



## Targeting in Complex Emergencies: Colombia Country Case Study

Jacqueline Frize

April 2008



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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the support and assistance of many individuals throughout the course of this research. I am especially grateful to local leaders in the communities we visited and all the community members themselves who showed their interest in meeting with us and answer our many questions. Particular gratitude goes to Lisa Neisa, my Colombian counterpart, who shared out the field work with me in the communities.

In WFP Colombia, I am extremely grateful for Manuela Angel and Jacqueline Flentge's continued support and interest in the study. In the field, the sub-office teams who led us to the communities and to the many implementing partners WFP works with. Particular thanks go to Maria Lucia Osorio from the Bogota sub-office, Carmen Saavedra from the Pasto sub-office, Yolanda Benavides from the Cali sub-office, Blanca Noemi Florian and Romys Gutierrez from the Cartagena and Valledupar sub-offices respectively. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Colombia Country Director, Praveen Agrawal.

In WFP Rome we would like to acknowledge the support of Nick Crawford, Sheila Grudem, Sarah Laughton, Joyce Luma, Allesia Rossi, Gaurab Tewari, Maria Novella Andrielli and Arif Husain.

I am also grateful to the government and non-government representatives who gave up some of their time to provide insights into the situation.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the support of the staff of the Feinstein International Center engaged in this study, particularly Dan Maxwell, team leader, and Marianne Vik, research assistant.

The views expressed in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Food Programme.

The Author

## Acronyms

Acción Social	GOC Agency in charge of IDP affairs
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (paramilitary group)
<i>Bienestarina</i>	GOC fortified wheat/soyblend for children and those at nutritional risk
<i>Bloqueado</i>	A community under siege by armed actors
CBTD	Community based targeting and distribution
CBO	Community based organisation
CO	WFP Country Office
CODHES	Consultoría Para Los Derechos Humanos y El Desplazamiento Forzado (Consultants on Human Rights and Displacement)
CN	Comite Tecnico Nacional y Consejo Directivo (WFP, Accion Social and ICBF coordination mechanism for allocating food aid)
ECHO	European Commission on Humanitarian Operations
ELN	National Liberation Army (guerrilla group)
EMOP	WFP Emergency Operation
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (guerrilla group)
FFT	Food for Training
FFW	Food for Work
FIC	Feinstein International Center
GoC	Government of Colombia
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IP	WFP Implementing partner
INGO	International non-governmental organization
Kcal	kilocalorie
Noraid	Norwegian international aid department
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ONIC	Organizacion Nacional Indigena Colombiana
PANEM	Catholic church relief programme directed to non-registered IDPs
PRRO	WFP Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
<i>Resistentes</i>	A community who refused to be displaced by the conflict and resists
RUPD	Registro Único de la Poblacion Desplazada (GoC IDP registration system)
SAT	Sistema de Alerta Temprana (early warning system on displacements)
SIMVA	WFP Sistema para la Identificación y Monitoreo de Vulnerabilidad Alimentaria (system for identifying and monitoring vulnerability to food security)
SISBEN	Sistema de selección de beneficiarios (GoC system for selecting beneficiaries for social programmes)
SISVAN	Sistema de Vigilancia Epidemiológica, Alimentaria y Nutricional (GoC epidemiological food and nutrition surveillance system)
TCE	Targeting in complex emergencies
UAO	Unidad de atencion y orientacion (AS run centres for IDPs in urban centres)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

## Executive Summary

This research is one of four cases in a study commissioned by the World Food Programme to investigate the participation of recipient community in the targeting and management of humanitarian food assistance in complex emergencies. The study involved a desk review of existing documentation, and two and a half weeks of field work between **25 November and 14 December 2007** by two researchers supported by the WFP CO. The purpose of the study was to understand the ways in which participatory or community-based approaches to targeting have been attempted, within the definition of community-based targeting suggested by WFP. The study was not an evaluation of targeting methods, although some critical examination of targeting was necessary in order to understand the constraints on community participation.

The study examined **community participation** through the food aid programme cycle with particular attention to its different steps (early warning, needs assessment, design, targeting criteria, beneficiary identification and selection, distribution, monitoring and evaluation). It involved 24 key informant interviews and visits to seven different communities where 21 group discussions were held in Spanish. None of the study findings can be extrapolated beyond the seven study communities, which represent a tiny proportion of the almost 2,000 communities assisted under the current nearly 3,000 projects in PRRO 10366.

Colombia has one of the highest numbers of displaced people in the world, between 1.8 million to 3.7 million people have been displaced. Most displacement is of the drip feed type, small numbers of families being displaced every day for decades. Women and children and marginalised ethnic minority groups such as the indigenous and the afro-Colombian people are over-represented among the IDP population. Once IDPs leave their land, many end up in urban centres looking for new livelihood opportunities. Approximately 4 million hectares of land have been abandoned by people forcibly displaced and although Colombia has sophisticated laws regulating the rights of IDPs, there is limited state protection over their properties. Colombia's geography makes it logistically complex and extremely expensive to deliver food in remote areas. It is however, an extremely resource-rich country whose geography makes it ideal for parallel economies to flourish based on oil, coca, bananas, coal and poppy. This study visited 5 very different regions including the southern hills bordering Ecuador, the Pacific communities living along extensive waterways, the foothills of the snow peaked mountains near the Caribbean Sea, inland into the jungles that border Brazil, and the urban sprawl surrounding Bogota the capital, to meet with communities and hear their voices.

The study identified a clear Colombia specific **targeting strategy** involving a series of sequential steps which help identify the 499,000 PRRO beneficiaries every year. The intricate targeting methods used have been summarised into two distinct steps by the authors, in order to be able to identify the main determinants. The first step in the targeting strategy involves the use of geographical and administrative targeting methods, based on geography, population and institutional criteria using a vast network of informal partners as well as a formal agreement with two Government of Colombia institutions



(Accion Social and Instituto Colombiano para el Bienestar Familiar). The second step involves choosing between seven possible food assistance modalities (relief, food for work, food for training, nutritional risk, mother and child, pre-school feeding and school feeding) each with their own specific beneficiary profile and food assistance package delivered by a chosen implementing partner. These two steps involve various decision-making processes.

The targeting strategy in Colombia allows for ample scope for **direct community participation** because about one third of WFP implementing partners are community based organisations. The study found that community based participation begins after the second step of targeting, and revolves more around programme implementation components than on programme design and selection criteria setting. Thus the community participation component of the targeting strategy under the current PRRO, specifies beneficiary profiles in great detail and relies mostly on existing community leadership structures for implementation. These aspects define the community based practices. During the study, it was seen that some communities can influence the implementing partners negotiation process with WFP to implement a food assistance project and hence can be said to successfully participate in the targeting strategy through an advocacy strategy. This is much more likely to happen in communities with strong cohesion and with leadership styles that foment good working relations with outsiders wishing to support that particular community. In some cases the beneficiary community itself approaches WFP to implement the project, this was seen to be more likely to be led by women in urban settings, where perhaps traditional leadership styles had somewhat broken down.

Participative methods are encouraged by WFP to all its implementing partners and set out in the Colombia PRRO 10366 operations manual. Important examples include encouraging meetings with beneficiaries, especially women; explaining the origins of the food assistance; creating a Food (or relief) Committee or equivalent. Close and regular contact with the communities and implementing partners was found to be an essential ingredient for participative and representative approaches. WFP has successfully achieved this in many of the projects it supports. The creation of representative food committees in the community to run food assistance projects was seen to be one of the most successful ways of balancing out leadership roles in a community and introducing checks to mitigate against corrupt leadership styles. In addition, the food committees were seen to have successfully empowered female community members to advocate for the strict adherence of the programme selection criteria and gain networking and resource mobilisation skills. Where the food committee was made up of the hand-picked friends of corrupt community leaders, the scope for community participation was seen to be greatly diminished. Participative consultation techniques were also observed among representatives of IDPs who had accumulated years of experience representing their community and had gained their trust.

The main exception to this observation was the mechanism of working with targeting practices already in place through established community leadership mechanisms set up for other purposes. This proved to be the mechanism which was most prone to abuse in terms of promoting participation, especially when associated to the selection criteria under

GoC Food for Work programmes. It appears corrupt leadership styles are something for which WFP's current targeting strategy has few checks and balances.

The study concludes with several recommendations on how to enhance community participation through current practice and suggestions on how to improve this.

The main **enabling factors** to participatory targeting were found to be:

1. Proximity and trust between community and some implementing partners
2. A targeting strategy that acknowledges changing needs e.g. relief focus
3. Recognising the protection element that results from WFP's international presence in the community
4. Fair targeting is seen in communities with good leadership
5. Urban populations that come together for a collective action
6. Rural populations that are supported in their process of returning home, in the rare occasions when this return process respects the mandates laid out in the IDP principles.
7. Some beneficiary involvement in selection for some modalities of food assistance
8. Women empowered by taking on leadership roles and reaching more marginal members of the community

The main **constraining factors** to participatory targeting were found to be:

1. Inadvertent support to existing systems of selection that are unfair and benefit the elite (Platteau 2004).
2. Not enough time spent with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries to explain targeting criteria, leaving leaders and IPs to do this.
3. Working with traditional leadership systems that require more frequent visits to achieve monitoring purposes.
4. Awareness that IPs may have a tendency to work with communities with higher degree of cohesion, and may exclude more vulnerable groups.
5. Limited community ownership of project due to a lack of participation in monitoring activities

The study concludes that CBTD is an approach that needs to be judged for its contribution to more effective targeting as well as for its contribution to more participatory programming methods. In the case of Colombia, CBTD achieves both of these objectives when it empowers community members to gain new skills, and does the opposite, when communities cause further exclusion through unfair systems of targeting. The success of food assistance programmes should consider both of these aspects.

## Section I. Background

### Context

Conflict in Colombia has over the last 60 years shifted from an ideology based civil war for control over central power, to a source of profit, increasingly complex and corrupt as economic interests grow. Forced displacement of civilians is seen as a deliberate strategy to allow armed actors to take control of specific territories and trade routes rich in natural resources. Colombia is made up of three, very different geographic regions: the coast, the plateaux and plains, and the Andes. It has a vast water network includes three major drainage basins: the Pacific basin; the Atrato and Magdalena valleys; and the Eastern plains through which the Caqueta, Amazon and Orinoco rivers flow. The southern part of the country is sparsely inhabited forested area. Colombia is a resource rich country whose geography makes it ideal for parallel economies based on oil, coca, bananas, coal and poppy.

### Map of Colombia: Source CIA factbook



The main armed actors include the Government of Colombia (GoC) armed forces, guerrilla groups, notably *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), and a collection of paramilitary groups, notably the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC), right wing paramilitary groups fighting against the insurgency who joined forces in 1997 (Glaser 2006). The present administration has adopted a stringent strategy involving limited negotiation with the armed groups, demobilisation of paramilitaries<sup>1</sup> and a US backed fight against drug trafficking known as *Plan Colombia*, which has been succeeded by *Plan Patriota*, through

further reinforcement of the Colombian armed forces. The armed factions continue to confront each other across the entire national territory, to regain negotiating power, control illicit production and access strategic economic corridors. To this end they seek to control

1 In May 2006, the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled on the constitutionality of the government's controversial "Justice and Peace Law," which offers dramatically reduced sentences to paramilitaries responsible for atrocities and other serious crimes (Human Rights Watch)



the population in those territories perpetuating insecurity and instability to deny central government full control.

Colombian security forces strike to combat the parallel economies, the most well known of these being the aerial coca eradication programme in zones under guerrilla control, which has recently been complemented with manual eradication programmes using demobilised ex-paramilitaries (Springer 2006).

In addition, the high levels of organised crime reflect the cultural values and economic interests of certain urban groups and are fuelled by high wealth disparities (Richani 1997). The population suffers intimidation, threats, individual or collective illegal detentions, murders and massacres and some zones are blockaded to restrict movement of people and goods. Those displaced by violence and direct threats often end up in urban areas that group together people from all over the country, and thus replicate the allegiances with armed actors at the national level in urban slums controlled by gangs (World Bank 2004). Finally, hostage taking of the civilian population for long periods of time continues as a war tactic of some armed groups.

Colombia has a long tradition of self organisation and this is reflected in the diversity of community organisations such as trade unions, political, religious and non-governmental entities. The protracted violence has also led to numerous solidarity networks at local, national and international levels providing support and an advocacy role. One of the aims of the parties to the violence in Colombia is the very disintegration of all forms of community participation, the destruction of existing social fabric and the dispersal of organised groups. This means that community-based organisations (CBOs) are frequently subject to threats and their leaders are pursued, intimidated or illegally detained. Certain communities are under surveillance by armed actors, and, in the worst cases, used as human shields by the parties to the violence, resulting in massacres.

