

Working Paper 189

**Assessment of Needs of
Internally Displaced Persons in Colombia**

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This Working Paper forms part of a series that reviews the range of ways in which livelihoods approaches are currently used by operational agencies and researchers working in situations of chronic conflict and political instability (SCCPI). The aim of the series is to document current practice so that useful lessons can be learned and applied to ensure for more effective policies, needs assessment, and aid programming to support livelihoods during protracted conflict. Many of these lessons from each of the individual papers are summarised in a synthesis paper. The series also includes an annotated bibliography and a paper outlining the conceptual issues relating to the applications of livelihoods approaches to SCCPI.

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Acronyms

ACH	Accion Contra el Hambre (Action Against Hunger)
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for the Human Rights
CSO/CP	Country Strategy Outline / Country Programme (WFP)
CODHES	Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement, CHRD)
ECHO	European Commission for Humanitarian Operations
EMOP	Emergency operation
EVAM	Emergency Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (WFP)
CVA	Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment
CFSP	Community Food Security Profiling
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Italy)
GPID	Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee (WFP)
ICBF	Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced persons
kcal	Kilocalorie
MSF	Medicos Sin Fronteras (Doctors without Borders)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs
OIM	Organizacion Internacional para las Migraciones
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OMS	Organizacion Mundial de la Salud (WHO)
OPS	Organizacion Panamericana de La Salud (PAHO)
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
PROFAMILIA	Pro Bienestar de la Familia (Pro Family Welfare)
RSS	Red de Solidariedad Social [Refugees Studies Centre, Social Solidarity Network (Government Database on registered IDPS)]
RUT	El Sistema de Informacion Sobre la Poblacion por la Violencia
SAF	Standard Analytical Framework (WFP)
TGD	Theme Group on Displacement (UN)
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
USCR	United States Committee for Refugees
USDOS	United States Department of State
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (WFP)
VIP	Vulnerability Issues Paper (SAF)
WFP	World Food Programme (FAO)
WHO	World Health Organization (Switzerland)

Summary

A major dilemma in situations of displacement is ensuring that humanitarian assistance, in particular food aid, reaches the most vulnerable and has the greatest impact while adhering to basic principles of neutrality and impartiality. Assistance programmes for allocating humanitarian resources and for censusing (counting and registering) internally displaced persons (IDPs) often lack the information needed to appropriately tailor assistance to the specific conditions and needs of different IDP groups. Reference is made in particular to possible manipulation of IDP data for political purposes.

This paper suggests that assessment methodologies can play an important role in understanding and acting upon IDP needs in a neutral and impartial manner. The needs assessment approach outlined here illustrates how World Food Programme (WFP) Colombia is building upon standard analytical WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) framework to develop a country-specific methodology. In the case of Colombia the approach was developed based upon a thorough understanding of IDPs needs from secondary sources and an initial Food Needs Assessment Case Study.

The assessment methodology is work in progress and discusses the following methodological aspects as they relate to meeting food and livelihood needs in situations of displacement:

- Factors leading to the displacement of different IDP groups in Colombia are identified and their specific needs and problems discussed
- WFP's needs assessment methodology, beginning with an overview of the standard analytical framework (SAF) are described and applied in the development of the VAM assessment methodology in Colombia
- The concluding section reflects on the methodology being developed in Colombia, and includes a number of observations and a discussion on: data collection issues for the consideration of food needs during the critical phases of displacement; the added value of including livelihood information in the VAM analysis; and how the methodology could be standardised to allow WFP and its partners to better understand and respond to the needs of IDPs in different phases of displacement

The assessment approach relies on four activities for the collection, compilation and analysis of data. These activities have been developed with the following considerations in mind: i) understanding the specific needs of food-insecure people in situations of displacement; ii) capitalising on the existing data and information available in Colombia; iii) working within the timeframe of 12 months to provide results for the start of WFP's new programme in Colombia (2003); and iv) ensuring that the results provide the capabilities for ongoing targeting and activity selection refinements during the three-year operation.

Key findings that guided the development of the methodology are:

- Particular needs of IDPs in Colombia, the reasons for displacement, needs according to the phases of displacement and displaced groups considering ethnicity and gender, and urban and rural food and livelihood needs
- Constraints posed by working in an environment of escalating conflict within a protracted crisis, and developing assistance responses for people caught in transition between relief and resettlement
- Combined objectives of WFP's operation that are to meet both the immediate food needs of the internally displaced and to support the recovery of food and livelihood security in more stable situations

- The technical and financial capacity of WFP and its partners to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data, consistent with the operational requirements of a large food assistance operation in a complex political emergency

Even though the application of the methodology developed by WFP and its partners is still in progress, a number of interesting observations and lessons are shared. Initial findings have allowed WFP to better understand when food assistance is required, i.e., the crucial period after the first three months of displacement. This period has been largely forgotten and many activities were not designed to reach those most in need during this time. As a result, in the next phase of WFP's operation more attention will be given to this crucial period and to balancing direct feeding requirements through soup kitchens with livelihood support through education, restarting during agriculture production, and resettlement when feasible.

Incorporating a livelihoods approach in the WFP Colombia assessment methodology provides a strong basis for developing targeting criteria in a standardised way that avoids manipulation. Given the nature of IDP operations, i.e., the back and forth situation of displacement, return, repeated displacements, and because needs change over time with the phase of displacement, IDP numbers and needs are not constant over the life of an operation, an impartial reference for developing and applying targeting criteria is key.

The assessment methodology provides a far more in-depth understanding of who the displaced are, their means of livelihood, their vulnerabilities and the types of assistance reaching them. A solid information base establishes credibility. Perhaps greater credibility and understanding will highlight the deprivation of the internally displaced and serve as a basis for impartial advocacy that will bring greater attention to the plight of IDPs in Colombia and elsewhere.

1 Introduction

In the past two decades, an alarming number of people worldwide have had to abandon their homes and livelihoods in the face of civil conflict, natural or economic disasters, or other threats. As they do not cross an international border, they are considered ‘internally displaced persons’ (IDPs) and not refugees. Figures show that the number of IDPs has risen steadily since the early 1980s and people are now displaced in 56 countries. An accepted estimate is that 20–25 million people are internally displaced due to conflict and another 25 million from natural disasters. By comparison, there are approximately 12 million refugees worldwide (WFP, 2000a).

The forced displacement of civilians remains one of the most pressing humanitarian problems in developing countries. The displaced lose their social, legal and economic ties and thus suffer considerable physical and psychological hardship. They often face special difficulties not shared with other conflict-affected groups that make their livelihoods insecure. Specifically these are difficulties related to re-establishing livelihoods in areas of temporary settlement or reintegration in unstable areas when traditional means of livelihoods are no longer viable (WFP, 2000a). On the one hand, IDPs do have special needs, on the other, there is a growing consensus that IDPs should not be singled out for special treatment (WFP, 2000a). People may not wish to be classified as IDPs and may incur even greater security risks as a result.

The food, shelter and protection requirements of IDPs should be guaranteed by their governments, but in countries divided by war or ethnic tensions, or where governments have very limited resources, that assistance may be inadequate. This is particularly true when the country’s economic and social infrastructure has been destroyed and its displaced citizens cannot return home to resume livelihood activities for long periods.

Governments have become more responsive in acknowledging their primary responsibility for protecting and assisting affected populations under their control (WFP, 2000a). When lack of capacity does not allow them to discharge that responsibility, many are becoming less reticent to seek assistance from the international community. The case of Colombia illustrates central aspects of this global problem. Forty years of domestic conflict have caused the displacement of over a million persons. A total of 480 municipalities are now affected by forced displacement (RSS, 2001). While exact and consistent estimates of IDPs are difficult to obtain, at present over 500,000 are seeking support under government assistance programmes. Colombia ranks fourth highest in number of IDPs worldwide after Afghanistan, Sudan and Angola (Refugee Studies Centre, 2002).

A major dilemma in Colombia and in most situations of displacement is ensuring that humanitarian assistance, in particular food aid, reaches the most vulnerable and has the greatest impact while adhering to basic principles of neutrality and impartiality. This is extremely sensitive as it touches upon the authority of sovereign governments and the responsibility of international organisations to meet needs without distinction. Particular reference is made to possible manipulation of IDP data for political purposes. Assessment methodologies can play an important role in understanding and acting upon IDP needs in a neutral and impartial manner.

