



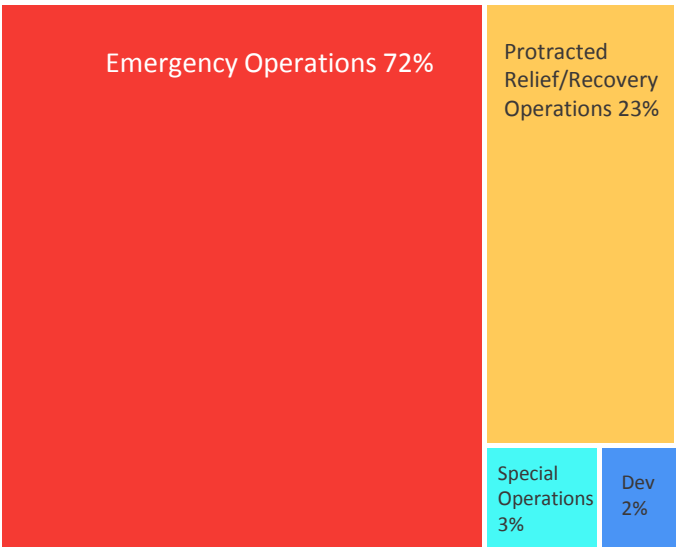
# Monitoring humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected settings



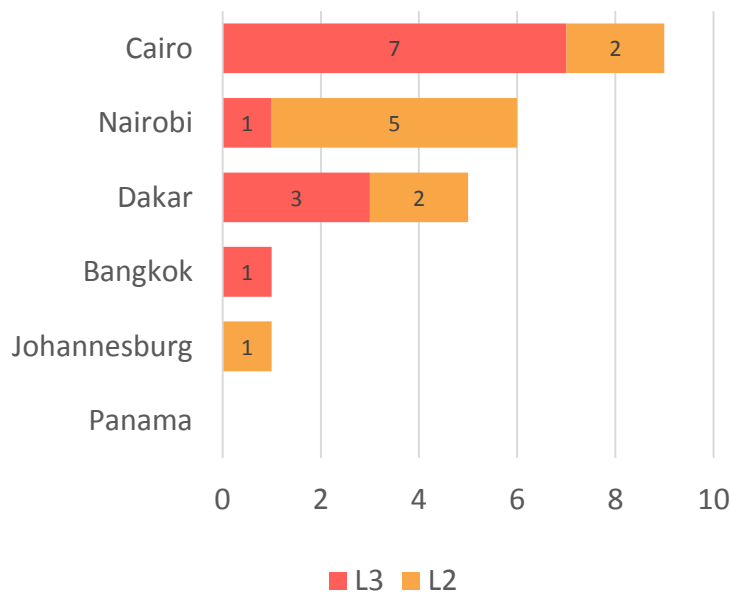
## Background

Over the last five years, the world has seen an unprecedented number of large scale conflict related emergencies. It is estimated that over 65 percent of WFP's work in recent years has been in conflict-affected settings. The World Food Programme Regional Bureau Cairo for the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe (RBC) is covering a large proportion by providing oversight and support to five L3 and L2 emergencies in conflict settings.