## **Displacement**

Displacement in Colombia has particular characteristics which are fundamental to an understanding of this case study. The displacement happens daily and is nation-wide, mostly of the unnoticed *gota a gota* (drop by drop) type of displacement of small numbers of individuals. Collective displacements of 50 people or more are known as mass displacements and are much more visible, and are attended to by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Mass displacements were more dominant in the 1980s, now displacements tend to be circular and even occur within towns and neighbourhoods (Meertens 2003). IDPs who are not registered under the GoC **Registro Unico de Poblacion Desplazada** (RUPD) do not have access to immediate aid in areas in which ICRC is not present unless it is provided by other humanitarian organizations. Displacements happen in many stages and the displaced are aware that there is little prospect of return. A major consequence of this type of displacement is the creation of neighbourhoods that form poverty belts around the country's larger urban areas.

Another specific characteristic to Colombia are the communities under siege, *bloqueados*, who are surrounded by armed actors and are not allowed to flee, and communities in resistance, *resistentes*, who organise themselves to resist and keep out all armed actors from their territories.

Colombian laws for the protection of individuals displaced by violence are among the most complete in the world, and follow the guiding principles for assistance to displaced populations (the Deng Principles). The two main legal instruments are:

1. Law 387 (1997) via which measures are adopted to prevent forced displacement: assistance, protection, and socio-economic consolidation and stabilisation of internally displaced persons as a result of violence. Article 15 of the law states that IDPs are entitled to emergency humanitarian assistance for a maximum of three months.
2. Decree 2569 (2000), through which the law is regulated and the functions of the implementing authorities specified.

Some of the shortcomings of the system have been recognised. For example, the need for a differential approach in terms of gender, age and ethnic differences in order to address the differentiated impacts on the population, affecting women, and afro-colombian and indigenous populations disproportionately. It has also been highlighted that there is a need for a longer post-emergency phase outlook, so that the assistance mechanisms can be agile enough to make link from displacement to development and reconstruction phases in terms of short term employment, income generation, food security and capacity building (Meertens 2003).

One formal and at least three informal systems for tracking and registering the displaced exist in Colombia. The official GoC IDP register, **Sistema de Registro Unico de la Poblacion Desplazada (RUPD)**, registers internally displaced people (IDPs) who give a verbal declaration at an officially recognised site within 12 months of displacement. A written statement of the declaration is sent for validation and if the IDP is legally recognised as so, s/he is classified in the official registry system and qualifies for a range of benefits including payment, housing, job training opportunities and food aid. The system is accused of being fraught with obstacles, and would certainly be unable to cope should all IDPs chose to register. The government database only registers those IDPs that have passed a long screening process, and is reported to exclude 40% of those that request entry.

The other systems include the Conferencia Episcopal's **RUT** which includes many IDPs that do not wish to register under the RUPD; and the Consultative Forum for Humanitarian Rights (**CODHES**) based on secondary sources for tracking IDP populations. The figures obtained by each of these systems vary greatly, ranging from 1.8 to 3.4 million, with GoC official figure of 1.8 million being the most conservative. In addition there is a register held by the ICRC of people assisted by them. Displacement figures are controversial, as the database held by GoC was set up in 1995 and Codhes in 1985, so that cumulative totals

are not comparable. Each system has been set up with a different objective and serves its own purpose.

Closely linked to the displacement issue, an estimated 4 million hectares of land have been abandoned by people forcibly displaced with limited state protection over their properties. The state agency in charge of land reform, INCODER, only began a process of registering abandoned land in 2005 (Springer 2006). This loss of their only asset adds to the plight of a majority of IDPs forced to find settlement in more urban areas.

### **Humanitarian actors**

The nature of the conflict has led to numerous organisations being involved in mitigating its effects working directly and indirectly with the affected population. The United States of America (USA) remains the most influential foreign actor in Colombia. In 2006 it provided close to US\$800 million to the Colombian government, mostly in military aid. Via 'Plan Colombia', the USA allocates emergency and post-emergency funding to GoC, with Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and other Scandinavian countries being the other main bilateral donors. ECHO, whose activities centre on emergency intervention, is the main donor for the International NGOs of European origin.

Church networks, mainly through Caritas, provide fundamental support to the ecclesiastic movement and its humanitarian action.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) is active in Colombia, with a presence in Bogota, Medellin, and Cali. The United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) is present nationally and works in joint agreement with the ministries of Health and Social Wellbeing. UNHCR activities integrate with national interventions to assist the displaced and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) implements projects of to get IDPs to become self sufficient, as well as health, education and capacity building.

The ICRC works in agreement with GoC on emergency aid, with the Colombian Red Cross and other National Societies implementing emergency and reconstruction programmes, and is responsible for attending to mass displacements.

The international NGOs (INGOs) undertake activities independently or in cooperation with Colombian NGOs.

### **WFP Colombia**

WFP has been present in Colombia since the 1960s, working mainly in development programmes until 2000, when it began its Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operations (PRRO). WFP is present in 21 of the 33 administrative departments in Colombia, and has 10 sub-offices through which it manages its operations to enhance its coverage.

This case study takes place in December 2007, the tail end of the third three year PRRO, 10366, which targets 499,000 people yearly. The current PRRO targets 70% of its resources to recent IDPs and 30% to other vulnerable populations based on the results of the various

baseline studies listed above to complement secondary data sources. This allocation figure is revised yearly based on evolving needs, which are identified through various secondary sources rather than specific WFP led field level needs assessment surveys.

### PRRO 10366 Objectives

PRROs<sup>2</sup> are designed to complement the Government of Colombia's National Plan for the prevention and assistance to those displaced by force. WFP's main strategy is to facilitate the transition from short-term relief/recovery activities to medium-to-longer term solutions for IDPs.

The goal of the current PRRO is to *protect and stabilize livelihoods* of IDPs and enhance their resilience to shocks, by means of two complementary strategies.

- 1. The relief** component (38% of budget) provides assistance in the form of general food distributions to newly displaced IDPs, longer-term IDPs still identified as food-insecure, confined and blockaded communities and to non-registered IDPs, a group not otherwise reached by other major donors.
- 2. The recovery** component (62% of budget) assists primary-school children and pre-school children aged 3 to 6 through school and pre-school feeding; pregnant and lactating women (and their children under two years old) and children at nutritional risk through targeted supplementary feeding as take-home rations; and other vulnerable communities in need of rebuilding their livelihoods through food-for-work and food-for-training.

In both 2006 and 2007, WFP surpassed the number of planned beneficiaries, due mainly to an increased need in relief programming. A Colombia specific Operations Manual allows WFP to support different types of beneficiaries through seven established food assistance modalities (Table 1).

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<sup>2</sup> PRRO 6139 (Feb 2000-Jan 2002), PRRO 10158.0 (Jan 2003-Dec 2005); PRRO 10366.0 (May 2005-March 2008)

**Table 1. WFP Colombia PRRO 10366 profile by modality of assistance**

Modality of intervention	Target group	Duration of food aid	Ration Kcal / day*	Number of planned beneficiaries per year	Actual number of beneficiaries in 2006
<b>1. Relief</b>	New IDPs and blocked <sup>3</sup> communities	90-180 days	1644	160,000	<b>184,595</b>
<b>2. Food for work /</b> <b>3. Food for training</b>	IDPs and vulnerable host population	80-160 days	1644	113,000	<b>184,595</b>
<b>4. Nutritional risk</b>	Children under 5 Weight/Height < 2 Zscore or with HIV/AIDS	200 days	929	50,000	<b>70,532</b>
<b>5. Maternal and child support</b>	Pregnant, lactating women & their children < 2 years	320 days	929	28,000	<b>56,505</b>
<b>6. Pre-school feeding</b>	2-6 years old	240 days / year	677.4	35,000	<b>23,041</b>
<b>7. School feeding</b>	6-14 years old	180 days / year	677.4	113,000	<b>97,672</b>
<b>TOTAL (of which females)</b>				<b>499,000 (263,310)</b>	<b>676,143 (53%)</b>

\* Food Rations made up of varying quantities of rice, pulses, oil, salt, local sugar and fortified food

### WFP partners

WFP has formal agreement with two government institutions, the Presidential Agency for social action, *Accion Social*<sup>4</sup>, and the Colombian family welfare institute, *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (ICBF), to support those displaced by violence and vulnerable socio-economic groups.

### Accion Social

This is the GoC agency for social action, created in 1998 to replace its predecessor, the Red Social de Solidaridad.

<sup>3</sup> *Blockaded* communities are those with movement restrictions, confined to specific geographic areas by illegal armed actors

<sup>4</sup> Accion Social came into existence in July 2005 through the merging of the Agencia Colombiana de Cooperacion Internacional and the Red de la Solidaridad) – decree 2467



## ICBF<sup>5</sup>

The ICBF was created in 1968 and includes the National Institute for Nutrition. In 1985 it began implementing an epidemiological, food security and nutrition surveillance system (SISVAN) to tend to the needs of the displaced and rural households affected by violence.

WFP, AS and ICBF make decisions through an established committee, the *Comité Técnico Nacional y Consejo*. WFP has signed a letter of understanding with Accion Social and ICBF to formalise the partnership with the GoC agencies in order to target food to officially recognised IDPs under the RUPD system and vulnerable groups identified by ICBF. WFP's agreement with GoC also includes the possibility of targeting non-officially recognised IDPS. This amplification of target groups as a deliberate strategy to reach more vulnerable groups was adopted by WFP after the first PPRO in recognition of the limitations of RUPD<sup>6</sup> as a system for registering all IDPs, and the shortfalls in meeting IDPs entitlements in practice.

## WFP implementing partners

WFP Colombia has the largest network of partners of any WFP-assisted project in the world. The network of organisations and institutions working on IDP issues in Colombia has grown considerably since 2000. At the time of the mission, WFP has links with 1,729 organisations and was working with 960 cooperating and implementing partners (IP) at the time of this case study visit.

**Table 2. Number of WFP Colombia projects by type of implementing partner 2006**

Type of WFP implementing partner	Number	Percentage
Local authority, schools and health institutions	786	44.5%
Local NGOs and CBOs	771	43%
Church led groups	198	11%
International NGOs	15	1%
International organisations	8	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 729</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: WFP Colombia annual report 2006

The relationship with them is described by the country team as "informal" whereby WFP commits food and partners commit cash and in-kind food and non-food items to projects. Partners are responsible for receiving the food and distributing it to beneficiaries, with their own resources through a signed agreement which includes monitoring rights for WFP. The rules and regulations of implementing food-based programmes are set out in the PRRO 10366 Operation Manual. In addition WFP has a formal field level agreement with Pastoral Social and Catholic Relief Services under the PANEM, a Catholic Church relief programme directed to non-registered IDPs.

5 <http://www.icbf.gov.co/espanol/sistema.asp>. accessed December 2007

6 Many IDPs do not register with RUPD; many people registered under RUPD are not IDPs; RUPD does not recognise blockaded or resistant communities, multiple displacements or displacements within neighbourhoods; RUPD does not recognise economic displacement due to fumigation of illegal crops; RUPD does not recognise host populations as vulnerable groups. Source: Loughton 2005.

The overwhelming number of partnerships is central to WFP's targeting and distribution strategy as they are chosen for their geographical location and access to potential beneficiaries. The allocation of partners varies with the food assistance modality as the two examples below show.

Throughout 2007 the **relief component** of the PRRO was delivered as follows

- 49% Government institution
- 21% CBOs
- 17% Church based organisation
- 6% National NGO
- 4% International NGO
- 2% Health institution

Throughout 2007 **the FFW component** of the PRRO was delivered as follows

- 34% Government institution
- 33% CBOs
- 11% Church based organisation
- 9% National NGO
- 9% International NGO
- 2% Health institution

### **Targeting food assistance in Colombia: some important issues**

Successful targeting involves ensuring that the required assistance gets to the people who need it, at the time needed, in the quantity needed. From a humanitarian point of view, the main concern is about exclusion or under-coverage errors; and from the point of view of resource efficiency and not undermining local markets, inclusion or leakage errors are the biggest concern (Barrett and Maxwell 2005). Several issues related to targeting in general provide a backdrop for a better understanding of the Colombia specific research findings.

These include:

1. Political vulnerability of marginalised groups,
2. Diversion and redistribution of food assistance,
3. Protection and dignity,
4. Time-bound targeting criteria, and
5. The objectives of the food assistance

### **Marginalised groups**

While displacement is at the root of much of the loss of livelihood and dignity in Colombia, socio-economic inequalities also exist and there is a great disparity between the rich and poor. The two most marginalized groups are the indigenous and the afro-Colombian population. Currently, ethnic minorities are protected by specific laws, which in theory grant them rights to land and respect for their ethnic identity. Their human development

index is 0.66, the lowest in Colombia. Although ethnic minority groups constitute only 10% of the total population, they make up 19% of the total displaced population.

There are over 80 *indigenous* groups in Colombia, and an estimated total of 800,000 people living in very diverse eco-systems. Indigenous communities are protected by laws, established in 1890, to grant rights to pre-Hispanic cultures; laws enshrined in the 1991 National Constitution; and decrees. The indigenous *cabildos* are officially acknowledged as the communities' General Assemblies, while *resguardos* (official reserves) are the property of organised indigenous communities. This land however has not been spared by the armed actors.

