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EMPOWERING AND EXPANDING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FOOD SECURITY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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Summary

1. The role of women in food production, and consequently food security for families and the community at large, is well understood. Women the world over play a crucial role in food production. Unfortunately, their contribution has long been ignored, and the gender-related constraints that women face have not been taken into account in agricultural policies and strategies. Women's lack of access to fundamental resources for food production – land, capital, credit, cash, agricultural inputs, technology, training and extension services; their access to the political arena and education, and consequently non-farm labour markets, is limited. Industrialization and globalization, which ostensibly have positive long-term effects on the development of rural communities, have often actually jeopardized women's role in food production during the early stages of introduction. Indeed, with their lack of access to resources, women face enormous difficulties in producing for liberalized markets at competitive rates. Women have adopted various coping mechanisms to preserve food security, ranging from additional non-farm activities and small scale business to switching to new activities.

2. To empower women and improve their role in food security and local development, an integrated approach is needed. Investment should take into account natural, physical, human, financial and social capital as well as the legal and institutional frameworks to promote them. Piecemeal investment will not be effective, because all factors are complementary and necessary for women's empowerment.

3. The international community is recognizing the role of women in food security and local development and making tremendous efforts to empower them. The recent report of the United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality has called for action on the global scale for gender equality and women's empowerment, which are crucial to meet the Millennium Development Goals. More tangible efforts are needed to ensure that measures and reforms trickle down to the poor, women in particular, and make a real difference in their lives.

4. WFP and other United Nations agencies working in the field of food security are making every effort to make gender equality a reality in their daily operations.

Introduction

5. The role of women in food security is well understood. Traditionally, women have produced food and ensured the food security of the family and the community at large. Despite new trends in food production arising from globalization, women carry out a significant proportion of food production in most developing countries. For decades women – especially African women – have combined farm and non-farm income-earning activities as a survival strategy to ensure food security for their families and to reduce the

risk of starvation in periods of food insecurity. To provide food for their families, women are farmers, petty traders and informal labourers, because none of these strategies on its own is capable of sustaining them. Women are also responsible for reproduction, and yet have to work even when they are pregnant or lactating.

6. Despite the important role that women play in food security and local development, their needs and the gender-related constraints they face are not taken into account when the causes of low food productivity and food insecurity are considered. This is called the “invisible factor”. Women face multiple constraints in producing food: lack of access to land, capital, credit, cash, agricultural inputs, technology training and extension services; their access to the political arena and non-farm labour markets is limited as a consequence of their lack of education. This invisible factor is most pronounced in African countries (Boserup, 1970; abstract from Christina Gladwin *et al.*, 2001).

7. To empower women and enhance their role in food security and local development, multiple factors need to be taken into account: natural, physical, human, financial and social capital, and the legal and institutional frameworks to promote them. Any efforts to improve one factor that leaves out the others will be ineffective, because they are all complementary factors required for women’s empowerment.

8. The international community and individual governments are becoming increasingly aware of the role of women in food security and local development, and are making tremendous efforts to empower women. The main challenge to all these efforts, however, is to ensure that the measures and reforms benefit the poorest of the poor, particularly women, who often cannot seize development opportunities.

9. The January 2005 report of the United Nations Millennium Project’s Task Force on Education and Gender Equality concluded by stating: “The next ten years provide a new window of opportunity to take action on a global scale to achieve gender equality and empower women, which are critical for meeting the Millennium Development Goals.”

10. The World Food Programme is in the forefront of the battle for women’s empowerment. As the United Nations food-aid arm, WFP uses food to meet emergency needs and to support economic and social development. Its mission statement mandates WFP to work to put hunger at the centre of the international agenda, promoting policies, strategies and operations that directly benefit the poor and hungry. Because women and children are most vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity, WFP has put them at the centre of its operations. In 2003, WFP adopted the new Gender Policy 2003–2007, with eight Enhanced Commitments to Women (ECW) that aim to ensure gender equality in all WFP operations.

Background

11. About 800 million people in the developing world are currently experiencing food insecurity. This situation is likely to worsen every day. Women play a crucial role in ensuring food security and well-being for households. Their contribution to food production – 70 to 80 percent in sub-Saharan Africa, 65 percent in Asia and 45 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean (IFPRI, 1995) – needs to be recognized to promote equitable and sustainable development of rural communities. Sustainable food production is the key to food security, as women’s empowerment is the key to food security. The challenges of meeting the food and nutrition needs of food-insecure people will grow in the coming years, especially in a global environment of increasing poverty, rural migration, conflict and environmental degradation. All potential actors in development, especially women, should therefore be supported in their part in sustaining livelihoods. “Given equal access to resources and human capital, women farmers can achieve yields equal to or even, as some studies show, significantly higher than those of men” (IPFRI, 1995). Women’s access to and control of land, credit, agricultural extension services, training, education, health, technology and information are crucial to increasing their contribution to food security and local development.