### 2015 Funds Spent in RBC



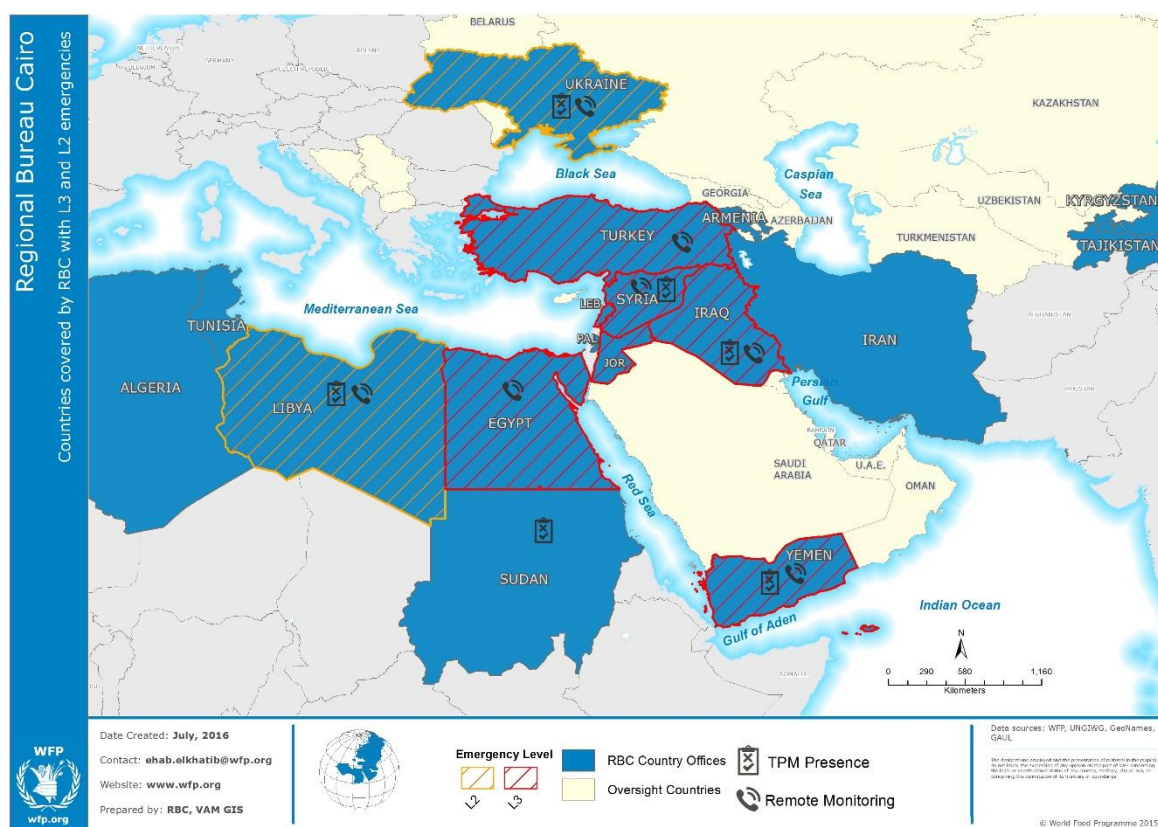
### Countries with emergencies by WFP Regional Bureau in 2015



Since 2015, nine out of eighteen countries covered by RBC have ongoing L3 and L2 emergencies. The Syria and neighbouring countries emergency response covering Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt started in 2011. Due to the protracted nature of the crisis, both operations will transition into a protracted relief and recovery operations. Libya, Ukraine and Iraq started in 2014 and Yemen in 2015. In addition, Sudan has regular disruptions leading to new displacements, in particular affecting Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Some other countries in the region remain fragile, including Armenia and Azerbaijan due to an unresolved dispute over Nagorno Karabakh.

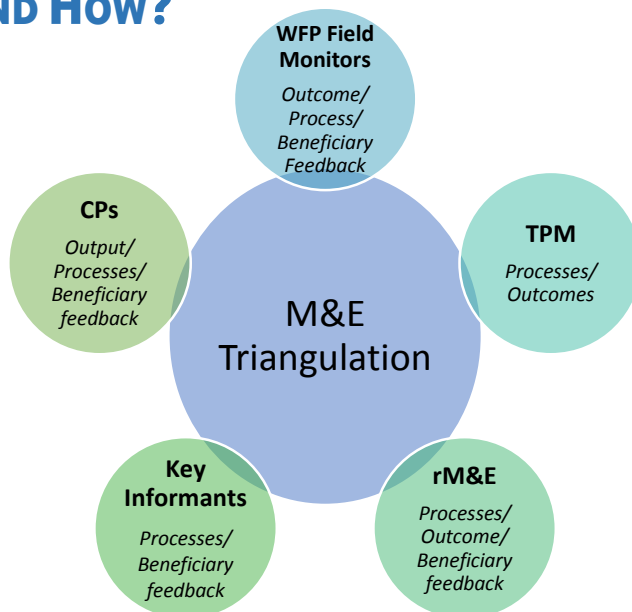
The purpose of this paper is to share experiences, lessons learned and innovations related to monitoring in conflict affected settings as well as to provide an overview of the M&E information produced to inform strategic and programmatic decisions.





## WHAT IS BEING MONITORED AND HOW?

As in all operations, WFP monitors outputs, processes, outcomes, risks and assumptions and also gathers beneficiary feedback for accountability and learning to improve the programmatic response. This follows the guidance set in the RBC Emergency M&E Package (EMEP). In order to meet set standards, country operations rely on their own WFP monitors, Cooperating Partners (CP), third party monitoring (TPM), remote monitoring (rM&E) and key informants.