The *Afro-Colombian communities* are protected by Law 70. It gives them ownership of territories where local committees are established, as an organisational form also recognised in law. The afro-Colombian population is concentrated along rainforest river communities along the pacific coastland and border with Panama where much of the violence has taken place. They have a history of a strong process of return after being displaced through organised peace communities which declared themselves to be outside the conflict. More recently the conflict has moved to the mountain border areas with Ecuador affecting different population groups as guerrilla and paramilitary confrontations continue to gain access to trade routes and natural resources.

WFP programme design acknowledges the marginalized groups and addresses their specific needs through positive discrimination when it comes to beneficiary selection, as they have limited access to government support systems. The PRRO was formulated to assist one of the most marginalized groups in the country: IDPs. Within that group WFP Colombia assists traditionally vulnerable and isolated groups, such as Indigenous and afro-Colombian communities, women, children, extremely vulnerable host communities and rural communities at risk of displacement. WFP programming includes a Colombia specific gender policy providing the general framework for the protection of beneficiaries. WFP programmes consider the marginalised groups that are listed in Table 3.

**Table 3. WFP PRRO current target groups based on criteria related to marginalisation**

WFP PRRO target groups	Observations
<b>Ethnic minorities</b>	Afro-Colombians and Indigenous communities
<b>Women</b>	73% of the total IDP population is women and children
<b>Urban and rural areas</b>	The rural-urban displacement has led to concentrations of IDPs in Colombia's main cities
<b>Communities hosting IDPs</b>	These are identified through the implementing partners. Many host communities, in particular in rural areas and small municipal capitals, are already living at little more than subsistence level and are ill equipped to cope with an influx of IDPs.
<b>Blockaded communities</b>	Those whose movement is restricted by armed actors, sometimes used as human shields between two groups UNHCR estimated 200 communities are in this situation
<b>Resistant communities</b>	Those who decide to organise themselves and keep armed forces out of their territory
<b>Communities displaced by fumigation</b>	Illicit crops, mostly coca, are grown in 26 of Colombia's 32 departments. If farmers or waged labourers (some small farmers are forced to grow coca by the armed groups) report fumigation as being the cause of displacement, they are excluded from government assistance.

This refinement of these target groups has been the result of successive PRROs, allowing for inclusion of more categories of beneficiary than those identified through government institution criteria.

#### **Diversion and redistribution of food aid**

Successful targeting does not stop at the identification of beneficiaries and delivery of food assistance; it also needs to ensure that the food is used by those it is intended for (Taylor 2004). The sharing of food assistance as a standard practice has both cultural aspects related to solidarity as well as more cohesion related aspects. This is why monitoring systems need to capture the reasons for the redistribution, to differentiate inaccurate targeting from corrupt leadership (Mathys 2004).

During the field interviews, no examples of food diversion were mentioned. One community visited even had all food coming in and out controlled by military checkpoints. Those interviewed claimed that they were under no pressure to pay any taxes for the food assistance they had received. This may be due to the relatively small ration size and short length of the programmes, and because some of it is distributed in cooked form. However, it is likely this phenomena of taxation is under reported as it is common practice in Colombia and known locally as the *vaccination jab*.

On the other hand, the redistribution of food was seen to be common practice during the field work by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. This is also captured in WFP post distribution monitoring forms. A distinction must be made between redistribution by targeted beneficiaries, and that carried out by community leaders. When probed as to why beneficiaries shared the little food they received, the most common response was that their neighbours were in the same situation as they were and therefore there was little difference

between them. Women attending nutritional risk programmes also believed this, even though they were fully aware that they had been selected to be part of the nutritional risk programme because their children met objective nutritional entry criteria.

Forms of redistribution in the Colombia case study endorsed by community leaders included giving out smaller rations to official beneficiaries so as to be able to give to more people. Communities who brought this up stressed that whereas they saw the redistribution as fair, they did not see the process that took place as fair, because they were not consulted prior to the decision being made. This type of behaviour was more divisive in some communities than in others and therefore relates directly to community based mechanisms of power and control. The point of interest of this redistribution for this study, is to what extent it is the result of community based processes, identified and endorsed by ordinary community members and to what extent is it imposed by community leaders.

### **Protection and dignity**

During the field work, discussions around dignity and food assistance were consistently broadened out by those interviewed to include more general rights related issues. The notion of having had their rights violated by forced displacement is strong in Colombia, and closely linked to the demeaning nature of having to rely on assistance. In addition, some of those interviewed described that receiving assistance was potentially dangerous when it involved attending official GoC selected sites, as it exposed IDPs making them visible to anyone wanting to take reprisals. WFP implementing partners are well aware of this and some acknowledged supporting specific individuals at the time of interview because they had received threats, and were able to do this in a confidential way that minimised the risk of exposing the family. At the same time, a contradictory position was seen among some beneficiaries interviewed, who were thankful for WFP food assistance, but who longed for access to the full set of rights they knew they were entitled to under the law so that they could stop living on handouts.

The study did not interview people who chose not to look for assistance, so nothing can be said of the hundreds of thousands who are too scared or distrustful to get involved in assistance programmes. The nature of the *gota a gota* displacement in Colombia foments anonymity and mistrust. Alongside this background in which humanitarian agencies operate in Colombia, there is also a current that criticises the government's handout approach to dealing with the effects of the conflict. This stigma associated with receiving aid is therefore further exacerbated. This means that although there is a legal framework for the protection and assistance of those affected by the conflict, it has many shortcomings in its practical application due to the various layers of mistrust involved. Food assistance is delivered through such a wide range of implementing actors in Colombia (table 2) that varying levels of trust are involved between the various actors.

Some interviewees felt they were lucky to be receiving food assistance as they realised most of their other rights that they were entitled to were not being met. This element of luck may be indicative of the lack of control over their lives felt by many IDPs. Even beneficiaries



belonging to strong women led groups who had made clear inroads towards meeting some of the needs of the group, wondered if it was not just luck that singled them out to receive food assistance. Sometimes this luck was associated with religious beliefs. The researchers visit to listen to the communities point of view was often cited as proof of solidarity and a sign that they had not been forgotten in an environment where receiving food assistance is a reminder of having been wronged in the first place.

### **Time-bound targeting criteria**

Emergency funding is often directed to people suffering from the consequences of new events and is intended to have quick life saving impact. In the context of complex emergencies, the chronic nature of the conflict is the backdrop which constantly created new IDPs. Colombia is no exception, however, it is worth highlighting that the *gota a gota* type of displacement, fear of reprisal and inefficiency of the official IDP registration system means newly affected IDPs are often identified months after their original displacement. WFP works with an 18 month since displacement cut-off in its PRRO as a time-bound eligibility criteria.

WFP staff and beneficiaries alike have identified this as a limiting factor for beneficiary inclusion as the time lag from displacement to identification of beneficiary can often take even longer than 18 months. Since WFP assistance is not directed as first relief response, but rather towards transition between being displaced and becoming self-sufficient, in line with the IDP rights outlined by the GoC, the 18 month cut off may be an administrative criteria that excludes individuals at a time when they belong to a community that has taken time to establish itself and organise its quest for rights and assistance. In practice, WFP staff exerts some flexibility with the displacement time cut off, but this appears to be for practical reasons rather than as part of the programme design, since often donor funds have to be specifically directed to new IDPs for relief. The 18 month cut off for eligibility of WFP relief assistance appears to be particular to Colombia, and is a reflection of the complex system of anonymous and fear laden displacement that often means individuals are not able to ask for help until they have found some place to live or community/relative to be hosted by.

### **Objectives of food assistance**

In Colombia, food assistance has a livelihood and dignity focus rather than concrete food security objective. This became very apparent in interviews where individuals focused on a rights-based discourse when referring to food assistance, rather than a needs based-discourse. The food is appreciated as much for its physical qualities as for representing proof that they had not been forgotten by everybody, in view of the limited capacity for the duty bearers to meet demand. It is important to keep this in mind when looking at WFP assistance modalities, that relief assistance is very short (90-180 days) compared with other countries suffering from protracted conflict situations and is intended to help tide IDPs over from a relief to rehabilitation phase over a period of months and sometimes years.

### **Conclusions**

Several points can be highlighted from this discussion. WFP Colombia aims to *protect and stabilise livelihoods* of IDPs and enhance their resilience to shocks, by means of relief and recovery strategies designed to be complementary. WFP operates under formal agreements with two GoC institutions and the most extensive network of implementing partners of any WFP operation in the world. Food assistance is delivered for between 80 to 240 days under seven different modality options. Displacement is constant in Colombia and although the law provides for the rights of IDPs, the systems in place are inadequate to meet demands. There is much controversy over official numbers of IDPs. Channelling food assistance within this environment in a timely manner is challenging due to not only logistical and resource issues, but because it is linked to the political vulnerability of marginalised groups, diversion and redistribution of food assistance, protection and dignity issues, time-bound targeting criteria, and the objectives of the food assistance. This section has identified the background context in which community based targeting mechanisms operate as will be seen in the next section.

## **Section II. Operational aspects of targeting**

### **Needs assessment and programme design**

The design of PRRO 10366 is based on a sophisticated understanding of the causes and consequences of the conflict based on extensive secondary information sources and close communication with organisations working on the ground. WFP commissioned studies on the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable groups for a better assessment of needs include:

- 1.** Socio-economic and nutritional status of IDPs through two sample surveys
- 2.** 2003 WFP/Econometria study on Food Security among IDPs
- 3.** 2004 WFP/ICRC rapid needs assessment in 6 departments
- 4.** 2005 WFP/PAHO nutrition survey
- 5.** SIMVA - A system for collecting food security data on a regular basis by tracking the same household over time<sup>7</sup> - covers 20% of WFP operations
- 6.** Baseline study of Emergency, FFW and FFT modalities
- 7.** 2007 ICRC/WFP study of IDP and resident population food security and health status in 8 major cities in Colombia

The 2003 survey showed that 50% of the IDP population was less than 15 years old, IDP households purchased 80% of their food while their average income was 61% of the minimum wage. This classified 70% of households as deficient in two or more unmet basic needs, compared with 10% in the poorest quintile of the population. This led to the development of PRROs that included both a relief and recovery component. No EMOPS exist.

The allocation of resources for relief/recovery distributions in Colombia is variable, changing every year to meet identified needs. This has meant an increasing allocation for relief component from 23% to 47% in the last three years: (2005:23%/77%; 2006:40%/60%; 2007:47%/53%). This flexibility to respond to newly identified needs within the PRRO in Colombia is very different to most other countries where WFP operates, where specific WFP led needs assessments involving primary data collection are often the only tool available for an understanding of the situation.

The recent WFP PRRO 2007 evaluation concluded that relief operations continue to be relevant to address IDP needs, and that school feeding is a suitable follow on from relief. It also suggested pre-school feeding can have nutritional, and not only educational objectives,

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7 The SIMVA is a co-designed vulnerability monitoring system which can serve both as a baseline and a monitoring tool. It has had limited use due to complexity and high cost, as well as to some debate as to whether it is a baseline, a monitoring tool or a surveillance instrument to assess IDP and other vulnerable groups food insecurity.

and that vulnerable group feeding is the best method for assisting at risk groups and be able to target specifically. Finally Food for work and food for training were seen as appropriate ways of meeting IDP evolving needs in a wide variety of livelihood recovery activities. WFP Colombia is revising its targeting strategy according to the above conclusions at the time of writing.

**Stakeholder analysis**

There are a number of different stakeholders, who are either directly involved in targeting, who influence targeting and who are influenced by targeting practices. These are summarized in table 4 below after discussions with WFP Colombia staff. It was concluded that WFP targeting is mostly influenced by WFP GoC partners along with its IPs.

**Table 4. Analysis of stakeholders influencing status on targeting practices in Colombia**

Directly involved in targeting	Influence targeting	Influenced by targeting
WFP Accion Social ICBF Implementing partners - government institutions - church based - CBOs - INGOs - education and health authorities IDP committees Community leaders Colombian Red Cross Recipients (through sharing)	Political actors (legal and illegal) Donors (ECHO, USAID) ICRC INGOs (26 of them) GoC early warning system (SAT) IDP committees Individuals Other agencies: - UNHCR - Noraid  <b>Specifically DO NOT influence targeting</b> Local press & academics	Local authorities Food aid relief committees Recipients - organised women’s groups - indigenous groups  Non-recipients - marginalized groups such as the youth, teenage pregnant girls, recruits, the disabled - spontaneous IDPs not identified

**Targeting strategy**

The main approaches to targeting include a variety of methods rather than a single technique<sup>8</sup>. The most commonly accepted targeting approaches include:

**Geographic targeting** refers to the “identification of specific administrative units, economic areas or livelihood zones that have a high concentration of food-insecure women, men and children” (WFP 2006). Most reviews have concluded that geographical targeting is the most feasible and appropriate form of targeting in emergencies (Taylor 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Forthcoming complimentary FIC research study document by Maxwell et al (2006) Targeting in complex emergencies. Literature Review

**Administrative/indicator targeting** corresponds to the use of objective measures of need such as physiological status (anthropometric or nutritional status; health status or illness); demographic information (size of household, groups of school children, pregnant and lactating women, female-headed households, the elderly or the disabled); socioeconomic status (household income, size of landholdings, asset ownership); and political vulnerability (displaced people, ethnic minority). These objective measures are usually defined by agencies external to WFP.

