

A

[Excellent Analysis]

**The World Food Programme:
Initiative to Protect Livelihoods in Crisis Situations and Enhance
Resilience to Shocks**

James K. Abraham

09 December 2005

IRP 632 – Professor Mathiason
Maxwell School, Syracuse University

**The World Food Programme:
Initiative to Protect Livelihoods in Crisis Situations and Enhance Resilience to Shocks**

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the world's largest organization centered on food aid.

The overall mission of the organization is to “meet emergency needs and support economic and social development” through food aid⁵. The program has developed several branches and strategies for combating food crises and helping people become more resilient to famine and food shocks. The five major strategic priorities for 2004 – 2007:

- Save lives in crisis situations
- Protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks
- Support the improved nutrition and health status of children, mothers and other vulnerable people
- Support access to education and reduce gender disparity in access to education and skills training
- Help governments establish and manage national food-assistance programmes¹.

An obstacle of evaluation for the strategic priorities and the subsequent outcomes and outputs is that they are stated as activities. Even the smallest effort to “save lives in crisis situations,” could be seen as accomplishing this strategic goal. The second strategy, “to protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks” includes both development and relief programmes. It aims at the heart of the problem by developing the community's resistance to crises. This paper will seek to analyze this strategic priority's logical framework.

Background:

The World Food Programme is a United Nations organization that was created as a pilot program in 1962 to combat food crises around the world. A major earthquake in Iran, a hurricane in

Thailand, and refugees in Algeria left tens of thousands of people without proper food resources². The World Food Programme was designed to quickly alleviate these problems, but the need for food aid around the world did not cease and neither did the WFP. In 1974, Bangladesh was suffering severe floods and drought conditions. The WFP used food aid for the purposes of development for the first time by promoting the rebuilding of homes and essential infrastructure².

Since the creation of the UN Millennium Development Goals, the World Food Programme has attempted to draft its strategies to help meet those goals. The strategy, “to protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks,” is heavily integrated in protracted relief and the promotion of development through food aid. It is used to not only eradicate hunger and promote sustainability, but it also seeks to educate, empower women, improve health, and combat HIV/AIDS. Many programs such as food-for-work, food-for-training, and free meals at school are used to promote the development of community systems that will advance the ability of these communities to cope with food shocks.

Budget:

The World Food Program is a joint program with the United Nations and the Forestry and Agricultural Organization. However, the WFP does not receive funding from the assessed U.N. budget as do most non-development UN agencies. The entire budget of the WFP comes from voluntary donations from state-governments, charities, or private contributors. The U.S., Canada, and Western Europe accounted for over 90% of contributions in 2004 up from 88% in 2003⁴. In 2003 the WFP spent approximately USD \$3.25 billion on food aid programs. These included special operations, development programs, bilateral operations, and protracted relief

and recovery operations, but it does not include emergency operations or administrative expenses. In 2004, the amount dropped to 2.89 billion US dollars, but it does not take into account expenditure for the Tsunami which occurred very late in 2004 and is considered an emergency operation³. Funds are tracked by the type of program, country, and region that the funds are being used for. This allows only approximations of funds that will be used by each strategic priority since the strategic priority encompasses many different activities or programs. Food procurement is a major operational expense that is circulated back through the developing nations. The World Food Programme makes a strong effort to purchase the food it will be using for aid from food producers in the country of operation or countries in the region. This initiative helps generate jobs and income for developing the region. In 2004, developing nations accounted for approximately 69% of food procurements. Thailand, Argentina, and Ethiopia contributed the most amount of food amongst the developing nations which totaled USD \$725 million.

Australia and the USA provided by far the most amount of food to the WFP, and along with other developed nations, they account for USD \$326 million of food procurements; approximately 31% of food procurements.⁴

Strategic priority #2 (SP2), “protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks”, had an estimated twenty-five million target beneficiaries in 2003. This number fell to twenty-two million in 2004, approximately half of which were women in both years. In 2003 the total operational expenditure for SP2 was USD \$533 million. In 2004 it was USD \$414 million. This was approximately eighteen and twenty-two percent of the overall budget respectively; a steady increase from seventeen percent in 2002⁷. The major activities that accounted for the majority of the budget were food-for-assets, food-for-training, and resettlement of beneficiaries⁴. The table below outlines the budget for SP2:

⁴	2003	2004
Number of Beneficiaries	25 million	22 million
Percentage of Women	51	51
Estimated Operational Expenditure	USD \$533	USD \$414
Percentage of Overall Expenditure	18	22

Critique:

While there are five strategic priorities, SP2 is perhaps the most important amongst them because it incorporates the rest. With the success of “protect[ing] livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks,” the organization is stopping the recurring cycle of need for food aide. With the success of SP2, the nutrition and health of children and mothers (SP3) and the access to education and reduction in gender disparity (SP4) objectives can be met. Expenditures can then be better spent on the strategic priorities of helping people in crisis situations (SP1) and helping governments establish food-assistance programs (SP5). Therefore, SP2 should have a larger portion of the budget. Many of the programs categorized under SP2 supplement the programs in SP3 and SP4, namely food-for-training and free meals at schools. If a stronger focus were put on SP2, then communities would develop a better self-sustainability and capacity to cope with shocks. Subsequently The WFP could then better address gender disparity, health, and educational issues.

Goals and Objectives:

The objectives of the organization are clearly defined within the mission statement and strategic plan. Though they seem broad, when taken in context of the organization, they aim directly at what the organization hopes to achieve. As stated before, the overall mission of the organization is to meet emergency needs and support social and economic development. In addition, the

World Food Programme seeks to meet “refugee and other emergency food needs” and the “logistic support” needed in food aid⁵. These broad objectives aim at the heart of what is the overall mission of the organization. While providing food relief for refugees and in emergency situations, the WFP seeks to promote nutrition and health. It also aims to promote self-reliance and asset-building through its development initiatives.⁵

Though disaster and emergency relief are its major functions, WFP seeks to promote development even during these tumultuous situations. Within the mission statement, WFP recognizes key practices that will help in development. Among the most prominent of these are food-for-work programs that empower people to build or rebuild essential infrastructure and create assets for trade. Additionally, the promotion of health, nutrition, education, and gender equality through food aid are a major function of creating self-reliance.⁵

WFP lists certain activities among its objectives which are important to point out. The WFP is concerned about not affecting the regional food production and local consumption of food. It also seeks to prevent dependency on food aid and broad participation between age and gender gaps; all of which correlate with the intent of self-reliance. The programs of food-for-work and food-for-training also help with these preventative measures. A major objective of the World Food Programme is to promote national plans for food aid and disaster recovery. WFP works closely on the national and local level to develop plans that promote stabilization and rebuilding after a crisis situation. The organization also provides logistic and multilateral assistance for regions in crisis.

After the creation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the World Food Programme quickly adopted policy that would promote these goals. The UN Millennium Development Goals⁶:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education

- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Improve maternal health
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Reduce Child Mortality
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
- Develop a global partnership for development

These goals tied in directly with the specific objectives/priorities that were developed for 2004 through 2007.

Critique:

The greatest strength in the objectives of the organization is that they are well defined and narrowly focused. The organization seeks to aid in food crises and help prevent and/or develop resilience for future crises. Though this is no easy task, and on a global level, requires massive amounts of capital, assets, and human resources, the organization does not stretch itself thin by getting away from the objective. Additionally, while it seeks to promote development goals, it is focused on this strictly through food aid.

Specific Objectives

Each of the specific priorities created by the World Food Programme for 2004 through 2007 is viewed by WFP as a specific objective. They are not separate programs, but are interweaving objectives that are integrated in many of the country or regional programs. Each of the country or regional programs makes an attempt to monitor the program based on some or all of these five objectives.

- Specific Priority 1: Save lives in crisis situations⁴ – this objective aims directly at the emergency and special operations. These situations are not usually able to be planned for years in advance. As a result of immediate and/or large scale need, this specific objective is often given first priority.

- This specific priority accounted for approximately 68% of the operational budget in 2003 and 51% in 2004.
- One example of how this objective is measured in the field is of the multilateral assessment of the food crises in Darfur, Sudan. The WFP along with UNICEF, the US CFC, and others conducted a survey of acute malnutrition and mortality rates. The survey showed that because of the World Food Programme's assistance critically high levels of malnutrition and mortality were prevented.
- Specific Priority 2: Protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks⁴ – this objective aims at combating the need for SP1 by developing a local and sustainable ability to cope with crises. Many measures have been taken to implement and evaluate the progress of this objective. These measures will be discussed in detail later.
- Specific Priority 3: Support the improved nutrition and health status of children, mothers and other vulnerable people⁴ – this objective aims to promote the health of those who suffer greatest from food crises and hunger. Children and women are naturally more susceptible to mortality and malnutrition during food crises.
 - This specific priority accounted for approximately 5% of the operational budget in 2003 and 11% in 2004.
 - One example of the progress made illustrates the reduction of malnutrition in Uttar Pradesh, India. In villages where WFP provided children with micronutrient fortified food, severe malnutrition reportedly reduced from 12.7% to 3.2%.

