). Study on shock-responsive social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: summary of key findings and policy recommendations. OPM in collaboration with WFP.

² WFP Strategy for Support to Social Protection. (2021). Online. Available from: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/world-food-programme-strategy-support-social-protection-2021>. [Accessed on 9 November 2022].

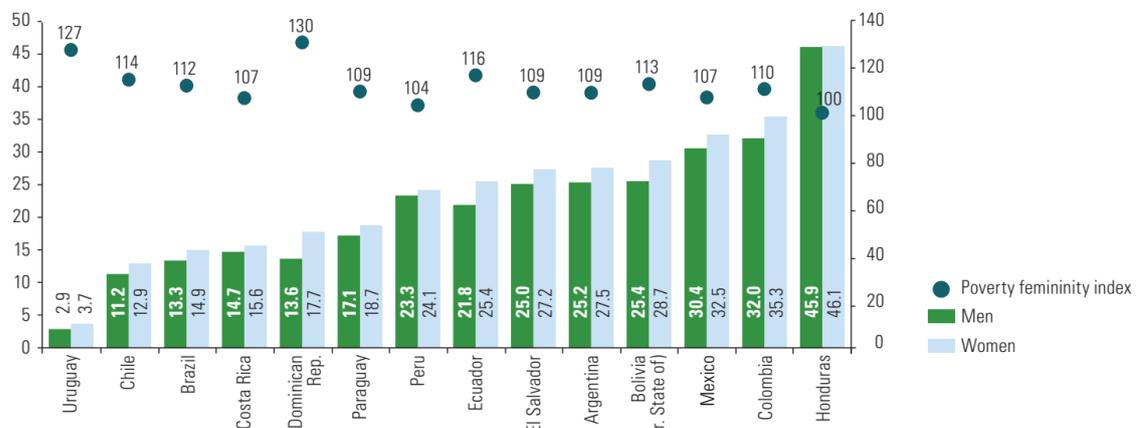
Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

1.2. CONTEXT

Poverty

7. According to ECLAC's 2021 Social Panorama in Latin America report³, Latin America and the Caribbean has been the world's most vulnerable region in the pandemic. It has registered the highest number of deaths due to COVID-19 worldwide (1,562,845 as of December 31, 2021), a number that was expected to increase throughout 2022. This represents 28.8 percent of all the COVID-19-related deaths reported globally, although the LAC's population represents only 8.4 percent of the global population. As of January 2022, only 62.3 percent of the region's population (estimated at 408 million) were vaccinated against the disease.⁴
8. The extreme poverty rate in the region rose from 13.1 percent of the population in 2020 to 13.8 percent in 2021 as a result of the prolonged health and social crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents a setback of 27 years. The overall poverty rate reduced slightly from 33.0 percent to 32.1 percent of the population. In absolute numbers, the number of persons living in extreme poverty rose by 5 million (from 81 million to 86 million), while the total number of persons in situations of poverty declined by 3 million (from 204 million to 201 million).⁵
9. Across LAC, the incidence of poverty is very heterogenous not only between the countries of the region, but also between the population groups living in them. Personal attributes including sex, age, membership of an ethnic or racial group, or area of residence can determine the probability that a person will live in poverty. Overall, women are more likely to be affected by poverty than men. Figure 1 below presents the rates of poverty for women and men in a sample of countries from the region together with the value for Poverty femininity index that is calculated as the ratio of the female poverty rate to the male poverty rate multiplied by 100 for 20–59 year-olds (a value over 100 indicates that higher number of women are affected by poverty than men).⁶

Figure 1: Poverty femininity index



Source: ECLAC (2022). *Social Panorama in Latin America and the Caribbean*

10. Age is another factor that affects the probability of living in a household suffering from income poverty. This is particularly the case of children, adolescents and older people. Poverty rates for persons under 15 years of age were found to be between 1.3 and 1.8 times higher than those of the next age group (15–39 years). The largest gaps were identified in countries where overall poverty rates are low, such as Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay. This gap tends to be smaller in countries with higher overall poverty rates. In the majority of the countries and especially those with consolidated pension

³ ECLAC (2022). *Social Panorama in Latin America and the Caribbean 2021*. [Online]. Available from: Available at: <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/47719> [Accessed 4 Aug. 2022].

⁴ Idem.