12. The international community’s awareness of this situation is increasing, but more tangible and effective actions are needed to fill the gender gap. For example, in the 1970s the role of women in food security was ignored in statistics and analyses of constraints to food production. This trend is gradually changing. WFP and other United Nations agencies are making tremendous efforts to ensure gender equality in their daily operations.

13. With regard to WFP’s efforts for women’s empowerment and gender equality, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, WFP adopted its 1996–2001 Gender Policy, the Commitments to Women (CW), which were linked to strategic objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action and based on the roles women play as managers of food and as guardians of household food security. Following various reviews of lessons learned from implementation of the CW, in October 2002 WFP adopted the new Gender Policy (2003–2007) known as the Enhanced Commitments to Women, which implied further major institutional changes. The final stage of these changes is implementation at the country level to contribute to efforts of national mechanisms for gender equality.

Current Situation of Women's Empowerment in Food Security and Local Development

14. In most societies in the developing world, women play a major role in agricultural food production, including fisheries, forestry and livestock as well as in local development (FAO, 1997). With the new era of globalization, the most disadvantaged population – the poor, the majority of whom are women – are increasingly marginalized and either do not benefit from or are adversely affected by economic growth. With trade liberalization, industrialization and the commercialization of food production, the traditional role of women in food security and development is being jeopardized. Despite the projected long-term positive impact of these new policies on the lives of rural people, women generally find difficulties in adjusting to them during the transition period. This is because of their low capacity to produce and sell competitive products in the liberalized markets, which often leads to transitory impoverishment of rural population which in turn affects their food security. Some farmers choose to move to other sectors as a coping mechanism, which is often more difficult for women because of their lack of access to and control of resources.

15. In Peru, Chile and other countries of the South, women are fighting against new policies that favor monopolistic systems and are building their own community food and health systems (Diverse Women for Diversity, 1997). Other women in indigenous societies oppose land sequestration and the use of hazardous chemicals in export-oriented agriculture.

16. To empower women and expand their role in food security and local development, actions need to be taken in various areas. Natural capital – land, livestock, water, trees and natural resources – and physical capital – houses and collective infrastructures – play a major role in economic production (Quisumbing *et al.*, 2001). Assets also provide security in periods of crisis, because the sale of assets is one of the first and most handy coping mechanisms a family can resort to in a crisis. Despite the important role that women play in food production, they do not benefit equally with men from these assets; men often have control of the assets, whether they are community or family assets. To overcome this situation, women often try to accumulate other assets such as livestock that have an economic value and provide food for the family. Increasing women's access to land and related assets and technology is fundamental to increasing their productivity.

17. One of the greatest achievements of the women's movement in recent decades has been investment in women's human capital. Significant increases have been registered in women's life expectancy, 20 percent longer than men's (Quisumbing *et al.*, 2001), fertility rates have declined and gaps in education have been reduced. These investments in human capital increase women's capabilities, expand their field of opportunities and

empower them in making choices. Among these investments, the most rewarding is education, whose results positively affect all aspects of the lives of women and their families.

18. Another important area in which to invest to empower women is social and financial capital. Women have been assisted in organizing themselves into groups that empower them. With group savings, women are able to overcome the main constraint of requirements for collateral to obtain loans. Through the groups, women are able to mobilize funding from micro-finance schemes, develop small-scale businesses and build more valuable assets.

19. Last but not least, to facilitate the process of women's empowerment through the above investments, there is a need to develop legal and institutional frameworks. Laws taken in isolation are not effective: they need to be accompanied by substantive and procedural measures to empower the institutions charged with implementing the laws. A holistic approach to legal reforms needs to be taken; procedures need to be enlightened to facilitate the process of seeking justice for the poor, women in particular. This will provide the basis for women to lay legitimate claim to the assets mentioned above (Quisumbing, 2001).

WFP's Efforts in Empowering and Expanding the Role of Women in Food Security and Local Development

WFP Food Aid Policy: Enabling Development

20. The role of WFP food aid is different from that of other types of development assistance. In its Food Aid Policy, WFP aims to enable marginalized people, particularly women, to participate in development and share in its benefits by focusing on five areas of intervention: (i) reaching mothers and children; (ii) investing in education and training, particularly for women and girls; (iii) gaining and preserving assets; (iv) disaster mitigation; and (v) management of natural resources. In all these areas of intervention, WFP ensures that women benefit equally with men.

21. WFP recognizes, however, that food aid alone cannot lead to positive developmental outcomes; it needs to work in partnership with others to link its interventions to development opportunities they provide to the communities.