All countries but Libya - and recently Yemen due to security concerns - use a mix approach of both WFP and TPM staff to monitor sites on the ground depending on whether WFP has access to certain locations or not. Libya is the only fully remotely managed operation in the region, and thus is heavily reliant on CPs and TPM.



WFP Field Monitor in Rural Damascus, Syria.

At the start of the initial response, a pre-assistance baseline is conducted followed by regular post-distribution monitoring (face-to-face or remote) to measure immediate outcomes in terms of enhanced food consumption and reduced application of coping to meet food shortages and other basic needs. In some countries, a panel of households is re-interviewed after assistance ceases to assess if households are able to maintain an acceptable consumption status and reduce or stabilize use of negative coping strategies after assistance ends.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO MONITORING IN CONFLICT SETTINGS: DATA SOURCES IN ADDITION TO PARTNER REPORTS (AS OF MID-2016)

Yemen	Syria	Iraq	Ukraine	Libya	Sudan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•WFP monitors</li><li>•TPM</li><li>•rM&amp;E</li><li>•Hotline in Sana’a under discussion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•WFP monitors</li><li>•TPM</li><li>•Key informants</li><li>•rM&amp;E under development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•WFP monitors</li><li>•TPM</li><li>•Interagency hotline</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•WFP monitors</li><li>•TPM (both face-to-face and rM&amp;E monitoring)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•TPM (conducting both face-to-face and remote monitoring)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•WFP monitors</li><li>•TPM</li></ul>

Third Party Monitoring (TPM)

Third Party Monitoring (TPM) companies have proved to be indispensable in their ability to quickly respond to the needs of WFP, filling the information gap and often providing high quality data through innovative survey techniques to gather information in hazardous areas.

*Third Party Monitoring is conducted by an independent organization to monitor cooperating partners’ distributions, collect outcome information and conduct beneficiary interviews where WFP does not have access due to physical, security or political reasons.*

TPM companies are contracted in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Ukraine and Sudan. Since the start of 2015, nearly US\$3 million has been spent by WFP on TPM contracts across the region. All but one contract was through private companies, often local research institutes or polling centres with in-country presence and an established network at local level prior to the conflict. These partners have been fully trained by WFP staff and are responsible for onsite monitoring, baseline studies, post-distribution monitoring interviews, remote monitoring and the set-up of beneficiary feedback lines.

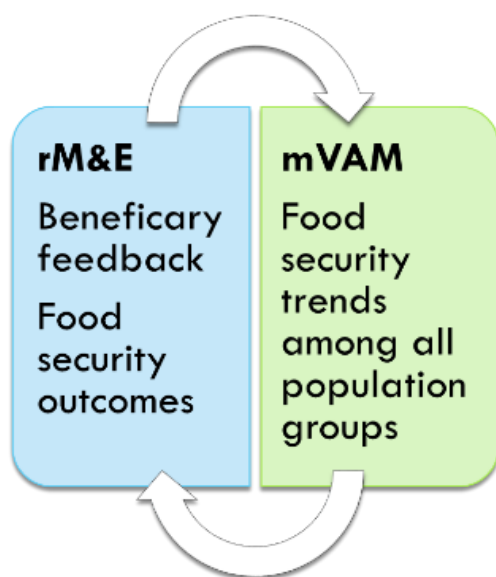
TPM uses structured interview tools and also conduct interviews with focus groups and individuals to gather qualitative beneficiary feedback. Some are also contracted to monitor food prices in local markets. TPM has been implemented across all activities, including general food assistance, nutrition activities, school feeding and food-for-assets programmes.

While useful, TPM does have multiple associated limitations. For one, general reliance on TPM in inaccessible areas can be risky as means of verifying conflicting information remains limited. In addition, most TPM partners in RBC come from the private sector and may lack an understanding of humanitarian principles. Training and close oversight is therefore essential but can be challenging if TPM monitors reside in inaccessible areas.





TPM photo from a distribution in Germa, South Libya.