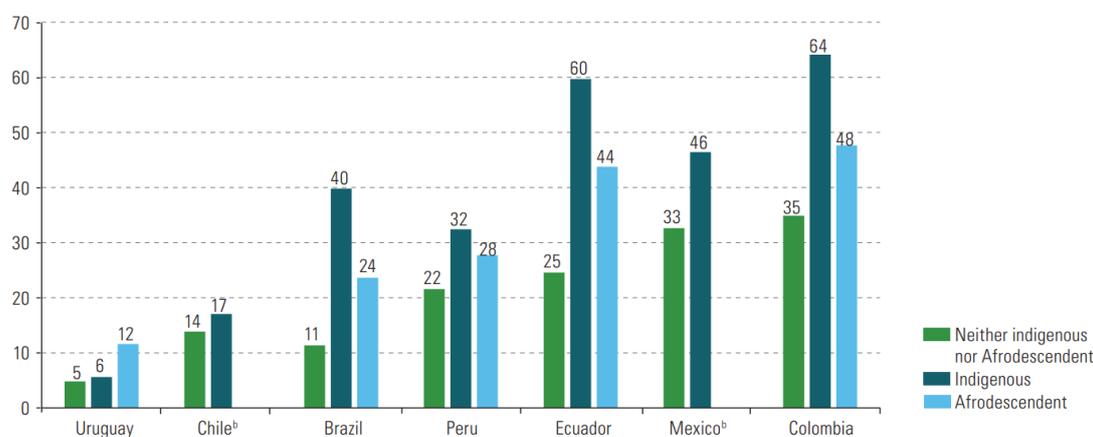
⁵ Idem.

⁶ Idem.

schemes, persons over 65 years of age were found to be less likely to live in poverty compared to the other age groups.⁷

- Finally, according to the ECLAC 2021 report, indigenous and Afro-descendent populations are also much more likely to be affected by poverty. Figure 2 illustrates these differences on a sample of countries for which data is available.⁸

Figure 2: Poverty rates by race and ethnicity, around 2020



Source: ECLAC (2022). *Social Panorama in Latin America and the Caribbean*

Food and nutrition security and progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2

- It is expected that the impact of climate change in LAC will be considerable, given the region's economic dependence on agriculture, and limited resilience, in particular of the poor and vulnerable populations. This low resilience results from the multiple climate risks that the region is exposed to including the extreme weather, disease, sea level rise and glacial melt. Severe weather events, such as storms and hurricanes in Central America and the Caribbean, are also increasing in frequency (during the 2000-2009 decade, there were 39 hurricanes in the Central America-Caribbean, compared to 15 during the 1980s and just 9 during the 1990s). In combination with the recent demographic trends (population growth, urbanization), this increases the region's vulnerability. In addition, crop yields and local economies are also expected to be affected, which in turn compromises food security.⁹
- In 2020, the prevalence of hunger in LAC reached 9.1 percent, the highest since 2005. This represents an increase by two percentage points from the previous year and can be partly explained by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same year, 59.7 million people in LAC were undernourished, which represents an increase of 13.8 million from 2019. The subregion where the increase in undernourishment was the largest is Central America (2.5 percentage points), reaching its highest value since 2000.¹⁰
- In 2020, the overall prevalence of food insecurity in LAC was 41 percent which represents an annual increase of 9 percentage points – the highest increment globally. The prevalence of severe food insecurity, which means people who had gone a day or more without eating, was 14 percent. In absolute numbers, this means 267 million people were experiencing food insecurity - 60 million more than in the previous year without physical or economic access to food in the quantity and quality required for their health and development. However, the highest overall undernourishment rates were registered in the

⁷ ECLAC (2022). *Social Panorama in Latin America and the Caribbean 2021*. [Online]. Available from: <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/47719> [Accessed 4 Aug. 2022].

⁸ Idem.

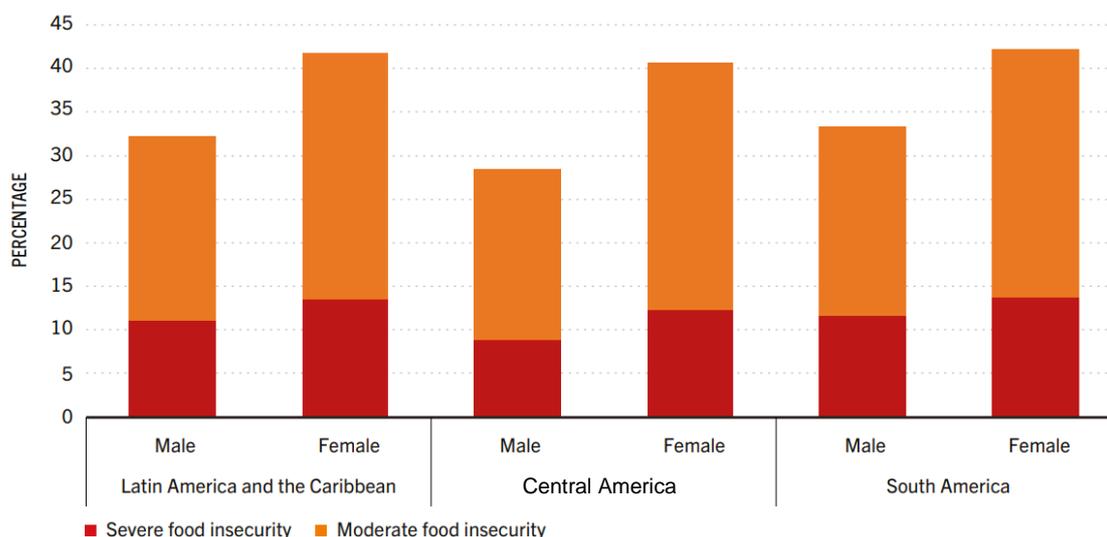
⁹ Solórzano, A. and Cárdenes, I. (2019). "Social protection and climate change: WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean's vision to advance climate change adaptation through social protection". World Food Programme in collaboration with Oxford Policy Management.