22. To reach mothers and children, WFP works in partnership with national health authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to provide supplementary food for pregnant and lactating women and for children attending health services. Where public health services do not exist or are weak, WFP works with the

communities, women's groups and NGOs that work with women to deliver supplementary feeding, nutrition and health education and health referral services.

23. In its efforts to invest in education and training, WFP implements food and education activities by focusing on food-insecure areas where there are low rates of elementary school attendance or low attendance of girls. In collaboration with partners, WFP also implements training activities for women for income generating activities and social development.

24. WFP also helps communities to gain and preserve assets so that beneficiaries can enjoy the long-term benefits of interventions. In this context, WFP ensures that the poor participate in the design and management of asset-creating activities and that women's needs are taken into account during the identification of assets to be created.

25. In places where food availability often fluctuates, early intervention may prevent the distress sale of crucial household capital – tools, land or livestock – and prevent the erosion of human capital, for example by enabling a family to keep its children in school. WFP often conducts interventions such as building community water tanks and feeder roads, social forestry and education-based activities to help reduce the severity of setbacks. It also ensures that women equally benefit from those assets.

26. Women and children are affected by crisis differently from men; they often suffer more from crisis situations than men because they may have to take up additional burdens. Women's role in food security increases during crises, when they are usually expected to find more imaginative coping strategies. Disaster prevention and mitigation activities are important components of WFP interventions: they range from constructing or repairing rural infrastructures to limit flood damage or slow the advance of desertification to building sea dikes or small dams to mitigate damage to coastal areas caused by hurricanes.

27. Managing natural resources contributes to food security. WFP uses food assistance to enable people to invest in learning and sustainable management practices that protect their natural resources. WFP targets food-insecure areas to implement programmes for preventing or halting degradation of natural resources. Other programmes are designed to support moves from unsustainable to sustainable practices before resources are degraded to the point of exhaustion. WFP also intervenes to prevent the "silent" natural-resource emergencies such as encroachment of sand on arable land.

28. In all these interventions, WFP ensures that its ECW are mainstreamed to empower women in improving their role in local development in general and food security in particular. Among the eight ECW in the Gender Policy 2003–2007, four aim at enhancing the role of women in food security; three contribute to increasing women's

role in local development. The new features of the ECW are: (i) women's enhanced control of food; (ii) increased emphasis on adolescent girls; (iii) food for training targeting women and adolescent girls as a new programme focus; and (iv) increased advocacy of women's role in food security. The results of the self-assessment phase of a recent WFP baseline survey in 2004 on implementation of ECW include interesting findings on its efforts on gender equality.

Enhanced Commitments to Women: Promoting Women's Role in Food Security

ECW I: Meet the specific nutritional requirements of pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls, and raise their health and nutrition awareness.

ECW IV: Contribute to women's control of food in relief food distributions of household rations.

ECW V: Ensure that women are equally involved in food distribution committees and other programme-related local bodies.

ECW VII: Contribute to an environment which acknowledges the important role women play in ensuring household food security and encourages both men and women to participate in closing the gender gap

Enhanced Commitments to Women: Promoting Women's Role in Local Development

ECW II: Expand activities that enable girls to attend school.

ECW III: Ensure that women benefit at least equally from the assets created through food for training and food for work.

ECW VI: Ensure that gender is mainstreamed in programming activities.

29. To implement these commitments to women, WFP had to undertake major institutional changes:

- a) ***Food to be put directly into the hands of women.*** This was a major undertaking that was not easy to implement in areas where cultural beliefs work against it, for example in Afghanistan under the Taliban. The results of the 2004 baseline survey to assess implementation of ECW and the 2004 case studies on best practices related to women's control of food in relief operations in six countries are encouraging.

In general, women beneficiaries holding food entitlement cards expressed great appreciation for this measure. They said that it increased their sense of value and made them feel that they had a role to play in their community. Control of the rations allowed them to ensure that their children's share and their own share were brought home rather than diverted for other purposes. The baseline survey results are as follows:

- In 67 percent of food distributions, for relief and for development, women were designated as food entitlement holders (FEHs) in each household or were listed as such on food-distribution lists. Wives in polygamous families were listed separately as FEHs in 56 percent of food distributions.
- In 90 percent of food distributions, women were encouraged to collect their food and were informed of their right to designate someone to collect the household food ration on their behalf.

