



REVIEW OF FOOD FOR PEACE MARKET-BASED EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Jordan/Turkey Case Study Report

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ACRONYMS

3RP	Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience plan
APS	Annual Program Statement
ATM	Automatic Teller Machine
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
EFSP	Emergency Food Security Program
EMMA	Emergency Market Mapping Analysis
FFP	Food for Peace
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HRP	Syria Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
LRP	Local and Regional Purchase
MBEP	Market Based Emergency Program
MT/mt	Metric Ton or metric ton
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
PIO	Public International Organization
RFSAN	Regional Food Security Analysis Network
SMS	Short Message Service (text message)
TANGO	Technical Assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme
WoS	Whole of Syria

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM JORDAN AND TURKEY

Syria regional crisis: The response to the Syria regional crisis exemplifies the challenges and opportunities involved with delivering food assistance in a widespread, largely urban refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) crisis affecting middle-income countries. This case study focuses on operations managed from two of the six countries supported by the FFP Syria response, Jordan and Turkey. Here banking systems and information technology enabled novel experiments in technology such as the OneCard system in Jordan and the “Kizilay” platform in Turkey managed by World Food Programme (WFP) along with the block chain technology experiment of WFP in Jordan. Highly developed, internationally connected food markets in Jordan and Turkey, the political dynamics of the region, and the agricultural resources in Turkey made this a unique case. The response focused on addressing the needs of refugees hosted by Jordan and Turkey as well as affected households inside Syria. FFP-supported food assistance includes e-vouchers for refugees in Jordan and Turkey, food parcels delivered from Jordan and Turkey to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and needy communities in conflict-affected areas of Syria, and cross-border supply of locally and regionally purchased (LRP) flour to support bakeries in Syria. A novel study comparing modality performance has allowed the piloting of a beneficiary-centered choice strategy where refugees can choose the assistance modality that best meets their needs. This case also illustrates the importance of considering multi-sectoral needs of middle income urban beneficiaries in middle income countries, where rent, not food, is their largest expense. Food assistance was more reliable than other sectors, lessening but not stopping decapitalization of refugee assets over time. The regional political dynamics of refugee hosting countries and the fluidity inside Syria require implementing partners (IPs) to be adaptive, able to adjust their management structures and develop novel approaches to program delivery and accountability within Syria.

I. INTRODUCTION

CASE STUDY SCOPE AND APPROACH

This report is one of seven case studies conducted under a global review of Food for Peace (FFP) market-based emergency programs (MBEP) that received Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) or Title II 202(e)-enhanced funding between fiscal years (FY) 2010 and 2016. This case study explores FFP-supported MBEP responses in Jordan and to a lesser extent in Turkey, and provides context-specific information that relates to the global review’s four main objectives: (1) establish a historical narrative about FFP market-based emergency food assistance programming between FY 2010 and 2016, (2) review program design and implementation processes, (3) analyze program cost-efficiency trends across a range of variables, and (4) identify developmental impacts of the projects on local economies and market actors.

The global review¹ is based on information from FFP guidance and award documents (i.e., IP proposals); field visits to seven countries specified by FFP; and data, documentation, and information provided by FFP, Implementing Partners (IPs), key informants, and program beneficiaries.

The field team conducted focus group and key informant interviews in Jordan from April 24 – May 5, 2017. Information on programs conducted from Turkey was obtained through document review, and key informant interviews were carried out remotely due to logistical challenges at the time of field work. For further details on interviews, see Annex 4 and Annex 5 for a discussion of the methodology.

A consistent methodology was used across cases to allow for comparison and aggregation of findings for the Global Report. The review is intended to gather lessons learned that focus on how FFP, as a unique actor and the largest international food assistance donor, has evolved to address food insecurity in crisis contexts. The case study is not a formal evaluation of MBEP; rather it is a selective review of the experience of IPs and other stakeholders. This report concludes with recommendations for FFP about good practices identified and those that FFP should consider modifying.

REGIONAL CONTEXT: During the spring of 2011, in response to peaceful demonstrations, President Bashar al Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic Government (SARG) promised legislative reforms. These never came to pass, and Assad’s forces responded violently to continued protests (USAID 2017b). This led to the formation in November 2012 of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, a coalition of opposition groups. The next month the United States Government (USG), among others, recognized this Syrian Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. On March 19, 2013, the Syrian Coalition established the Syrian Interim Government, based in dispersed locations throughout opposition-held areas of the country. The Islamist militias not included in the coalition created a separate armed opposition alliance, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS or ISIL) (Kaphle 2014; BBC 2017). In September 2014, the United States and five Arab countries launched air strikes against ISIS.