- Specific Priority 4: Support access to education and reduce gender disparity in access to education and skills training⁴ – this objective aims at following through with policies seeking to fulfill the UN Millennium Development Goals. Empowering people through education and incorporating women in education and community activities increases the likelihood of development, reduces surging population growth and promotes human rights.
 - This specific priority accounted for approximately 7% of the operational budget in 2003 and 13% in 2004.
 - One example of education and female empowerment is the WFP program in Georgia which sought to increase enrollment in public schools among 2,000 orphan children and especially girls by providing free meals. After only three months of operation there were significant enrollment and attendance rates.
- Specific Priority 5: Help governments establish and manage national food-assistance programmes⁴ – this objective aims at empowering national government to “plan and manage food-base programmes.” The idea is that if a sufficient plan is in place, then efforts will be made to prevent resilience to shock and reduce the need for food aid in the country. The policy framework is still being developed and very little field experiences have been available to illustrate productivity. The major operations included in this specific priority are to build relationships with governments, link outputs to outcomes, and help capacity building.

Critique:

While these specific objectives adequately categorize the different methods of food aid that the World Food Programme is aiming for, there is an inherent problem with accurately monitoring

the success of one specific objective from the others. This is true mostly for SP2, SP3, and SP4. Again, the specific objectives are stated as activities and do not define at which point the specific objective will be complete. A better statement for the second strategic priority would be, “Protect 100% of targeted lives in crises, and double resilience to shock.” Though “resilience to shock” would be quite difficult to quantify, once an efficient methodology for measuring such an abstract is found, the WFP can make great strides in setting and meeting goals. Additionally, because many programs will be implemented that will span two or maybe three of these objectives, it will be difficult to evaluate if the objective was met by its own merit. If a food-for-work initiative that seeks to build schools allows the integration of women in work that they would normally not do and women are employed as teachers, this may be looked upon as a lessening of gender gaps while educating children. However, the gender gap may not have truly existed if schools were not available to monitor pre-program gender disparity.

Outcomes

The major outcome for SP2: protect livelihoods in crisis situations and enhance resilience to shocks seeks the “increased ability to manage shocks and meet necessary food needs⁴.” This, in essence, is a restating of the specific objective. Additionally, the performance indicators for outcomes have been continuously modified to accurately depict the success of the outcome. In 2003 several different performance indicators were applied to the outcome resulting in a multitude of data⁷:

- Improved food production
- Improved food security
- Increased household income

- Reduced share of income spent on food
- Improved access to goods and services
- Improved community mobilization/capacity
- Strengthened capacity to create and maintain assets.

The World Food Programme was only able to get approximately half of its sample projects to report on progress using undefined performance indicators and allowing for reporting on a multitude of outcomes. Additionally, the outcomes were stated as activities and evaluating accomplishments were again marred by lack of a definitive end-state. In Georgia, an agricultural food-for-work project illustrated difficulties with reporting and time periods allowed for the project and surveying sustainability.⁷

The WFP then criticized the 2003 performance indicators because they did not specifically pertain to the outcome or specific priority. Again, the problem with overlapping objectives and subsequent activities caused problems in evaluation. In 2004, the WFP modified its performance indicators to simplify the overwhelming number of indicators. The seven indicators above were consolidated into one umbrella indicator described to measure the “proportion of beneficiary household expenditures devoted to food⁴.” This new indicator seemed difficult to fully appreciate so target levels were not set. Additionally, the lack of observable data prevents the creation of realistic goals.

Instead, pilot studies over several programs in Ghana and the Palestinian Territory were implemented to evaluate household expenditures on food before and after a project. Reporting on an indicator such as this proved difficult because it required long term evaluation (perhaps longer than three to six months after the project was over) and required a great deal of information to be aggregated and computed. There does not exist a set evaluation standard for

the performance indicator so several pieces of data are accessed to give an approximation of household expenditure on food. In Ghana, data used to approximate household food expenditure included amount of asset holdings, gender of head-of-household, and number and sources of income. A similar issue occurred in the Palestinian Territory which recorded the full range of household expenditures including non-food items and how they were obtained. Overall, the pilot programs revealed the difficulty of collecting and analyzing the data. As a result, several projects in both regions were unable to produce reports on their findings.