## Remote Monitoring (rM&E)



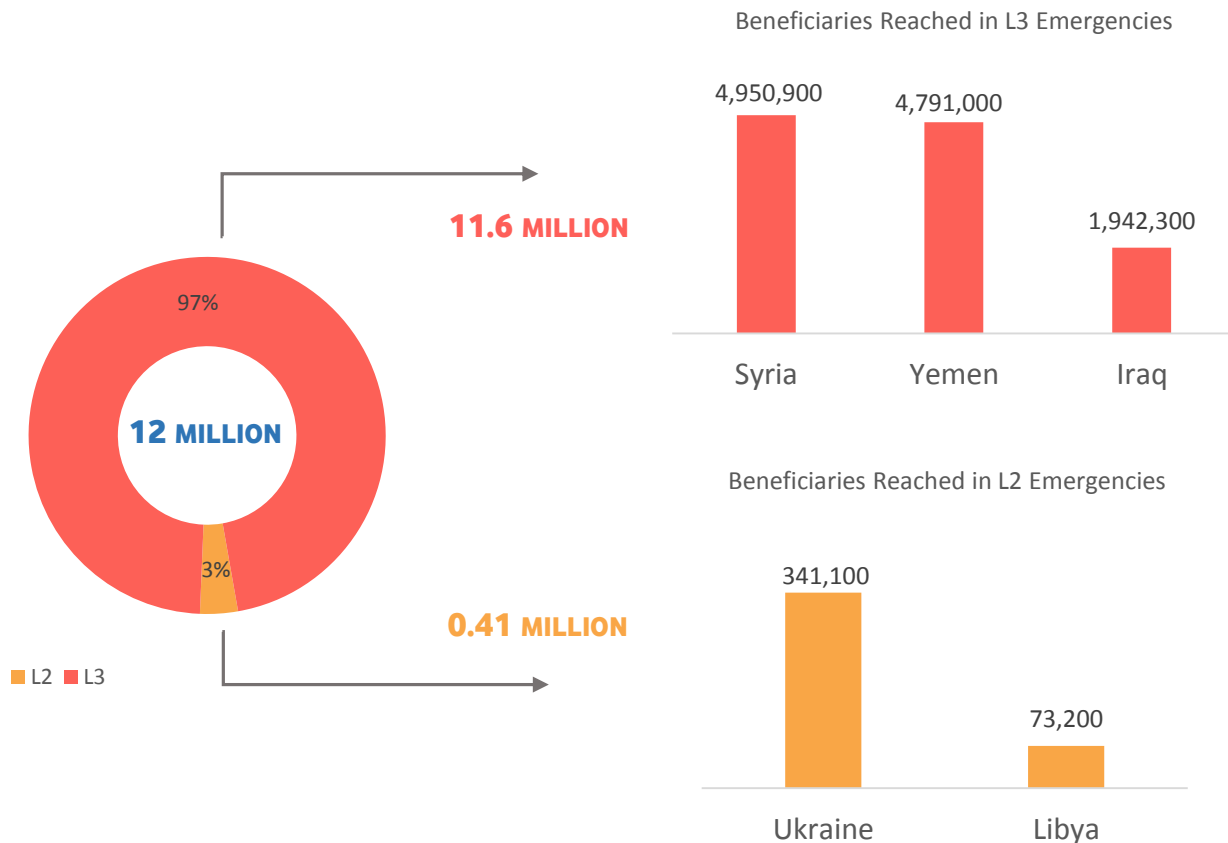
The lack of access in many countries in RBC due to ongoing conflict has led to an increase in the use of remote monitoring services with specialized call centre partners – often in collaboration with mVAM. Yemen was the first country to contract a company based in Jordan specialized in automated calls and random dialling among existing beneficiary lists which is used both to collect outcome indicators and gather beneficiary feedback on the use of assistance, their awareness of the programme and entitlements and satisfaction. They have since reached up to 2,800 households per month through live calls for monitoring purposes. Syria is currently in the process of contracting the same partner for remote monitoring services to expand the monitoring coverage. The table on the next page details the benefits and limitations associated with rM&E.

Benefits		Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ rM&amp;E increases monitoring coverage and frequency of data collection and reporting</li> <li>□ rM&amp;E is cost-efficient compared to face-to-face surveys</li> <li>□ rM&amp;E does not put any monitors at security risks</li> <li>□ Increase likelihood of interviewing males who are working during the day</li> </ul>	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Potential sampling bias (mobile phone ownership, connectivity, access to electricity)</li> <li>□ Limited ability to validate and probe answers</li> <li>□ Number of questions limited</li> <li>□ Language consideration and cultural sensitivities consideration</li> <li>□ Possible Higher non-response rates</li> </ul>

## M&E FINDINGS AT COUNTRY-LEVEL

In the RBC region, WFP reached more than 12 million beneficiaries with food assistance in the five conflict affected L3 and L2 emergencies by the end of 2015. In Syria and Yemen alone, nearly 10 million unique individuals were assisted over the year.

