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# Summary of Evaluation Evidence to Support Gender Equality Integration in Programming in the Southern Africa Region

Commissioned by the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

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# Definition

For WFP, a Summary of Evaluation Evidence (SEE) is defined as a document that presents, concisely and clearly, an overview of evidence from a defined set of evaluations on a particular topic.

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# Foreword

Across Southern Africa, achieving food and nutrition security is deeply intertwined with gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The impacts of climate shocks, economic instability, and health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic have aggravated food insecurity in the region, with women and girls among the most affected. Poverty and food insecurity are higher in households led by a woman, malnutrition is higher among women and girls of reproductive age, and women and girls are less resilient to shocks due to a lack of access to productive resources.

Women constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce and are pivotal to household nutrition; yet, persistent structural barriers limit their access to land, capital, technology, markets, and decision-making. These disparities maintain systemic inequalities that undermine women's economic empowerment and are a significant constraint to household wellbeing, thriving communities, and the region's development.

Regional policy frameworks, such as the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP), the SADC Gender and Development Protocol, and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, have underscored the need for inclusive, gender-responsive approaches to transforming food systems. These commitments call for the integration of gender equality as a foundational principle in all aspects of agricultural, food security, and nutrition initiatives.

This summary of evaluation evidence highlights the importance of operationalizing these commitments and provides learning from WFP's interventions. It contributes to identifying what WFP is doing well in Southern Africa to empower women and girls and advance gender equality, further building on and strengthening this work. One such critical finding is that most of WFP's work has reached and benefited women and occasionally supported their economic empowerment. The summary further outlines areas of learning for WFP and partners to apply in future progamme design, strategy, and implementation.

Various pieces of evidence stand out, inter alia, the call and evidence-informed design for a shift from gender parity-focused actions to transformative approaches that address systemic barriers, social norms, and structural inequalities.

As Southern Africa navigates increasingly complex challenges, this summary of evidence serves as both a reflection and a call to action: when gender inequality persists, our food security and nutrition goals are compromised. It invites us, policymakers, practitioners, and partners to intentionally invest in the structural shifts needed to advance gender equality and women's empowerment—as a human right, and as a catalyst for sustainable food and nutrition security.

Eric Perdison (Regional Director)
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# 1. Introduction

**1.** Southern Africa is one of the regions in the world facing high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition. The region has high levels of gender-based violence (GBV), HIV/AIDS prevalence, and households headed by women dealing with high levels of poverty and food insecurity. These and many other structural and systemic gender inequalities hamper efforts to achieve zero hunger.[1]

**2.** WFP in Southern Africa oversees operations in 12 low and middle-income countries in the region – covering Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo (Congo), Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Aligned with national government priorities and nationally selected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), WFP's regional operations in the region include a range of assistance to countries and vulnerable populations under the organization's mandate of saving lives and changing lives while ending global hunger.[2]

## 1.1. WFP's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Commitments and Priorities

**3.** WFP recognizes gender inequality as a root cause of food insecurity. A world with zero hunger can be achieved only when everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and equal voice in the decisions that shape their households, communities, and societies. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) is critical to achieve this, and attention to gender is a key element of WFP programming. In the WFP corporate 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, GEWE is one of the four cross-cutting priorities, focused on equal opportunity, access to resources, and voice in decision-making. The WFP corporate 2022 Gender Policy specifically aims to ensure that WFP optimizes its presence, role, capabilities, and partnerships to advance GEWE in a manner that addresses the differing needs, priorities, and experiences of the women, men, girls, and boys with whom it works.

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**4.** WFP mainstreams gender through different means, including using gender analyses to inform programme design and applying a Gender and Age Marker (GAM) – required for all Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) designed since 1 June 2018, with a code of 3 being the minimum requirement to reflect WFP's ambition to improve GEWE among assisted populations. WFP also builds evidence to capture issues relating to food security and gender.

[1] Southern African Development Community (SADC) Humanitarian Appeal: Responding to the Impacts of the El Niño- Induced Drought, Gaborone, Botswana, May 2024.

[2] RBJ programming addresses, among others: school feeding and home-grown school feeding; food for assistance, social protection, social safety nets, and food systems resilience-building; cash and food transfers; crisis response; country capacity strengthening; community capacity building; nutrition; climate; girls' education; social and reproductive health rights; gender equality and women's empowerment; and vulnerability assessment.

## 1.2. Purpose of this Evidence Summary

**5.** RBJ has commissioned this Evidence Summary to share the learnings on GEWE in its region. The Evidence Summary draws from 24 independent evaluations of WFP programmes, projects, policies, and CSPs. The goal of the Evidence Summary is to enhance understanding of how WFP interventions have addressed gender inequality by identifying what works and what does not – and whether there are differences according to thematic areas covered. The learnings shared will strengthen WFP's contributions to GEWE in Southern Africa by building on existing good practice and learning from the region. The Evidence Summary will also contribute to improving programme quality and informing programmatic decision-making. It seeks to make learnings accessible to regional and national technical advisors involved in strategy development and CSPs, programme and project design, and implementation and monitoring.

## 1.3. Evaluation Universe, Methodology and Limitations

**6.** The 24 evaluations covered in this Evidence Summary were published between 2019 and 2024. They were largely WFP-commissioned but also included other evaluations of joint programmes commissioned and managed with other United Nations (UN) agencies. The universe of evaluations was determined by RBJ. The evaluations cover different programme thematic areas where gender considerations in design and implementation were assessed and reported. In four cases, GEWE was the main subject of the evaluation; in 20 cases, GEWE was mainstreamed within the evaluation but was not the main focus. Reports from all 24 evaluations were systematically searched using the following key words, in alphabetical order: "boy"; "empowerment"; "equality"; "female"; "gender"; "GEWE"; "girl"; "male"; "men"; and "women".[3]

**7.** This Evidence Summary captures insights from the available evidence and notes evidence gaps. Findings are summarized against 10 key themes, paying attention to main patterns and divergences across the region. Limitations of the Summary include that: (1) evidence generated may be neither representative of the situation in some countries nor generalizable across all the countries and thematic areas because of contextual nuances and the diversity of interventions implemented in different communities and countries; (2) if the design of the evaluations in the universe does not meet generalizability or representativeness criteria, the same applies to the evidence generated; and (3) each evaluation addressed gender differently, with differing levels of analysis and depth, and some evaluations generated very little evidence on GEWE.

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[3] See Annex 1 for the full list of evaluations reviewed for this SEE in a rigorous, demanding and methodologically robust process. Evidence from the evaluation reports was entered into a matrix with pre-defined categories to systematically record evidence emerging, which was then summarized in the present document. The matrix and several drafts of the present document were internally quality assured by the consultant team. Drafts of this document were shared with WFP for review, and comments addressed by the consultant team.

# 2. Summary of Thematic Findings

## 2.1. Alignment of WFP gender priorities with national priorities

**8.** Evaluations found that Country Office (CO) GEWE priorities were aligned with national priorities on GEWE in respective countries, and that RBJ GEWE priorities were aligned with Southern African Development Community (SADC) GEWE priorities.[4] Four mechanisms for alignment at CO level were in evidence. The first mechanism was through linkages between WFP programmes and the SDGs that national governments have prioritized.5 For example, the evaluation of Lesotho's 2019-24 CSP noted it "is explicitly focused on supporting the Government to achieve SDG 2, zero hunger, and is fully aligned with SDG 5, gender equality" (Lesotho 2024 CSP Evaluation (CSPE), p.25). The second mechanism was through coherence with relevant national policies.[6] The third mechanism was through support to development and implementation of national policies,[7] and the fourth was through clear coordination, linkages and capacity strengthening with relevant government ministries.[8]

**9. WFP programmes were coherent with the relevant national policies on GEWE.**[9] Evaluation of the 2010-18 National School Feeding Programme (NSFP) in Eswatini found the programme was "fully coherent with the country's overarching development policies [...] gender equality and women empowerment dimensions" (Eswatini NSFP, p.16). This coherence was the case even where WFP programme priorities were not explicitly reflected within national policies. In Lesotho, for example, the evaluation of the 2015-19 Asset Creation and Public Works Activities (ACPWA) found that Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) projects were aligned with the 2018-22

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National Gender Policy's "priority 4 (gender, productive resources and employment, economic empowerment) and policy priority 6 (gender, food and nutrition security)" (Lesotho FFA, p.19).

**10. WFP supported the development and implementation of national policies and strategies on GEWE.**[10] The evaluation of the 2018-20 Interim CSP (ICSP) in the DRC reported that WFP worked closely with the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children, and "was

[4] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.

[5] Congo FY17 Final, Eswatini HGSF, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, WFP Gender Policy.

[6] Congo FY17 Final, Congo FY17 MTE, Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho CCS, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi FFA, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia NSFP, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, Zimbabwe R4, Regional MDA, Regional RVAA, WFP Gender Policy.

[7] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Namibia 2023 CSPE.

[8] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho CCS, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zambia 2023 CSPE.

[9] Congo FY17 Final, Congo FY17 MTE, Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho CCS, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi FFA, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia NSFP, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, Zimbabwe R4, Regional MDA, Regional RVAA, WFP Gender Policy.

[10] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Namibia 2023 CSPE.

extensively involved in the review process of the National Multisectoral Nutrition Policy (2013)", including through the designation of a dedicated focal point within WFP. WFP also provided "a focal point for capacity building, which helped to increase awareness and understanding of the link between gender and nutrition within the Ministry" (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.19). In Namibia, WFP provided government partners involved in the implementation of the Zero Hunger Road Map, including the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare, with "enhanced technical assistance to support the Government in designing and implementing effective and gender-transformative food and nutrition security programmes"(Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.68; Annex IV, p.115).