**Community-based targeting** refers to community members defining eligibility criteria and applying it in recipient selection based on the recognition that the community itself has the greatest knowledge about the needs. The process can involve formal representatives such as local leaders, or elected Relief Committee. In theory, in community-based targeting, the community is responsible for identifying and selecting recipients (and non-recipients), but in practice the eligibility criteria are usually predetermined by an external implementing agency on the basis of assessments (Mathys 2004).

**Self targeting** is designed so that participants self-select into the programme. The most common of these is through food for work, where self-targeting is achieved by setting wages low enough that only the truly poor or food insecure would participate in the intervention, but high enough to meet basic needs. Another form of self-targeting is the provision of cooked food, or soup kitchens, which often only those truly in need will make use of.

### **WFP Colombia Targeting strategy**

The targeting strategy in Colombia is clearly described in the PRRO 10366 Operations Manual which serves as project document for WFP's two government partners as well as for its many implementing partners. WFP's operating environment involves up to 2,000 implementing partners to provide food assistance for almost half a million beneficiaries through seven different food assistance modalities. Some clear sequential steps have been identified here to help interpret the strategy.

#### **First step – Geographical and administrative targeting**

WFP Colombia's targeting strategy begins with four targeting criteria which have been summarised in Figure 1 below as a useful way of distilling the community based participatory aspects later on:

1. Geographical targeting
2. Population related targeting
3. The Partnership with Accion Social and ICBF
4. Institutional targeting through choice of implementing partners

These four criteria are spelled out in the Operations Manual and correspond to *geographical* and *administrative targeting* (Andreuzzi) and are distinct from *community-based* and *self-targeting* approaches listed above. The first step criteria allow WFP to:



**1.** Prioritise the administrative departments in Colombia that experience most displacement identified through RUPD and CODHES district level statistics, which registers departments that “expel” as well as those that “host” IDPs. Smaller administrative units are then targeted (*Cabeceras municipales, Corregimientos/Veredas, Barrios/Sectores*).

**2.** Prioritise vulnerable groups already identified (women, children, ethnic groups, age, IDP status, vulnerable groups to food insecurity) including:

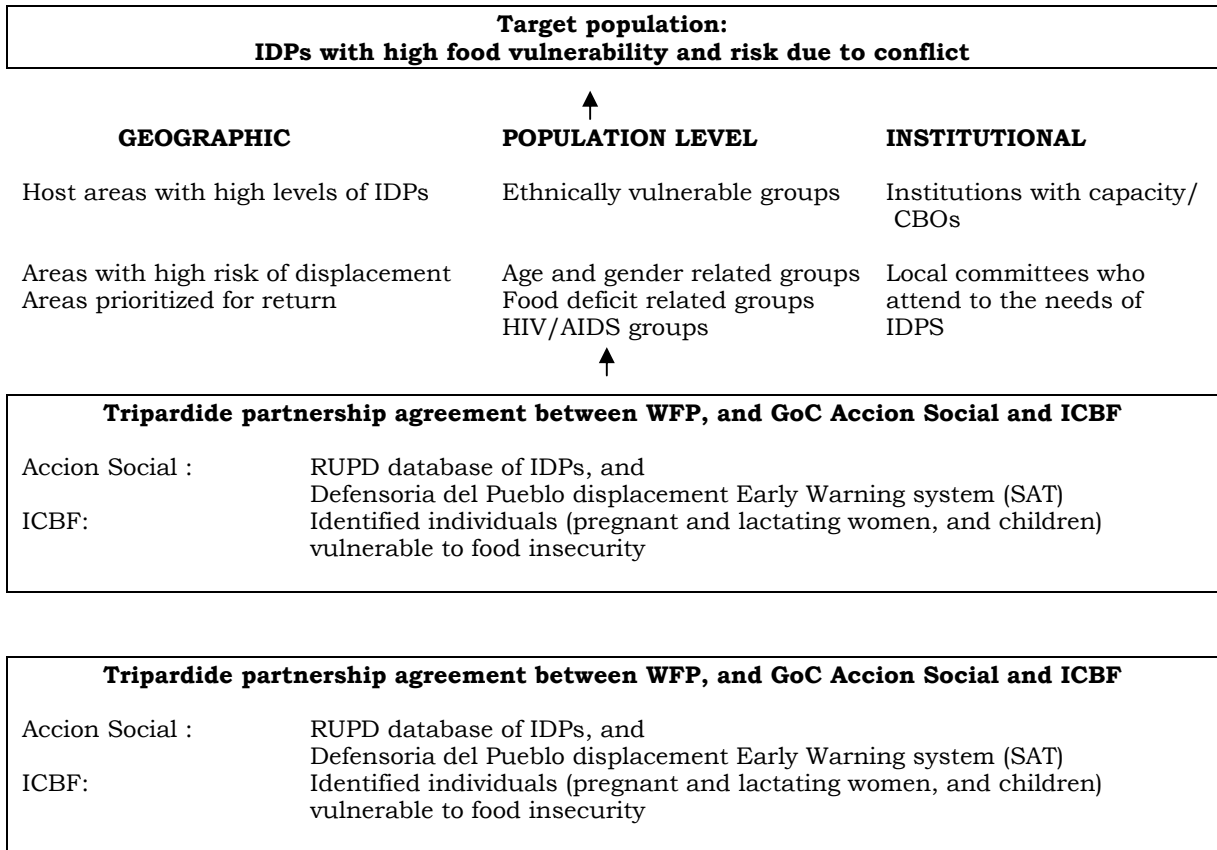
- Gender (priority to females, especially in FFT literacy and nutrition programmes)
- Age (priority to 14-19 year old girls, FFT and Nutritional risk)
- Rural displaced to urban (especially women)
- IDPs not registered in RUPD (validated by the RUT or ex-ICRC beneficiaries)
- <18 months since displacement (relief; FFW; FFT link to government initiatives)
- Food insecure (FFW for those with food deficit, no food aid, no stable source of income, returnees under principle 28, not benefiting from similar assistance elsewhere)

**3.** Target through government institutions with a remit to assist those with food needs and encourage the promotion of the participation of the implementing partners and participating in capacity building of these and of the community.

**4.** Identify implementing partners who work in these geographical areas and can reach the identified vulnerable groups. Partners are tasked with the individual identification of beneficiaries according to the targeting tools above. WFP therefore chooses partners who show capacity to involve community in project identification, design and implementation, have proven experience of working with the displaced and vulnerable; are credible and be recognised by the community.

**Figure 1. WFP Colombia Targeting strategy<sup>9</sup>**

**First step: geographical and administrative targeting**



<sup>9</sup> Based on WFP Colombia PRRO Operations Manual page 17: *Process of formulating and approving project documents.*

**Targeting example - Nutritionally at risk beneficiaries displaced to an urban centre**

IDPs displaced from different locations in Colombia settle in urban peripheries of the capital. Women within the community offer support to newcomers by encouraging them to join their women's group and participate in peer group activities to help them deal with their socio-economic hardships. The neighbourhood is recognised as a host community that IDPs seek refuge in through secondary data. Nutritionally at risk beneficiaries are selected among the 3 to 6 year old population, and their mothers attend the local CBO centre to receive food assistance as well as participate in other activities offered by the CBO.

Geographical targeting identifies where WFP will work, using available displacement figures. The second step identifies children at nutritional risk and targets them for food assistance using institutional criteria related to nutritional status which can be measured using objective indicators.

**Second step – food assistance modality targeting**

A second step involves choosing the food assistance modality that is most appropriate to meet the needs of the people identified under step 1. This is illustrated in Figure 2. This step is crucial in the targeting strategy, as the chosen modality corresponds to specific beneficiary profiles, and hence influences who will be selected for food assistance.

**Figure 2. WFP Colombia Targeting Strategy**

**Second step: food assistance modality targeting**

**Target population:  
IDPs and vulnerable groups with high food vulnerability and risk due to conflict identified through step one above (geographic, population and institutional targeting)**



1. Relief (General food distribution or soup kitchen)
2. FFW (Individual and community works)
3. FFT (Literacy prioritised over other trainings, but also linked to government schemes)
4. School age support to 6-14 year olds
5. Pre- school feeding to 3-6 year olds
6. Nutritional Risk feeding to children with anthropometric measures (Weight for Height < 2 Z-scores)
7. Mother and Child feeding to pregnant, lactating & mothers with children <2 years old

The second step allows the targeting strategy to become operational because the choice of food assistance modality eventually identifies who is included and who is excluded from a programme due to the specified selection criteria linked to that modality. The modality predefines the target group. At first glance it may appear that the relief, FFW and FFT modalities have more scope for community participation in targeting, especially as these food assistance modalities are often associated with the self targeting approach described above. In contrast, the other four modalities are more closely linked to institutional feeding,

and offer less scope for community participation in targeting. However, the field work revealed that FFW and FFT schemes are often linked to other initiatives, where the selection of beneficiaries is not done by WFP, but by a government IDP scheme, and WFP provides food assistance to those admitted into the scheme. This removes the self targeting component, unless it is a CBO run project. The implementing partners are requested to follow the specific entry and exit criteria specified for each modality based on a project specific targeting tool devised by WFP for its partners.

*“WFP targets the most vulnerable and socially excluded groups, aims to minimise exclusion and inclusion errors. Therefore all implementing partners need to apply the targeting tool before submitting a project request”.* (Source: Operations Manual for PRRO 1036)

**Example - A spontaneous returnee community**

This community was displaced by violence in 2002 and moved down from their rural homesteads to urban centres. After more than four years of displacement, the displaced community organised itself to the point they decided to return to their land, without the official support and guarantee of safety and dignity they are entitled to under the IDP principles. In this example, the return process restricts humanitarian organizations, as the return is deemed to be spontaneous and not official, and therefore GoC targeting criteria do not apply. However, the church leaders in the urban centres identify the vulnerable situation of the IDPs who wish to go back to cultivating their homesteads and WFP provides a relief ration to support the return process.

Institutional targeting is the first step, and identifies a community WFP will assist through one of its implementing partner.

The second step involves the community elaborating a list of *spontaneous returnees* who will be eligible for WFP food assistance. Members of the community in *resistance* (those who refused to be displaced originally) cannot be not included in the target beneficiary group according to the targeting tool applied to returnee selection. The community understands WFP food is for those who were displaced and are now returning and acknowledges that although those who *resisted* could also benefit from food assistance, they are conscious of the programming criteria.

The second step is the choice of relief modality for returnee populations.

From the two examples above we can see that first and second steps targeting in Colombia make up a **targeting method** with a set of rules, criteria and other elements of programme design that define beneficiary eligibility as outlined in the PRRO Operations Manual. In addition to this, there is a **targeting mechanism** which amounts to the choice of implementing partners chosen by WFP to identify individuals and deliver the food assistance. It is here where community-based targeting begins to have a role since over one third of WFP operations in Colombia are implemented through CBOs. In this sense, community-based targeting is not a method, but part of a mechanism that places communities in charge of assessing eligibility and or implementing delivery (Conning 2000). CBOs and community members elected onto Relief Committees or equivalent structures are given responsibility for identify potential beneficiaries according to WFP's targeting method, but are not given the responsibility for setting the targeting criteria (section III). The complete devolution of resources and of responsibility for setting targeting criteria rarely lies with the community in both humanitarian and development contexts (Conning 2000).



## Operational constraints affecting targeting

### 1. Logistical challenges

Colombia's geography makes it logistically complex and extremely expensive to deliver food round the country. One politician has described Colombia as being more geography than history, and having more territory than state<sup>10</sup>. The extensive network of partners and food assistance modalities poses a further challenge since there are over 1,000 end distribution points the food has to get to. In about 15% of cases, the food has to be transported by river to reach communities, incurring additional fuel costs that need to be covered by the implementing partner, which may be the community itself. Sub-office staff recognises this constraint, and accommodate the needs of those logistically more difficult to reach when possible, in an attempt not to exclude populations more difficult to access. This is helped by the fact many projects are small with 1-2000 beneficiaries. Cost analysis was not part of this study, but it is clear that it can influence targeting when accessing remote communities involves much higher transport costs. WFP circumvents this somewhat through its implementing partners, some of which raise funds for other projects and can therefore reach more dispersed populations.