The challenges lie in overcoming socio-cultural barriers, especially in conservative societies. An important lesson from the Torbat-e-Jam refugee camp in Iran is that WFP staff engaged the Imam in the process, whose support was fundamental to success. The involvement of men during programme design and life cycle is fundamental.

b) ***Let women have control of food*** by involving them equally in food-distribution committees (FDCs) and other bodies. WFP wants food to be handed to women, but they have to assume leadership roles in the food-distribution process. This raises the issue of meaningful participation as opposed to merely reaching numerical targets for women. In the case studies, women beneficiaries indicated that they felt that the struggle for recognition of their right to speak in the community is worthwhile and that, encouraged by WFP support, women in leadership roles gained respect from men that was not evident before. They also indicated that men's attitudes towards them are slowly changing. The baseline survey also revealed the following results:

- 92 percent of food-for-training (FFT) project documents state that at least half of the representatives on beneficiary-level FDCs are to be women; this occurred only in 78 percent of food-for-work (FFW) project documents.
- In 71 percent of FFW and in 78 percent of FFT project documents, the target of at least 50 percent of women executive-level members in FDCs is clearly stated.
- Partners provided leadership training for women participating in beneficiary-level committees in 50 percent of food distributions, 56 percent of FFT and 63 percent of FFW activities.

The challenges will be to involve both men and women in developing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.

- c) ***Alleviation of women's burden*** was the next target: WFP realized that by giving women control of food, it was in some cases adding to women's burdens or possibly putting them in danger. Women pointed out in the case studies that their daily tasks include fetching water and carrying wet laundry or firewood sometimes for distances greater than that between the final distribution point (FDP) and their homes. WFP is working with the logistics unit to see how to alleviate the burden and ensure security for women when they collect food. Increasing of the number of FDPs, repackaging food in smaller bags or organizing more frequent food distributions have been proposed. The challenge will be to combine burden and safety concerns with cost effectiveness.
- d) ***Seek gender equality in staffing***. In the Gender Policy, WFP applied the same standards to its own staff as it does to its valued beneficiaries, by seeking gender equality in staffing. WFP aims to have more women staff in all categories, especially at management levels in humanitarian operations, where gender gaps are biggest. WFP is addressing staff welfare and working conditions, and is looking for other ways to improve the working environment for women and men. Important steps have been made in this regard, although the recent mid-term review of the implementation of ECW noted a loss of momentum from the previous years. WFP will look into it and take corrective measures.

30. The self-assessment phase of the baseline survey was conducted in 48 countries. The overall results from Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua reveal the following: WFP's ECW are being well implemented; most of the targets of 50 percent women participating in FDCs and management committees have been achieved and targets of 70 percent of women in FFT have been largely accomplished. There is, however, a need to recognize that in contrast with other regions, WFP did not generally face much resistance to women's empowerment in food distribution in Latin America because women have been in charge of food handling and related issues.

31. For detailed information on the results of the baseline survey in all 48 countries and in selected Latin American countries, see Annex I for overall results of the self-assessment part of the baseline survey in five Latin American and Caribbean countries, and Annex II for the results from Nicaragua and Colombia and the results of the case studies in Colombia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

32. To realize fully the empowerment of women and the expansion of their role in food security and local development, the need is for strong, sustained political will and engagement at the decision-making level of governments and organizations working in the field of women's development. All empowerment efforts should be accompanied by institutional and legal reforms that benefit the poor and make a difference in their lives, particularly for women. At the March 2005 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, many high-level delegates made compelling speeches on the measures, reforms and laws of their governments to empower women and promote gender equality. The challenge is to ensure that women at the grassroots level benefit from the effects of those laws and measures, are well informed of their existence and are empowered enough to claim the rights they provide.

33. Four major recommendations emerge from our analysis:

- Investment in women's education would improve the well-being of women and their families in terms of health, nutrition, opportunities for employment, food security and development in general.
- Investment in women groups and the networks and collective action that they generate are recognized as assets in themselves. Through these networks, women are able to develop small-scale businesses, improve farm outputs and create assets that alleviate the burdens of processing food and collecting water. Women are considerably empowered through the networks where gender inequalities are not pronounced or where women even hold an advantage.
- Administrative and legal reforms to eliminate discrimination with regard to resources and to promote women's rights need to be enacted and institutionalized.
- At the organizational level of WFP, other United Nations agencies and NGOs, women's empowerment will emerge only if measures that enhance gender equality are institutionalized and incorporated regularly in programme activities and mechanisms, for example in country office work plans, programme and project documents and agreements with implementing partners.

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**2004 SURVEY ON THE ENHANCED COMMITMENTS TO WOMEN (ECW)
RESULTS FROM THE SELF ASSESSMENT PHASE FOR LATIN AMERICAN
AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**

Countries covered: Honduras, Haiti, Colombia, Nicaragua, and Bolivia.