**11. There was clear coordination, linkages with relevant government ministries and priorities, and capacity strengthening, which in the best cases took multiple and creative forms.**[11] The Mid-Term Evaluation of Malawi's 2021-23 Joint UN Programme on Girls' Education (JPGE), for example, noted it "supports menstrual hygiene education to enhance school attendance and participates in teacher empowerment initiatives addressing gender-based violence, thus aligning with national priorities [...It also...] collaborates with local police forces, the Youth Friendly Health Service Programme, and the Health Facility Improvement Plan, complementing government activities on child protection and health". The same evaluation highlighted that such capacity building support focused on district level governments "with which the ministries of education and agriculture already collaborated" (Malawi JPEGIII, p.23).

## 2.2. Gender analysis in programme design

**12. The extent to which gender analysis informed programme design was mixed and inconsistent, and often completely lacking.**[12] For example, the Eswatini NSFP evaluation found "its design was not informed by any gender analysis" (Eswatini NSFP, p.17). The evaluation's perception analysis found "only 20 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that "current school feeding considers gender issues" and 5 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement" (Eswatini NSFP, Annex 8, p.67). Likewise, Namibia's 2012-18 NSFP evaluation noted that, while updates took place in 2014 and 2016, there was "very little evidence of attention paid to gender integration in the roadmap" (Namibia NSFP, p.v).

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**13.** Reasons for inadequate gender analysis varied, with the most common reasons (i) lack of time, (ii) lack of awareness or understanding, and (iii) limited resources.[13] First, lack of time was a result of work pressures leaving insufficient leeway for specific gender studies during design.[14] Second, lack of awareness or understanding of which gender issues might need to be addressed within programme design, and how this might be done, was also common.[15] For example, the Namibia NSFP found substantive discussion of gender was "surprisingly absent" (Namibia NSFP, p.56). Looking ahead in its recommendations to the design of a Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme, this evaluation observed the importance of HGSF explicitly examining gender issues and proactively integrating gender components into "value chain analysis and development strategies in order to increase competitiveness, respond to gender equity goals and ultimately enhance poverty reduction impacts".

[11] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho CCS, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zambia 2023 CSPE.

[12] Just three evaluations reviewed found evidence of gender analysis being used to inform programme design (Lesotho CCS, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Congo FY17 MTE).

[13] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.

[14] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Namibia NSFP.

[15] Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho FFA, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Namibia NSFP, Regional MDA.

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It specifically highlighted the importance of considering gender roles and relationships along different stages of the value chains; how to promote and create equitable participation in interventions; and how to address the distinctive needs of women in access to resources (Namibia NSFP, p.52). Third, limited resources by COs to conduct gender-specific analysis was also a problem. For example, evaluation of Malawi's 2019-23 CSP detailed how "gender mainstreaming was limited by the absence of a dedicated budget", insufficient strategic partnerships to support GEWE, and a "lack of context-specific gender analyses to inform interventions" (Malawi 2023 CSPE, p.39). This evaluation noted "the roll-out of additional analyses was interrupted by COVID-19 and funding limitations" (Malawi 2023 CSPE, p.62).

**14. Despite a lack of gender analysis in design, there was some evidence of gender-sensitive approaches, but these were insufficient for positive GEWE results.**[16] The Lesotho FFA, for example, found gender to be "mainstreamed through the equal recruitment and participation of men and women during project implementation [...] However, the heavy manual labour workload of land rehabilitation activities, a lack of systematic implementation of childcare facilities and the gender-insensitive nature of male foremen compromised the GEWE-sensitive approach". The gaps mainly arose from "a lack of gender analysis, gender-sensitive programming tools and GEWE-sensitive training at all levels" (Lesotho FFA, p.46). This evaluation further observed that the Lesotho CO was unable to conduct gender analysis during programme design "due to a lack of resources" (Lesotho FFA, p.18).[17]

**15. Evaluations have sometimes been a tool for improved gender analysis in design for subsequent CSPs or programme phases.**[18] For example, the evaluation of Malawi's 2014-17 JPGE recommended "in-depth analyses into issues related to girls' access to education should be included in JPGE II to provide deeper understanding and improve the effect and impact of the programme", with special attention put on the importance of studying "the factors underlying pregnancy rates in the target areas of Malawi" and "lack of success of JPGE in addressing sexual violence" (Malawi JPGEII, p.x). The Malawi JPGEIII demonstrated the subsequent progress made in addressing gender stereotypes, poverty, and the lack of role models for boys, including through the introduction of a social behaviour change component, the use of needs assessments to identify and address specific challenges (e.g., early marriages and teenage pregnancy), the involvement of a range of relevant stakeholders (i.e., parents, community leaders, and policymakers) to ensure their buy-in and influence on the final beneficiaries, and the sensitization of boys to issues related to early marriage, pregnancy, HIV, and absenteeism (Malawi JPGEIII, p.19). In Lesotho, and in contrast to evidence shared above from the earlier Lesotho FFA, the thematic evaluation of 2019-23 Country Capacity Strengthening Activities found the CO had paid more attention to, and had more capacity for, gender analysis and action planning in the design of interventions (Lesotho CCS, p.42).

[16] Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho FFA, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, Zimbabwe R4, Regional MDA.

[17] See more on resourcing in Section 2.9, below.

[18] Congo FY17 Final, Congo FY17 MTE, Lesotho CCS, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, WFP Gender Policy.

**16. CSPEs indicated that some countries had Gender Action Plans and incorporated gender analysis in CSP and programme design.**[19] Evaluations showed that a Gender Action Plan was in place from as early as 2017 (Zimbabwe 2017-21 CSPE, Annex IV, p.98). The Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE noted WFP Zimbabwe conducted and built from a situational gender analysis to inform the CSP: "Significant gender inequalities were apparent in this and other studies [...] Drawing on these analyses, the country strategic plan gender approach focused on targeting women as beneficiaries, their involvement in decision making and disaggregated data collection" (Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, pp.19-20). Some COs incorporated greater gender analysis into their CSP and programme design, including Namibia and most notably Mozambique, which was one of the countries that took part in WFP's internal Gender Transformation Programme under the 2015-20 Gender Policy.[20]

**17. Evaluations concluded that the use and depth of gender analysis in both CSP and individual programme design was frequently weak and that this affected the capacity of COs to conduct solid planning**.[21] Common gaps were noted in the extent to which gender analyses were used to inform programming, including for CSPs which had specific priorities related to gender. For example, in Namibia, while there was evidence of data on gender being consulted, it was unclear how these informed the design of activities, even though one of the seven CSP priorities was to "promote the generation of sex- and age-disaggregated data, participatory gender analysis and capacity strengthening on gender analysis and gender-transformative approaches" (Namibia 2023 CSPE, pp.22-23). Insufficient depth and quality of gender analysis is an explanatory factor, with a number of evaluations pointing to gaps in comprehensiveness and concomitant consequences for planning and implementation. For example, in the Madagascar 2019-23 CSP, opportunities were missed to use gender analysis to generate deep understanding of the dynamics between men and women in the socioeconomic domain, with lack of documentation and lesson-learning from the implementation of WFP's gender-focused practices also having negative implications for programming success (Madagascar 2023 CSPE, p.36). Similar issues were noted by the Zambia and Lesotho CSPEs. In both cases, envisioned gender-transformative programming had not been supported by in-depth analysis of gender dynamics, with design specifically hindered by the use of rapid rather than in-depth gender analysis in Zambia (Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.19; Lesotho CSPE, p.77). Gaps were also noted in the extent to which the CSPs drew on available external data and information, as was the case for the DRC where available gender analyses from partners were found to have been overlooked in CSP design (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.37).

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## 2.3. Access, parity or underlying systemic causes of gender inequality

**18. The inconsistency of approach to gender analysis in design constrained the extent to which WFP interventions in the region focused on underlying systemic causes of gender inequality.**[22] Where programming includes attention to underlying systemic causes of gender inequality, this was sometimes haphazard or ad hoc. Lesotho's FFA evaluation, for

[19] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE.
[20] Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, WFP Gender Policy, Namibia 2023 CSPE.
[21] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Lesotho CCS, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi FFA, Malawi IRMP, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Namibia NSFP, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, Regional MDA, Regional RVAA, WFP Gender Policy.
[22] Congo FY17 Final, DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi IRMP, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Namibia NSFP, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, Regional MDA, WFP Gender Policy.

example, explained that "gender-responsive programming and gender-friendly norms included the introduction of childcare facilities for lactating women, which gave women a chance to participate in the FFA/public works while breastfeeding and setting norms for the distance between participants' homes and project sites", thereby tackling some underlying causes of inequality (Lesotho FFA, pp.18-19). However, the attention to "gender-friendly norms" within these interventions was "mostly based on individual guidance of responsible WFP staff members", rather than on any in-depth corporate WFP investigation into or understanding of relevant GEWE issues (Lesotho FFA, p.18).

**19. The evaluations highlighted that most of WFP's work on GEWE access and/or parity.**[23] This was reflected in monitoring systems, where beneficiary numbers were almost always tracked by male/female.[24] **Only 11 of 24 evaluations reported a GEWE focus on issues that could be considered as underlying structural and systemic causes of inequality,** such as unequal power relations and discriminatory social norms, where impacts could have potential to transform gender relations, as well as to reach, benefit and empower women and girls.[25] **Of these 11 evaluations,**[26] **only four had an explicit focus on GEWE issues**, namely the evaluations of the Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique's 2019-23 Gender Transformative and Nutrition Sensitive project and the WFP Gender Policy. These findings are unsurprising, as, by definition, a girls' education programme focuses on systemic underlying inequality, as do a gender transformative and nutrition sensitive project and a gender policy.