### 2. Flexible modality challenges

WFP support is short term in its design, providing food rations for between 3-6 months for the relief modality, 2.5-5 months for FFW and FFT modalities, or up to one meal a day for between 240-330 days of a year for nutritional risk, maternal and child groups, pre-school and school feeding modalities (table 1). This undoubtedly increases coverage and allows resources to be directed to new emerging groups in need of assistance during the life cycle of the PRRO. WFP sub-office staff identifies new projects roughly every three months (depending on the modality) maintaining a high rotation of beneficiaries. Since there are always more demands than resources, WFP staff needs to negotiate the timing of the start and end of the projects with the implementing partners in a very flexible manner to ensure maximum coverage. While this focuses on beneficiary interests, it poses considerable work load on WFP staff and implementing partners who aim to endure smooth rotation procedures and within the three year life span of the project have to monitor and follow up on groups of beneficiaries who may have received anything between 80 to 900 days worth of food assistance.

### 3. Security constraints

Through its extensive partnership network, WFP can access the locations where IP are based, but needs to remain sensitive to changing security conditions. This study did not aim to quantify access problems due to insecurity, but highlights it as a realistic constraint WFP staff and implementing partners have to work with and which can affect the timing of assistance to a given community, hence targeting. Blockaded communities are the most difficult to reach and WFP has close established collaboration with IPs wishing to assist

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10 Source: MSF Spain 2005 bulletin, quote from GoC ex minister Rodrigo Escobar Navia

these populations. During this study one selected community could not be visited due to increased security risks on that day.

#### 4. Financial resource availability

The current PPRO has not been fully funded and staff reported that this certainly curtailed WFP planned activities, leading mainly to delays in food distributions. Although beneficiaries received a full ration in all modalities, in some cases the duration of the food assistance was shortened in order to ensure coverage (PRRO draft evaluation 2007). Whilst this does not constitute a targeting constraint in terms of identification, it does constitute a targeting constraint in terms of distribution (Taylor 2004). The 2005-2008 PRRO expanded its operations in six new departments compared with the preceding PRRO in order to increase its coverage and is managing to operate with a reduction of 33% in costs. The study did not seek to quantify the funding situation, but rather to highlight that financial considerations have the potential for influencing geographical targeting decisions.

#### 5. Community perception constraints

Communities interviewed were understanding of logistical and resource constraints that hampered WFP food delivery and related these to the contextual complexity of operating in Colombia, a country where IDPs complained of being part of a national system in which they are put on a list and never receive anything:

*“ esa lista es como la loteria, no sabes a quien le va a salir”  
(that [registration] list is like a lottery, you never know who is going to be chosen)*

This was observed during the fieldwork at the UAO where IDPs seeking official medical assistance they are entitled to under the law, were given a number and told to come weekly on the same day and wait to see if their number was called. This was in sharp contrast to WFP food assistance beneficiaries consulted during this study, who reported that whilst there were sometimes delays in getting a project approved, once it began, the food aid deliveries were reliable. The community's perception of WFP has potential for influencing targeting processes.

### Conclusions

Several points can be highlighted from this discussion. WFP Colombia has devised a sophisticated targeting strategy which involves extensive use of secondary data and commissioning socio-economic studies to ascertain the needs of IDPs. The targeting strategy has been summarised here as being made up of sequential steps corresponding to geographical and administrative targeting, and subsequently targeting through choice of food assistance modality. These two steps result in a targeted beneficiary profile that implementing agencies will identify and distribute food to. Community based participation begins at this stage, when official leaders or food (or relief) committee elected representatives engage in the identification of beneficiaries and ensure programme delivery, including monitoring. FFW and FFT modalities do not always adhere to the self targeting approach described above, as they are sometimes linked to government schemes where

beneficiaries are selected and then automatically eligible for food assistance. The case study visited seven communities and found distinct characteristics in each. Characteristics of community participation is explained in more detail in the next section.

### Section III. Participatory aspects of targeting

#### Participation<sup>11</sup>

The concepts of “community” and “participation” are particularly difficult to define even in an abstract sense, much less in an operational sense. Even with the emergence of rights-based and community-based approaches to assistance, these terms are seldom defined.

Communities are defined in terms of “primary groups”- indigenous institutions that are ascriptive, including kinship ties, traditional political institutions and authority structures and territorial networks around the community or village; and “secondary groups” that include social and economic organizations that often involve voluntary membership (Chazan 1992). It is easy for outsiders to oversimplify local community structures when using the term, overlooking local leadership structures, processes, capacities, resourcefulness and culture. This can be further complicated in the context of a complex emergency. Many conceptions overlap either the “moral economy” aspects of community, or the tendency towards “elite capture” of goods and services in a community—emphasizing that perceptions of community may be more informed by the biases of the observer than the actual tendencies of a given community.

Community-based or participatory approaches may have to do with several objectives. One of these is essentially an instrumental means to an end: to save costs; to improve programme performance through better in-depth knowledge of the members of the community; or to improve accessibility. On the other hand, these approaches may be an end in themselves: empowering communities; recognizing the right of communities to have a say in decisions that affect their future and well-being; rebuilding social networks that may have been eroded by conflict or crisis.

The participation and consultation of affected populations in humanitarian action now seems widely accepted as crucial to effective social targeting, resource utilisation, accountability, sustainability and impact. Three core components of participation, considered by ALNAP (2003) include context; affected population; and humanitarian actor. Each of these can constrain or promote participation. The more affected the community (little organised, without life projects, total loss, uprooted) the greater the likelihood that it will become the object rather than the subject of aid.

The WFP policy on participation states that its

*“assistance programmes are designed and implemented on the basis of **broad-based participation** in order to ensure that programme participants (including beneficiaries, national and local governments, civil-society organizations and other partners) contribute their knowledge, skills and resources to processes that influence their lives. WFP will use participatory approaches to bring the poorest and marginalized people into its assistance*

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<sup>11</sup> Taken from Maxwell Case study for South Sudan March 2008

*programmes, strengthen their representation in community structures and overcome gender inequalities by creating opportunities for both women's and men's voices to be heard. It will do all this while maintaining sufficient flexibility to ensure its programmes' suitability to local situations and capacities.*"<sup>12</sup>

Hence WFP's definition tends to include both of the different categories of objectives for participatory approaches. The policy on community-based targeting does not specify a view on the nature of "community" as outlined above. WFP's 2006 Policy "Targeting in Emergencies"<sup>13</sup> defines community-based targeting as:

*"Households or beneficiaries are selected with the participation of community members such as traditional or religious leaders, specially constituted food committees equally composed of women and men, or local authorities, on the basis of criteria developed with the participation of the communities."*

This study has therefore sought the broadest interpretation of both terms. WFP programmes visited in Colombia ensure a high degree of community participation when WFP works directly with the beneficiaries of food assistance. Whilst active community participation is an aim in itself of WFP programming, this participation is not tantamount to improved targeting and must be differentiated in order to ascertain if community based targeting mechanisms help to reach those in most need in complex emergencies.

### **Example: Women's group in FFT programme**

Discussions were held with beneficiaries of a FFT programme for women where the group decided what training programmes they wished to be involved in. The discussions revealed that women who wished to join the group had a grace period in which they had to prove their commitment and their worth to the group, and were only invited to officially join the group if they were seen to have similar attributes as existing members. Whilst this is a community based targeting mechanism, it does not necessarily mean that those in most need of food assistance are receiving it through this modality.

## **Governance mechanisms and participation**

### **Civil administration**

Civil administration is arranged hierarchically by geographic area. The first internal administrative unit are Departments overseen by a Governor; the administrative units that fall under the departments in decreasing order of size are Municipios, Alcaldias, Localidades and Barrios for the cities and Veredas and Corregimientos in rural areas. The

<sup>12</sup> This is taken from p.15 of the WFP (2003). *Consolidated Framework of WFP Policies . An Updated Version*. Executive Board Third Regular Session Rome, 20–24 October 2003.

<sup>13</sup> WFP/EB.1/2006/5-A

smallest administrative unit is the Barrio or Sector, each with their own GoC representative.

Colombia has another important public service independent from central known as the *Defensoria de Pueblo* (defense institution of the people), an ombudsman, represented by the Personero in the smaller administrative units. Its role is to uphold the rights of people in social or economic need through judiciary or extra-judiciary representation as necessary. In the case of IDPs whose rights have been violated, this service is of utmost importance, and can be accessed through regional and municipal offices, as well as judicial centres.

Government management of emergency response is through its Unidades de Atencion y Orientacion (UAO) which are centres run by Accion Social to provide assistance to IDPs. This is where declaration of displacement and registration for various of the IDP entitlements happens. It is well acknowledged in Colombia that many IDPs do not make to a UAO and find alternative support systems through extended family, church based networks and even the Personero.

### **Traditional and other leaders**

The indigenous population has their specific officially acknowledged leadership system. The study did not investigate these in depth other than to ascertain the relationship between the chosen leader and the rest of the community. In the case of the Arhuaco indigenous population visited during the case study, the community leader has clear religious, social and political roles closely tied to the use of natural resources and governs through a general assembly (cabildo) through extensive consultation processes. Traditional leaders among non-indigenous groups exist that correspond roughly with the Veredas.

In addition to these traditional leaders, the conflict has led to the rise of armed actor leadership styles within the guerrilla groups as well as the paramilitaries, in addition to those existing within the GoC armed forces. These were not researched during the case study, although it is acknowledged that there is a potential role for these leadership systems within redistribution of food assistance.

### **Participatory (community-based) targeting practices**

From the literature review of community based targeting practices (WFP 2007), a number of practices emerge that define community based targeting more fully. These can be summarized as community participation (through a relief committee or other representatives) in various stages of the programme cycle:

1. Assessing food insecurity;
2. Setting targeting criteria;
3. Overseeing registration and verification processes;
4. Oversight of distribution points and distribution; or
5. Oversight of monitoring (targeting criteria, food baskets and end use of food).



In view of the step by step targeting strategy described in Section II, it is clear that in Colombia community based targeting exists when the community is an implementing partner of WFP, and when an intermediary partner chooses to use the CBTD approach. Participative methods are encouraged by WFP to all implementing partners in the operations manual encouraging meetings with beneficiaries, especially women; explanations on the origins of the food assistance; and the creation of a Food (or relief) Committee or equivalent. The scope for direct community participation in the targeting strategy is however limited under the current PRRO, which specifies beneficiary profiles in great detail. This does not mean effective targeting is compromised, rather that community participation at this stage of the project cycle does not feature as strongly as in other stages.



**Photo: Focus group with leaders. Identification of decision-making processes at various steps of the programme cycle / J. Frize / Colombia, December 2008.**

Table 5 below categorises the community into 5 groups, which are the focus of this study. This categorisation helps determine if there are any advantages to community based processes from the view point of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries by capturing how well they feel their representatives act on their behalf. It includes the implementing partner as a separate column for cases when this is not the community itself. The table is based on observations made to the communities visited and is only intended to be indicative. It can be seen that involvement is directly linked to roles and responsibilities. Non beneficiaries expressed no involvement, although they were aware that food assistance was being delivered.

**Table 5. Overview of participation of different community members in the various stage of the programme cycle**

<b>Programme cycle stages</b>	<b>Implementing partner (not the community)</b>	<b>Community leader</b>	<b>Food assistance project leaders</b>	<b>Relief Committee (RC)</b>	<b>Beneficiary</b>	<b>Non-beneficiary (not a leader or in RC)</b>
<b>Early warning</b>	<b>YES</b>					
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>YES</b>					
<b>Design</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>				
<b>Targeting criteria</b>						
<b>Beneficiary Selection</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	
<b>Distribution</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	
<b>Monitoring</b>	<b>YES</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>		
<b>Evaluation</b>						

Example of Focus Group discussion outputs with community leaders on decision making processes during different stages of the project cycle, December 2007.

For the seven communities interviewed, a distinct pattern of participation unfolds, whereby the IP has the most active participation, including that of needs assessment. Non-beneficiaries on the contrary have the least participation. Community leaders, Relief committees and leaders chosen to run food assistance projects are most active in the implementation stages of the programme cycle related to beneficiary selection, food distribution and monitoring activities. These stages of the programme cycle correspond to the implementation, once the geographical and administrative targeting and the choice of food assistance modality targeting has been completed. None of the community members are involved in setting targeting criteria (section II), however, most are involved in the selection of beneficiaries in terms of identifying them at community level.

The perceived level of participation of community members is therefore closely related to their perceived level of representation in terms of their community leaders or food assistance leaders. This means there is an important role to play for the Relief Committees and equivalent leadership structures for the targeting of food assistance. Beneficiaries interviewed expressed most involvement during the act of food distribution itself and in FFT projects, especially in the instances when those involved in FFT were actively involved in recruiting more beneficiaries into the project itself. These FFT projects are good examples of community participation in the targeting process, using something similar to a snowball recruitment technique, which corresponds to a self targeting approach.

The flip side to this is the reported disadvantage of strong community involvement in FFT where work is very time-demanding. Community members who took on a leading role in project design and implementation reported long working hours that stopped them from

participating in other remunerated work or childcare.