ECW I: Meet the specific nutritional requirements of expectant and nursing mothers and adolescent girls, and raise their health and nutrition awareness

In Latin-America 8 Nutritional Interventions have been covered through the self-assessment survey

- Pregnant and lactating women (PLW) are being supported with **micronutrient and fortified food** more than adolescent girls: five (out of eight) nutritional interventions under survey provide micronutrient-fortified foods to PLW; only two provide such kind of food to adolescent girls participating in out-of-school and life skills training activities.
- In the Latin American countries under survey **deworming medication** is not a priority: none of the WFP project documents under survey explicitly state that deworming medication will be given to PLW in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy; furthermore only the Honduras Country Office (CO) reports to provide deworming medication.
- Six (out of eight) WFP project documents explicitly state that **awareness-raising sessions** on nutrition, health and caring practices will be offered to participants and seven nutritional interventions are actually offering such kind of awareness-raising sessions.

ECW III: Ensure that women benefit at least equally from the assets created through food for training and food for work

In Latin America 4 Food for Training (FFT) activities have been covered through the self-assessment survey

- According to the CO self-assessment two (out of four) FFT activities set the **target of having at least 70 percent** of females among the trainees. Nevertheless females actually are at least 70 percent of the trainees in only one activity.
- **Females participating** in the four FFT activities under survey account for 57% of all the trainees.

In order to facilitate attendance of women and adolescent girls to the FFT activities the Gender Policy 2003-07 suggests undertaking a gender-specific situation analysis in

preparation of the programme design and providing complementary services, such as child-care arrangements, flexible timing, sanitation, etc.

- A **gender-specific** situation analysis has been undertaken in preparation of two (out of four) FFT activities. Partners cooperating with WFP provide **complementary** services in three FFT activities.

In Latin America 8 Food for Work (FFW) activities have been covered through the self-assessment survey

- A **gender-specific situation analysis** has been undertaken in seven (out of eight) FFW activities under survey.
- Unfortunately appropriate work norms for women have been put in place only in one FFW activity and their implementation has been explicitly mentioned in only two WFP project documents.

ECW IV: Contribute to women's control of food in relief food distributions of household rations

In Latin America 7 Relief / General Food Distributions (GFDs) have been covered through the self-assessment survey

- **Participatory consultations with women** took place before determining the locations of food distribution points (FDPs) in three (out of seven) Relief / GFDs.
- An assessment was conducted to identify the need for **special packaging** in two Relief / GFDs.
- Women, whether heads of households or wives, are the **food entitlement** holders (or are listed on the food distribution lists/household food ration card as such) in five Relief / GFDs. Furthermore information about food entitlements is provided to beneficiaries in five Relief / GFDs.
- **Women** are being **encouraged to collect** their food, and informed of their right to designate the collection of the household ration to other persons in six Relief / GFDs.

ECW V: Ensure that women are equally involved in food distribution committees and other programme-related local bodies

Relief / GFDs

- Three (out of seven) WFP project documents explicitly state that at least half of the **representatives** on beneficiary-level Food Distribution Committees (FDCs) established in relation to Relief / GFD will be women.

- Three WFP project documents explicitly state that at least half of the **representatives on executive-level members** on beneficiary-level FDCs will be women.

Food for Training

- Three (out of four) FFT activities adopted a **participatory approach with men and women** for beneficiaries' identification. Two adopted a participatory approach for activity identification and formulation. Only one adopted a participatory approach for development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.
- Three WFP project documents explicitly state that at least half of the **representatives** on beneficiary-level FDCs established in relation to FFT activities will be women.
- Three WFP project documents explicitly state that at least half of the **representatives on executive-level members** on FDCs established in relation to FFT activities will be women.

Food for Work

- Seven (out of eight) FFW activities adopted a **participatory approach with men and women** for beneficiaries' identification; six adopted a participatory approach for 1) activity identification and 2) development of an M&E system.
- Three (out of seven) WFP project documents explicitly state that at least half of the **representatives** on beneficiary-level Asset Management Committees (AMCs) established in relation to the FFW activity will be women.
- Only two WFP project documents explicitly state that at least half of the **representatives on executive-level members** on AMCs established in relation to the activity under survey will be women.

CONCLUSIONS

Achievements

- Awareness-raising sessions on nutrition, health and caring practices are often mentioned (and actually offered) in the WFP project documents.
- A gender-specific situation analysis has been often undertaken in preparation of FFW activities.
- Women, whether heads of households or wives, are often the food entitlement holders and information about food entitlements is often provided to beneficiaries.
- Women are often being encouraged to collect their food, and informed of their right to designate the collection of the household ration to other persons.

- The WFP project documents often state that at least half of the representatives (and half of the representatives on executive-level members) on beneficiary-level FDCs established in relation to FFT activities will be women.
- FFW activities often adopted a participatory approach with men and women for 1) beneficiaries' identification; 2) activity identification; 3) development of an M&E system.