**20. Seven evaluations specifically noted a limited GEWE focus on underlying systemic causes of inequality while their primary focus remained on access and parity to reach and benefit women**,[27] whether by accident (as in Lesotho FFA, above) or by design. Among these seven, for example, the evaluation of Malawi's 2015-19 FFA programme noted a deep effort to ensure the involvement and participation of women throughout the planning and implementation cycles. This effort was found by the evaluation to have contributed to an active involvement of women in participatory planning

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and implementation, and in the choice of assets to be created and/or rehabilitated, which in turn ensured that women and other vulnerable groups benefited from WFP supported asset creation, with downstream effects for their incomes, livelihoods and resilience (Malawi FFA, p.40). In a similar vein, strong planning and inclusion of gender-sensitive strategies and **gender-transformative approaches** in resilience activities were identified as having enhanced the likelihood of benefits for women's status in the community and household in the DRC (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.38), suggesting an opportunity within this type of programming to move along the Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform (RBET) Framework towards greater empowerment. Examples of **empowering activities** from the DRC CSP included support for income-generating initiatives like guinea pig farming that contributed to women's economic autonomy, and programme efforts in support of functional literacy for women. Beyond direct benefits to participating women's capacity to read, write and calculate, these efforts were found to have increased and enhanced the effectiveness of their participation in decision-making processes in villages and in the organizations of which they are members. Dimitra self-help groups (Clubs d'écoute) were particularly highlighted for discussing village problems and helping identify community-based solutions and leadership roles for women (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.38). Another example came from the evaluation of Zimbabwe's 2018-21 R4 Rural Resilience Initiative, which

[23] Congo FY17 MTE, Congo FY17 Final, Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi IRMP, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Namibia NSFP, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, Regional MDA.
[24] See more on monitoring in Section 2.8, below.
[25] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho CCS, Lesotho FFA, Malawi FFA, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, Zimbabwe R4, Regional RVAA, WFP Gender Policy.
[26] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho CCS, Lesotho FFA, Malawi FFA, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Mozambique GTNS, Zimbabwe R4, Regional RVAA, WFP Gender Policy.
[27] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho CCS, Lesotho FFA, Malawi FFA, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Zimbabwe R4, Regional RVAA.

sought to **address systemic causes of inequality** through practical interventions such as the establishment of crèches at FFA work sites to enable women to participate in the work, and a focus on the construction of assets that aimed to reduce the burden of collecting water (dams) and firewood (fuel-saving stoves). These labour-saving initiatives helped to promote women's ability to take part in the FFA activities (Zimbabwe R4, p.17), again suggesting opportunities to move along the Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform (RBET) Framework towards greater empowerment.

## 2.4. Targeted actions primarily focused on GEWE

**21. As noted above, evaluations found that most interventions focused on access and/or parity, and this was reflected in the nature of their GEWE-targeted actions.** Built-in quotas for women's participation or heavy targeting of female beneficiaries were the most relied upon types of action for results. For example, Zimbabwe's R4 evaluation found quotas built into project design, helped to ensure high levels of women participation (Zimbabwe R4, pp.16-17). In general, targeted actions that were primarily focused on GEWE were not of the kind that could be expected to lead to gender transformative impacts (see Section 2.6, below), but instead were more focused on achieving gender-sensitive or gender-responsive outcomes (see Section 2.5, below), as well as embracing WFP's corporate commitment to Do No Harm. Many examples have been given already in this Evidence Summary.

**22. Among actions that went beyond beneficiary numbers, two types emerged. The first type were actions that focused on women beneficiaries; the second group were actions that focused on the wider community**.[28] **Among the first type, some actions were straightforward** (e.g. childcare facilities in Lesotho and Zimbabwe, functional and financial literacy initiatives in the DRC and Zambia),[29] **while others were more innovative**. The Namibia 2023 CSPE gave further examples of straightforward actions, within Integrated Food Systems Projects, in the form of two women's group poultry projects that were "intended to be headed by women", because of the underlying idea that raising poultry "would be less labour intensive for the women than horticultural production, giving them time to work in their fields" (Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.128).

**23. The more innovative actions were found where GEWE was the main intervention focus and where gender analysis informed project design.**[30] For example, the Malawi JPGEII evaluation reported lack of sanitary pads as one of the reasons for absenteeism, and that "capacity building on producing re-usable sanitary pads was considered a significant achievement" (Malawi JPGEII, p.26). Likewise, the Malawi JPGEIII evaluation found

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[28] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[29] DRC 2020 CSPE, p.38, Lesotho FFA, pp.18-19; Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.43, Zimbabwe R4, p.17.
[30] Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique GTNS.

"availability of gender segregated toilet facilities, mostly including change rooms for menstruating girls" to be the "most mentioned important service introduced by JPGE III" (Malawi JPGEIII, p.48). Other innovations included Dialogue Clubs to tackle sensitive behaviour change topics with beneficiary households (Mozambique GTNS, p.47). These kinds of examples arose mainly in projects where gender analysis informed design (Section 2.2), underscoring the importance of gender analysis to anchor greater innovation and impact.

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**24. The second group of targeted actions primarily focused on GEWE were based on awareness raising and gender sensitization.**[31] This took the form of gender awareness training of FFA beneficiaries in Lesotho and Malawi,[32] and of wider community gender awareness raising via community radio in Mozambique (Mozambique GTNS, p.65) and in Malawi's 2017-19 Integrated Risk Management and Climate Services programme (IRMCS). Within the 2018-21 Regional Market Development and Food Systems programme, where GEWE was not a main focus, WFP training for mostly men truck drivers in Tanzania (1,474 of the 1,482 drivers trained), on topics including gender issues and GBV, was indicated by key informants to have enhanced productivity and skills to manage transport businesses, but without "a follow up monitoring process in place, the evaluation team was unable to establish whether ther training had led to any behavioural changes" (Regional MDA, p.38). Within Malawi community radio interventions, "the content of the 'Ulimi ndi Nyengo' radio programs often include gender as a cross-cutting issue (e.g. exploring gender roles in various aspects of agriculture), and every programme also ensures that both women's and men's voices (as farmers, technical specialists and presenters) are included [...and...] sexual exploitation and abuse was addressed as part of the "16 days of gender activism" campaign" (Malawi IRMP, p.42). However, Malawi IRMP's evaluation still found "gender is mainly perceived in terms of numbers of men and women" participating in activities, rather than "in terms of empowerment or decision-making processes" (Malawi IRMP, p.13).

## 2.5. Outcomes of WFP interventions on GEWE

**25. Evaluations provided substantial data on GEWE at the output and outcome level, but this was primarily in terms of beneficiary or participant numbers.**[33] For example, the MTE of the 2018-22 McGovern-Dole-funded School Feeding Programme (SFP) in Congo found "the percentage of female presidents on school feeding committees has substantially increased [...] The percentage of women in a treasurer position has remained stable, but the percentage of women holding a vice treasurer position has more than doubled (from 22.2 percent to 53.8 percent) [...and...] there are considerably more female administrators in the committees (from 16.7 percent to 75.8 percent)" (Congo FY17 MTE, pp.43-44). The evaluation of Eswatini's 2019-21 Linking Smallholder Farmers to the HGSF programme found an increase in the proportion of women farmers engaged by WFP in the project from 44 percent in 2019 to 67 percent in 2022, and that the "project steering committee is composed of eight women compared to nine men and is chaired by a woman which is a notable achievement" (Eswatini HGSF, pp.23-24). Under Malawi's IRMP, output indicator results showed that 8,930 women Village Saving and Loan members were trained by the end of 2018 compared to 3,320 men (Malawi IRMP, p.29). Conversely, not all

[31] Lesotho CCS, Lesotho FFA, Malawi CSP, Malawi FFA, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique GTNS, Regional MDA.

[32] Lesotho FFA, pp.18-19; Malawi FFA, ER p.29.

[33] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.

interventions kept adequate data to draw firm conclusions about GEWE outcomes, as with Eswatini's NSFP, where the evaluation found "outcome indicators on enrolment and attendance do not allow for a meaningful conclusion about performance" because of a lack of GEWE targets (Eswatini NSFP, p.40). Where other types of targeted actions on GEWE took place, beyond a focus on access and/or parity, these also showed mainly positive results (see **Box 1**).[34]

**Box 1 - Positive outcomes for women – an example from Lesotho**

Under Lesotho's CCS activities, men's participation in nutrition clubs was promoted. The evaluation found one or two male members in all seven nutrition clubs interviewed during field visits, and that "these men have participated in trainings on Positive Deviance that allowed them to be involved in discussions and activities on child feeding and care", representing "an achievement considering the traditionally exclusive engagement of women in nutrition subjects" (Lesotho CCS, p.50). In addition, field visits to Public Works showed that women had the same opportunities as men to actively participate as well as to retain a benefit of the assets created, and that women had acquired bookkeeping and marketing skills through support to group registration (Lesotho CCS, p.50). This evaluation remarked how "FGDs with women showed that women have been empowered to generate and manage their own livelihood activities and are benefiting from the in-kind and financial benefits of these activities through this participation. Participation in Public Works has also allowed women participants to improve access to land as they have equal access to the land that communities have made available for the projects' implementation" (Lesotho CCS, p.50).