In addition, CBDT is reported to involve less agency staff during the distribution process itself, however, the identification of communities and leaders can be quite time consuming for agency staff as it requires establishing partnerships with central, district and local leaders to ensure full support for the approach at all levels (Mathys 2004).

One final point is that the environment in which the crisis develops determines the forms of community participation possible in humanitarian programmes. Access to the intended beneficiaries depends, for the most part, on the mobility of humanitarian actors, the positioning of the parties to the conflict and the degree of respect granted to human rights. It can also be affected by geographical conditions and the security, or otherwise, of roads/waterways. In Colombia, such factors reduce the possibilities for encounter between humanitarian actors and affected populations (ALNAP, Colombia Case Study 2005). However, the phenomenon of over-participation of affected communities has also been documented as a reality.

### **Relief committees**

WFP's targeting strategy (outlined in Section II), suggests that once negotiation takes place between the IP and community leaders/representatives, the relief committee (or equivalent body) becomes operational if a food assistance project has been agreed. This describes a scenario where Relief Committees made up of representative members of the community are involved in supplying beneficiary lists and registering eligible beneficiaries according to WFP criteria set out in the PRRO Operations Manual to ensure appropriate targeting of food assistance.

Relief committee members interviewed during the case study were mainly women. Much of the discussion with them revolved around their involvement in mainly food handling, storage and distribution and cooking related work. This level of responsibility was reported to be greatly appreciated by women running canteens and communal kitchens, as they could see on a daily basis how their work benefited those receiving the food assistance. In addition, the women felt empowered to discuss the possibility of including newly identified people who are in need for consideration into the programme, whilst clearly respecting the eligibility criteria and rules. Increased empowerment in theory has been considered an advantage of CBDT and female Relief Committee members certainly confirmed that project management had allowed them to acquire skills in networking and resource mobilization as well as having provided them with in-depth knowledge on laws, regulations and institutional mandates.

The reported advantages of giving women a direct managerial role and having to report back to WFP resulted in their reported ability to officially protect the food from community members through clear justification of their roles and responsibilities towards anyone requesting food from them as can be seen in the following quote:

*“no señora, a mi no me van a pedir las llaves del almacén, esa comida es para los niños”*

(There’s no way I’ll be asked for the store room keys, that food is for the children)

It must be noted that the women’s groups admitted to being able to say this with hindsight through the experience they had shared. Newly formed relief committees who had only handled food once at the time of our study visit, expressed far less certainty about their role, and their ability to stand up to any community pressures. This was especially the case when local leadership was strong, and women felt they had no dominantly recognised role.

### **Relief committees from indigenous communities setting their own targeting criteria**

Relief committees made up of traditional authorities from indigenous groups were less willing to explain how they targeted and explained that one of their strengths as a community was being able to keep to their own rules and not feel obliged to accept the conditions set by outsiders (meaning WFP and others who may impose ways of working). In this case, the relief committee would meet the people’s needs according to their own rules. They expressed having negotiated this with WFP. This is an example of community participation in a fuller sense that they set their own targeting criteria, which is kept secret. Over time, the WFP team felt they would gain more trust to understand how the targeting was done.

### **CBOs**

As mentioned above, the term community is also laden with meanings often associated with people grouped together due to common characteristics such as:

- Geographic proximity of origin
- Geographical proximity after an event such as displacement
- Lineage based communities (ethnicity, families)
- Time based communities brought together by an event
- Communities defined by collective action
- Communities defined by GoC programme actions

During this study, communities fitting all those descriptions were visited. However, only in some cases were WFP food assistance programmes being implemented by CBOs. The potential for grass roots community based organised groups to emerge in any of the above settings with leadership styles that enhance representative and participative targeting, is likely to be related to level of community cohesion and a determining factor for attracting outsider support. Interviews with key informants with local authority representatives, revealed that it is easier to allocate project funds and support to communities who show levels of organisation that are conducive to collaboration with outside partners, than to disorganised communities who failed to comply with partnership agreements and who were more likely to be dropped out of future projects.

It must be emphasized, nonetheless, that a strong CBO is not the equivalent of a fair targeting system. This very point made earlier with reference to strong community leaders and targeting also applies to communities being supported through implementing partners that use CBTD approaches and follow and support the community closely, such as the church based groups and some government institutions. It appears from the field work that a degree of organization allows for more successful partnerships with outsiders. The CBO still has to prove its worth to the community members through different mechanisms than the ones used to work in partnership with outsiders. It is here that CBTD may have a role to play. If the CBO adheres to CBTD principles and represents its community it may be in the best position to ensure the best form of community based targeting.

The case study CBOs presented interesting differences between urban, peri-urban and rural communities. In urban settings, the community based projects were formed through a collective task that lent itself more easily to forming self help support groups through which food assistance could be channeled, almost working as a self targeting mechanism where members of the community with a degree of trust and confidence in a CBO could easily join the CBO and thus benefit from its activities. The strongest community based groups were those capable of identifying their own needs and negotiated for WFP support.

To further investigate what enhances CBTD practices, an analysis of the application of CBTD principles applied to the seven communities visited for this case study is provided in Table 6 below. It is clear that community leaders are the interface between the outside agency and the community. Where the IP is close to the community and familiar with leadership styles and the degree of representation of the rest of the community, CBTD principles are easier to uphold. Where the IP is faced with a new community, that may be dispersed or under the rule of bad leadership, alternative representation through formal relief committees is more conducive to CBTD. The table below suggest that current practice is strong on transparency and gender sensitivity, but weaker in accountability.

Field visits revealed that where the leadership structure was hierarchical, protective or selfish, exclusion errors were more likely, despite the stringent criteria developed by WFP for programming. While this may be an obvious observation, the only check and balance to mitigate against is developing a close relationship with the community and the IP. In view of the number of IPS and communities served, and the rotation of projects, this will continue to be a challenge for WFP. The bad leadership examples were more likely to be a source of conflict when the food assistance was given as FFW or FFT modality, and where the beneficiaries of these programmes had been selected for the training or work scheme even before WFP negotiated a food ration. In these cases, WFP targeting exacerbates unfair selection systems which can lead to intra-community conflict.



**Table 6: Application of Principles of CBTD systems to Colombia Case Study**

<b>Principles of CBTD</b>	<b>Activities carried out by leaders/relief committees that help achieve the principles:</b>	<b>Colombia case</b>
<b>Transparency</b>	<p>Circulate information about food entitlements, timing of distribution Distribute in a public place</p> <p>Publicly call out names of those eligible for food aid</p>	<p>Not enough</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>
<b>Accountability</b>	<p>Distribution system takes account of social, ethnic, political divisions within the affected population</p> <p>Elect a relief committee by community to elicit their views on the distribution and any complaints</p> <p>Possibility for community to change committee members in case of complaints</p> <p>Relief committee receives food/countersigns waybill</p> <p>Assess and identify the socially and politically vulnerable and ensure they receive their entitlements</p> <p>Independent monitoring during and post-distribution</p>	<p>Not enough</p> <p>Not enough</p> <p>Not enough</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Not enough</p> <p>Yes</p>
<b>Impartiality</b>	<p>Food allocations are based on an objective assessment of need</p> <p>Distribution according to household size</p> <p>Monitor receipt of agreed rations to intended recipients</p>	<p>Set criteria</p> <p>Not enough</p> <p>Yes</p>
<b>Gender sensitivity</b>	<p>Women considered heads of HHs and recipients of relief</p> <p>Gender balance on relief committees</p> <p>Distribution does not interfere with women's other responsibilities</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Not enough</p> <p>Not assessed*</p>

\*A 2006 gender assessment carried out in WFP supported communities reported programmes did not interfere with workload.

**Adapted from: Jaspars et al., 1997; WFP food and nutrition handbook**

### **Conclusions on targeting effectiveness and the role of CBTD**

The WFP targeting strategy, simplified in this study into sequential steps, provides a clear methodology for minimising inclusions errors. Beneficiary profiles are clearly defined and the close working relationship between WFP and IPs, be they governmental, church-based or CBO, allows for guidance and support through monitoring activities. Effective targeting is achieved if the beneficiary profiles adhere to vulnerability criteria of intended target groups.

This targeting strategy is however more open to exclusion errors because there are just too many people who would qualify for assistance at one time under the present targeting criteria. The WFP targeting aims to minimise exclusion errors by keeping a high rotation of



beneficiaries. The targeting strategy can therefore be more effective because there is a time span attached to each food assistance modality provided by WFP, so there are clear exit criteria related to length of support. This allows for new beneficiaries to be identified and food can be provided to a new group for a specific time. Exclusion errors in WFP programmes were seen during the study to be minimised in various ways:

1. Ensuring adequate funds to meet planned projects
2. Working with whole communities, instead of targeting a subset of the community
3. Allocating more than one project to one community so that different community members can be included eg Nutritional Risk and Food for Work.
4. Applying the rotation system, where community members benefit in a sequence and know this will be the case.
5. Supplementing WFP food with other resources from an implementing partner.
6. Allowing community leaders to distribute food to all once, rather than to target a subgroup, justified through solidarity and equal needs.
7. Redistribution of food by individual community members (beneficiaries) to other individuals of their choice.

Where targeting mechanisms are controlled by the community and its leadership, effective CBTD depends on:

- The chosen food assistance modality
- The community leadership structure

The allocation of food assistance modality to suit the implementing partner capacity and closeness to the community is WFP's best tool to ensure targeting is effective. This observation applied to communities visited and is not intended as a generalisation of the WFP Colombia programme. However, the degree of proximity, access to and trust of beneficiaries in the implementing partner makes for better community acceptance of the established targeting strategy, even when they do not qualify for assistance.

#### **Enhanced practices of CBTD based on observation:**

- Involvement in needs assessment so that the implementing partner can be more sympathetic to community needs.  
*Example:* social workers in Nariño work with WFP IPs to do the needs assessments and household visits and then provide a list to WFP.
- Scope for negotiating food assistance modality when WFP and implementing partner discuss options as the rations for different programmes are not the same and beneficiaries can only be in one programme –they should be aware which modality suits them most.  
*Example:* a household receiving food assistance through the mother who has been identified for a nutritional risk programme, is perceived by the community not to be eligible for a FFT

programme as she is already seen to be receiving food assistance. Whilst WFP does not stipulate that households can only receive one form of assistance, for example it can combine a household with an individual level one eg FFW and nutritional risk, this is not always translated at community level. It is possible that the husband could learn a new skill through FFT and secure his household's future in a more sustainable way than the nutritional programme which is assistential.

- Specific Food (or relief) Committees to be created that separate power from the formal leadership structure. When leadership is good the Relief committee should pose no threat, when leadership is bad the community can have an alternative listening ear.

*Example:* in many communities the relief committee is formed out of an existing leadership committee. This replicates existing leadership styles.

- Support modalities that unite rather than divide communities, such as relief and food for training.

*Example:* targeting of FFT or FFW assistance dependent on GoC selection procedures and available resources in small communities with less than 100 households, should aim for community programmes rather than individual household level programmes.

- Monitoring activities include questions on whether food was distributed to those not targeted and to state the reason as well as whether redistributions take place and whether there are inclusion and exclusion errors.

### Challenges to CBTD approach based on observation

The main limitations to community based approaches in the current design are:

- Limited physical access by WFP staff to CBOs and dispersed beneficiaries who do not form a recognisable community. This is an obvious limitation of the *gota a gota* displacement in Colombia.
- The limited time to build strong partnerships with some CBOs due to duration of projects means that WFP visits are very brief and infrequent. While there is a high level of trust between IPs and WFP, this needs to be extended to CBOs. The longer WFP works with CBOs the more this is likely to improve.
- There is limited scope for challenging community leaders who are ineffective as some programmes only have 3 distributions, so there is little time to correct mistakes and bad practice during some of the monitoring visits. While it is recognised this may not be generalised beyond the study communities.
- Community divisions when food assistance is provided to some members of a community chosen under a separate selection system, such as FFW and FFT government schemes.
- Protective style of leadership role not allowing for access to beneficiaries and transparency accustomed to in humanitarian assistance do not allow for the collection of evidence that the targeting is community based and better than WFP criteria based.
- Limited knowledge by the community of the food assistance entitlements and modus operandum, especially for new projects, does not allow non beneficiaries to understand why

they have been excluded and differentiate bad leadership and relief committee actions from WFP rules that exclude them.

These are examples based on observations through discussions with communities and cannot be extrapolated beyond those communities. A remarkable observation is that whereas some beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries seemed somewhat ill informed about the operational aspects of the food assistance programme, in terms of exact ration entitlements, date of next delivery and length of programme, they also expressed a certain trust and confidence that food would eventually arrive and they would receive it. This perception of WFP's commitment was extremely positive.