Challenges

- To increase the number of nutritional interventions providing micronutrient-fortified food to adolescent girls.
- To increase the FFT activities based on a previous gender-specific situation analysis and the provision of complementary services to facilitate attendance of women.
- To increase the involvement of women in the FFT activities, especially in those areas where the gap between the skills of women and men is wide.
- To regularly put in place appropriate work norms for women, especially where many female workers participate to the FFW activities.
- To increase participatory consultations with women to determine the locations of food distribution points and to assess the need of special packaging.
- (in FFT activities) to adopt more frequently a participatory approach with men and women for development of an M&E system.
- (in FFW activities) to increase the participation of women among the executive-level members in the AMCs.

**NICARAGUA AND COLOMBIA BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS AND
COLUMBIA CASE STUDY RESULTS**

NICARAGUA – RESULTS FROM SITE-LEVEL BASELINE SURVEY

Operations surveyed: Nicaragua Country Programme 10044 and PRRO 10212.

ECW I – nutrition

About 15% of the sites where Pregnant and Lactating women (PLW) are assisted were surveyed.

- Micronutrient fortified food is provided to all PLW in all the sites surveyed.
- In all sites surveyed at least half of PLWs and of adolescent girls attend awareness rising sessions on nutrition, health, caring practices, prevention of HIV/AIDS. No men attended these sessions.

ECW III – Food for Asset (Food for Work and Food for Training)

FFW

About 25% of FFW sites were sampled and surveyed.

- On average 50 % of participants in FFW activities are women.
- On average beneficiaries felt that they were involved “enough” in the definition of the FFW activities; that women’s needs were taken “a lot” into account; and that the activities offered reflected what they had actually discussed in the participatory consultations.
- Adolescent girls were generally involved less in all the consultations, because there are no activities targeting them.
- If women and girls are assigned a too heavy task they can ask for a lighter one.
- Flexible timing and illness arrangements are offered as complementary services to the women working on the FFW activities.
- In every site every worker (male or female) receives a ration card under her/his name.

ECW V – participation in decision-making bodies – FFW committees

In almost all of the sites surveyed beneficiary-level food distribution (FDCs) and asset management (AMCs) committees are in place.

Sites where the percentage of women among members and executive-level members in FDCs/AMCs established in relation to FFW activities reaches 50%

food distribution and asset management committees	% of sites PRRO	% of sites CP
Sites where the percentage of women in food distribution committees reaches 50%	69.4	36.8
Sites where the percentage of women in leadership positions in FDCs reaches 50%	60.9	21.2
Sites where the percentage of women in <u>asset management committees</u> reaches 50%	80.7	36
Sites where the percentage of women in leadership positions in asset management committees reaches 50%	73.4	19.3

- Women feel that their views are taken into consideration quite a lot in the committees
- In about 50% of FFW sites leadership training is offered to women participating in the committees.

ECW VIII – Human resources

- 2 out of 2 international officers are women
- 1 out of 1 national officer is a woman
- 3 out of 4 general service staff are women

COLOMBIA – RESULTS FROM SITE-LEVEL BASELINE SURVEY AND FROM ECW IV AND V CASE STUDY

Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation 10158 (PRRO), Assistance to Persons Displaced by Violence in Columbia covers the needs of 375,000 displaced persons for a three year period which began October 2003. The operation provides protracted relief assistance to displaced persons in transition between relief and recovery, focusing on the needs of families between fourth and twenty fourth month displacement. The primary goal of the PRRO is to support the social and economic reintegration of displaced persons by improving their food security.

ECW I – Nutrition

About 25% of the sites where Pregnant and Lactating women are assisted were surveyed.

- Micronutrient fortified food is provided to all PLW in all the sites surveyed.

- 50% of PLW assisted in the surveyed sites received at least a dose of deworming medication.
- In about 75% of sites surveyed at least half of PLWs and of adolescent girls attend awareness rising sessions on nutrition and health.
- In about 65% of the sites at least half of PLWs and of adolescent girls attend awareness rising sessions on caring practices.
- Awareness-raising sessions on prevention of HIV/AIDS are offered only in about 40% of the sites. No men attended these sessions.

ECW III – Food for Asset (FFW and FFT)

In general, women and adolescent girls expressed that they feel that their needs and expectations are more satisfied through Food for Training, rather than through Food for Work (FFW) projects.

Since most of the beneficiaries interviewed were previously farmers, most of the FFW schemes consist of agricultural work. This causes some problems in the participation of women, because the FFW sites are far from the villages and the physical burden required is heavy.

Moreover it is important to stress that these productive projects tend to reproduce the traditional gender division of labor found within the household. Indeed the men do the “hard work” in the field while the women take care of cooking, gardening and raising the children.