2 Objective

The objective of this Working Paper is to present WFP's experiences in developing a methodology to better understand the needs of IDPs in Colombia, considering that this work is still in progress. Currently, there is no systematic national food security monitoring system in Colombia, rendering data collected to be either too general or too anecdotal for effective decision making. Consequently, assistance programmes for allocating humanitarian resources and for censusing (counting and registering) IDPs often lack information that can be used to appropriately tailor assistance to the specific conditions and needs of different IDP groups.

WFP's extensive experience in responding to the needs of IDPs has shown that needs, including food needs are contextual, influenced by the phase of displacement, previous livelihood strategies, urban or rural resettlement location, causes and frequency of displacement, the security and human rights situations in the areas of displacement, and relocation and resettlement (WFP, 2000b). With a good understanding of the diversity of IDP needs, assessment methodologies can relate needs to the phases of displacement, and analyse the effects on the livelihoods of different IDP groups.

In Colombia, WFP is developing and improving its vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) methodology to better understand the food, livelihood and security vulnerabilities of the displaced during different stages of displacement. This enhanced understanding will support the implementation of the next phase (2003–6) of its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO). WFP's activities combine direct food distribution to those IDPs most in need, with other activities to promote food and livelihood security when conditions on the ground permit. At the time of preparing this document, direct food distribution is a small part of WFP's response (only 7% of resources are directed towards feeding) with timely support for rebuilding food and livelihood security as security conditions permit being the main emphasis of WFP's assistance.

This paper aims to present this methodology as work in progress, and to discuss the following methodological aspects as they relate to meeting food and livelihood needs in situations of displacement:

- a. The Section 3 reviews the current situation of the displaced in Colombia. Factors leading to the displacement of different IDP groups are identified and their specific needs and problems discussed.
- b. Section 4 presents WFP's needs assessment methodology, beginning with an overview of the VAM standard analytical framework (SAF) used by WFP in situations of instability and a description of the basic SAF concepts, applied in the development of the VAM assessment methodology in Colombia.
- c. The concluding Section 5 reflects on the methodology being developed in Colombia, and includes a number of observations and a discussion on: data collection related issues for the consideration of food needs during the critical phases of displacement, the added value of including livelihood information in the VAM analysis, and how the methodology could be standardised to allow WFP and its partners to better understand and respond to the needs of IDPs in different phases of displacement.
- d. Annex 1 provides a more detailed explanation of the VAM SAF and Annex 2 presents WFP policy principles for the provision of assistance to food-insecure people in situations of displacement.

3 Assessing IDP Needs in Colombia – the VAM Approach

The characterisation of IDPs in Colombia is complex, multifaceted, and changing – symptomatic of the instability of conflict situations. The lack of a systematic national food security monitoring system in Colombia means that information published by government agencies is often general and or anecdotal, leaving gaps in understanding the food and livelihood security¹ needs of the internally displaced. Thus, government assistance programmes responsible for allocating funds, food distribution, and for censusing IDP populations often lack the necessary information for tailoring assistance to the specific conditions and needs of different groups of IDPs.

WFP's VAM provides the basis for WFP and its partners to gather and analyse location-specific information in zones affected by instability and displacement. Initial assessments and ongoing monitoring surveys are important tools for developing a snapshot understanding of localised situations of displacement and for assuring appropriate and sufficient assistance.

3.1 VAM summary

VAM provides a detailed understanding of the nature of food insecurity and livelihood vulnerability. Working in collaboration with a variety of international partners ensures that efforts continually meet standards of quality. VAM is explicitly intended for use in both food aid decision-making at the policy level and at key points in the design and management of food-assisted relief activities. VAM information also supports the complementary needs of the broader national and international community to address more rigorously the problems of food and livelihood insecurity and vulnerability. VAM's primary functions are to identify (WFP, 2001a):

- Why food insecurity and vulnerability conditions exist at a given time
- Who are most likely to face food insecurity and vulnerability
- Where the hungry, poor and vulnerable populations are most concentrated
- Sectors of intervention where food aid has a comparative advantage in addressing the problems of food insecurity and vulnerability

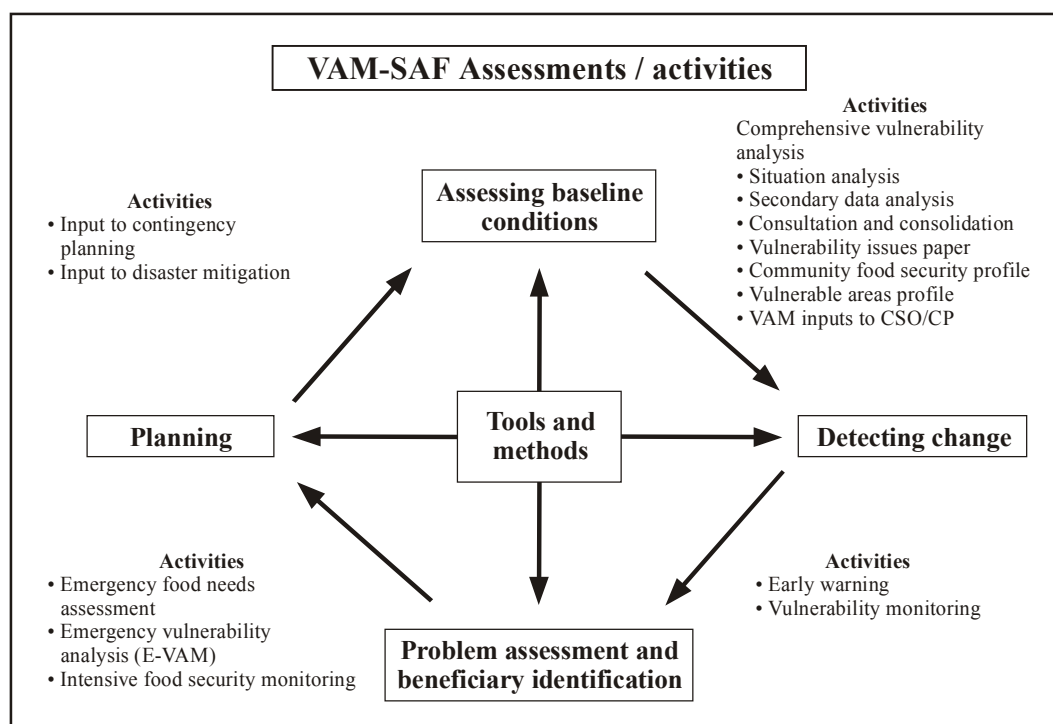
VAM uses a variety of sources to accomplish these objectives – from satellite images of agro-climatic conditions and secondary data on education, health, and nutritional status, to changes in market prices and household coping behaviour, and simple face-to-face discussions with men, women and children in food-insecure and vulnerable communities. WFP has developed a VAM SAF with the objective of providing accurate and useful information and analysis to meet WFP's increasingly standardised needs and reporting requirements (WFP, 2001a). All approaches and methods incorporate 'best practices' in the way they structure the analysis, process data and information, and interpret results to produce the products that satisfy WFP's and its partners' information needs throughout its programme cycles. Refer to Figure 1 for a graphic presentation of the VAM SAF.

This framework represents structured, step-by-step activities tailored to meet critical information needs at different points in both the WFP emergency and development programme cycles. WFP views the information and analysis for emergency and development programming as highly complementary. SAF provides a shared *conceptual framework* for understanding food and

¹ A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (both material and social) and activities that provide a means of living. 'A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks' DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, April 1999.

livelihood insecurity and vulnerability and a specific understanding of the *appropriate role of food aid* to address their causes (WFP, 2001b). For more details see Annex 1.

Figure 1 VAM Standard Analytical Framework (SAF)



Source: WFP, VAM web site, "Introduction to SAF concepts"

3.2 Assessment methodology in Colombia

WFP's food security² approach in Colombia is concerned with both short-term issues of immediate food needs and the longer-term issues of supporting livelihoods and gaining self-sufficiency in meeting basic needs. In the short term, the approach is concerned with saving lives by reducing nutritional risk, usually by meeting short-term food needs through food aid. Longer-term food security and livelihood support usually involves interventions that are supported by food aid, but which require non-food resources and a more stable operating environment.

The livelihood strategy that a household pursues is dependent on its assets (including natural, human, social, and financial resources) and on its production, economic, and consumption activities. It also depends on the particular risks that a household faces and that household's members ability to cope. These in turn determine livelihood outcomes that are analysed in terms of food, nutrition, health, water, shelter, security, etc.