## **Conclusions**

Several points can be highlighted from this discussion. CBTD through community leaders is not tantamount to good targeting practice. The strongest community based groups where those capable of identifying their own needs and negotiated for WFP support. The leadership style and the way food (or relief) committees are elected and allowed to do their work is very dependent on community cohesion and leadership interest in the food assistance project. It appears that leadership styles enhancing community participation allow for a distinct food (or relief) committee to take responsibility. In one community, this approach led to the leaders themselves being excluded from the programme as they did not fit the set criteria. On the other hand, bad leadership styles were observed to be a source of conflict when the food assistance was given as FFW or FFT modality, and where the beneficiaries of these programmes had been selected for the training or work scheme even before WFP negotiated a food ration. In these cases, WFP targeting exacerbates unfair selection systems which can lead to intra-community conflict. While it is not possible to generalise as to which type of food assistance modality lends itself most to enhanced CBTD, it is clear that community participation in any food programme is time consuming and competes with other responsibilities, and those attracted to take on leadership roles need to have the time to do this well. The operational aspects of targeting food assistance often take on more importance than the selection and identification of beneficiaries due to the commitment to deliver well.

#### Section IV. Conclusions

Targeting in Colombia has been described here as a process with sequential steps. The first step involves a geographical and administrative method, involving partnership with two official government institutions, Accion Social and ICBF as well institutional targeting through choice of implementing partners. Some of these implementing partners are CBOs, and thus rooted in the community. The second step is an operational mechanism, involving a choice out of seven food assistance modalities based on methods to meet potential beneficiary needs and then selecting these through WFP implementing partners. Two of these modalities, FFW and FFT lend themselves to self targeting approaches which are generally recognised to be rooted in community participatory practices. However, in the cases observed in Colombia, many of the FFW and FFT projects are linked to government schemes for IDPs with their own targeting method and therefore much less participatory than may seem at first glance. CBOs represent about one third of WFP implementing partners in Colombia at any one time, providing ample scope for applying the CBDT approach when the community can select and identify criteria for assistance as well as the individuals who are eligible. This happens mainly after steps one and two described above.

The current targeting strategy has evolved through successive PRROs and increasingly aims to reach more difficult to access populations outside official government institution lists, such as IDPs that have not registered under RUPD, *blockaded* and *resistant* communities and marginalised ethnic groups. Beneficiary selection by implementing partners falls into three broad categories of selection. Those

1. dependent on another institution,
2. dependent on community leaders, and
3. dependent on individuals representing a CBO/NGO or a government representative

The CBDT applied in Colombia is not a default option for working in insecure areas, but rather a deliberate strategy of allowing some of the communities affected by violence that WFP target for food assistance to prove that they have a level of organisation that allows them to take control of some aspects of their lives again. This is limited in terms of setting criteria for programme and beneficiary selection.

The parts of the CBDT approach in Colombia geared at community leaders and CBOs, that are successful in effective targeting is dependent on existing community leadership styles and community cohesion. Ethnicity, rural and urban settings and gender have the greatest influence in leadership structures of the communities visited. Each impact on leadership styles in different ways, but definitely contribute to shaping the relationship between the leader and the beneficiary. When specific food assistance relief committees are elected they are somewhat able to counterbalance some of the authoritative leadership styles driven by self-interest, but this is not guaranteed. Where resources are scarce, and food assistance is targeted to specific groups within a community, the CBDT approach places an extra strain on weak communities with unfair leadership styles. The implementing partner's relation with the communities can mitigate against this when the implementing partner has close contact with the community and a history of working with them. This is more difficult for implementing partners who work with a conflictive community for the first time. Some

implementing partners admit to choosing not to work with these communities and seek out more collaborative ones. The weaker the community affected by the crisis, the more likely it is to become the object rather than the subject of food assistance. This reinforces the theory that CBDT is more feasible when an agency has long term presence within the target community (Mathys 2004) and the programme is directed towards livelihood support rather than prevention of mortality in an acute emergency.

Nevertheless the CBDT approach does allow potential beneficiaries to be targeted effectively even if their involvement is only at the distribution stage of the project cycle. In some instances at the beneficiary selection stage when they encourage relatives or neighbours to join a CBO and its activities and as a result are entitled to food assistance, similar to a self-targeting approach. This improves the inclusion of marginalised groups in some instances, but much of the decision lies with the leaders who in some instances show preference for people they trust. This is understandable in the complex environment the food assistance programmes take place. This enhances the potential for protection through the food assistance programme because of the presence of outsiders, but can also place leaders at risk if they are too visibly seen to be getting benefits for their community. WFP staff are open in the discussions with communities on this issue and can minimise negative outcomes.

Most exclusion happens through the programmes linked to government programmes such as housing schemes and vocational training schemes. The needs far outstrip the resources and selection for inclusion for these GoC run projects is neither transparent nor reliable. WFP food assistance programmes associated with these types of schemes risk making the exclusion worse by making non-beneficiaries feel they have missed out of two assistance programmes.

CBDT requires in-depth preparatory work with communities and their leaders and results in a very heavy work load on WFP staff due to the sheer number of projects at one time in Colombia. CO management admits that the workload is such that much of the contact with implementing partners and communities is focused on problem solving and monitoring. The time consuming nature of working with CBOs is however acknowledged by staff to be worth it if it improves the targeting process, and establishes trust relationships quickly.

Finally food assistance in Colombia has no life saving role. However the PRRO modalities have a clear relief and rehabilitation objective to support people affected by conflict through a transition period until they stabilise. There is an 18 month cut off for assisting IDPs, which is in practice sometimes waived by IPs. Interviews revealed that many IDPs are nowhere near settled after 18 months, with many not having even gone through the official declaration process to be recognised legally as IDPs in that time. Mass displacements of 50 people or more are more visible to assist and get legal recognition than the daily drop by drop displacements. Strict adherence to the 18 month cut off may exclude people who may actually be in a worse economic situation than when they were first displaced, as they will have spent their savings, stayed with relatives and friends to the point they need to make on, and still not have received any official assistance they are entitled to. While it is

acknowledged that a cut off is necessary to contain the numbers targeted by the programme, it is directly linked to the targeting of the most vulnerable.

## **Recommendations of the study**

This case study has drawn on some of the observed successes and failures of the CBDT approach witnessed through interviews with different groups within seven different communities. Discussion with key informants at Bogota level revealed that food assistance has a minor role to play in restoring people's rights and yet when the CBDT approach is adopted by WFP, it does seem to provide a model of assistance that enables communities to face the challenges of accessing scarce resources. Undoubtedly this is due to the specific targeting strategy in place which involves assisting small numbers of beneficiaries in a multitude of projects at one time. Whilst the dynamic nature of the targeting process is suited to the ever emerging needs of IDPs and vulnerable groups in Colombia, there may be some scope for WFP to identify appropriate community based exit strategies for food assistance modalities.

Observations related to best practice and constraints are summarised below. Table 7 provides more insights on how the conclusions and recommendations were arrived at:

### **Enabling factors to participatory targeting**

1. Proximity and trust between community and some implementing partners. Continue fostering strong relationships with IP, with particular focus on the new ones who may require closer follow up at first.
2. Changing needs acknowledged in targeting strategy e.g. relief focus. Continue sending verification missions to respond to new emergencies as this successfully identifies new IDPs in need of assistance and minimises exclusion.
3. Protection element acknowledged through international presence. Continue using unmarked food aid bags in areas where IP is likely to have to pass through illegal group and military checkpoints, avoid keeping food stocks near *blockaded* communities, as these continue to be a specific marginalised group in need of support.
4. Communities with good leadership target fairly. Continue to monitor practice and encourage the use of more open community meetings to develop selection criteria and beneficiary lists. Ensure members of relief committees are not hand-picked by the community leaders through visits to the community and conversations with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.
5. Urban populations can come together for a collective action. Continue to provide opportunities for beneficiary led solutions and not only be limited by GoC criteria. WFP programmes linked to GoC assistance to IDP schemes run the risk of being perceived as being part of a lottery system, whereby assistance is not based on need or rights, but luck. WFP should continue to offer IDPs displaced to urban centres an alternative form of assistance that rewards community cohesion.
6. Rural populations can be supported in their process of returning home, in the rare occasions when this return process respects the mandates laid out in the IDP principles. Continue to identify communities who seek this support, whilst advocating at central



level that the return process should adhere to IDP principles and not expose IDPs to further risks.

7. Some beneficiary involvement in selection for some modalities of food assistance. Continue to question which modality is most appropriate for a specific group and avoid the one size fits all approach. This is particularly true for the relief, FFW, FFT, pre-school and nutritional risk programmes which lend themselves to community based approaches more than the institutional school feeding.
8. Women empowered to take on leadership roles and reach to more marginal members of the community. Continue to foster the capacity of women leaders to lead fairly by questioning their selection criteria constantly. This has been very successful to date in urban settings where traditional leadership roles may be more dispersed.
9. Do not cut rations, as recommended by the 2007 evaluation; continue to deliver the food quantities promised before delivering to newly identified beneficiaries. The short nature of the programmes allows for very little contact between the community and WFP in some cases, and this can be improved by ensuring programmes run their intended course.

#### **Constraining factors to participatory targeting:**

1. Inadvertent support to existing systems of selection that are unfair and benefit the elite (Platteau 2004). WFP needs to be aware that communities do not always chose the best leaders, and use the relief committee as a way of mitigating against this.
2. Most interaction takes place between implementing partner and leaders, leaving insufficient information shared with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on targeting. More time is needed in communities to explain this.
3. Traditional leadership systems that are not transparent enough for monitoring purposes should be visited more regularly, for example the indigenous populations, in order to gain trust and understand how the CBTD is taking place.
4. Be aware that IPs may have a tendency to work with communities with higher degree of cohesion, for example communities with a history of complex leadership are excluded by some partners may exclude more vulnerable groups, seek out communities with failed projects.
5. Include community participation in monitoring activities to increase ownership and allow communities to develop their own criteria of a successful project. This may provide insights into community structures and processes.

These recommendations stem from the observations during discussions with the communities included in this case study. Whilst they are not intended to represent all the work of WFP Colombia, they are intended to provide insights into which community based aspects of targeting are successful in Colombia so that these may be compared with the other four case study countries that form part of this overall study, and contribute to central policy making on improved targeting practices. CBTD is an approach that needs to be judged for its contribution to more effective targeting as well as for its contribution to

more participatory programming methods. In the case of Colombia we have seen that in some instances, CBTD achieves both of these objectives, by empowering community members not used to roles of responsibility to gain new skills, and we have seen the opposite, where communities left to their own dynamics have fostered unfair systems of targeting causing further exclusion. The success of food assistance programmes should consider both of these aspects.

**Table 7. Field work explanatory notes on conclusions <sup>14</sup>**

Identified CBTD step	Colombia case study observations
<p><i>Implementing agency meets with local authorities and community members to explain the nature of the programme in public meetings. If only a proportion of the population is to be targeted for assistance then this is also explained</i></p>	<p>This procedure is part of the targeting system by WFP: Implementing partners are very diverse – local government, local NGOs religious organisations, beneficiary groups, INGOs, and very rarely WFP themselves. Access to the beneficiary population usually requires close contact between the implementing agency and local authorities (legal and illegal actors). Targeting for most programmes is based on WFP selection criteria that implementing partners communicate to the potential beneficiaries. This is not necessarily done through public meetings though, as these do not happen often, but rather through meetings with representatives of smaller beneficiary groups. The type of food assistance programme determines who is eligible for criteria</p>
<p><i>The community elects a relief committee (RC) at a public meeting. The aim should be to have a broadly representative committee, including adequate representation of women, and the ethnic, social, economic and political groups within the community.</i></p>	<p>The creation of a new Relief Committee is not always necessary; WFP encourages use of community based structures in place for other community programmes. It is normal for a community served by WFP with food, to be getting support in other ways as well. All food assistance programmes have a committee in charge of selecting and distributing, but this is often based on committees existing for other community representational matters, for example IDP groups representatives, health centre committee, mothers of beneficiaries committee. Where Relief Committees are set up from scratch, the WFP implementing partner has the best knowledge of the community and decides on the characteristics of the representation, not WFP. Most communities have a tendency to group themselves by place of original displacement which often implies ethnic and social and political similarities. There is a high level of mistrust among urban communities living in a geographical space made up of communities displaced from different locations. In this sense, it is probably impossible to achieve complete representation.</p>
<p><i>The implementing agency and RC discuss the criteria that should be used for beneficiary selection. These criteria may then be discussed in a public meeting.</i></p>	<p>This seems to be made very clear from the outset. An agreement on selection criteria and total numbers to be assisted. Public meetings are unlikely to be used frequently.</p>
<p><i>The RC registers the beneficiaries for the programme. The list of beneficiaries may be read out at a public meeting, so that everyone in the community has an input in ensuring that only the poorest or worst affected, and all those meeting the selection criteria, are included in the programme.</i></p>	<p>This does not always happen. Lists are sometimes made on the basis of selection criteria related to non-WFP programmes, e.g. the Red Social Government registered IDP housing programme or government IDP training programmes. In this case, officially registered IDPs are entitled to food aid because they have been selected to be in the government programme. This type of selection is the one that is reported consistently by communities to be the most unfair of all. The issues with the Colombian IDP registration system are very complex and well documented and criticized.</p> <p>Beneficiaries entitled to WFP food through one of these associated government schemes are not entitled to be selected for another type of food assistance programme at the same time. Relief committees can ensure this double registration does not occur.</p> <p>The other targeting method where Relief Committees have no say in the ICBF welfare services system, where vulnerability criteria are applied to identify households in need of various forms of support, regardless of their IDP status.</p>