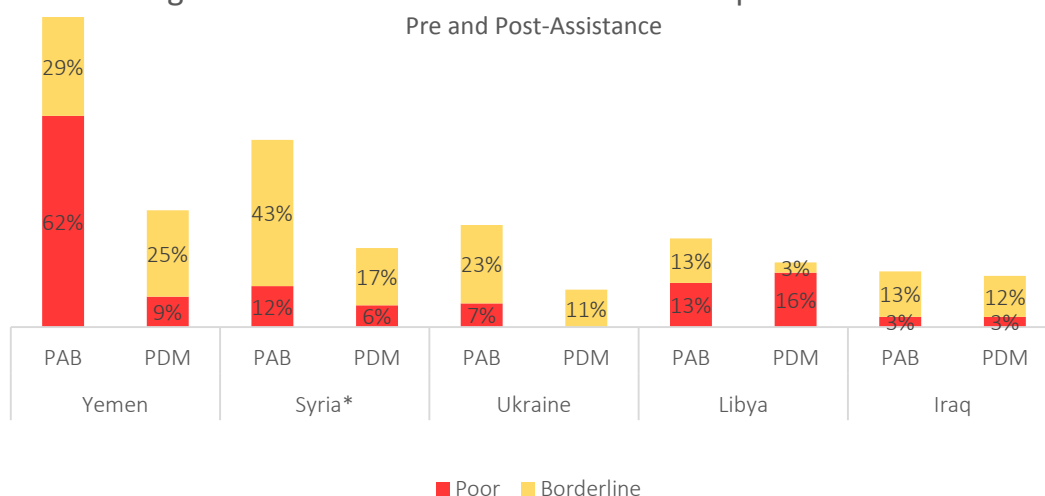
Figure 1: Number of people assisted in conflict-affected countries in 2015



## Outcome Measurements

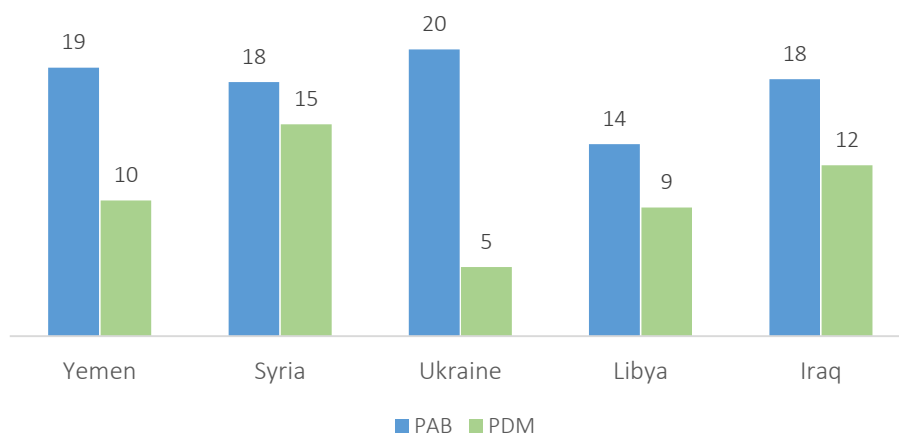
Since 2014, Country Offices across the region started to conduct pre-assistance baselines (PAB) in all new emergencies to measure their food security status before assistance was received among assisted populations. Targeted beneficiaries in Yemen had by far the lowest food consumption levels at baseline. After assistance was received Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) took place to measure food security outcomes and assess the impact of assistance. Figures 2 and 3 illustrates the positive impact of WFP assistance on food consumption levels and the application of coping strategies (Data source: 2015 Standard Project Reports). Overall, WFP assistance lead to some 50 percent reduction in poor or borderline consumption in Yemen, Syria and Ukraine while the situation was stabilized in Libya and Iraq.