**26. Conversely, evaluation evidence made clear that positive outcome level results must be contextualized within the limited scope, awareness level and understanding of gender issues within which interventions and GEWE-targeted actions were designed.**[35] For example, evaluation of Malawi's IRMP found among FFA participants that "men and women are given the same types of work and working hours, apart from the elderly and pregnant and lactating women [...and...] participants can choose their working hours to fit it in with their other responsibilities". The evaluation found, however, that while "some women in the FGDs expressed pride in being seen to be capable of the same work as men, other interviewees felt that consideration should be made in terms of reviewing different work hours for men and women" (Malawi IRMP, p.43). In

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another example, the Zambia 2023 CSPE found several positive outcomes for women's economic empowerment, including that WFP had contributed to "smallholder farmers', particularly women's, ability to access markets, mostly through improved agricultural practices and to a lesser extent through promotion of market information and linkages" (Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.34). The same evaluation also found some savings groups, except for those in remote, resource-poor areas, "have enabled women SHFs to diversify their incomes [...and...] FGDs and

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[34] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.

[35] Malawi IRMP, Zambia 2023 CSPE.

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site visits provided evidence on how Savings for Change had enabled women SHFs to invest in both on- and off-farm businesses, diversifying their incomes, thereby strengthening resilience" (Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.35).

**27.** While these results were in themselves largely positive, **GEWE outcomes for vulnerable women were sometimes less positive**.[36] For example, the Zambia 2023 CSPE also observed that, while "WFP provided Virtual Famers' Market, MAANO, an app that disseminates information on price, quality and market actors [...] FGDs and KIs did not indicate widespread use. Whereas some women SHFs reported that the app had facilitated their access to distant urban markets, other KIs questioned its utility, possibly due to mobile phone or connectivity issues in certain areas" (Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.35). Likewise, the DRC 2020 CSPE found evidence in emergency settings that "ration sizes were inadequate for women and girl refugees". The consequence was that "survival sex was mentioned in all group interviews as a means through which to supplement cash transfers [...and... between 70 percent and 80 percent of young girls practice survival sex" (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.38). Also in the DRC, the 2020 CSPE found gender considerations were integrated into food and cash-based transfers mainly through the preferential naming of women as beneficiaries on distribution lists, and that interventions targeted a slightly larger number of women than men, but the proportion of women reached relative to targets was consistently lower than that of men, even decreasing in 2019 (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.27). This same evaluation found better integration in resilience activities, which were considered more likely than other interventions to improve women's social and economic status in the community and household (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.38).

**28. Evaluations took more critical note of unintended negative effects on GEWE from WFP interventions.**[37] Such unintended outcome-level negative effects reflect weaknesses in gender analysis at design (Section 2.2) and insufficient attention to issues of equity and inclusion in implementation, as well as to ensuring that all WFP programming respects corporate commitments to Do No Harm and to uphold the safety and dignity of all participants and beneficiaries through protection mainstreaming. For example, in Mozambique's gender-focused programming, the GTNS evaluation found that the main hurdle encountered by women was their limited access to mobile phones, which stronger upfront analysis of gender barriers could have identified (Mozambique GTNS, p.40). Other evaluations noted challenges to achieving project objectives related to insufficient buy-in as well as exclusion of certain groups. For example, the Malawi JPGEIII evaluation reported that some male learners disclosed feeling left out of the interventions in basic education and suggested this was likely contributing to unintended resistance to the programme (Malawi JPGEIII, p.55). Like the Malawi 2023 CSPE, Namibia's CSPE and NSFP evaluation highlighted insufficient attention to gender in design and to the inclusion of men (see **Box 2**). In the DRC, while GEWE was well integrated into resilience programming and benefits were likely for women's socio-economic status, attention to vulnerable groups such as sick people and people with

[36] DRC 2020 CSPE, Zambia 2023 CSPE.

[37] DRC 2020 CSPE, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Namibia NSFP.

disabilities was found to have been neglected (DRC 2020 CSPE, p.44). Likewise, Eswatini's NSFP evaluation concluded that the project's procurement and tendering systems gave no provision for giving equal opportunities to female-owned businesses, people living with disabilities and those impacted by HIV and AIDS. (Eswatini NSFP, p.38).

**Box 2 - Unintended outcomes for women – an example from Namibia**

The Namibia 2023 CSPE noted insufficient amounts of food provided to households headed by women, due to lack of consideration for care activities performed by women in relation to family members (Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.42). Namibia's NSFP evaluation surfaced lack of monetary and/or timely remuneration for women's participation in WFP activities, increased work burden for women, and worsening of domestic relations as negative outcomes for women. Women were found to have spent anywhere from 6 to 8 hours a day in contributions to the National School Feeding Programme, in addition to their household and other responsibilities. Female cooks attested that existing poverty-related difficulties were compounded by limited employment opportunities due to low levels of educational attainment (Namibia NSFP, p.46). The NSFP evaluation also found unanticipated effects of women being threatened with violence at home due to delays in in-kind remuneration for NFSP work and suggested that a general absence of men in the programme had led to a "re-enforcement of gender roles and stereotypes, disproportionately impacting on women including the negative opportunity cost for women providing free labour, and instances of domestic level mistrust over women's use of time and access to money" (Namibia NSFP, p.46).

## 2.6. Impact of WFP on social norms and structural and root causes of gender inequality

**29. Evaluations provided very limited evidence of impacts** of **WFP interventions on gendered social norms and other structural and root causes of gender inequality.**[38] This stems from the already identified issues with lack of gender analysis at the design stage (Section 2.2). As the Lesotho FFA found, some of this was "the result of a limited understanding of gender equity; thus, to obtain gender equality at a project level, the specific conditions of women should be considered, e.g., women's less physical strength and their main responsibility for children and domestic chores" (Lesotho FFA, p.46). However, evaluations said little on other factors, such as whether the right stakeholders were involved or the right approaches pursued, and a lack of documentation was a further issue.

**30. Crucially, evaluations often could not find evidence of impacts on social norms and structural and root causes of gender inequality because interventions rarely set out to explicitly achieve such changes, at least from the perspective of causation.**[39] This has parallels to the situation regarding the overall GEWE focus of WFP interventions and the GEWE targeting of actions within them (Sections 2.3 and 2.4) – i.e. that GEWE outcomes could not be evidenced as a causal attribution if interventions did not set out to achieve gender-related change, or had unintended negative consequences (Section 2.5).

**31. There were positive findings reported about changes in social norms in some evaluations.**[40] For example, Malawi's IRMP evaluation strongly found "FFA and VSL activities were perceived to have improved the lives of women. Women said that they had greater respect within their households and their communities because they had their own income through FFA and VSL. A men's FGDs reported that VSLs had reduced the level of gender-based violence caused by economic differences between men and women. In a small number of cases, women reported that their husbands or sons had helped with household chores to allow women time to participate in FFA/IFA work. The training for VSL actively supports GEWE by encouraging joint financial decision-making at the household level. It was also reported that men have greater respect for women's money borrowed from the VSL, and they do not misuse it because they know that it needs to be paid back to the VSL" (Malawi IRMP, pp.43-44).

**32. Evaluations also surfaced unintended negative impacts on GEWE – beyond unintended negative outcomes (Section 2.5) – which reflect challenges in both design and implementation.**[41] The Namibia NSFP elaborated in some detail about the role of the WFP intervention in reinforcing existing social norms that underlay substantive gender inequality, noting "the voluntary involvement of women as cooks appeared to be accepted as the norm at all levels (school, community, regional and national)" (Namibia NSFP, p.46). This evaluation highlighted that these women felt they had no choice but to take on this role, which was viewed as a

[38] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[39] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[40] Malawi IRMP.
[41] Congo FY17 MTE, Lesotho FFA, Namibia NSFP.

natural extension of the traditional roles ascribed to women as caretakers. The evaluation observed "all the female cooks (99% of volunteers participating) spoken to in the FGDs felt that they did not have a choice and would continue to contribute for the sake of their children and their own livelihood at the household level" (Namibia NSFP, p.46). It reported other respondents saying that this had brought about an unfortunate reinforcing of stereotypes about women and men and contributed to girls and boys being confronted with a perpetuation of traditional roles and missed opportunities to transform gender roles and dynamics by challenging notions of masculinity and femininity directly at school level (Namibia NSFP, p.46). Similar findings of missed opportunities to challenge traditional roles, and of enhanced burdens for women, were reported in the Lesotho FFA (see **Box 3**). The Congo FY17 MTE praised the project's active encouragement of "community committees to put women into leadership positions" which had "very positive" results (Congo FY17 MTE, pp.43-44; see data above at paragraph 24). However, the same evaluation observed that several opportunities had been missed to reduce heavy daily workloads and help transform the lives of what were mostly women cooks. The evaluation noted most cooks never received training and were not paid in spite of their critical role in project implementation, also that the project did not prioritize improved water sources, creating difficult working conditions, as in most cases cooks played a major role in carrying water to school (Congo FY17 MTE, pp.43-33). The final evaluation of the 2018-23 McGovern-Dole SFP in Congo firmly noted "the contribution of mothers to cook represents the most important contribution without compensation. This may run counter to the objective of empowering women as advocated by the WFP gender policy (Congo FY17 Final, p.47). These findings led the evaluation to highlight the need for an emphasis on ensuring programme objectives promote equality and empowering women, "as part of a much broader approach to the role played by women in the running of school canteens" (Congo FY17 Final, p.63). As was the case for outcomes (Section 2.5), all this evidence underscores the importance of ensuring that all WFP programming respects corporate commitments to Do No Harm and to uphold the safety and dignity of all participants and beneficiaries through protection mainstreaming.