14 Sources: Jaspars, S. & Shoham, J. (1999) Jaspars, S. & Creti, P (2006); Taylor, A. & Seaman, J. (2004, July)

Identified CBTD step	Colombia case study observations
<p><i>Distribution, or payment, is carried out by the RC together with a monitor from the implementing agency.</i></p>	<p>Food distribution is carried out by RC or equivalent. It was not possible to ascertain whether it is normal for a monitor from the implementing agency to be present. Although it is acknowledged that WFP staff carries out monitoring activities, the number of projects does not lend itself to WFP presence at every distribution.</p> <p>Monitoring systems are diverse, as food assistance can be given on a daily basis as cooked food, or can be a 40 day ration. It was not possible to assess whether the implementing partners of WFP all carry out the same type of monitoring visits, but monthly monitoring reports are compiled by the WFP sub-offices according to a standard format, and then compiled by Bogota into quarterly reports. The volume of work means WFP staff is unlikely to be able to visit all communities being served on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p><i>The RC receives feedback on the targeting and distribution method from the community, and informs the agency monitor. The monitor organizes for the programme to be adapted if necessary to be more effective. The community can also give direct feedback to the monitor with any issues regarding the relief committee. New members can be elected if some or not found to be fulfilling their responsibilities</i></p>	<p>Since in Colombia most food assistance is delivered by existing committees (not necessarily newly created Relief Committees), the community has already established a communication mechanism with them because these representatives have other functions, and this is especially true of IDP representatives. The exception is the Relief Committees created when the food assistance programme is run by women, such as canteens and FFT.</p> <p>Here Relief Committees seem to focus on the function of the food and the associated activity (training or attendance at the canteen).</p>
<p><i>Post distribution monitoring is carried out by the implementing agency with input from the RC.</i></p>	<p>This appears to be so, using WFP standardized forms as per the Colombia Operations Manual. WFP also carries out PDM aiming to cover 50% of projects.</p> <p>Targeting in Colombia is logistical complex in view of the diversity of communities assisted and the myriad of IPs involved. The WFP Colombia programme tends to target very small numbers in each location, and identifies new ones on a quarterly basis, suggesting a very refines system. This minimizes inclusion errors, although it is not clear if it minimizes exclusion errors as under present criteria 3 million people would be eligible for WFP food assistance for at least 3 months.</p>

## Annex 1: Map of Colombia



### Colombia Administrative Map

FICSS in DOS

As of December 2007

Field Information and Coordination Support Section  
Division of Operational Services  
Email: [mapping@unhcr.org](mailto:mapping@unhcr.org)



## **Annex 2: Research Methodology**

### **Research objectives**

The Colombia study is one of four cases in a broader research project entitled “Targeting in Complex Emergencies” which has the following objectives:

- 1.** Identify and describe success and failure factors associated with current WFP targeting and distribution approaches in complex emergencies, and what role community dynamics and levels of participation play in these approaches.
- 2.** Identify and analyze the linkage between assessment findings, specific programming objectives, targeting criteria and WFP’s current TCE approaches—with due consideration of the process and elements of CBTD—and how these can be strengthened.
- 3.** Identify a range of pragmatic options for the implementation of participatory targeting and distribution approaches in complex emergencies that achieve programming objectives and are consistent with WFP targeting policy.
- 4.** Propose a framework for determining the suitability, feasibility and effectiveness of implementing participatory targeting methodologies across a range of complex emergency contexts and WFP programming interventions

Research questions include:

- 1.** How is targeting currently done in the context of complex emergency?
- 2.** What role can CBTD play in ensuring that food assistance reaches those most in need of assistance in complex emergencies:
- 3.** Can CBTD contribute to improved representation of poor, marginalized or excluded groups in a complex emergency?
- 4.** How can a community-based approach to targeting in complex emergencies enhance the potential for protection, and conversely, how does it exacerbate the potential for conflict or fuel existing tensions and conflict?
- 5.** What are the main lessons for general programme guidance on the CBTD process in complex emergency situations, including how to match elements of CBTD to specific conditions on the ground?

### **Colombia case study research methodology**

The research involved a combination of secondary and primary data collection following a protocol established for all the case studies in this project (Feinstein International Center, 2007a).



## **The Research field work dates**

The field work for this study was carried out between 15 November and 14 December 2007.

## **The Research Team**

- The country specific research team consisted of one Tufts Researcher who carried out the preparatory work. Upon arrival in Colombia, a local researcher was recruited for 14 days to support with the field work. The two researchers then devised the joint research field methodology outlined below. This two person team was supported by WFP country staff from the CO, three sub-offices and 2 subsidiary offices. A total of 19 WFP Colombia members of staff were involved at different stages of the field research. There was no WFP HQ member involved in this case study, unlike the other three case studies that form part of this research.
- No translators were required during the field work.

## **Literature review and preparatory work**

- Part of the secondary data collection and analysis was carried out before arrival in country by the Tufts researcher with support from a Tufts research assistant. Documentation was gathered on the nature and political economy of conflict in Colombia, the history of targeting issues, and food aid modalities. Country-specific secondary data for 2005-2007 was requested from WFP in advance and reports are listed in the Reference section.
- WFP CO staff was consulted on the identification of organizations influencing or engaged in, or supporting, targeting of food assistance (or other) for interview. WFP CO staff was also consulted for the selection of study sites to visit according to the criteria in the study protocol in order to reflect as wide a variety as possible of different contexts. This process was begun two weeks prior to arrival in country and revised upon arrival.

## **Field data collection methodology**

This was qualitative in nature and involved interviews with key identified stakeholders in the targeting process following an interview guide. Interviews were conducted in seven different locations in Colombia (see Table 9) with 24 key informants and 21 focus groups in the different locations, in addition to discussions with 15 WFP CO programme staff. These interviews relied on a semi-structured protocol, with the same initial questions for respondents, but with ample latitude for exploring in depth, issues arising in the course of the discussion. The key informants included WFP staff, GOC national and local authorities, partner and non-partner NGO representatives, traditional authorities, community leaders, programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. These included:

1. Consultation with WFP CO staff
2. Introductory meeting CO staff 25 November
3. Planning meetings with programme staff in Bogota 26, 27 November
4. Sub-office level meetings (pre and post field site)

5. Meeting with WFP GoC partners Accion Social and ICBF
6. Final meeting with CO staff to present progress to date 14 December
7. Complimentary secondary data was requested from each of the following groups interviewed:
  - i. National authorities/WFP partners:
    - ICBF and Accion Social in Bogota
  - ii. WFP implementing agencies:
    - Accion contra el Hambre and Oxfam GB in Bogota
    - Pastoral Social in Meta and Nariño
  - iii. Implementing partners community level in El Castillo, Pasto and Santa Marta
  - iv. Other agencies with an interest in distribution of assistance:
    - ICRC in Bogota
    - PIUR and UMATA Nariño
  - v. Donors funding distribution programmes
    - ECHO
    - USAID
  - vi. Local authorities involved in targeting and providing services:
    - ICBF and Accion Social in Meta, Buenaventura and Santa Marta
  - vii. In each of the communities visited, interviews and focus group discussions were held with:
    - Local leaders representing communities and organizations
    - Relief committees or equivalents set up to oversee food distribution
    - Different groups of conflict affected populations – including beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and marginalised groups

All interviews were semi-structured, lasting between one to four hours, and involving one to five people. WFP CO staff was consulted regularly through six formal and informal meetings with programme staff at Country level and one or two meetings at each sub-office, and subsidiary office level.

Field visits to communities included semi-structured group discussions (of between seven and twenty two people) with members of the community split into four different categories:

1. Local community representatives
2. WFP food relief committee or equivalent
3. WFP food aid recipients (beneficiaries)
4. Members of the same community not receiving food aid (non-beneficiaries)

Field visits were announced by WFP staff one to seven days before the arrival of the research team to ensure maximum participation by members of the community as in many instances it involved the community gathering at an agreed place.

An introductory meeting was held in plenary at the start of the visit. The study aims, the independent nature of the researchers and the voluntary and anonymous nature of the participation were communicated directly by the researchers with support from WFP staff allowing time for clarification questions from the community.

Formal consent for carrying out the research was obtained verbally during the introductory plenary meeting as laid out in the study protocol. Great care was taken to ensure those present understood participation in the study would not affect their present entitlement to food assistance from WFP.

Rapid rural appraisal techniques were used to collect some of the data in the interview guides. The following main techniques were used in the communities to complement the semi-structured interview guide.

1. Introductions and profile – to identify characteristics of group
2. Participation in the project cycle – to assess level of involvement of group at stages
3. Matching problems to solutions – to assess level of involvement of the group
4. Role play of the food distribution day – to assess level of involvement of group
5. The life of the commodity – to assess level of involvement of the group in end use
6. Before and after comparisons – to assess views on changes to community cohesion

The recruitment of respondents into the study was organised by WFP staff and implementing partners who announced the meeting with the community in advance. Excellent turn out of relief committee leaders and beneficiaries was thus ensured on the appointed day, although it was more difficult to recruit formal leaders and non-beneficiaries on the appointed day.

### **Methodological limitations**

- Colombia was the first of three countries to be visited by the Research team and the study protocol was only finalized and agreed between Tufts and WFP Rome 5 days prior to arrival in-country of the researcher. This left the WFP country team with little time to prepare.
- Only the essential documentation was translated into Spanish by the researcher and shared with sub-office teams a few days prior to field visits.
- The number of suggested site visits was reduced significantly
- Two community visits were cancelled – one due to security constraints, and a neighbouring town was visited instead, the other due to time constraints was not replaced.
- A fifth study objective applied to other case study countries where WFP HQ staff accompany the research team was excluded from the Colombia case study (WFP will be solely responsible for meeting the objective on the development of a costing framework for targeting in complex emergencies)
- The nature of the research questions was perceived by some WFP staff to be of an evaluative nature, which somewhat interfered with responses.

## Selection of study sites (table 8)

The selection was done to include as wide a variety of communities as possible including:

- Different kinds of aid targeting, in particular relief modalities and community based
- Different “community” types including rural and urban populations, different ethnic groups, and different forms of displacement and settlement status (IDP, officially or not officially registered, accompanied or spontaneous return)
- Different forms of leadership and governance (e.g. areas under control of government and opposition, or under control of different factions)

**Table 8. Profile of the seven communities visited during the study<sup>15</sup>**

Communities visited by Research Team			Interviews with target groups				
LOCATION (Department)	POPULATION PROFILE	FOOD ASSISTANCE MODALITIES	Official leaders	Relief Committees	WFP beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	WFP partner CBO IN CAPITALS
<b>SOACHA*</b> , <b>Cundinamarca</b>	Urban Women’s group	FFT / Mother and child Nut risk	Women group only	√	√	√	<i>SISDECOP</i>
<b>EL CASTILLO</b> , <b>Meta</b>	Rural Spontaneous returnees	Relief Pre-school	√	√	√	√	<i>Pastoral social</i>
<b>SOTOMAYOR</b> <b>** (Nariño)</b>	Urban	FFW – housing scheme	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	√	<b>X</b>	<i>Pastoral social</i>
<b>PASTO</b>	Peri-urban Women’s group	FFT- agriculture and crafts	Women group only	√	√	<b>X</b>	<i>HUELLAS DE MUJER</i>
<b>SAN MARCOS</b> <b>(Valle del Cauca)</b>	Rural Afro-Colombian	FFW – housing scheme Nutritional risk	√	√	√	√	<i>Arquitecturando</i>
<b>GUMAKE</b> , <b>(Magdalena)</b>	Rural Indigenous	FFW – housing scheme Nutritional risk	√	<b>X</b>	√ Women only	<b>X</b>	<i>INDIGENAS ARHUACOS</i>
<b>STA. MARTA</b> <b>(Cartagena y Valledupar)</b>	Urban Vulnerable group	Relief – soup kitchen	Women group only	<b>X</b>	√	√	<i>MUNDO CREATIVO</i>

\*Soacha served as a pilot for the study to test the study tools.

\*\*This town replaced a programmed visit to a neighbouring town due to security constraints.

<sup>15</sup> Only 7 of the almost 3,000 project were selected for this study, and the results are therefore not meant to be representative of the country programme. One community had to be excluded from the study as only 3 hours had been allocated for the visit which was deemed too short by the research team.

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