Understanding the severity of food and livelihood insecurity is essential for determining the most appropriate response. In a livelihoods approach, the severity of food insecurity is gauged by its impact on people's ability to feed themselves (risk to lives), its impact on livelihoods (how people's assets and capabilities allow them to cope and secure a means of living), and the risk to the livelihood strategy. These aspects require an understanding of the interrelation between access to food and the other factors that support a livelihood strategy, through an analysis of vulnerability, risk and coping strategies. In the case of the displaced in Colombia this may mean linking food aid

² WFP uses the following definition of food security: 'A family is food secure when it has access to and control over sufficient quantities of good quality food for an active healthy life'. Within this definition, the two elements of food security are firstly the availability, quality and quantity of food, and secondly access and entitlement to food through purchases, exchange and claims.

to such non-food support as seeds, tools and fertilisers to restart agricultural production, or to school books and materials to rebuild a school to ensure that displaced children have access to education.

At the very minimum, in unstable situations an assessment should:

- Indicate the type and proportion of the population most affected
- Understand the relative risk of displacement and its effect on lives and livelihoods
- Provide information that is accessible to decision-makers, programme designers, and the media.

Various approaches can be used to assess food needs and food security in situations of displacement, and there are many commonalities in the methods relating to the collection of information from secondary sources through the use of rapid rural appraisal (RRA) techniques. The assessment methodology in Colombia can be characterised as:

- A *holistic* approach to food security that examines how all groups within an IDP population access food. This requires taking account of basic needs other than just food (and the possible trade-offs between food and other basic needs), different types of livelihood systems, the effects and desirability of the various coping mechanisms adopted by IDPs, and the potential support to livelihood recovery
- *Qualitative* in that it supports statistically significant household data with qualitative information
- *Participatory*, i.e. involving those affected by displacement.

The assessment approach relies on four activities for the collection, compilation and analysis of data. These activities correspond to the steps presented above in Figure 1, but have been developed with the following considerations in mind:

1. Understanding the specific needs of food-insecure people in situations of displacement
2. Capitalising on the existing data and information available in Colombia
3. Working within the timeframe of 12 months to provide results for the start of WFP's new programme in Colombia (2003)
4. Ensuring that the results provide the capabilities for ongoing targeting and activity selection refinements during the 3-year operation.

Activities 1 and 2 correspond to Step 1, Assessing Base Line Conditions, and Activities 3, 4 and 5 to Step 2, Problem Assessment. Activities 1–5 are described below (Table 1).

Table 1 Application of VAM to assess IDP needs in Colombia

	Theme	Method	Respondents
Activity 1	Literature review	Secondary data compilation	• Government, agency, institutional sources
Activity 2	Food needs case study	Structured interviews	• Seem-urban areas • Rural areas • Indigenous community reservations • Urban areas
Activity 3	RUT database exploratory analysis	Cross tabulation	• Records kept for 15,170 families
Activity 4	Construction of food insecurity and livelihood profiles and validation of targeting criteria	Structured interviews Focus group interviews	• IDP groups based on livelihood categorisation to determine groups most at risk
Activity 5	Food and livelihoods assessment	Structured interviews Focus group Interviews	• IDP groups in sample receptor communities within the regions most affected by displacement

4 Activity 1: Literature Review on IDP Needs

This Activity consisted of a review of relevant secondary sources and provided the conceptual basis for designing Activities 2, 4, and 5. Important information included: factors behind displacement, identification of IDP groups, diverse needs of these groups, and IDP needs over time. This information provides the context for understanding how to examine and analyse the needs of the internally displaced and other food-insecure groups affected by displacement. It is important that the needs of both host and resident populations are examined in conjunction with those of the displaced. The literature review established the conceptual base for developing the assessment methodology in Colombia through the compilation of the following background documentation.

4.1 Factors behind the process of displacement in Colombia

In Colombia, displacement is a strategy closely linked to, among others, the issue of land tenure and control of territory. 3% of landowners own more than 70% of the arable land as a result of the failure to implement a comprehensive agrarian reform (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999). Over 4 million ha of land, the equivalent of one-third of the country's arable land, have been expropriated from the displaced (WFP, 2001c). According to non-governmental organisation (NGO) figures, paramilitaries are allegedly responsible for 43% of the displacement, followed by guerrilla groups (35%) and state actors (6%) (SC-US, 2001). On the Caribbean coast, forced displacement is a common long-term strategy to reconfigure land ownership (NRC, 2002a). Territorial expansion by armed groups denies the displaced their main livelihood asset, contributes to the depopulation of rural areas, increases pressure on urban areas to meet the basic needs of the displaced, and destroys social and family networks that have traditionally allowed people to survive periods of stress.

About 70% of the displaced lose their lands (WFP, 1999). The rural poor have no legal remedy to reclaim; lacking personal documentation and property documents, they have little chance to recover their lost properties and livelihoods.

Although foreseen by law, the allocation of alternative lands to displaced rural populations is rarely implemented. Likewise, resettlement can bring new security problems when the land allocated is in areas of importance to the parties of conflict or other IDPs seeking settlement, hence complicating the situation.

4.2 Grouping IDPs

In Colombia, more than 2.2 million people have been displaced since 1985 (CODHES, 2000a). According to official sources, there were 125,000 persons displaced in 2000, rising to 525,000 in 2001. These figures only include those displaced for up to 2 years because the Government of Colombia does not consider a person to be displaced after 2 years (TGD, 2001). Of the 2.2 million displaced since 1985, about 1.1 million are children (CODHES, 2001a). Further, women and the indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations represent a disproportionate number.³ Approximately 60–86% of population movements are in groups of more than 50 (TDG, 2001).

³ In 2001, women represented more than 55% of IDPs (NRC, 2002a).

4.3 Diverse situations, diverse needs

Studies have shown that the priority needs of IDPs are related to food security, housing, health care, education, income-generating sources, and security (TGD, 2001). These findings reconfirm that IDP needs are diverse within the following general needs categories:

- **Hunger and malnutrition.** A serious problem for the displaced, in particular for children (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999). In Colombia, children, families headed by women, and families surviving in urban areas are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity (WFP, 2001b). Although IDPs receive 'food supplement' rations for extended periods of time, supplies can be sporadic and often insufficient for the changing location patterns of displaced population groups (UNHCHR, 1999).
- **Housing.** Primary needs are immediate temporary shelter for the newly displaced and long-term shelter for the growing IDP population in urban areas, since IDPs are subject to being evicted from these lands at any time (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999).
- **Health risks.** Malnutrition, respiratory illnesses, diarrhoea, parasitic diseases and sexually transmitted diseases are indicators of the extreme fragility of IDP living conditions (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999). In Colombia only about 50% of the total displaced population is covered by the national social security scheme. A primary obstacle to receiving health care services is the lack of an identity card. Colombia's Ministry of Health and the Social Solidarity Network have yet to agree upon a mechanism of identification that will allow IDPs to be covered, thus health institutions are unwilling to provide free assistance to the displaced.
- **Psycho-social tensions.** Self-reliance and dignity erode as a result of long-term displacement, poor living conditions, insecurity and restricted movements. The mental health needs of conflict-affected people suffering from severe malnutrition, loss and violence-induced trauma have until recently received scant attention, though the importance of psychosocial care during all three phases cannot be underestimated. Not only those still displaced, but even many resettled families, live in fear of both the past and the future
- **Income.** Limited capacity-building or vocational training opportunities are available to adult IDPs. This is particularly serious for rural IDPs who have to create a means of livelihood in an urban environment where many displaced families do not earn enough to meet their minimum daily expenditures for food, water, transportation, fuel, and basic non-food items such as toilet paper, sanitary napkins, soap, detergent, and toothpaste (WFP, 2001c). The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in Colombia has criticised the government for not providing sufficient assistance to IDPs to cover their basic needs, as many governmental support activities are limited to handouts, lacking consistency and support to durable solutions. The Office condemned the failure to fully adhere to Act No. 387 covering the needs of displaced persons and to comply with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- **Exposure to violence and abuse.** IDPs face special difficulties related to violence and abuse, especially in areas of continuing conflict. There is growing recognition among agencies that assistance provision must be linked to protection of IDPs' physical security and human rights before and during displacement and during return/resettlement. Displaced people are often denied a variety of rights, that can affect their livelihood opportunities. The loss of property rights and entitlements has a direct impact on food security, while denial of work, travel permits and identity documents can deny IDPs access to other entitlements including food (WFP, 2000a)

4.3.1 IDPs in urban and rural areas and their needs

The newly displaced population consists mainly of farmers and residents of small towns. The three departments receiving the majority of IDPs are the traditional receptor sites of Antioquia, Bolivar and Valle de Cauca (CODHES, 2000b). The majority of displaced in Colombia move from rural to urban areas, however displacement is increasingly taking place within cities, often as a secondary movement (SC-US, 2001). Major urban areas such as Bogota, Barranquilla, Medellin, Cali, and Cartagena and smaller municipalities have been overwhelmed by the need for services. Since cities are of particular concern as both the displaced and residents live in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions (CODHES, 2000b; USCR, 2001; U.S. DOS, 2001).