**Box 3 - Equal participation, yet missed opportunities to transform gender roles – an example of unintended impacts from Lesotho**

The Lesotho FFA programme created opportunities for both men and women to work equitably on land rehabilitation activities. The equal wage given to women and men exposed communities to the concept of the equal wage, helping to break the traditional value system that implies women are entitled to fewer gains than men for the same amount of work. However, the evaluation found that, while women were usually allocated lighter tasks in land rehabilitation activities than men, they were still expected to fulfil traditional domestic roles. A beneficiary stated: "there is no equality as we are expected to do "womanly tasks" with no assistance from the partners after tedious land rehabilitation tasks" (Lesotho FFA, pp.38-39). This evaluation also noted that the absence of understanding of these issues and of written guidelines to address them left gender-based task allocation to the discretion of foremen and the sympathy of men beneficiaries (Lesotho FFA, pp.38-39).

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**33. With the 2022-26 WFP Gender Policy now in place, greater attention to GEWE impacts may result via more deliberative attention to gender transformation in CSP, programme and project design.** The 2015-20 Gender Policy advocated a transformative approach to GEWE. Its evaluation found "WFP has shown leadership in establishing frameworks to supports its work on GEWE, including efforts to address gender parity. While this has led to positive change, the leadership focus on gender parity has overshadowed other aspects of the Gender Policy (2015–2020) and presents a barrier to strengthening WFP's overall approach to GEWE" (WFP Gender Policy, p.vii). A key lesson from evaluations reviewed for this SEE is that "structural causes of vulnerability continue to undermine outcomes for women, and particularly households headed by women, compared to male-headed households, and programmes need to continue to both consider the impact of programme activities on women's work burdens and also programme in a gender-transformative way" (Malawi FFA, pp.59-60). Under the 2022-26 WFP Gender Policy, there are prospects for

greater impact, particularly if theories of change can be linked more directly to addressing causes of gender inequality, to allow the possibility for more accurate conclusions about intended (and unintended) impacts on GEWE to be drawn in future evaluations.

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## 2.7. Monitoring systems' adequacy to track gender-related changes and GEWE outcomes

**34. Review of the evaluation universe repeatedly raised concerns with the adequacy of monitoring systems. The majority of evaluations showed that monitoring systems and indicators for GEWE were inadequate, with little attention given to GEWE aspects and limited gender disaggregation of data, beyond tracking basic numbers of male and female beneficiaries.**[42] Indicative of this was that evaluation methodologies invariably noted the lack of existing gender-disaggregated (or GEWE outcomes-relevant) monitoring data, and the corresponding need to pay special attention to GEWE issues in primary data collection during evaluations. At corporate level, evaluation of WFP's Gender Policy found that, "while the compulsory use of sex- and age-disaggregated data required by the Gender Policy, Gender Action Plan and Corporate Results Framework has acted as a driver to establish a basic level of gender analysis across WFP programmes, the primary focus has been on quantitative reporting on beneficiaries rather than also including a qualitative gender analysis (WFP Gender Policy, p.42).

**35. Both evaluations of WFP's McGovern-Dole-funded SFP in Congo found slightly better monitoring systems** than many other WFP interventions covered in the evaluation universe, with better availability of disaggregated data, but they still found room for improvement to track empowerment outcomes. The MTE found "the availability of gender disaggregated data and inclusion of sufficient GEWE considerations in the project is still inadequate and there is need to improve the M&E system in terms of gender sensitivity" (Congo FY17 MTE, p.44). The final evaluation found "the availability of sex-disaggregated data in the SAPRs [Semi Annual Performance Reports] and ITT [Indicator Tracking Table] is still insufficient, and that there is a need to improve the monitoring and evaluation system in terms of gender sensitivity" (Congo FY17 Final, p.49). The evaluation was therefore "unable to report a clear picture of gender-related outputs achieved" (Congo FY17 Final, p.17).

**36. Two evaluations found good monitoring systems – the WFP Gender Policy and the Mozambique GTNS.** Both had **multiple** gender indicators across numerous aspects of GEWE, although data on all

[42] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.

measures was not always complete and there was still room for improvement. In Mozambique, the GTNS evaluation recommended enhancement of "gender-transformative indicators", to "bolster monitoring, and strengthen partner capacities in M&E" (Mozambique GTNS, p.75). More widely, evidence from the WFP Gender Policy evaluation indicated "WFP has made improvements in the collection of sex-disaggregated data [but] further progress is needed to ensure that it is collected systematically and then used to inform the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting across all programmes and in all country offices" (WFP Gender Policy, ER p.26).

**37. Overall, there were two aspects to the adequacy of monitoring systems that emerged from this SEE review. First was the extent to which they were able to track gender-related changes in respect of outputs and outcomes – reaching and benefiting women. Second was the extent to which they were able to track gender-related changes in respect of impacts – empowering women and transforming gender relations.**[43] Evaluations highlighted serious gaps in the latter case. In the former case, a key factor was whether the programme, project or CSP had specific objectives related to GEWE. Where gender was a stronger component of the intervention, monitoring of outputs and outcomes was more likely to have some gender focus. However, even in these cases, there was a lack of monitoring of empowerment and impacts. Reasons for this were not elaborated in the evaluations, but it was notable that evaluation methods for collecting primary data on gender-related changes and outcomes focused on interviews, focus group discussions and perceptions surveys rather than on the more quantitative indicators (e.g. numbers of women farmers receiving training) that featured more prominently in the WFP monitoring systems. Relatedly, the Lesotho FFA found "assessment of the GEWE objective of improved gender equality and empowerment was constrained by the fact that only one indicator was in place across the projects", noting surprise "given the high level of focus of WFP on gender equality" (Lesotho FFA, p.46).

**38.** As a result, **evaluations made recommendations to strengthen GEWE monitoring systems**, including through support from the regional bureau.[44] For example, Malawi's IRMP evaluation advised that "all future outcome monitoring results are disaggregated by gender to determine whether there are any changes in gender inequality" (Malawi IRMP, p.43).

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## 2.8. Use of Gender Age Marker (GAM) in design, implementation and monitoring

**39. Evaluation evidence on the adequacy of monitoring systems and indicators to track gender-related changes and GEWE outcomes also highlighted the use of GAM in programme design, implementation and monitoring.**[45] The IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM), as tested and refined by WFP, indicates the extent to which essential programming actions address gender- and age-related differences in humanitarian response (WFP Gender Policy, pp.10, 13, 29-30).

[43] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[44] DRC 2020 CSPE, Malawi IRMP.
[45] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.

**40. Many of the WFP interventions included within the evaluation universe were designed prior to the establishment of GAM within WFP systems. As a result, only seven of the evaluations mentioned having a GAM.**[46] In three of those cases, it was the evaluation TOR that required to assess GAM for the CO.[47] In Namibia the GAM was 2a and in Madagascar the GAM went from 2a under the Transitional ICSP to 3 under the full 2019-23 CSP, as the average across individual activities.[48] However, this was not necessarily evidence of GAM strengthening attention to gender issues in programming, as all CSPs designed after 1 June 2018 had to ascribe a GAM of minimum 3, as noted above. Conversely, in Lesotho, "the CSP 2019-2024 received a Gender and Age Marker of three out of four, which means that gender is fully integrated but not age" (Lesotho CCS, p.24). Evidence of the higher level of attention to GEWE in the CCS itself was "confirmed by the evaluation's quantitative survey, in which 97 percent of respondents considered that GEWE and age considerations are integrated into CCS activities they have participated in" (Lesotho CCS, p.25).

**41. Evaluation evidence suggested that using the GAM might only have been of limited help in redesigning programs to strengthen GEWE outcomes and impacts.**[49] For example, the Zambia 2023 CSPE found GAM data related well compared to other countries in the region (Zambia 2023 CSPE, Annex 10, p.169). The CSPE noted: "An assessment of GAM for Zambia during the lifespan of the CSP (ACRs 2019-2021) shows a steady increase in GAM codes (from 3 to 4) […] All SOs except one […] are assigned a GAM code of 4 (representing gender transformation)". Furthermore, "in 2021, WFP Zambia requested to join the Gender Transformative Programme launched by HQ and is moving forward with preparations (such as a detailed gender assessment) which could better inform work towards WFP gender transformation objectives." On the other hand, this CSPE also observed that "despite these positive ratings, and successful support such as Saving Clubs and gender transformation results within SIDA projects […] KIs saw the CSP as contributing to women's empowerment (GAM 3) rather than transformation (GAM 4). While they regard some interventions as having the potential to be transformative, there are some persistent challenges to gender equality, particularly in political empowerment, economic participation and access to education" (Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.44).

**42. Evaluation evidence overall indicated limitations with the GAM.**[50] The WFP Gender Policy evaluation summed it up best: "WFP has established clear linkages between the Gender Policy (2015–2020) and CSPs through implementation of the IASC Gender with Age Marker; however, there is a tendency to address GEWE at a generic level rather than in a manner tailored to the specific operational context. While the application of the IASC Gender with Age Marker has contributed to CSP design, the process has often been mechanistic and accountability-focused rather than a dynamic driver of gender mainstreaming" (WFP Gender Policy, p.v).