Critique:

In order to justify the proper creation and use of an outcome, effective performance indicators must be present. An accurate and obtainable performance indicator is essential for monitoring and evaluating progress. The success of a project can be entirely undermined by faulty performance indicators. The description of the performance indicator is accurately stated as the “proportion of household expenditure devoted to food.” As stated, it avoids the mistake of taking the proportion of expenditure from proportion of income generated. However, the performance indicator is extremely lacking in the methodology of data-collection, and how it will be accurately calculated against several factors. Because it is a pilot outcome and performance indicator, proper data has not been established. Therefore, success cannot be measured until a base-line is made. One suggested methodology would be to examine all the expenses of the household over a defined period of time. Teaching accurate book keeping to the beneficiaries may be needed for obtaining this information. Random interviews could be conducted with a sampling of households in the village. They could be done on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Problems may arise with expecting the villagers to remember and or accurately assess their expenses in either technique. The method of payment and use of goods or services

obtained are important as well. The goods and services not paid for through monetary standards (those which have been traded for) should be measured against a monetary standard equivalent in the area. The food purchases or trades should be monitored closely and taken as a percentage of total expenditure. Income brackets should be created and monitored separately using the same method. Reporting should then depict the average percentage food expenditure per household per income bracket. This suggested method of calculation would depend heavily on the accuracy of bookkeeping by the household, but can be verified through several instances of *household*. Accuracy, of course, would grow with the number of households in the sample.

Outputs

While the outcome and performance indicators for the outcome have been turbulent for this specific objective, the output has been more consistent and easier to monitor. The World Food Programme defined one output for SP2: “target beneficiaries participate in food-supported asset creation and income-generation activities⁷.” The goal is to have 100% of targeted beneficiaries involved in food-for-training, food-for-work, and related activities created by the WFP to promote growth. The output could otherwise be stated as, “Food rations supplied for participation in asset creation and income-generating activities to 100% of targeted beneficiaries. This would encompass the method and end-state of the outcome. The WFP believes that these programs will empower the beneficiaries and increase desire for developing their community and generating assets. In turn, the community is able to develop enough infrastructure, assets, and income to cope with future food shocks. Additionally, the WFP found it important to include women in the process of asset and income generation as part of its goal to empower women. The organization tracked women’s participation separately.

In 2003, the performance was measured using a sample of thirteen different asset and income generating projects. The projects were primarily food-for-work and food-for-training projects, but they were selected because they had the highest number of participants in the region⁷. The results are illustrated in the table below⁷:

Percentage with required output indicator data	100%
Percentage of planned FFW participants reached	86%
Male FFW participants	65%
Female FFW participants	35%
Percentage of planned assets created FFW (when targets reported)	78%
Male FFT participants	34%
Female FFT participants	66%

In 2004, the WFP decided to use a more simple performance indicator in order to more efficiently collect information. Instead of tracking both men and women separately by project and then against the whole of participants, the organization decided to simply track the number of participants and the number of women. The new indicator was stated as the “Percentage of women beneficiaries participating in asset- and income-generating activities⁴.” The data could then easily be calculated to find the percentage of participants against the amount targeted, and the percentage of each gender. The objective of this change was to make data collection easier for project managers. In 2004, targets were set for women to become seventy percent or more of the participants in the planned activities in order to incorporate more women into the activity. This target was not reached, but fifty-one percent of participants were women which is closer to the actual amount of women in each community.⁴

Critique:

While simplifying the performance indicator was an intelligent step to ensure accurate and efficient data collection, the target rates of women participants are excessive. Determining that women should constitute 70% of the project participants when they only make up 50-60% of the

population in any given area is counter-productive. If a particular project's aim is to target a greater amount of women, then that project should have a focus and purpose for doing so. However, because the specific objective is to "protect livelihoods in crisis and enhance resilience to shocks," consistently targeting women in preference to men would undermine the specific objective. Men may feel isolated and the project may cause unneeded problems in the development of assets and income. More likely, men may reject the project resulting in a failure in the project. Target rates should be set at a more reasonable number, say 55%, to reflect global percentages of women. Additionally, each project or activity should have the flexibility to alter this number in order to reflect gender analyzed work and empowerment depending on the community.

Activities:

The major activities associated with the output are not unique to this output or even to this specific objective. The major activities that have been used to meet the output specified are food-for-work and food-for-training projects⁴. These projects play a large role in WFP development programs that are not necessarily associated with the specific objective of "protect[ing] livelihoods in crisis and enhance resilience to shock." These programs are also often used in development of education systems, promotion of health, and to lessen gender disparity. In 2004, a sampling of Standard Project Reports revealed that 86% of the food-for-work and 90% of the food-for-training programs were completed successfully⁴.