In contrast, families from indigenous communities generally flee to rural areas to stay with other indigenous communities. Families displaced in rural areas are able to keep a higher number of animal species than families displaced in urban and semi-urban areas, and are also able to feed themselves better in kilocaloric terms if there is land on which to grow vegetables or fruit. Access to food and the ability to barter for food may also be somewhat better in rural areas (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999).

4.3.2 IDP children and their needs

Children represent 50% of IDPs in Colombia and 86% of all IDP households include one or more children (CODHES, 2001b). Of the displaced children 45% are 14 or younger, while 20% are between 3 and 10 years old. The majority of these children suffer from some level of malnutrition (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999). For example, in Turbo (Antioquia Department), 68% of displaced children in displaced camps are malnourished (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999). Children suffer the most serious effects of minimal and irregular medical care: 80% of IDP children do not receive social security or vaccination coverage; for displaced children under 5 this is 20% below the national average (Human Rights Watch, 1998).

Only 23% of displaced children attend school (SC-US, 2001). Although school is free to all Colombians, payment for books, uniforms, other fees and bureaucratic obligations make school inaccessible to most displaced families. Often displaced parents see no return from putting their children into school, as cheap child labour is a key livelihood strategy (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999).

4.3.3 IDP women and their needs

It is important to understand the special concerns of displaced women and hence the need for a gender approach to assistance and protection strategies, since displacement tends to alter the family and household structure and change gender roles, forcing women to assume additional burdens while exposing them to additional risks. Lack of appropriate skills and difficulties in developing new coping mechanisms are among the problems displaced women must face. However, women play a central role in developing coping mechanisms and in reducing the vulnerabilities faced by families and communities.

In Colombia women head up to 56% of displaced households (NRC, 2002a), and their families are highly vulnerable according to a number of indicators (WFP, 2001c). As in most conflict situations, men are more engaged in and affected by the fighting, leaving the burden of providing for the family to women. Because female-headed displaced families earn significantly less and have less

access to outside support structures than settled families, these women are concerned about income-generating opportunities, the security of their families, money to buy food, fuel, soap, cleaning materials, and utensils, etc. Lack of documentation places restrictions on women's movements and on their ability to obtain title to land; there are also no educational opportunities for their children in the camps.

Women also find it difficult to obtain assistance, (often mentioned are the 90-day ad hoc grants available through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or the small 'pension' available from the Ministry of the Interior). Some women did not know this assistance existed or feared their lack of documentation would preclude receiving help (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 1999).

Women's specific requirements may include protection from physical violence; protection of property rights and entitlements (which often do not transfer to female heads of household); access to jobs and training opportunities that would enhance their ability to develop livelihoods, and steps to ensure that displacement does not reinforce socio-cultural biases that discriminate against women or reduce their food security.

4.3.4 IDPs' needs over time – phases of displacement

The causes and length of displacement affect livelihood possibilities. Some people have been displaced as many as five or six times by new outbreaks of violence and, in extreme cases, have been displaced for so long that they lose their original livelihood skills. Thus, a distinction can be made between the following phases of displacement (WFP, 2000b):

- **Initial displacement.** People forced to leave their fields, animals or jobs lose the possibility of even providing for their own food, at least temporarily. During this first stage, IDPs tend to have multiple basic subsistence needs and to be more vulnerable than other conflict-affected people. Almost immediately, they try to find shelter and food, then depending on their situation, they soon begin to think about work. For those to whom survival strategies are unavailable or insufficient, or fail, there may be no alternative to food aid. When a displaced family or individual can move in with relatives, their support may ease the transition, but may also mean that the combined group becomes more food-insecure.
- **Protracted displacement.** Once IDPs have set up temporary homes, they usually begin to meet their own food, fuel and shelter needs, a process that can be greatly assisted by the provision of basic inputs to allow them to rebuild their livelihoods. As the situation stabilises, displaced persons try to re-establish some continuity with their old life: educational opportunities become important as does expanded health care provision, including psychosocial care, sanitation and access to clean water. Where these facilities have been unavailable to internally displaced populations, malnutrition and morbidity rates have soared. This second phase can be quite long. On average, 7 years in Latin America (against 6 years in Africa, Asia and the Middle East). Globally, one in five IDP is displaced for over 10 years (WFP, 2000b).
- **Resettlement/return.** In Colombia over 65% or more of all displacements are permanent (CODHES, 2001a) while 24% of IDPs want to return to their original place (NRC, 2002a). During this third and final phase, the displaced often need food again but they also need support in permanently re-establishing their lives. A coherent reintegration strategy is always rooted in voluntary return based on accurate information about the situation in the home area; participation in decision-making; ensured existence of basic infrastructure, including access to water, food, health care and education before return; and planning returns according to the agricultural season. In Colombia, with the resumption of war in February 2002, there is presently little scope for resettlement.

5 Activity 2: Food Needs Case Study

In June 2001, WFP Colombia and its counterparts Red de Solidaridad (RSS) and the Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar (ICBF) carried out a Food Needs Case Study among displaced families (WFP, 2001c). Data were collected by means of 76 structured interviews, representing 532 displaced persons. A questionnaire was designed following WFP's Assessment Guide for Emergency Needs (WFP, 2001c), and the guidelines and checklists of partner agencies.

Interviews were conducted with families in:

- Semi-urban areas (Las Ovejas and San Onofre in Sucre, Turbo, Chigorodo, Piedras Blancas and El Carmen in Urba and Bolivar)
- Rural areas (Los Palmitos, Palo Alto)
- Indigenous community reservations (Mutata and Polines)
- Urban areas (Olaya, El Pozon and Nelson Mandela neighbourhoods in Cartagena and Sincelejo).

In addition to collecting data on general socio-economic indicators, the case study was designed to assess food insecurity by measuring scores based on a relatively complete set of food security indicators. The assessment examined two scenarios – before and after displacement – using the following indicators:

- General – age, ethnic group
- Socio-economic – land tenancy, size of plot
- Productive assets – animals, etc.
- Agricultural production – type, income and domestic consumption
- Food consumption patterns – type, amount and quality of food consumed, kcal intake per person per day
- Salaried work – type and income
- Expenditure patterns – water, transport, fuel, food, etc.
- Coping strategies – reduced consumption, dietary modifications, exchanges, loans, depletions of assets, education of children
- Gender breakdown – to understand principal productive activities of both, coping mechanisms, income levels for both women and men.

5.1 Case study findings

The 40-year conflict in Colombia has limited or destroyed livelihood options for both urban and rural families due to lack of access to basic items and services, protection, land and income-generating activities. The most vulnerable to these deprivations are children, single mothers, families displaced between 4 and 12 months (recent IDPs), families displaced between 1 and 2 years, families highly in debt, large families (greater than the average of seven members), families with an income below Col\$ 4,000 per day (= US\$ 2,667 @ Col\$ 1 = US\$ 1.5) and ethnic minorities. The two categories, vulnerable groups and phases of displacement provide a framework for grouping the displaced for the purpose of assessing food and non-food needs. Case study findings are summarised in Box 1.

5.1.1 IDP groupings

- Urban families
- Rural families
- Children
- Single mothers
- Ethnic minorities

5.1.2 Phases of displacement

- 4–12 months
- 1–2 years
- 2–4 years
- >4 years

The mean kilocalorie intake immediately following displacement is around 1,750 kcal per person per day, well below the internationally recommended minimum of 2,100 kcal per person per day for a refugee in a camp setting (WFP 2001c). IDPs in urban areas consume on average only 1,695 Kcal per person per day, lower than the food intake of semi-urban and rural displaced persons. These newly displaced are in urgent need of food assistance and nutritional recovery and receive assistance through Government and ICRC programmes for the first 3 months of displacement. At the end of this programme if IDPs are unable to meet all of their food requirements food assistance is provided through such programmes as soup kitchens, supported by WFP, until people have access to other sources of income.