The complexity of the emergency has intensified with ongoing fighting, shifting conflict lines, suspected chemical warfare against civilians, and interference and attacks on humanitarian assistance. For these reasons humanitarian access to conflict-affected populations in Syria was impeded, causing mass displacement within and across its borders. Six years after the conflict began an estimated 465,000 people are dead or reported missing (Reuters 2017). Syrians are now the largest refugee population under UNHCR’s mandate. As of early 2018, United National High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) had registered nearly 5.5 million Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, though in 2014 some of these countries began to close their borders to new influxes of Syrian refugees. Turkey hosts the largest number, with more than 3.3 million registered Syrian refugees. Jordan, the main country of focus for this case study, currently hosts 661,000 Syrian refugees (UNCHR; GAO, 2017). Although some refugee camps exist, the majority of Syrian refugees, about 92 percent, are living in urban areas among host country populations (UNCHR).

¹ A review differs from a program evaluation or audit in that it is a broad assessment of program performance, process, and operational issues. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) defines a “review” as “distinct from evaluation and more closely associated with monitoring. They are periodic or ad hoc, often light assessments of the performance of an initiative and do not apply the due process of evaluation or rigor in methodology” (UNDP 2009).

MARKET STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION IN JORDAN: Ranked as a lower-middle-income country by the World Bank, Jordan has a well-developed commercial market sector and an integrated market system. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased from \$12.6 billion in 2005 to \$38.7 billion in 2016, making Jordan's economy the 86th largest as of 2016 (World Bank 2017b). Coupled with a good transportation network and adequate infrastructure, Jordan can fulfill increases in consumer demand without putting pressure on supply or raising prices (WFP 2014). As Jordan has few natural resources, it is highly dependent on imported goods. Regional conflicts, chronic poverty, rising unemployment and high public debt have slowed economic growth in the past decade (CIA 2017a). The conflicts in Syria and Iraq have hurt large and medium scale exporters in Jordan because access to long-standing trade routes and export markets to those countries has been curtailed. Markets in Jordan are able to accommodate the local and regional purchase of food commodities, a critical modality option for implementing partners.

MARKET STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION IN TURKEY: To Syria's north, Turkey ranks as an upper-middle-income country with a much larger GDP than Jordan, totaling \$856 billion in 2016, the 17th largest globally (World Bank 2017a and 2017b). Turkey is a member of the G-20 (G20 2015), indicative of Turkey's large economy. Economic growth in Turkey peaked in 2015 at over 6 percent per year, but declined to 2.9 percent in 2016 after the failed coup attempt in 2016 (World Bank 2017d). At the same time, tourism declined sharply, and unemployment and inflation increased. Turkey is estimated to be the world's seventh largest agricultural producer, exporting numerous crops including cereals, vegetables, fruit and other perennial crops (e.g., apples, hazelnuts), and livestock (OECD 2011). Agriculture comprises about a quarter of all employment in Turkey and most of the employment in rural areas (CIA 2017b). Droughts in recent years have somewhat reduced food production in Turkey, as in 2007-2008 when the agriculture sector sustained about \$2 million in losses (FAO 2017). Grain harvests in the 2016-2017 season, however, are expected to be above average (FAO GIEWS 2017). Markets in Turkey also are able to accommodate the local and regional purchase of food commodities.

2. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF FFP MARKET-BASED FOOD ASSISTANCE IN THE SYRIA REGIONAL RESPONSE: JORDAN AND TURKEY

SYRIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE OVERVIEW: USAID, International Non-Governmental Organization (INGOs), and Public International Organizations (PIOs) moved to address the humanitarian crisis soon after the Syrian conflict began in 2011-12 (GAO, 2017). Many of these organizations, such as the FFP IPs, had extensive, long-term experience in the region. Most of the IPs had recently mounted large-scale relief and development programs related to the Iraq War, as well as in Palestine and Lebanon. Each of these organizations had developed institutional capacity to design and implement large scale food, cash, and non-food item transfer programs in insecure environments.

By the beginning of 2014, escalating conflict was pushing the humanitarian crisis outside of Syria, causing large scale human displacement and growing refugee numbers. In July 2014, the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2165 authorized UN cross-border (i.e., from Turkey, Jordan, Iraq) humanitarian aid to conflict-affected people and communities outside of government control. This mandate, recently renewed through early 2019, allowed for the implementation of the Whole of Syria Approach framework bringing UNHCR, WFP and other humanitarian agencies together under a comprehensive framework, common response plans, and a supporting coordination structure, UN

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (UN 2017; OCHA 2016). In early 2015, the Whole-of-Syria² (WoS) approach and the complementary regional extension, the Whole-of-Crisis³ approach were initiated, bringing together humanitarian actors working in Syria and in neighboring countries (cross-border and refugee operations) to increase the overall effectiveness of the Syria response.