¹⁰ FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. (2021). *Latin America and the Caribbean – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and trends*. Santiago, FAO.

Caribbean (16.1 percent). This also means that the LAC region is now even further off track from reaching SDG target 2.1 to end hunger and achieve food security.¹¹

15. Similarly as poverty, food insecurity is gendered, with more women experiencing it compared to men. Thus, 41.8 percent of women in LAC experienced moderate or severe food security compared with 32.2 percent of men. Figure 3 illustrates these disparities using 2020 data. This disparity was likely further exacerbated by the pandemic.¹²

Figure 3: Prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity by sex, 2020



Source: FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. (2021). *Latin America and the Caribbean – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition*

16. Since 2000, the LAC region has demonstrated an important progress in reducing stunting, having decreased its prevalence from 18 to 11.3 percent. However, in the second decade of this century the rate of decrease slowed down, delaying the achievement of the SDG 2 target to reduce stunting by 50 percent by 2030. Stunting levels are most elevated in Central America (16.6 percent), followed by the Caribbean (11.8 percent) and South America (8.6 percent). However, there are significant disparities between countries. In 2020, the highest prevalence of stunting in LAC was registered in Guatemala (42.8 percent), Ecuador (23.1 percent), Haiti (20.4 percent) and Honduras (19.9 percent), with Chile, Paraguay and Saint Lucia with prevalence rate under 5 percent. In the same year, the wasting rate was estimated 1.3 percent, markedly under the global average of 6.7 percent.¹³
17. At the same time, 7.5 percent of children under five years were overweight. The prevalence registered in LAC is 2 percentage points above the global average and has been on the rise since 2000. With the current trend, the region is off the track with respect to SDG 2 target of keeping overweight in children under five years below 3 percent by 2030. With respect to obesity in adults, in 2016 it was affecting almost a quarter (24.2 percent) of the region's adult population and had an increasing trend; this is well above the global average of 13.1 percent.¹⁴ It's also important to highlight the results of the recent studies produced by WFP and ECLAC in eight countries of the region that evidence the very high socio-

¹¹ FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. (2021). *Latin America and the Caribbean – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and trends*. Santiago, FAO.

¹² Idem.

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Idem.

economic cost of the double burden of malnutrition in LAC, ranging from 2.3 percent¹⁵ of gross domestic product in the Dominican Republic to 16.3 percent¹⁶ in Guatemala.

18. In 2019, the prevalence of anaemia in women of reproductive age in LAC was 17.2 percent. Although it is well below the global average, it is to be noted that in recent years there has been a lack of progress with regards to this indicator, which undermines the likelihood of attaining the SDG target of reducing the anaemia prevalence by 50 percent by 2030. The highest anaemia rates have been registered in the Caribbean (29.1 percent), followed by South America (17.3 percent) and Central America (14.6 percent).¹⁷

Government policies, priorities and institutional capacities

19. According to the Oxford Policy Management (OPM)/WFP Study on Shock-Responsive Social Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean (2019), the social protection systems in the region are in their majority 'mature' systems that can be characterised by strong government leadership (e.g. embedded in legislation), as well as integrated system of programmes supported by established administrative systems, high levels of institutional capacity, robust systems for informed decision making and accountability enhancement, and sustainable funding. This provides a solid base on which responses to shocks can be adapted.¹⁸
20. The significant coverage of social protection systems in many LAC countries allows important segments of the population to be reached, in particular the poor and vulnerable. For example, the proportion of households benefiting from conditional cash transfer programmes in the region increased between 2000 and 2016 more than five times (from 3.6 percent to 20.2 percent), reaching to approximately 130 million persons.¹⁹ The SDG 1.3 Target and its indicator are particularly relevant to assess the progress towards social protection coverage.
21. The study also found that in LAC there remains a gap between: (1) initial relief activities, which are typically intended to support affected populations during the first weeks following a shock; and (2) early recovery and reconstruction efforts. Given the evidence that suggests that the social protection system can be used in the different phases of the emergency response, it has been discussed that gains can be achieved through better coordination between the different government and non-government stakeholders working on emergency response, including with the civil protection sector. Finally, the study also highlighted a trend towards the progressive construction of social citizenship.
22. Other stakeholders that have been closely engaged in Shock-Responsive Social Protection and in social protection in general include World Bank, UNICEF, IADB as well as ILO, UNDP, UN Women and regional bodies such as CDEMA.