Single mothers are more vulnerable than women in male-headed families. Single mothers consume 275 kcal per person per day less, own 17% fewer animal assets, earn almost Col\$ 2,000 (= US\$ 2,667 @ Col\$ 1 = US\$ 0.75) less per day, and have slightly lower expenditures than women in male-headed families. Their total debt, however, is half that of two-parent displaced families. Single mothers tend to have less access to credit and are financially more conservative. Families that have been displaced for between 4 and 12 months and between 1 and 2 years are the most vulnerable to food insecurity. This is due to a gap between assistance support and the establishment of effective livelihood support. After the initial 3-month assistance terminates, families are affected by limited income, asset depletion, indebtedness, and insufficient access to food (WFP, 2001c).

Box 1 Summarised case study findings

- There is an alarming drop in the socio-economic assets of families following displacement – they keep only 12% of their animal husbandry assets, and earn only about 30% of their incomes before displacement
- Depletion of assets, indebtedness, reduced food consumption, and consumption of cheaper foods constitute the four most frequently employed coping mechanisms
- The principal economic activity of women (90%) prior to displacement was animal husbandry. After displacement about half of the women are unemployed (53%). Those who find work (42%) receive only sporadic income from some form of domestic labour
- Mean kilocalorie intake immediately following displacement is 1750 kcal per person per day, almost 20% below the recommended minimum average for emergency settings (2100 kcal per person per day)
- Female-headed households have a kcal intake similar to the mean (1760 kcal per person per day)
- Urban displaced households also have a similar intake (1690 kcal per person per day) immediately after displacement. But because they face higher expenditures, especially for water, fuel and transportation, they require a higher income to guarantee sufficient food consumption.

6 Activity 3: Exploratory Analysis of the RUT Database

Early in 2002, based on the findings of Activities 1 and 2, WFP Colombia hired a local consultant to undertake a preliminary analysis of IDP data collected by the El Sistema de Informacion Sobre la Poblacion por la Violencia (RUT) Pastoral Social Secretariat of the Catholic Church. The initial task was to evaluate their ‘System of information on IDPs due to violence’ (Guerrero, 2002) to assess the quality of the database and the data, and to extract data within the general SAF framework, taking into consideration the key findings of Activity 2. Of particular significance were the findings related to differing vulnerabilities during the phases of displacement, urban rural vulnerabilities, and asset loss according to population groups. The analysis of the database was therefore structured to determine changes in IDP household socio-economic characteristics before, and during different stages of displacement. WFP analysed RUT’s 1999, 2000, and 2001 databases, taking advantage of its recent adaptations.

There are numerous advantages to RUT’s database. Endorsed by the Catholic Church, the database has a reputation of credibility, solidarity and impartiality. Similarly, being managed by the Church, it has a huge geographical reach covering almost all of the country; it covers 80 municipalities, in 32 departments for up to 5 years per selected indicator. Accordingly, the database is one of the best sources of information on IDPs in Colombia as it contains interviews with 15,170 families. One member of each displaced family is interviewed. This person answers questions on the socio-demographic characteristics of all the members of the family (gender, age, skills, etc.) and on the families’ different vulnerabilities. The key elements used for RUT’s decision making are: the date of expulsion, date of reception, date of interview, and type of aid received and by whom. It also includes questions on the past (abandoned lands, education, employment), the present (aid received, aid organisation, school assistance), and the future (expectations of returning home).

The objective of WFP’s analysis was to develop profiles of IDP households that would allow for the testing of the following hypotheses through Activity 4.

- **Main hypothesis.** The displaced population between 4 and 24 months of displacement are worse off than the recently displaced still receiving assistance from the Government’s emergency programme. The 4 and 24 month group are also worse off than those displaced for longer periods of time
- **Secondary hypothesis.** Vulnerability to food and livelihood insecurity – differentiated by duration of displacement – is directly influenced by pre-displacement socio-economic conditions.

The primary variable for the overall data analysis was the duration of displacement, using the following categories, established specifically for the WFP analysis:

- Emergency phase <90 days
- Post-emergency phase 90 days–1 year
- First displacement phase 1–2 years
- Second displacement phase 2–4 years
- Long-term displacement >4 years

6.1 Results

The major result of Activity 3 is the organisation of RUT data into frequency tables, showing the proportion of surveyed IDPs by IDP group, phase of displacement and livelihood characteristic. These frequency tables show the relative importance of each grouping and provide the essential information required to profile IDP groups in Activity 4. For example, a constructed frequency table would provide livelihood characteristic information (e.g. previous agriculture assets) for a vulnerable group (e.g. single mothers) by phase of displacement (e.g. emergency phase). Table 2 provides the variables used to construct the frequency tables for the categories, phase of displacement and livelihood characteristics.

Table 2 Variables used to construct frequency tables

Phase of displacement	Livelihood characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency phase <90 days • Post-emergency phase 90 days–1 year • First displacement phase 1–2 years • Second displacement phase 2–4 years • Long-term displacement >4 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous agricultural assets including land tenure and holding size before displacement • Assistance received, related to assets • Household structure (size, dependency ratio, number of children under 5, and under 15: the larger the family the higher the vulnerability of the household) • Family members' level of education, school attendance (prior- and post-displacement) • Income sources (capacity of response) • Family members with economic activities • Health conditions (household with disabled members, and members with diseases) • Women's condition – expectant mothers, heads of households • Reasons for displacement – relating reason to time and asset transfer • Current needs <p>Capacity of response (proxy, combined with education level and health indicator)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment prior displacement of head of household • Number of employed family members prior displacement • Current employment of head of household • Current number of family members employed

The analysis of data in the RUT database confirmed the vulnerability of the displaced from 3–24 months after displacement, specifically for the following groups: single-parent households, particularly those headed by women and those of ethnic origin. It recommended that the following steps be taken for further analysis:

- Use the generated frequency tables to extrapolate the relative ranking among typologies of IDP groups and compare them to the overall IDP population
- Identify methodological steps that would improve future data analysis
- Monitor the relative vulnerability of IDP livelihood strategies. Based on the experiences from the database analysis, WFP with RUT will identify possible improvements to the data-collection system in order to ensure a comprehensive IDPs profiling in terms of food and livelihoods security.

7 Activity 4: Construction of Food Insecurity and Livelihood Profiles and Validation of Targeting Criteria

The objective of Activity 4 is to analyse and verify the hypothesis identified in Activity 3 by using the cross-tabulated variables from the frequency tables and applying them to a larger sample of the IDP population. The result, a set of IDP profiles will include:

- Ranking based on a vulnerability index
- ‘Mapas perceptuales’ (baseline maps) in order to graphically visualise the relationship between displaced individuals and the distribution of assistance received from various organisations. The analysis will include geographical coverage, by sector (health, education, food, etc.) to ensure better distribution of aid in prevention, protection, humanitarian assistance and re-establishment
- Profiling of IDP demographic characteristics by period of displacement
- Specific recommendations to improve assistance to IDPs.

The definition of vulnerability profiles will help determine how effective existing mechanisms or benchmarks are for targeting in the current Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) and provide suggestions for refinement for any new operation. Existing targeting criteria will be compared with the results of the current analysis to better understand effectiveness both in terms of food aid volumes and support to strengthening IDP livelihoods. Finally, Activity 4 will identify a core set of indicators to be tested in the final Activity 5.

8 Activity 5: Food and Livelihood Assessment

In mid-2002, a food and livelihood assessment will be conducted as the last activity of the applied SAF methodology. The assessment will examine consumption patterns, coping mechanisms and factors that prevent the displaced from re-establishing their food security and livelihoods, even after a relatively long period of displacement.⁴ Please note that this Activity will be the expansion of Activities 2, 3 and 4, resulting in the identification of preliminary criteria and IDP vulnerability profiles.

It will test the application of targeting criteria identified through Activities 3 and 4 to a larger sample of a comprehensive food and livelihood assessment. Specifically under Activity 5 the following will be carried out:

- Verification of the proposed targeting criteria and IDP vulnerability typologies
- Determination of the specific characteristics of the profiles
- Assessment of needs for food, other basic needs and support required for building and preserving assets
- Provision to WFP and partners of a basis by which to better define types of assistance that is based on IDP group needs.

The assessment will cover a sample of settlement communities within the regions most affected by displacement: Oriente Antioqueno, Norte del Cauca, Sur del Valle, Magdalena Medio, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Uraba, Centro del Choco, Montes de Maria, Sucre, Cesar, Santander and Meta. Considering sample size and its representation of displacement patterns, the current proposal recommends covering the following municipalities: San Luis, Betulia, Burutica, Anza, Medellin, Barranquilla, Bogota, El Carmen de Bolivar, Cartagena, Florencia, Buenos Aires, Valledupar, Quibdo, Fundacion, Villavicencio, Puerto Asis, Barrancabermeja, Sincelejo, Buenaventura, and Jamundi.