FFW

About 35% of FFW sites were sampled and surveyed.

- On average 50 % of participants in FFW activities are women.
- On average beneficiaries felt that they were involved “a lot” in the definition of the FFW activities; that women’s needs were taken into account “enough” and that the activities offered reflected “enough” what they had actually discussed in the participatory consultations. Adolescent girls were generally involved less in all the consultations, because there are no activities targeting them.
- If women and girls are assigned a too heavy task they can request a lighter one.
- Flexible timing and illness arrangements are offered as complementary services to the women working on the FFW activities.
- In every site every worker (male or female) receives a ration card under her/his name.
- In focus group discussions men declared that women are in control of the food even if they were not involved as workers. Women benefit from the assets created even if the FFW was not designed with this goal.
- Women often took on a more active role in the community because they were alone.

ECW IV – Relief food distribution

About 50% of sites where WFP is distributing food were surveyed.

The food is distributed through “Community kitchens” where food is provided already cooked to the beneficiaries.

Women manage almost everything: they receive the food, manage the list of beneficiaries who are entitled to the ration and organize the cooking. In general women are empowered through this activity and feel that their social role is acknowledged by the rest of the community.

Results of the Colombia case study about ECW IV.

Traditionally in Colombia, women have a high degree of control over food within households. Preparing, managing, and distributing food is seen as women’s responsibility. In situations of displacement women tend to carry a greater burden than men as they often take on the role of income earner as well. When displaced families are forced to adapt to a new environment, usually urban, it is women who bear the burden of supporting the family. It is more difficult for men to find work because they are not always able to transfer rural livelihood skills to an urban environment. It is easier for women to find a source of income through domestic work. Consequently, in situations of displacement, women often take on the role of income earner in addition to other responsibilities.

Generally, food distribution points, which also serve as food storage facilities, are determined jointly by food distribution committees, implementing partners and beneficiaries. Distribution points are selected based on several criteria including accessibility to beneficiaries, safety and security, and cleanliness (free from rodent infestation) of storage facilities. Women’s suggestions and opinions are taken into account in the process especially since the majority of food committees are composed of women and they are the ones who collect rations.

Beneficiaries are informed about the food distribution process by the implementing partner, WFP sub office staff, food committees, and through word of mouth. They are told about the time and place of distributions, ration size and composition, and the fact that the food is free and not tied to politics or the ongoing armed conflict. In some communities such as Soacha food delivery dates are announced through a community loudspeaker. Almost all beneficiaries interviewed claimed to have sufficient information regarding food distribution.

ECW V - Participation in decision-making

FFW

In almost all of the surveyed FFW sites beneficiary-level food distribution committees (FDCs) are in place.

Asset management committees (AMCs) are in place in 65% of FFW sites.

Sites where the percentage of women among members and executive-level members in FDCs/AMCs established in relation to FFW activities reaches 50%

food distribution and asset management committees	% of sites
Sites where the percentage of women in food distribution committees reaches 50%	58
Sites where the percentage of women in leadership positions in FDCs reaches 50%	45.5
Sites where the percentage of women in <u>asset management committees</u> reaches 50%	54
Sites where the percentage of women in leadership positions in <u>asset management committees</u> reaches 50%	53.6

- Women feel that their views are taken into consideration “a lot” in the committees related to the FFW activities.
- In about 50% of FFW sites leadership training is offered to women participating in the committees.

Relief

In 73% of Relief food distribution sites there are beneficiary-level food distribution committees (FDCs).

Sites where the percentage of women among members in Food Distribution committees (FDCs) related to Relief/GFD reaches 50% and sites where the percentage of women among executive-level members in FDCs related to Relief/GFD reaches 50%

food distribution committees	% of sites
Sites where the percentage of women in food distribution committees reaches 50%	86.3
Sites where the percentage of women in leadership positions in FDCs reaches 50%	69.2

- Women feel that their views are taken into consideration “a lot” in the committees related to the relief distribution.
- In about 50% of Relief sites leadership training is offered to women participating in the committees.
- During focus group discussions it was found that men and women are both members of the committees, but the committees haven’t got a hierarchical structure. There are not real “leadership positions”. Indeed everyone takes on the same duties and responsibilities that are sometimes rotated among the members.

Results of the Colombia case study about ECW V

The country case study revealed that in the areas visited women made up the vast majority of food committee and overseeing committee members including decision-making positions. The reasons for this are several. Culturally women manage and control food within households, so men aren’t interested in being part of these types of committees and see it as women’s responsibility and thus are very supportive of women taking the lead role; many households are female headed; women and children make up the majority of beneficiaries; partners firmly follow the WFP Procedures Manual, which explicitly states that women should form the majority of food committee members.