Figure 2: Poor & Borderline Food Consumption in 2015  
Pre and Post-Assistance



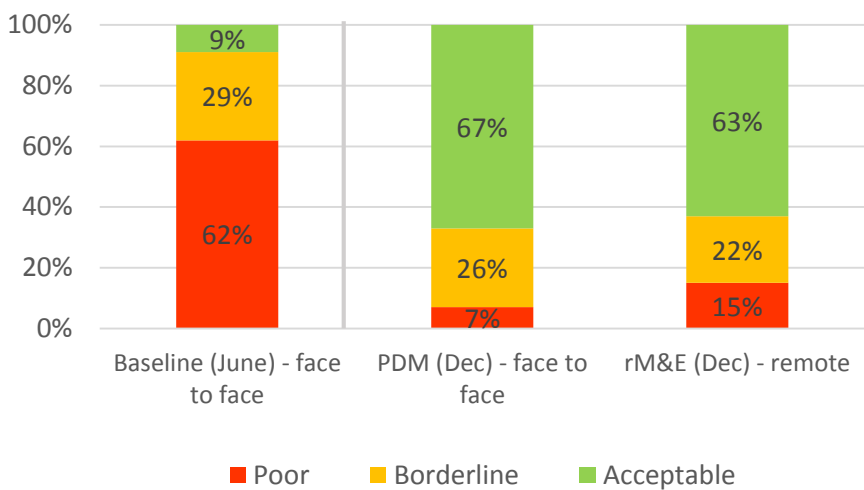
Beneficiaries showed high applications of food coping strategies\*\* – meaning they are highly stressed to meet their basic food needs. Following the receipt of WFP assistance, beneficiaries showed much lower coping levels, particularly in Ukraine and Yemen.

Figure 3: Coping Strategy Index by Country in 2015  
Pre and Post-Assistance



One example of successful outcome monitoring through TPM (face-to-face) and rM&E was in Yemen, where the information gathered complemented and enabled triangulation of M&E findings in areas not accessible to WFP. Figure 4 illustrates that food consumption groups were comparable between the face-to-face and phone call interviews through rM&E which were both conducted in December 2015. This comparison provides credibility to remote calls for outcome monitoring in Yemen and is now being tested in other emergencies.

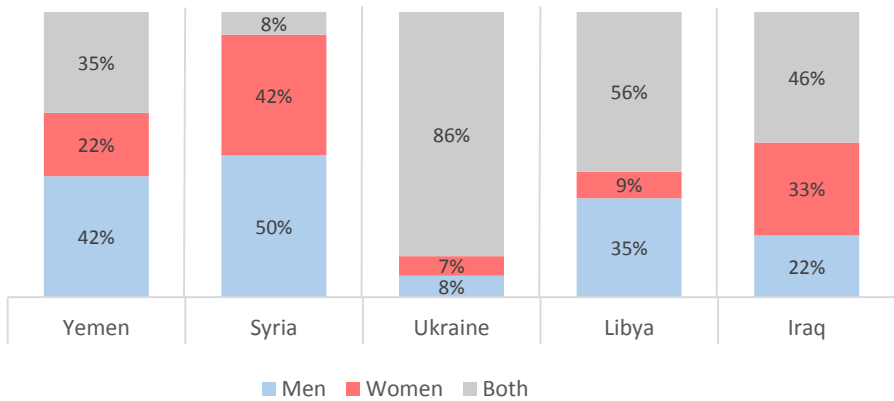
Figure 4: Food Consumption in Yemen



Monitoring of Cross-cutting Themes

Monitoring cross-cutting themes of protection, accountability to affected populations and gender are key elements to measure performance and guide programme decision-making. The following graph illustrates the differences by country in decision-making over the use of assistance. Amongst female headed households, no real variation was shown over decision making. While in the majority of male headed households women make or contribute to decision-making on the use of the food assistance received, the decision-making is dominated by men only in Syria and Yemen. Monitoring this information is critical when changing from one to another transfer modality.