Through the analysis of the data collected, a combination of the relevant factors influencing the vulnerability of IDPs will be identified and used to describe the characteristics of each of the main groups under study. If RUT agrees to track a sample of the informants this information would provide a useful baseline for future analysis, an important necessity for future impact analysis of food aid interventions, by allowing a comparison between IDPs assisted by the PRRO and those who were not. At a minimum it would allow a trend analysis of the general situation of IDPs in Colombia.

A profile for each group will be defined during the assessment. The food security emphasis will consider food availability, access and utilisation together with the capacity to cope in critical situations. In addition, the potential to re-establish livelihoods strategies will be analysed. The assessment will permit the identification of significant criteria and thresholds to be used to measure changes in the situation and status of displaced families.

⁴ This assessment is actually an essential element for the current WFP review of IDP's conditions in Colombia that was started by WFP at the beginning of food aid assistance to IDPs under the current PRRO. The review will be used on the one hand to test a series of hypotheses so that consequent targeting criteria can be update and adopted ; and on the other hand to define and orientate specific types of interventions to improve the livelihoods of displaced populations.

The main tasks to be carried out include the:

- Review of monitoring data to identify the major causes of food insecurity in particular for the displaced population⁵
- Final selection and testing of food security indicators in the selected regions
- Detailed inventory of available data and information related to the selected indicators
- Field survey including training interviewers, planning areas, logistics, and coordination
- Establishment of a database
- Statistical analysis of the data collected.

The food and livelihoods assessment will rely on both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data collection in the field will employ the following techniques:

- Community questionnaires
- Structured household interviews with IDPs by gender and age group
- Field observation
- Interviews with key informants including private traders, farmers unions, women's organisations
- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques to collect qualitative information at the community level. The objective is to explore community and individual perceptions related to displacement and to jointly identify strategy to halt the livelihood erosion of the displaced, resident and host populations.

The assessment data will be analysed by the responsible team and will be presented within the food security framework of VAM standard outputs. The Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) supported UN thematic group on displacement, in which FAO, WHO, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF) participate with WFP, ICRC and the Government's relief agency RSS will provide technical backup. Collaboration with the European Commission for Humanitarian Operations (ECHO)-coordinated group of non-governmental nutrition organisations working with displaced populations will also be maintained. The assessment's outputs will include maps, a collated database, and a guide to the methodology and tools used. All findings will be shared with relevant government bodies, national and international NGOs, and major donor agencies.

⁵ RSS, ICBF, Pro Bienestar de la Familia (PROFAMILIA), RUT, Consultoria para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES), WFP, Organizacion Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM), Organizacion Mundial de la Salud/Organizacion Panamericana de la Salud (OMS/OPS), Accion Contra el Hambre (ACH), Medicos Sin Fronteras (MSF), ICRC, and reports from WFP monitors.

9 Conclusions

The needs assessment approach outlined in this paper illustrates how WFP Colombia is building upon the standard analytical VAM framework to develop a country-specific methodology. In the case of Colombia the approach was developed based upon a thorough understanding of IDPs needs gained from secondary sources and an initial food needs assessment case study. The key findings that guided the development of the methodology included:

- The particular needs of IDPs in Colombia, the reasons for displacement, needs according to the phases of displacement and displaced groups, taking ethnicity and gender into consideration, and urban and rural food and livelihood needs
- The constraints posed by working in an environment of escalating conflict within a protracted crisis and developing assistance responses for people caught in transition between relief and resettlement
- The combined objectives of WFP's operation which are to meet the immediate food needs of the internally displaced and support the recovery of food and livelihood security in more stable situations
- The technical and financial capacity of WFP and partners to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data, consistent with the operational requirements of a large food-assisted operation in a complex political emergency.

Even though the application of the methodology developed by WFP and its partners is still in progress, a number of interesting observations and lessons can be shared at this juncture. The following section highlights those that apply most directly to assessing needs of displaced populations in unstable situations with the objective of developing assistance responses to recover food and livelihood security.

10 Observations

10.1 The Colombia Methodology

It is generally agreed that no assessment methodology can meet all information needs in all circumstances. VAM outlines appropriate methods, but specific indicators are selected depending on: the SAF objectives set for each assessment, locally available data, and the specifics of the situation. The particular set of indicators can be scaled up or down according to time and security constraints. In summary, the framework is flexible and can be locally adopted.

It also allows for both ex-ante and ex-post results assessments. Of particular importance in situations of displacement and general instability, the Colombia methodology allows for data collection and analysis to consider:

- The social and political context within the IDP population to identify reasons for their food insecurity and to anticipate the probable effects of different targeting and assistance strategies
- The food and livelihood requirements, taking into account both food and non-food resources, and the basis for supporting non-food interventions. This information is extremely valuable to WFP partners for activity planning and resource mobilisation
- The benchmarks by which different levels and forms of assistance should be monitored on an ongoing basis as part of an information surveillance system that considers both the food and livelihood security situation (access to food and livelihood strategies) together with nutritional status
- A scenario or contingency analysis to examine how further displacements would likely effect the lives and livelihoods of the displaced, hosts, and resident populations
- The back and forth nature inherent in situations of displacement, giving a better indication of the conditions that provide for a safe return. Larger questions, such as when to combine food aid with other types of assistance, and how to determine when to stop distributing food aid can also be addressed from a more reliable base
- The likely effects of a very limited or zero assistance response
- The most appropriate response based on need using agreed indicators, allowing decision-makers to refer to impartial statistics to justify their actions. A better understanding of who the displaced are and their current needs can help to reduce the misuse of aid, and the partiality and tensions associated with poorly targeted assistance. For example, knowing that people are most vulnerable to food insecurity after the third month of displacement helps to draw attention to a phase that has in the past received insufficient attention

10.2 VAM and participation

IDP and community involvement is essential in all stages of programming and is in line with the directions outlined in the Guidelining Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID), Principle 28(2) (OCHA, 1999). For WFP, as outlined in its policy paper [WFP, 'Participatory Approaches', WFP/EB.3/2000/3-D, 2000, (WFP, 2000d)], participation is 'at a minimum'; consultation, with appropriate levels or types of participation included, depending on short-term or longer-term programming objectives and the situation on the ground.

The issue of participation, including feasibility of and the objectives of using PRA is a crucial consideration when designing an assessment methodology. Information extraction, particularly in the unstable situations surrounding displacement is often all that is feasible, but it does depend on the context. (In situations where people are at immediate risk of dying, basic information needs to

be ‘extracted’ as quickly as possible). In some circumstances, participatory approaches could compromise an agency's independence, impartiality and neutrality, all of which are essential in carrying out an objective assessment of need. In Colombia local conditions oblige WFP to rely more on rapid assessment techniques, although in principle, PRA and similar participatory techniques are employed. For example, WFP conducted an in-depth participatory evaluation of the former PRRO as a first step in the development of the new operation. This internal evaluation included all partners and representatives of beneficiary groups and has helped to build a coalition of partnerships that will strengthen the implementation of future WFP programmes.

10.3 Results and advocacy

Assessments results are a very useful input to advocacy at different levels. Results to date from the Colombia assessment provide a rough indication of the number of people displaced by gender, age, and ethnic groups, relative levels of vulnerability, and importantly why people are displaced. By acquiring data on the micro level (e.g. immediate food (caloric) and related needs) and the macro level (e.g. why people are displaced, for example due to Colombia's huge inequalities in land tenure), the assessment provides a basis for raising awareness among national governments and donors. In particular WFP has highlighted the issue of hunger in international and national fora, stressing the gap in the provision of assistance to IDPs after the third month of displacement.

An important function of advocacy is to encourage national responsibility for IDPs, with the objective of reducing dependency on international assistance as a substitute for national commitment; at the same time, there should be advocacy to address the broader needs of IDPs, in particular food needs in the period between 4 and 24 months of displacement and entitlements and property rights, especially for women, in the context of asset-creation activities.

10.4 Survey constraints

WFP's experience in Colombia indicates that this type of framework can be implemented relying heavily on local resources, and both human and existing data sources. Limited time for executing each stage is always a concern that affects the consistency and accuracy in data collection and data analysis. Also, the capacity of survey teams who need to be trained quickly and often lack experience, result in poorly filled out exit sheets. Problems are compounded when the questionnaire requires qualitative inputs.

WFP experience in the Latin America region demonstrates that repeated training is required, and that one short training period is insufficient, even for experienced field monitors, if they are to effectively apply basic participatory tools (e.g. seasonal calendar) to obtain qualitative data. A potentially serious problem arises in assuring consistency in qualitative data entry, when participatory tools are not systematically applied.