The food-for-work program is designed to empower beneficiaries by giving them direct participation in the development of their community. They are paid through food aid which they desperately need. The system prevents a dependency on food aid because the food is treated as a

form of payment. Food-for-work programs are made flexible enough to incorporate many different types of tasks that are needed in development and to include women.

Food-for-training programs are similar in that they supply food as “payment” to beneficiaries who attend training programs. The training programs build skills and knowledge that are essential in developing the community. Some examples of training programs include agricultural extension, HIV/AIDS prevention, literacy education, short and long-term food storage, and handling of poor-harvests. They teach the beneficiaries how to be flexible and cope with major problems overtime. These development efforts span across the objectives of creating resilience to shock, promoting health and nutrition, and to diminish gender gaps. Additionally, they teach the beneficiaries to live in a sustainable way.

Critique:

The activities most closely associated with this output and development in general for the World Food Programme are seemingly the strongest aspect of the entire goal of reducing poverty and hunger. Food-for-work and food-for-training projects allow beneficiaries to be involved in their own development. It promotes work, education, and knowledge of best practices in developing and sustainable livelihood. These programs seek to stop the recurring need for food aid and alleviating the problem at its source. As the proverb states, “Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime.”

Recommendations & Conclusion:

The specific objective of “protect[ing] livelihoods in crisis and enhance resilience to shock” overlaps much of the major objective of promoting development. Yet, the other specific objectives more narrowly define their development goals, namely promoting health and nutrition

(SP3), and promoting gender equality (SP4). This causes an overlap of activities that promote both this specific objective and either SP3 or SP4. However, this is only a problem in tracking the outputs or outcomes and not the overall effectiveness of the projects or the specific objectives.

The activities used for the specific objectives have been used prior to the creation of the strategic plan for 2004 through 2007 which first outlined the specific objectives. The activities proved effective long before a logical-framework matrix was applied, and they should not be changed because the performance indicators or flow of the matrix does not reveal their true practicality. The logical-framework matrix was built around the activities and the obvious needs in food aid. This is seemingly opposite of the intent of a logical-framework. The logical-framework is a top-down design that declares objectives and then breaks them down to specific objectives. They are broken down further until activities are created to meet those objectives. The activities and the performance indicators are created as a means to obtain the objective. However, in the World Food Program's logical-framework, the objectives were formulated as an afterthought to what has already been designed and implemented. The specific objectives accurately define the desires of the WFP, but because the activities have already existed, the specific objectives do not necessarily have distinct activities with definitive performance indicators. The activities are very useful and therefore should not change. Instead, the wording of outcomes, outputs, and performance indicators should be changed to accurately portray what is needed and produced in the projects. A concrete methodology of data collection and analysis is also required of the performance indicators in order for them to be useful.

Lastly, to restrict many of the strategic priorities to the years between 2004 through 2007 is detrimental to the long-term success of projects. Development projects require several years

before they can reveal actual results. Sustainable development does not materialize in four years. Though the strategic objectives could be continued beyond the allocated time, it would require another approval process by the executive committee. Additionally, such time restraints would entice new management (if management was changed during the course of the project) to drop the project and implement something that the new management desires. This would be damaging to the evaluation of the methods in the project as well as the beneficiaries. Therefore, the length of the programs and strategic plan should be extended through 2010 to allow for more accurate reporting, tweaking, and reimplementation of programs. This is especially needed for those programs and objectives that promote development because they aim to solve the problem at its roots.

Bibliography

- 1) World Food Programme. “Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007.” Drafted 15 Oct 2003. Available at <http://www.wfp.org>.
- 2) World Food Programme. “History: Operational Timeline.” (2005).
<http://www.wfp.org/aboutwfp/history/op_timeline.asp?section=1&sub_section=2>. (25 Oct 2005).
- 3) World Food Programme. “Operational Expenditure by Country, Region and Category, 2001-2004.” (2005). < <http://www.wfp.org/aboutwfp/facts/2004/pdf/operational.pdf>>. (25 Oct 2005).
- 4) World Food Programme “Annual Performance Report for 2004.” Drafted 5 May 2005.
Available at <http://www.wfp.org>.
- 5) World Food Programme. “Introduction: Mission Statement.” (2005).
<http://www.wfp.org/policies/Introduction/mission/index.asp?section=6&sub_section=1>. (25 Oct 2005).
- 6) United Nations. “United Nations Millennium Development Goals.” (2004)
<<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>>. (2 Nov 2005).
- 7) World Food Programme “Annual Performance Report for 2003.” Drafted 30 April 2004.
Available at <http://www.wfp.org>.