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## 2.9. Resourcing and budgeting for GEWE

**43. Not all evaluations in the universe addressed resourcing and budgeting for GEWE, with six of 24 evaluations not discussing the topic at all.**[51] **Where discussed, evaluations surfaced issues relating to funding constraints that affected the scope and nature of activities and on CO staffing and capacity.**[52] Budget constraints affected gender-focused programming in a range of ways. As already noted, lack of adequate remuneration for women involved with school canteens was an issue across several programmes, where the economic cost of women's work was not factored in as part of the budget of running school meal programmes. Remuneration most often took the form of in-kind benefits, as was the case in Madagascar where

[46] Congo FY17 Final, Lesotho CCS, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE.
[47] Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE.
[48] Madagascar 2023 CSPE, p.34; Namibia 2023 CSPE.
[49] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[50] Analysis of evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[51] Congo FY17 Final, Lesotho CCS, Malawi JPGEII, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe R4.
[52] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique GTNS, Regional RVAA.

women received a hot meal in return for their work but felt it was not enough (Madagascar 2023 CSPE, p.35). Budget constraints also limited other areas of programming that impact GEWE, as evidenced by the Malawi JPGEIII evaluation's recommendations to prioritize WASH infrastructure and latrines and change rooms in all schools as a means of addressing the structural causes of inequality (Malawi JPGEIII, pp.68, 75-76). In Mozambique too, the integration of gender transformative approaches was found to have been affected by funding and coordination challenges, particularly in terms of the timing of funding disbursements. This posed challenges to implementing partners and their capacity for timely integration of technical training with gender transformative messaging. The knock on effect of these issues around disbursement meant that technical and gender trainers went to communities at different times, and that participants of technical training (predominantly men in leadership positions) then often did not receive gender transformative messaging (Mozambique GTNS, p.54). Likewise, at RBJ level, the evaluation of the 2017-22 Regional SADC Vulnerability Analysis and Assessment programme found "some NVACs [National Vulnerability Assessment Committee] Chairs said support was inadequate for gender analysis, and for the use of specific tools developed at regional level" (Regional RVAA, p.62).

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**44. Evaluations found that funding constraints on CO staffing and capacity posed longer-term and structural organizational problems.**[53] Evidence emerged across different evaluations of challenges to GEWE planning and implementation, due to funding constraints which affected the organization's staffing and capacity (see **Box 4**). These findings reflect those of WFPs Gender Policy Evaluation which underscored how WFP significantly falls behind its 15 percent target for corporate funding for GEWE and noted implications for meeting the full financial commitments set out in the Gender Action Plan and implementing the Gender Policy (2015–2020) (WFP Gender Policy, pp.37-38).

**Box 4 – Effects of funding constraints on GEWE programming and implementation as evidenced in selected evaluations**

In Lesotho WFP progressed gender balance in the workforce. However, budget constraints meant key functions were thinly staffed and there was no dedicated gender officer (Lesotho 2024 CSPE, p.46).

In Malawi, gender mainstreaming has not benefitted from a dedicated budget, reducing capacity for context-specific gender analyses to inform interventions, and the CO had insufficient strategic partnerships (Malawi 2023 CSPE, p.39).

The Regional MDA also found very low budget for GEWE activities within its Malawi component (Regional MDA, p.8).

While the Gender Office provided support for resource mobilization at the country level, the evaluation concluded that this did not lead to shifts in extrabudgetary funding for GEWE, with the consequence that, although WFP made progress in developing regional gender strategies and action plans, implementation has suffered considerably from the lack of financial resources and capacity for decentralized delivery (WFP Gender Policy, p.38).

This suggests that funding reductions to the Gender Office and to regional bureaux for implementing regional gender strategies should be of concern to WFP decision-makers given the high level of demand for gender support across the organization and from partners.

[53] DRC 2020 CSPE, Lesotho 2024 CSPE. Malawi 2023 CSPE, Regional MDA, WFP Gender Policy.

**45. Resourcing and budgeting for GEWE was made available to all the evaluations, all of whom had TOR requirements for gender analysis and expertise within the evaluation teams.**[54] This was necessary because, in line with the United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender, all WFP evaluations have to intentionally integrate gender, particularly in evaluation design and methodology, and reflect gender analysis in the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## 2.10. Capacities to assess gender issues, design relevant responses, and implement gender-sensitive / responsive / transformative programming

**46. Another aspect relevant to resourcing and budgeting for GEWE that emerged from this review was that of constrained CO human resources**.[55] The review of the evaluation universe confirmed many of the findings of the WFP Gender Policy evaluation. This evaluation concluded that despite the development and promotion of gender learning materials, training and e-learning, "capacity-strengthening results in the field have been less encouraging due to limited training tailored to on-the-job needs and the weak resourcing of WFP gender advisor positions" (WFP Gender Policy, p.33; and see **Box 5**). To give a country example, the Lesotho CSPE found that WFP's ability to achieve gender and other cross-cutting aims was limited by staffing levels and expertise with no dedicated gender officer (Lesotho CSPE, p.46), while the FFA evaluation noted the gender focal point doubles as head of nutrition, and that no gender focal points are in place in field offices (Lesotho FFA, p.43). The CSPE further highlighted limited ability to focus on staff training, capacity strengthening and analysis to support GEWE. Although examples of attempts to mainstream gender across the CSP were noted, they were inconsistent and attention to disability inclusion was limited. The CSPE reported that the CO's solution was to form relevant partnerships, including with the Child and Gender Protection Unit within the Lesotho Mounted Police Service and the United Nations Population Fund, so that gender and protection concerns could be integrated into programming (Lesotho CSPE, p.viii).

**Box 5 – Selected WFP Gender Policy evaluation findings on GEWE resourcing**

Significant efforts to achieve gender parity have been made in WFP since 2015, yet WFP has not yet achieved gender parity across all levels or in all functions and "evidence suggests that gender inequalities continue in the workplace" (WFP Gender Policy, p.31). The number of gender positions increased between 2015 and 2019. However, only three regional bureaux and 21 country offices had dedicated gender advisors (WFP Gender Policy, pp.vi, 33). The total number of people working on GEWE in the organization (including those at headquarters) is 30 people out of 18,000 WFP employees (WFP Gender Policy, p.vi).

**47. Evaluations varied in the extent to which they examined capacity-related gender issues at CO level and, in some cases also partner capacity on GEWE.** Some evaluations focused on gender parity in staffing levels, rather than capacity for engaging on gender,[56] some did not specifically address the topic of CO capacity on gender at all,[57] and the existence (or not) of gender focal points was not always mentioned. The Zimbabwe CSPE included references to increased presence of female national staff at the country office from 41 percent in 2017 to 55 percent in 2020 as well the roll-out of several gender-related activities to build gender awareness among staff, in line with the country office gender action plan. This included advocacy of gender in the workplace,

[54] Evidence from all evaluations reviewed.
[55] Congo FY17 MTE, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe R4, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE, WFP Gender Policy.
[56] DRC 2020 CSPE, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Mozambique 2022 CSPE, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Zimbabwe 2022 CSPE.
[57] Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP.

and training on social norms and communication. A gender results network encouraged mainstreaming of gender across activities and functional units However, the same evaluation also brought out a lack of dedicated in-country gender expertise and that gender was managed solely by a focal point (Zimbabwe CSPE, p.39). Similar to Zimbabwe, Namibia's CSPE found that progress had been made in terms of gender parity in staffing,[58] resulting in recommendations that specifically suggested the CO should "allocate staff time to, and develop terms of reference for, the appointment of an experienced, senior-level focal point on cross-cutting issues" (Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.60). This evaluation brought out that competing CSP priorities and limited internal capacity had impeded comprehensive gender mainstreaming and identified a missed opportunity from the Namibia CO not having taken part in RBJ's Gender Transformation Programme (Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.52). However, as with Zimbabwe, there was no causal link between numbers of female staff and the capacities within WFP teams to assess gender issues, design relevant responses, and implement gender-sensitive / responsive / transformative programming. Regarding partners' capacity, Zimbabwe's R4 evaluation found several stakeholders "needed more support on gender" (Zimbabwe R4, p.29). Across WFP more widely, there was sometimes very limited understanding about how to engage on gender at all.

**48. Some evaluations emphasized the importance of capacity on GEWE within implementing partners and governments and highlighted good practices in this respect.**[59] For example the Malawi IRMP reported on efforts made by the WFP Gender & Protection Officer to train all implementing partners on GEWE issues (see **Box 6**).

**Box 6 – Malawi IRMP implementing partner capacity strengthening – a good practice example**

In the implementation of the Malawi IRMP each of the targeted District Councils identified a Gender & Protection Officer, and each of the key IRMP NGO implementing partners was required by WFP to employ a Gender & Protection Officer to support implementation of WFP's resilience activities at the district level. These Officers were trained by the WFP Gender & Protection Officer on prevention of gender exploitation and abuse, and gender equity through equal participation in access to assistance (Malawi IRMP, p.42).

**49. A final theme that emerged from evaluations was the crucial role of RBJ in supporting capacity on gender within COs.**[60] The Congo FY17 MTE reported that the CO received a mission from RBJ and WFP HQ in July 2019 to train CO and partner personnel, work with the M&E and communication teams, and advise on strengthening the gender transformational dimensions of the CSP implementation. This mission aimed to improve gender integration into the CO's activities and strengthen the knowledge and skills of its staff and key partners on gender concepts and issues (Congo FY17 MTE, pp.24-25). The Namibia 2023 CSPE recommended the CO and RBJ "explore opportunities within WFP to build capacity through participation in regional and global working groups and initiatives" (Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.60).

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[58] In Namibia, "at the start of the CSP, only one-third of the office were women. In 2020, the distribution was relatively balanced (48 percent women, 52 percent men) and in 2022, 65 percent of the staff were women" (Namibia 2023 CSPE, p.50).

[59] Malawi IRMP.

[60] Congo FY17 MTE, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Mozambique 2022 CSPE.