It should be noted that the development of the methodology is part on an ongoing WFP programme with a past time frame of 2 years and a future programme of 3 years. This type of assessment requires a time commitment in addition to significant financial and human resources and access to all displaced groups.

10.5 Core indicators

Central objectives of WFP's assessments in Colombia are to confirm the presence of hunger and food insecurity, identify where conditions are such that food aid is clearly the best resource to use in addressing the difficulties faced by IDPs and other vulnerable populations, and to introduce programmatic opportunities for livelihood support in sectors related to health, education, asset-creation, disaster mitigation and natural resource management. A core set of indicators is the basis for meeting these objectives.

The core set of indicators, to be tested and validated along with the final activity, may consist of the following, considering the major phases of displacement and return together with the before-displacement situation:

- Demographics, ethnicity, evolution of the population structure
- Occupational/ livelihood skills
- Physical and natural livelihood assets
- Political and social structures, relationships and representation including barriers to accessing assets such as land
- Protection and abuses by gender, age and ethnicity
- Basic entitlements for IDPs including food rations, resettlement allowances, health and housing benefits, loss of family member compensation
- Positive and negative coping mechanisms
- Evolution of the wider political context
- Differentiation within the population and who is most vulnerable to food insecurity
- Food consumption patterns by gender, age and ethnicity.

The practice norms related future assessments in situations of displacement and instability will consider the inclusion of:

- Primary and secondary information
- Quantitative and qualitative information
- A wide variety of IDP voices and experiences, from both the host community and the resident population
- The elderly and children, and the most-deprived groups
- A common understanding of what is meant by food and livelihood security and the role that food aid can play in addressing factors contributing to food and livelihood insecurity
- Staff from diverse disciplines who are able to triangulate findings
- Field staff involved in the analysis of information not simply collecting information for the assessment process.

The ultimate question in any WFP analysis is, 'How can food aid make a difference?' This information is critical to informed decision-making by WFP and its partners for the effective use of scarce food resources. The above practice norms and core set of indicators to be agreed on between WFP and its partners are a solid basis for ensuring a more effective and impartial role for food aid. At this stage methodology has already helped to establish the most critical periods for food assistance, the most vulnerable groups in need of food, and the objective of reorienting WFP-supported activities towards human capital development and alternative livelihood options for the internally displaced, at least for their duration of displacement.

10.6 An important use of livelihood data

Incorporating a livelihoods approach in the WFP Colombia assessment methodology provides a valuable basis for developing targeting criteria in a standardised way that avoids manipulation. Given the nature of IDP operations, that is the back and forth situation of displacement, return, repeated displacements, and because needs change over time with the phase of displacement, IDP numbers and needs are not constant over the life of an operation. For example, the Colombia PRRO has been approved for 3 years and it is most probable that both the geographical and beneficiary targeting will not remain as per the findings of the original assessment. The incorporation of livelihood information allows for more stringent criteria that should remain valid through the phases of displacement. Because criteria are based on the livelihood characteristics of different vulnerable groups based on livelihood profiles, the particular needs of these groups can be better considered when designing assistance programmes.

Livelihood data also allow for the consideration of livelihood support from the onset, rather than only in the later phases of displacement. The use of criteria based on livelihood information can be used to signal to governments and donors the need to mobilise non-food resources concurrently with food, and for a smoother transition from food to livelihood support. The assumption is that the livelihood information should lead to a better partnership and integration of scarce food and non-food resources.

10.7 Conclusions

Livelihood approaches and improved information provide a better basis for identifying those in need of assistance and appropriate types of assistance to render, including the most effective types of food distribution mechanisms. A methodology that introduces livelihood elements forces assistance providers to understand how people use and combine their skills, capabilities and assets, what they have lost as a result of displacement, which combination of these will allow people to withstand the deprivation of displacement, and finally the assets to be replenished during resettlement.

WFP's assistance to the displaced is centred around the critical periods after the first 3 months of displacement, when it is assumed that coping mechanisms should begin to replace government and ICRC assistance. The assessment thus far has allowed WFP to understand that this crucial period has been largely forgotten, and that some of its previous activities were not reaching those in need. As a result, in the next phase of WFP's operation more attention will be given to balancing direct feeding requirements through soup kitchens with support to education, restarting agriculture production and resettlement when feasible.

But an improved understanding of IDP needs, capacities and vulnerabilities only goes so far in meeting the objective of restoring livelihoods. In Colombia the two most important factors leading to assistance dependency are the lack of security and lack of consistent access to all vulnerable groups in need. Restricted movement and loss of access to productive assets, land in particular, keeps IDPs virtually trapped inside urban centres with few options. Insufficient resettlement packages for the majority of returnees also reinforces people's reliance on food rations, as they do not have the starting capital required to simultaneously secure shelter and restart livelihood activities. These core issues reinforce a pattern of extreme vulnerability that is reduced by government food rations – but which continues until IDPs develop new livelihoods in the resettlement phase.

A solid information base establishes credibility. Perhaps greater credibility and understanding will highlight the deprivation of the internally displaced and serve as a basis for impartial advocacy that will bring greater attention to the plight of IDPs in Colombia and elsewhere.

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Annex 1 VAM and SAF

The SAF encompasses a set of three core analytic activities (WFP, 2001b):

1. Comprehensive vulnerability assessment (CVA), to inform the design process
2. Periodic vulnerability monitoring (PVM), to support program implementation over time
3. Emergency vulnerability analysis and mapping (EVAM), to monitor progress toward objectives throughout the implementation period.

These tools, described below in more detail with their corresponding sub-components are intended to help WFP meet its special commitments to women through a gender-sensitive analysis. This analysis is designed to identify the particular problems women face in developing countries together with the opportunities for using food aid to address those problems. Even more importantly, it is geared to ensure that WFP identifies opportunities to use women's particular role within the household that often makes putting food aid under their control a highly cost-effective form of intervention.

While designed to provide an information base to support all subsequent VAM analysis, the steps in the SAF analytical process have specific input implications for WFP emergency operations. The CVA, for example, is intended to provide an essential empirical base for emergency programme design, while the EVAM includes analytic activities to further support various aspects of the emergency programme management.

A1.1 Comprehensive vulnerability assessment (CVA)

The CVA is undertaken every 3–5 years, in anticipation of a new country programme cycle, to provide a detailed understanding of comprehensive food insecurity and vulnerability conditions in the country's different regions and socio-economic groups, and thus support programme design, particularly regarding targeting and priorities. It has the two following sub-components:

A1.1.1 Situation Analysis

The objective of this analysis is to provide a geographic, sectoral and socio-economic overview of a country's food security and vulnerability context. It should identify the main causes of food insecurity, the population groups most affected and the possible sectors of intervention to address these problems. The Situation Analysis, in turn, consists of:

Literature review. The critical starting point for any vulnerability analysis is a review of existing relevant literature on the country's agriculture, poverty, nutrition, marketing and other food-security and vulnerability-related issues, providing a preliminary understanding of the causes of food insecurity and an initial definition of vulnerable socio-economic population groups. In doing so, it must analyse the political context, interests and activities of important institutional players in food security and vulnerability, providing the basis for selecting and interpreting available secondary data (below) in the appropriate analytic context.

Secondary data analysis. The analysis of secondary indicators provides a narrative understanding of the underlying causes and spatial patterns of food insecurity and vulnerability. It is not an index or model that synthesises diverse indicators into a single complex measure, but rather analyses them separately to enhance the understanding of the causes of various aspects of food insecurity and

vulnerability. In addition, it uses secondary data on food security and vulnerability *outcomes* to identify geographic priorities for WFP-assisted interventions based on where vulnerable populations are most likely to be concentrated.

A1.1.2 Community food security profiling (CFSP)

This is a field assessment intended to provide a more refined understanding of the communities, households and individuals in WFP's targeted 'most-vulnerable areas.' It analyses causes and levels of vulnerability, gender and intra-household resource allocation concerns, livelihood strategies, coping capacity and strategies, and issues related to the role of food aid. The data collection effort that uses a combination of sample survey and PRA techniques, provides information normally unavailable through secondary sources and thus offers a detailed factual basis for designing, monitoring and evaluating the activities. CFSP includes:

Geographic stratification. Secondary data on environmental conditions, natural and manmade hazards, social characteristics, access to infrastructure and services, economic organisation and health conditions, among others, are used to stratify the WFP target areas geographically. This serves as the basic sample frame for subsequent primary data collection activities in the CFSP and, potentially, in EVAM.