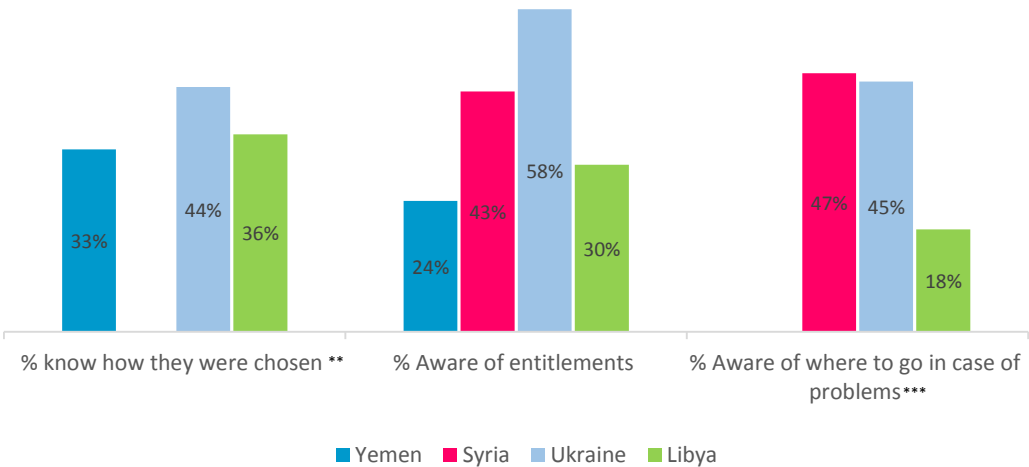
Figure 5: Decision-making over Assistance of Male Headed Household





Concerning accountability towards beneficiaries, the below graph illustrates some of the operational challenges faced in conflict affected settings in terms of informing beneficiaries on their entitlements, eligibility criteria and where to report issues/problems, showing varying degrees by country. This type of information helps programme managers to address these information gaps and monitor progress over time.

Figure 6 : Percentage of informed Households\*



Iraq and Libya have established beneficiary hotlines managed by the TPM or interagency where they can call to obtain information on upcoming distributions and provide feedback on assistance received. In Yemen, an in-house hotline is being established and Syria is exploring similar options. Beneficiary feedback is also gathered through regular monitoring tools and through remote monitoring and is shared regularly with decision makers. The following assistance preferences and satisfaction information was collected through remote calls in Yemen following the introduction of the commodity voucher programme.

Figure 7: Modality Preferences in Yemen

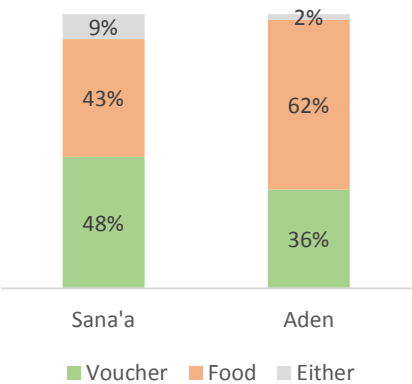
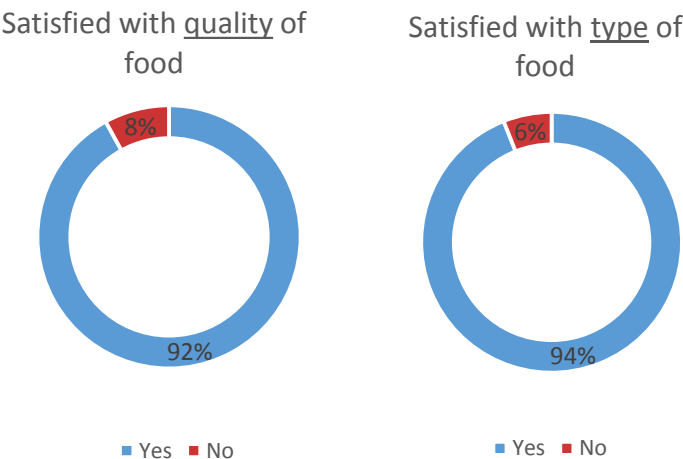


Figure 8: Beneficiary Satisfaction in Yemen



\* There is no available data for Syria  
\*\* There is no available data for Syria  
\*\*\* There is no available data for Yemen

### Tracking of Actions

Monitoring findings should inform programme to introduce corrective actions or strategic decision-making. Many countries in RBC are working towards closing the information loop through regular meetings with programme and partner staff, sharing M&E updates, issuing reports and tracking actions.

S.N	Distribution Site		
		Mar	Apr
1	A Camp	11	10
2	B camp	12	
3	C camp	6	10
4	D Camp	12	
5	E Camp	9	10
6	F (youth center)	8	10
7	G	11	
8	H	12	
9	I Camp	6	12
10	J Sport Center	12	12
11	K camp		
12	L camp		12
13	M 1 camp		
14	M 2 camp		
15	N camp		
16	O camp		
17	P camp		

In Iraq for example, a numeric color-coding system was developed to track monitoring findings at distribution and shop sites to induce corrective actions by programme managers, effective tracking over time and future planning of site visits. As seen in the example to the left, distribution sites coded red had the lowest scores and thus should be followed up more often than those in green. While in Syria, the Country Office developed an in-house online M&E database to track findings, actions taken and completion status at distribution points.