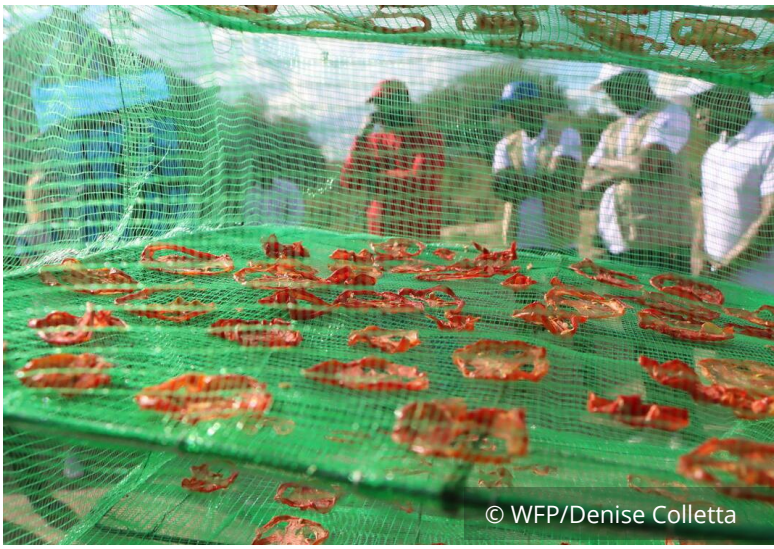
# 3. Summary of GEWE recommendations

**50.** The following points summarize the content and focus of the recommendations that were offered in the evaluations reviewed.

**51. Strengthen strategic partnerships with relevant government ministries at CO level and with relevant external stakeholders.**[61] Examples include that support should be targeted to aid policy implementation through technical guidance for government staff on the design and implementation of GEWE actions, and to capacity strengthening on GEWE to support more effective gender mainstreaming. Partnerships for more gender transformative work should be explored, and WFP should ensure full engagement of national governments throughout all project design, partner selection and implementation of gender-related activities. WFP should prioritize technical support to governments to accelerate the integration of gender into all programming and "should enhance regional- and country-level ownership of the gender policy and the Gender Action Plan through the revision of regional gender strategies and CSP-aligned gender action plans" (WFP Gender Policy, p.58). Where there are not yet Gender Action Plans within programme implementation frameworks, these should be developed, with relevant indicators to track impacts on different aspects of gender and vulnerability.

**52. Systematically consider GEWE in all programme design, strengthen the mainstreaming of gender and disadvantaged groups in all interventions, and carry out thorough gender analyses on economic empowerment issues to develop strategic directions.**[62] This includes measures such as analyzing gender dimensions of activity areas (e.g. resilience building and climate change) to better understand different needs of men, women, boys and girls, so that activities can be adapted for effectiveness, and monitoring interventions with relevant sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data. In-depth analyses of specific topics should be conducted to allow programming adjustments to improve outcomes, e.g. on factors underlying pregnancy rates in target areas (Malawi JPGEII, p.x), on supply chain and sectoral analysis (Regional MDA, p.63), and on gender-differentiated effects of climate services provision (Malawi IRMP, p.8). Recommendations for individual country-level gender-specific programs and projects including social norms should be analyzed, e.g. "Prioritize targeted initiatives aimed at challenging deeply ingrained cultural norms, to further dismantle power dynamics and gender inequalities that hinder women's empowerment and nutrition practices, thereby creating a more supportive environment for sustainable change and continue addressing women's economic constraints and streamline partner coordination to enhance collaboration and the overall effectiveness of the project" (Mozambique GTNS, p.72).

**53. Incorporate gender transformative approaches into Theories of Change from the start to ensure WFP programmes move beyond access and parity, towards tackling underlying systemic, structural and root causes of gender inequalities,.**[63] For example, "in designing interventions supporting women's empowerment or gender transformation, WFP should report on the specific constraints faced by women and how those can be mitigated or addressed in intervention design" (Zambia 2023 CSPE, p.63). Likewise, the recommendation from Mozambique about social and cultural norms just noted above (Mozambique GTNS, p.72), and from Malawi that "the crucial role of a gender-transformative approach should be fundamental" to the Theory of Change (Malawi FFA, p.49).


© WFP/Denise Colletta

[61] Congo FY17 Final, Congo FY17 MTE, DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini NSFP, Madagascar 2023 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi JPGEII, Namibia NSFP, Regional RVAA, WFP Gender Policy.

[62] Congo FY17 MTE, Congo FY17 Final, DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Lesotho FFA, Malawi FFA, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia 2023 CSPE, Namibia NSFP, Zambia 2023 CSPE, Regional MDA.

[63] Eswatini HGSF, Malawi FFA, Mozambique GTNS, Zambia 2023 CSPE, WFP Gender Policy.

**54. Evaluations provided pointers to improving GEWE programming and implementation through stronger attention to gender dynamics and lesson learning, although not all evaluations included specific recommendations.**[64] Recommendations focused on issues related to the topic of the evaluations. Reading across these recommendations (see examples in **Box 7**) highlights a number of topics that require attention, including: ensuring lessons learned from WFP programmes are used for future programming; clearly identifying and prioritizing comprehensive strategies to strengthen male engagement and ensuring approaches promote inclusivity of boys and men; and ensuring attention to power dynamics and social norms in designing gender-sensitive and gender-responsive interventions.[65]

**Box 7 – Examples of targeted programme-specific GEWE recommendations**

"Gender-based differences should be addressed [...] through additional questions and reflections about who has decision-making power over specific practices [...] and/or by involving farmers' spouses in specific PICSA facilitation sessions where gender-based roles are being discussed". Lessons learned from implementing recommendations "should be articulated and documented for future application in the design of GEWE-sensitive climate services" (Malawi IRMP, p.52).

"Identify specific activities to promote greater male engagement in school level activities". It is "equally important to acknowledge where men indicate willingness to assist and extrapolate as good practice examples". (Namibia NSFP, p.60).

"Avoid excluding boys from project activities that provide visible benefits" (Malawi JPGEII, p.41).

"Ensure that all WFP programme technical guidance (e.g. for cash-based transfers and general food distribution, school feeding, nutrition, resilient livelihoods) is updated in relation to its contributions to gender equality or that a technical note is provided for guidelines not up for review, with specific examples to illustrate how gender equality and women's empowerment can be used to shape effective, efficient, equitable and empowering WFP programming" (WFP Gender Policy, p.55).

Not all evaluations included focused recommendations on GEWE, instead, as with Recommendation 3 of Zimbabwe's R4 evaluation, simply suggesting that a much broader recommendation about supporting youth participation be led by the WFP gender focal point and include provision of guidance to implementing partners for mainstreaming GEWE within their organizations (Zimbabwe R4, p.45).

**55. Ensure a better use of analysis in design and intervention targeting, and promote positive outcomes for GEWE and positive impacts on structural and root causes of inequalities, including on social norms, by a stronger and more explicit focus on gender transformation in all CSPs, projects and programmes.**[66] As the previous paragraph notes, evaluations highlighted the need for WFP programming to explicitly recognize and programme for gender transformation if it is to achieve gender-transformative outcomes and impacts. Evaluations bring out a range of suggestions for doing so, including:

- Strengthening gender analysis in new CSPs (Malawi 2023 CSPE)
- Strengthening capacities of community-level stakeholders through training and capacity building on gender equality, disability inclusion and empowerment of all project participants (Eswatini HGSF)
- Promoting gender awareness and equality in schools, especially on protection, girls' empowerment and early pregnancy (Eswatini NSFP), by prioritizing capacity strengthening on sensitive social and reproductive health rights issues in general (Malawi JPGEIII), ensuring careful tailoring of messaging to adolescents (Mozambique GTNS), including boys in programme benefits (Malawi JPGEII, as above), and engaging parents more strongly and allowing mothers to become "role models for girls' empowerment" (Malawi JPGEII).

**56. Evaluations recommended WFP not to try changing social norms alone, without partners.** Several recommendations emphasized the need to build partnerships for change, particularly at inter-agency level, with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Population Fund, as well as with women's rights organizations at CO level (e.g. DRC 2020 CSPE, p.69, Malawi 2023 CSPE, p.66). However, they emphasized that explicit focus is required by elaborating "a specific sub-theory of change that outlines pathways for achieving gender-transformative results" (Lesotho 2024 CSPE, p.80).

[64] Congo FY17 Final, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Namibia NSFP, Zimbabwe R4, Regional MDA, WFP Gender Policy.
[65] Congo FY17 Final, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Namibia NSFP, Zimbabwe R4, Regional MDA, WFP Gender Policy.
[66] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Eswatini NSFP, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Malawi 2023 CSPE, Malawi FFA, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique GTNS.

**57. Evaluations provided recommendations on monitoring that were directly targeted to strengthening the specific indicators for the interventions being evaluated; in almost every case recommendations to strengthen monitoring were made.**[67] Evaluation of WFP's Gender Policy made two general recommendations on monitoring, one focusing on ensuring that the framework and guidance for mid-term reviews and evaluations of CSPs incorporate quantitative and qualitative analyses of WFP's gender equality-related activities, and the other that COs should mainstream gender into the mid-term reviews and evaluations (WFP Gender Policy, p.xiii). Recommended actions specifically referenced the GAM, noting the importance of CSPs informed by country- and context-specific gender and age analyses to ensure actions respond to country-specific GEWE needs. In addition to these overall recommendations from the Gender Policy Evaluation, CSPEs provided a range of more specific recommendations to strengthen monitoring, as follows:

- Broadening reporting, and strengthening accountability, by including qualitative data on gender (e.g. DRC 2020 CSPE);
- Integrating project or programme gender indicators into all M&E processes and including disaggregated data collection and analysis on gender and on disability, especially on asset creation and livelihood systems and at the individual farmer and household level;[68]
- Ensuring inclusion of indicators that capture attitude and behaviour change and broader social norm change, and strengthening gender and social norm tools and partner capacities on their use in M&E (Mozambique GTNS).