Community and beneficiary characterisation. This activity describes the livelihoods of the communities within the target areas, the characteristics of households that are chronically food insecure, vulnerable to food insecurity, or food secure. These characteristics will be used to target community-based, food-oriented activities as well as develop beneficiary selection criteria. Important outputs of this second phase are the community and household profiles in vulnerable areas.

Development of scenarios for contingency planning and disaster-mitigation efforts is increasingly a standard output of a VAM analysis, based on a detailed re-analysis of baseline secondary data and vulnerable group profile information. This analysis is intended to highlight regions and population groups at risk to specific hazards, indigenous coping/recovery capacities and available institutional and logistics resources as a basis for prioritising investments for improved emergency prevention, mitigation, and response capabilities.

Consultation/consolidation. Various types of consultation and consolidation exercises are recommended whenever they appear to be needed in the course of the CVA implementation. They may take the form of field visits, interviews, joint analyses, intra-office meetings and even formal workshops, and may be carried out with participation from any combination of WFP Country Office staff, WFP partners, and local food security experts. The point is to continuously test and improve the conclusions being produced by the CVA analyses and gain new insights. It is also intended to begin building a community of common interest and ownership of these issues and conclusions as the process continues.

A1.2 Periodic vulnerability monitoring (PVM)

A key feature of WFP's standard analytical framework is the ongoing effort to monitor the general food security and vulnerability status of key target groups by compiling early warning system information, key informant interviews, analysis of secondary data, and direct field assessments of VAM staff where necessary (WFP, 2001b). These efforts undertaken on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis, according to local conditions and decision-making requirements, help signal

the need for more intensive and formal emergency needs assessment missions. They also keep WFP informed of changes in external factors or the local context that may influence the performance of long-term development activities. WFP has identified the following two specific areas that can affect the status quo, and thus merit such periodic monitoring.

- a. **Slow-onset threats.** Certain food security threats such as AIDS, climate change, etc. will not trigger quick-onset emergencies but will, with time, substantially alter vulnerabilities to food insecurity. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation of these slow-onset threats are thus important to WFP. They give it the opportunity to: track changes in food insecurity and vulnerability conditions from the baseline analysis, compare results over time and isolate and analyse significant trends and changes in the food security and vulnerability of key target groups.
- b. **Early warning.** Collaborating with national, regional and international early warning resources, institutions and data when available, and allocating appropriate levels of WFP resources to the task when they are not, VAM will track the progression of near-term threats to food security in the countries it covers. SAF will help define certain early warning products and procedures that guide how VAM analyses and presents early warning information to WFP decision-makers.

A1.3 Emergency vulnerability analysis and mapping (EVAM)

Undertaken as needed under emergency conditions, EVAM analysis complements the overall WFP emergency programme design process to provide input into the following questions (WFP, 2001b):

- a. Is there an emergency?
- b. What is the nature of the problem?
- c. Where is it located?
- d. What type of household is most in need?
- e. How many households are in need?
- f. What type of assistance is required?
- g. What is the current need level and the expected duration and progression of needs?
- h. What specific food and non-food interventions are required?
- i. How should emergency rations be targeted?

Through EVAM, WFP develops activities to capture changes in food insecurity and vulnerability conditions from baseline analysis. These activities are primarily to support emergency planning, needs assessment and targeting, and to monitor the transition towards recovery. They also provide an important context for understanding external factors that may influence the performance of long-term development activities. EVAM components (WFP, 20001b) are:

- a. **Emergency vulnerability assessment.** This assessment combines sample survey and participatory methods to obtain essential information on the severity of crisis conditions at the household level, the socio-economic characteristics of the most severely affected population groups, their number and absolute food needs and an outline of specific key concerns for emergency programme design efforts. This in-depth field investigation takes 3–5 weeks to complete and is undertaken when the investment in building a broader context to assess the emergency condition is judged useful and possible for a more appropriate response from WFP and partners.
- b. **Emergency vulnerability monitoring.** This type of assessment, not systematically undertaken at present, is intended to support the management of an emergency operation by providing WFP decision-makers with information related to the impact of WFP emergency food aid resources on affected populations. To be completed in less than 3 weeks, it combines information on food aid deliveries with changes in market-level conditions and household coping behaviour, together with changes in individual nutritional status conditions that may signal the need to increase or decrease assistance levels to meet the changing needs of affected populations at every stage of

the emergency. In addition, this monitoring tool will enable WFP to identify the point at which the behaviour of affected populations indicates a shift from ‘coping’ to ‘recovery’ to better design transitional strategies from emergency operations (EMOP) to PRRO.

Table 3 Overview of SAF process

Type of analysis	WFP information needs	SAF analytic activities	SAF outputs
Comprehensive vulnerability analysis (CVA)	Geographic, sectoral and socio-economic group targeting	Situation analysis Literature review Secondary data analysis	Vulnerability Issues Paper (VIP) including input to WFP programmes Brainstorming workshop
	Beneficiary targeting, characterisation of household vulnerability dynamics and definition of the role of food aid	Community food security profiling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic stratification • Community and beneficiary characterisation 	Community and household profiles in vulnerable areas, including input to WFP programme Brainstorming workshop
	Identification of risks and potential impacts, and opportunities to mitigate disasters	Secondary data analysis Community food security profiling	Input to WFP programme
Consultation/consolidation			
Periodic vulnerability monitoring	Identification of emerging trends and eventual threats to food security and vulnerability	Slow-onset threats Early warning	Food security and vulnerability updates Input to early warning reports
Emergency vulnerability analysis and mapping (EVAM)	Current food security status: who, where, when, why, how much food?	Emergency vulnerability assessment (EVA)	Input to emergency operation document

Source: WFP (2001b)

Annex 2 WFP Principles – Assisting the Internally Displaced

1. The essential condition for provision of WFP food to displaced people is food insecurity, but understanding their particular assistance and protection needs is a prerequisite for effective targeting of assistance as displacement does not automatically make a person food-insecure. In the initial and resettlement/return stages, IDP priorities can easily be differentiated (particularly when IDPs are located in camps or are in resettlement programmes). In such cases, it may be appropriate to target IDPs as a specific group and then determine which ones are food-insecure or require food assistance.
2. In some cases, however, it can be both difficult and inappropriate to distinguish IDPs from other food-insecure groups either because authorities deny access to IDPs or restrict their movements, or they or the opposition conceal their presence. IDPs themselves may, out of fear, intentionally become ‘invisible’ by residing in temporary quarters. It is also difficult to determine the exact number of displaced people when agencies and governments do not use harmonised definitions or counting methods and various parties may have an interest in inflating or understating numbers. The remoteness of an area and/or its dangerous conditions can also make needs assessment very difficult.
3. While it is important to recognise that the needs of IDPs are often particularly acute, the need for general distributions rather than targeting may in fact be more appropriate when IDPs represent just one of many requiring assistance – including returning refugees. Particularly the poorer families among whom the displaced often settle may have similar needs and be entitled to assistance, especially during protracted displacement. In these situations, the same vulnerability criteria should be used to identify food-insecure people in general because it helps ensure the appropriate use of food and avoids tensions with local populations. Particularly when displacement is accompanied by ethnic tension, it is preferable not to distinguish between IDPs and other conflict-affected people.
4. In the end, the dilemma is to meet basic needs without encouraging poor people to become IDPs. One way to avoid dependency and relief-initiated population movements is to design a clear time-bound strategy for types and scale of relief assistance. From the earliest stages, assistance should be developed with the longer-term aim of restoring self-sufficiency, rehabilitating community-owned infrastructure, and restarting livelihood activities in communities of origin in order to encourage the eventual return of displaced families. WFP Food-For-Work activities can provide an incentive for such activities as reconstruction of public and private assets, and community infrastructure and private housing, involving civilian populations affected by conflict, thus aiding in the process of resettlement, recovery and reconciliation.
5. Improved arrangements with partners, especially those with protection mandates and experience in formulating protection strategies, is essential to ensuring that food assistance does not put intended recipients at risk. Beyond that, efforts to promote the broader rights of the displaced could include developing joint statements on humanitarian principles; advocating for access to food and related inputs, freedom of movement and property rights; and reporting or taking action when rights are violated. Greater awareness of the rights of IDPs as well as of their condition and needs must be promoted with national leaders, international organisations, the media, donors, and parties to conflicts. Support can also be provided for community-based protection, since activities that encourage the maintenance or restoration of communal links or promote integration of the displaced into the surrounding community contribute to their security.