Humanitarian issues and migration

23. The LAC region has experienced a significant increase in the number of people in need since 2018, raising from 9.6 million to 26.4 million persons in 2021. This increase is related to the growing frequency and intensity of sudden-onset disasters and recurrent climate shocks, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as challenging socioeconomic conditions and poverty as presented above. According to the Global Humanitarian Overview, at the start of 2022, six countries counted with a Humanitarian Response Plan (Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Venezuela) with a total financial requirement of US\$1.6 billion to respond to the needs of 13.4 million persons out of the 27.9 million

¹⁵ WFP, ECLAC. (2019). El costo de la doble carga de la malnutrición. Impacto social y económico en la República Dominicana.

¹⁶ WFP, ECLAC. (2020). El costo de la doble carga de la malnutrición. Impacto social y económico en Guatemala.

¹⁷ FAO, IFAD, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. (2021). Latin America and the Caribbean – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and trends. Santiago, FAO.

¹⁸ Beazley R., Solórzano A. and Barca V. (2019). Study on shock-responsive social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: summary of key findings and policy recommendations. Oxford Policy Management in collaboration with the World Food Programme.

¹⁹ Idem.

identified. This is a steep increase given the fact that in 2016, only Haiti had a Humanitarian Response Plan.²⁰

24. The pandemic significantly affected the region's poverty, displacement, food insecurity and violence rates. While LAC is still experiencing the impacts of the higher number of sudden-onset disasters and the record 2020 Atlantic hurricane season. Over the past year, in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, the population in need increased by 60 percent. In addition, for 2022, it's expected that *La Niña* will negatively impact agriculture, food production and livelihoods. Worsening socioeconomic conditions are likely to lead to more violence and displacement within and across borders.²¹
25. The region has been experiencing significant changes in its migration patterns. The Venezuelan crises has led to one of the major displacements globally. It is estimated that 7.1 million persons left the country with 5.96 million of Venezuelan refugees and migrants staying in the LAC region.²² At the same time, there is a growing number of Haitians that have migrated to South America (Chile, Brazil), and a large number of people are moving from the Northern Triangle of Central America into Mexico and towards the United States, and from Nicaragua into Costa Rica.²³ The movement of Central Americans toward the United States is not new. However, changes over the past five years in the volume and characteristics of the migrants have attracted attention from regional governments to reduce irregular migration. Approximately 1.8 million migrant encounters from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were registered at the United States - Mexico border between 2017 and 2021. Since 2018, mass movements became more frequent, including those composed of many families and unaccompanied children. Their primary destination is the United States, with incentives related to employment opportunities, family reunification, and humanitarian protection needs.²⁴
26. As of September 2022, food security situation for refugees and migrants from Venezuela in the LAC region continued to be critical, with over 2.1 million Venezuelan migrants being food insecure (42 percent). The situation is particularly concerning in Peru and Ecuador where the number of severely food insecure migrants has increased considerably compared to December 2021 (40 percent increase in Ecuador and 43 percent in Peru). Overall, one in four migrants report having no source of income at all. Another 50 percent report relying on informal jobs and have seen a reduction in their incomes due to the impact of pandemic.²⁵

Gender equality and women's empowerment

27. Gender inequality is a structural issue in the LAC region. Sexual division of labour and unfair social distribution of care tasks interact together with other structural challenges hindering the achievement of gender equality and create unfavourable conditions for women. Women are overrepresented in lower-income groups and also in the most insecure and unstable types of employment. Also, they

²⁰ OCHA. (2021) Global Humanitarian Overview 2022. [Online]. Available from:

[https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/latin-america-caribbean-global-humanitarian-overview-2022-summary-december-](https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/latin-america-caribbean-global-humanitarian-overview-2022-summary-december-2021#:~:text=Per%20the%20Global%20Humanitarian%20Overview,to%2026.4%20million%20in%202021.)

[2021#:~:text=Per%20the%20Global%20Humanitarian%20Overview,to%2026.4%20million%20in%202021.](https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/latin-america-caribbean-global-humanitarian-overview-2022-summary-december-2021#:~:text=Per%20the%20Global%20Humanitarian%20Overview,to%2026.4%20million%20in%202021.)

[Accessed 10 Aug. 2022].

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