**58. Place more attention on adequate resourcing and budgeting for GEWE impact, including by strengthening WFP in-house capacities on gender at different levels of the organization, including access to specialist support**.[69] Evaluations brought out the importance of more predictable, dedicated and multi-year funding, and of allocating funding within programme budgets to priorities at community level, including ensuring procurement systems prioritize women when sourcing local suppliers to address women's economic empowerment. Securing such funding would require COs to embed GEWE throughout all programming and target donors that prioritize gender-transformative activities and results. This would include a focus on significantly strengthening gender transformative partnerships, and on planning specific gender activities for each sub-office with dedicated necessary resources.[70] Evaluations also prioritized staffing and staff capacity. This included recommending WFP to invest in dedicated, professional gender advisors at headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices, with career pathways for this (WFP Gender Policy). It also included a focus on capacity strengthening (through on-boarding, training and regular refreshers) of all project staff (including partners) in gender transformative approaches, "at least to the level that they understand approaches such as the Gender Transformative Learning System" (Mozambique GTNS, p.74; Lesotho 2024 CSPE). To boost basic gender parity within the organization, various recommendations included references to better gender balance at WFP office and field office level (Zambia 2023 CSPE). Finally, as the evaluation of WFP's Gender Policy noted, "in response to the increasing scale of WFP operations and high level of demand for gender-related support, the reduction in funding to the Gender Office and to regional bureaux for the implementation of regional gender strategies should be a concern for WFP decision makers" (WFP Gender Policy, p.viii).

[67] Congo FY17 MTE, DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Lesotho FFA, Malawi IRMP, Malawi JPGEII, Malawi JPGEIII, Mozambique GTNS, Namibia NSFP, Regional MDA, WFP Gender Policy.
[68] e.g. DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Lesotho FFA, Malawi IRMP.
[69] DRC 2020 CSPE, Eswatini HGSF, Lesotho FFA, Lesotho 2024 CSPE, Malawi FFA, Mozambique GTNS, Zambia 2023 CSPE, WFP Gender Policy.
[70] Lesotho FFA, DRC 2020 CSPE, Malawi FFA.

# Key Messages

1. Gender-related issues emerged from the evaluation universe, both context-specific to Southern Africa and indicative of GEWE issues in general. This was to be expected, given that all evaluations required at least some attention to gender.
2. The main emerging pattern was of interventions that aspired to gender transformation without adequate gender analysis, gender awareness, and gender capacity within COs, right from design.
3. The most recurrently reported lesson in evaluations in Southern Africa was that, across all types of WFP interventions, gender-transformative impacts were not occurring.
4. With reference to the RBET Framework, most WFP interventions reached and benefited women, some empowered women economically, most did not pursue gender transformation, and none achieved it.

# Conclusions

1. **GENDER PRIORITY ALIGNMENT -** WFP GEWE priorities at RBJ and CO level generally aligned with national GEWE priorities.
2. **GENDER IN PROGRAMME DESIGN -** The extent to which gender analysis informed programme design was inconsistent. With a few notable exceptions for individual country level GEWE-specific programmes and projects, most interventions lacked gender analysis.
3. **ACCESS, PARITY or SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES -** GEWE within WFP interventions focused mainly on access and parity, and not much on underlying systemic causes of inequality in practice.
4. **TARGETED GEWE ACTIONS -** Straightforward actions to boost women's participation rates, more innovative actions for women as beneficiaries, and sensitization activities for beneficiaries and stakeholders were all in evidence.
5. **OUTCOMES ON GEWE -** Evaluation evidence often looked positive at output and outcome level, especially on parity and access (beneficiary and participant numbers) and in contributing to women's improved food security, nutrition and economic gains, but with unintended negative GEWE consequences too.
6. **IMPACTS ON SOCIAL NORMS -** Impacts on social norms and structural and root causes of gender inequality were negligible, and interventions often reinforced underlying inequalities.
7. **ADEQUACY OF MONITORING SYSTEMS -** Monitoring systems were inadequate to track GEWE changes beyond basic male/female beneficiary numbers; indicators mainly tracked quantitative outputs.
8. **USE OF GAM:** GAM's use was limited within the evaluations reviewed and its wider relevance was unclear.
9. **RESOURCING AND BUDGETING FOR GEWE -** Budgeting and resourcing were inadequate for gender-transformative outcomes and impacts, gender-responsiveness in programming, and in most cases for gender analysis within CSP, programme and project design.
10. **INTERNAL WFP CAPACITY ON GEWE -** Capacity was not strong in all COs, with often no dedicated staff and only gender focal points double-hatting with their main roles. RBJ and external partnerships helped to cover gaps.

# ANNEX 1 – EVALUATION UNIVERSE

| # | Evaluation Title | Short Title | Country | Publication Year | Evaluation Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Evaluation of Democratic Republic of the Congo Interim Country Strategic Plan 2018-2020 | DRC CSPE | Democratic Republic of Congo | 2020 | CSP |
| 2 | Evaluation of National School Feeding Programme in Eswatini (2010-2018) | Eswatini NSFP | Eswatini | 2019 | Decentralized |
| 3 | Evaluation of Linking Eswatini Smallholder Farmers to the Home-grown School Feeding Market (HGSF) | Eswatini HGSF | Eswatini | 2023 | Decentralized |
| 4 | Evaluation of Asset Creation and Public Works Activities in Lesotho 2015 -2019 (final) | Lesotho FFA | Lesotho | 2022 | Decentralized |
| 5 | Thematic Evaluation of WFP's Country Capacity Strengthening Activities in Lesotho 2019-2023 | Lesotho CCS | Lesotho | 2023 | Decentralized |
| 6 | Evaluation of WFP Lesotho Country Strategic Plan 2019-2024 | Lesotho CSPE | Lesotho | 2024 | CSP |
| 7 | Mid-term evaluation: McGovern-Dole Funded School Feeding Programme 2018-2022 | Congo FY17 MTE | Republic of Congo | 2022 | Decentralized |
| 8 | Evaluation of WFP Madagascar Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 FRENCH (full report) | Madagascar CSPE | Madagascar | 2023 | CSP |
| 9 | Mid-Term Evaluation of Integrated Risk Management and Climate Services Programme in Malawi from 2017-2019 | Malawi IRMP | Malawi | 2019 | Decentralized |
| 10 | Evaluation of the Food Assistance (FFA) in the context of Malawi 2015-2019 | Malawi FFA | Malawi | 2021 | Decentralized |
| 11 | Evaluation of WFP Malawi Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 | Malawi CSPE | Malawi | 2023 | CSP |
| 12 | Malawi, Mid-term evaluation of the United Nations Joint Programme on Girls Education III \| World Food Programme (wfp.org) | Malawi JPGEIII | Malawi | 2024 | Decentralized |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **13** | Evaluation of the Joint Programme for Girls Education (JPGEII) with financial support from the Norwegian Government (July 2014 – October 2017) | Malawi JPGEII | Malawi | 2020 | Decentralized |
| **14** | WFP McGovern-Dole Funded School Feeding Programme September 2018- November 2023: Final evaluation | Congo FY17 Final | Republic of Congo | 2023 | Decentralized |
| **15** | Evaluation of WFP Mozambique Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021 | Mozambique CSPE | Mozambique | 2022 | CSP |
| **16** | Evaluation of Mozambique Gender Transformative and Nutrition Sensitive Project 2019-2023 | Mozambique GTNS | Mozambique | 2023 | Decentralized |
| **17** | Evaluation of WFP Namibia Country Strategic Plan 2017–2023 | Namibia CSPE | Namibia | 2023 | CSP |
| **18** | Evaluation of Namibia National School Feeding Programme2012-2018 | Namibia NSFP | Namibia | 2020 | Decentralized |
| **19** | Evaluation of WFP Zambia Country Strategic Plan 2019-2023 | Zambia CSPE | Zambia | 2023 | CSP |
| **20** | Evaluation of WFP Zimbabwe Country Strategic Plan 2017-2021 | Zimbabwe CSPE | Zimbabwe | 2022 | CSP |
| **21** | Evaluation of R4 Rural Resilience Initiative in Masvingo and Rushing Districts in Zimbabwe 2018-2021 | Zimbabwe R4 | Zimbabwe | 2022 | Decentralized |
| **22** | Thematic Evaluation of WFP Contribution to Market Development and Food Systems in Southern Africa | Regional MDA | RBJ Regional | 2021 | Decentralized |
| **23** | Joint Evaluation of the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme (2017-2022) | Regional RVAA | RBJ Regional | 2022 | Decentralized |
| **24** | Evaluation of the Gender Policy (2015-2020) | WFP Gender Policy | HQ multi-country, including Mozambique, Zimbabwe | 2020 | Policy |

# ANNEX 2 – ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACPWA | Asset creation and public works activities |
| CO | Country Office |
| Congo | Republic of Congo |
| CSP | Country Strategy Plan |
| CSPE | Country Strategy Plan Evaluation |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| FFA | Food assistance for assets |
| GAM | Gender and Age Marker |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| GEWE | Gender equality and women empowerment |
| HGSF | Homegrown school feeding |
| IRMCS | Integrated Risk Management and Climate Services Program |
| M&E | Monitoring and evaluation |
| NPA | National Plan of Action |
| NSFP | National School Feeding Program |
| RBET | Reach, Benefit, Empower, Transform |
| RBJ | Southern Africa Regional Bureau in Johannesburg |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SFP | School feeding program |
| TOR | Terms of reference |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

**Southern Africa Regional Bureau**

**World Food Programme**

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