### ROLE OF REGIONAL BUREAU CAIRO

To meet the increasing demand in monitoring in emergencies and conflict-affected settings, the RBC M&E team developed the Emergency M&E Package (EMEP) based on extensive consultations with WFP and partner M&E experts and field practitioners. The EMEP was designed to help early emergency response teams to set up and maintain light and dynamic M&E systems that provide critical operational information to guide management and programme decision-making. The guide and toolbox contains extensive guidance on how to set-up and manage TPM and remote monitoring.



Focus group simulations – EMEP Workshop, Jordan April 2015

A practical simulation workshop based on real emergency scenarios was conducted to enhance Country Office capacities to meet monitoring requirements during the early and later phases of the emergency response. Thanks to the EMEP guidance, Country Offices in RBC and other regions with new emergencies have largely been able to meet all corporate monitoring requirements and beyond.

## Supporting Role by the Regional M&E Team

In new emergencies such as Ukraine and Libya, without prior WFP presence, the RBC M&E team took the lead in setting up third-party monitoring arrangements, and also facilitated TPM in Iraq, Yemen and Syria by supporting the selection process, providing training, set-up quality controls and conduct periodic reviews to monitor the performance of TPM partners. The M&E team strongly supported the use of remote monitoring (rM&E) for increased outreach to beneficiaries in hard-to-reach areas such as Syria and Yemen. The regional team offers a data analysis support desk and supports Country Offices to enhance the quality of internal and external M&E information products. RBC M&E also works closely with the VAM unit on baselines, remote monitoring and mVAM.



Distribution Visit by TPM partner Stars Orbit in Diyala, Iraq.

## LESSONS LEARNED

With the experience in monitoring emergencies over the last few years, many lessons learned have come to light particularly related to staffing requirements, TPM partnerships, Cooperating Partner capacities, and communicating M&E findings.

1. Monitoring in conflict settings require longer-term staffing strategies. The establishment of regular staffed M&E positions proved to be the most challenging aspect to establish and maintain sound monitoring systems in new and protracted emergencies. Particular attention should be given to the creation of national staff capacity.
2. Large operations with humanitarian access challenges require more than one full-time staff to produce regular and informative monitoring products that feed into strategic and programmatic decision-making and allow the tracking of actions in response to M&E findings.
3. The ability to communicate M&E findings in a simple yet informative manner ensures M&E findings become more visible and are acted upon. Stronger knowledge and information management capacity at regional and country level are important areas for further investments. There is also a need to improve the qualitative data collection techniques among WFP, CP and TPM staff to better be able to tell human stories in addition to facts and numbers.

5. Third party monitoring partnerships are often instrumental in providing information on areas with no or limited humanitarian access. The following are lessons learned particularly related to TPM management:
- When contracting TPM, ensure the Country Offices have adequate capacity to manage the partner, as regular coordination, training and oversight of the TPM is imperative to obtain satisfactory results.
  - Conduct regular meetings between the Cooperating Partner (CP) and the TPM company to ensure regular coordination occurs between both parties and ensure distribution plans are shared with TPM partners on a timely basis.
  - Where feasible, use of mobile technology to monitor movement of TPM staff. If not possible, collect attendance sheets whereby the TPM obtains signatures of CP staff at each distribution point visited as a way to mitigate risk and triangulate that the TPM was actually on the site.
  - Review datasets for irregularities and conduct call backs to a small sub-sample of households to ensure beneficiaries were visited and interviewed.
  - The TPM should be flexible enough to shift their contracts to hire potential local residents who have easy access to cover food distribution points. This should be a clearly highlighted condition in the TPM contract.
6. Monitoring capacities of cooperating partners with immediate access to beneficiaries needs to be enhanced, particularly those who operate in conflict zones without regular WFP visits. CP should be encouraged to establish independent monitoring capacities within their organizations.



WFP field monitor accompanies the TPM partner to monitor a distribution site in a non-governmental controlled area (NGCA) of Donetsk, Ukraine.

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