ECW VIII – Human resources

On December 31st 2003:

- 1 out of 1 national officer was a woman
- 2 out of 4 general service staff were women

Since January 1st 2003

- 37 out of 67 national officers recruited were women
- 3 out of 6 general service staff recruited women
- 9 out of 11 food aid monitors recruited were women

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE COLOMBIA CASE STUDY on Male and Female Beneficiaries’ Perceptions of the Measures and Practices Used to Implement Selected Enhanced Commitments to Women IV and V and Recommendations for their Replication.

- Cooperation among counterparts, working closely with small NGOs, CBOs, and women’s networks, and the commitment of WFP staff were seen as key factors in successful implementation of ECW IV and V.
- Partners and beneficiaries reported positive experiences when WFP contributed food rations to projects that aimed to stimulate women’s empowerment and recuperation in communities. These successes were achieved with the

- participation of highly committed and gender-aware CBOs and community women working in strategic partnership with WFP. Local implementing partners showed a self-help approach specific to women, which created an environment favourable for WFP to implement ECW IV and V.
- As long as internal armed conflict continues to create displacement among the Colombian population, attention must be given to women's needs and human rights, especially since 52% of the displaced people are women. In view of the situation in the country, ECW IV and V are essential for addressing the needs of women, creating opportunities for them to receive humanitarian aid, have access to and control over the food aid distributed and participate in decision-making, particularly regarding control over created assets.
 - In WFP programme operations, women have control over food in food distribution and make up the majority of food committee members.
 - Advocacy for long term social transformation is needed for further achievement of the ECWs and women's empowerment. Distributing food rations alone, without provision of complimentary services by partners, would not bring about changes in society and women's empowerment. There needs to be more effort from WFP to seek out and collaborate with organizations that can provide complimentary services such as IGA training.
 - Gender approaches should include activities that address men as well as women, if sustainable changes of roles at household and community levels are to be expected. Women's empowerment is possible only with the acceptance and understanding of men, who should be involved in all gender-related training. This could secure men's support for promotion of women's involvement in decision-making at family and community levels. Regarding the long-term nature of increasing the structural participation in society, the opportunities and responsibilities for women initiated through WFP assistance is completed, for example through CBOs and NGOs.

GOOD PRACTICES

Soacha

In Soacha, WFP's partner DISMAT has been implementing a community garden initiative as an FFT project since 2002. Initially, DISMAT provided technical training on small-scale land cultivation to forty IDPs, which included 20 women and 20 men. The project started out dominated by male beneficiaries, who took the lead role in all aspects of the project. As a result, women were excluded from everything including the food distribution committee. To address this issue, WFP and DISMAT worked together to sensitize men and to increase women's participation. WFP conducted information sessions with beneficiaries stressing the importance of women's equal participation in project activities. WFP urged DISMAT to provide leadership and self-esteem training to beneficiaries with an emphasis on women. The project was continuously monitored and opportunities where women could take a lead role were identified. Women's participation in the project increased dramatically as a result of these initiatives. Within two weeks of the leadership training, women were actively participating in food committees. After four months, women had reorganized and taken over the food committee. Women now occupy decision-making positions within the food committee and oversee all aspects of the project. The women also changed the beneficiary selection criteria to reflect a gender sensitive approach, giving priority to female heads of household. The project received WFP food aid for the first two years and is now successfully sustaining itself under the leadership of women beneficiaries.

Dealce Community Kitchen

In Quibdo, the Dealce community kitchen project is coordinated and managed by the Association of Displaced Women in Choco (ADACHO) and has been operating for three years. WFP began food support to the kitchen in the last PRRO (6139) December 2002 to June 2003, and continued under the current PRRO (10158), from November 2003 to February 2004. Community women prepare and cook the food, determine the cost of meals, and manage day to day operations. The facility provides breakfast, lunch and dinner and serves 30 to 50 people daily, most of who are men, young people and students. Newly arrived IDPs also access the kitchen for free meals. Over time, the community kitchen has evolved into something much more than a place to have an affordable or free meal. It has become a venue for building social networks and community cohesion. For example, the kitchen serves as a place for community gatherings and meetings; women come together to share and discuss problems and advice; children come to the kitchen to participate in recreational activities; and young men (students) organize children's activities such as birthday parties and games. In addition, the women have managed to secure training from an NGO on mop production, which has lead to an IGA project. The kitchen has become a place where people come for support and care, as well as for food.

Women beneficiaries reported many positive changes in their lives as a result of participating in WFP projects:

- Improved self-esteem and confidence
- Increased level of participation in public forums
- Greater respect from family and community members
- Increased decision-making within households and communities
- Improved nutrition and health of families
- Improved self- reliance

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