There are two current humanitarian response plans under the WoS framework: the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience plan (3RP). The HRP is an internal humanitarian response developed by the humanitarian community working in Syria. It is supported by UN agencies and partners in consultation with the Government of Syria and is anchored by three strategic objectives focused on saving lives and alleviating suffering, enhancing protection, and building resilience (OCHA, 2017). The 3RP is a coordinated region-wide response that has over 240 partners and targets the needs and priorities of refugees and vulnerable populations of impacted communities in Syria (3RP, 2016).

ROLE OF FFP IN THE SYRIA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The level of need in the Syrian regional crisis is vast. In 2017, the combined financial requirement for both plans was \$8.9 billion (Financial Tracking Service (FTS) N.d.). The USG was the second largest contributor to the Syria regional humanitarian plans in 2017 (out of 112 donors), contributing over \$980 million (Table 1).

Donor	Funding US\$ (million)	Pledges US\$ (million)
European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department	\$1,120	\$0
United States of America, Government of	\$980.5	\$17.5
Germany, Government of	\$800.6	\$0
European Commission-EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey	\$499.3	\$0
United Kingdom, Government of	\$231.6	\$0

*In addition to the USG contribution listed above, USAID also contributed \$34,600,000
 Note: the amounts above are contributions reported to FTS and UNHCR toward the (1) HRP 2017, (2) 3RP 2017, and (3) contributions outside these frameworks (UN agencies, NGOs or the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement) in Syria and neighboring countries.
 Source: FTS. N.D. Syria Regional Crisis 2017 Overview: Data.
<https://fts.unocha.org/emergencies/600/donors/2017?order=totalfunding&sort=desc>. Accessed Nov. 2017

² Under the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria.

³ Under the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinators for the Syria Crisis and Humanitarian Coordinator in Neighboring Countries

The USG contribution from FY 2012-2017 totals nearly \$6.7 billion, of which 37 percent is contributed by Food for Peace (USAID 2017b) (see Table 2). FFP has provided food assistance to crisis affected Syrians and to a lesser extent host communities since 2012.^{4,5}

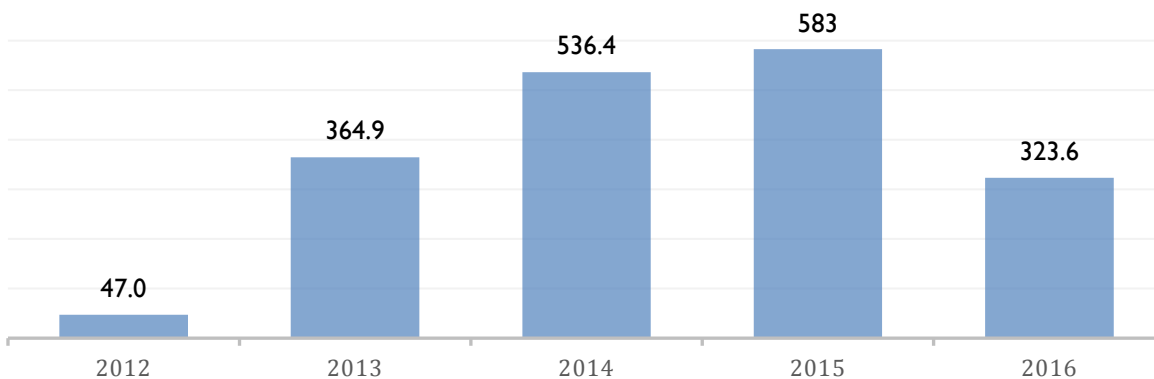
FFP’s initial contribution was in support of WFP’s first emergency operation (EMOP), targeting 50,000 IDPs. In response to intensifying conflict, declining food security, and an increasing number of conflict-affected people, the scope of WFP’s EMOP increased by 1,170 percent, extending to over 850,000 beneficiaries for just 2012. FFP also continued to increase funding for WFP and other IP programs operating in five countries in the region hosting Syrian refugees (Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt).

FFP funding for the Syria regional response peaked at \$583 million in 2015 (see Figure 1). For the Syria Regional Response, FFP has awarded EFSP funding, not Title II assistance, providing over \$1.8 billion in assistance from FY 2012 to 2016.

Table 2: USG humanitarian funding to the Syria Humanitarian Response, FY 2012-17

Donor	US\$ amount
USAID/OFDA	\$1,166,680,486
USAID/FFP	\$2,055,010,679
State/PRM	\$3,463,834,376
	\$6,685,525,541
Source: USAID 2017b	

Figure 1: FFP EFSP funding awarded annually (FY 2010-2016) for Syria Regional Response in \$US millions

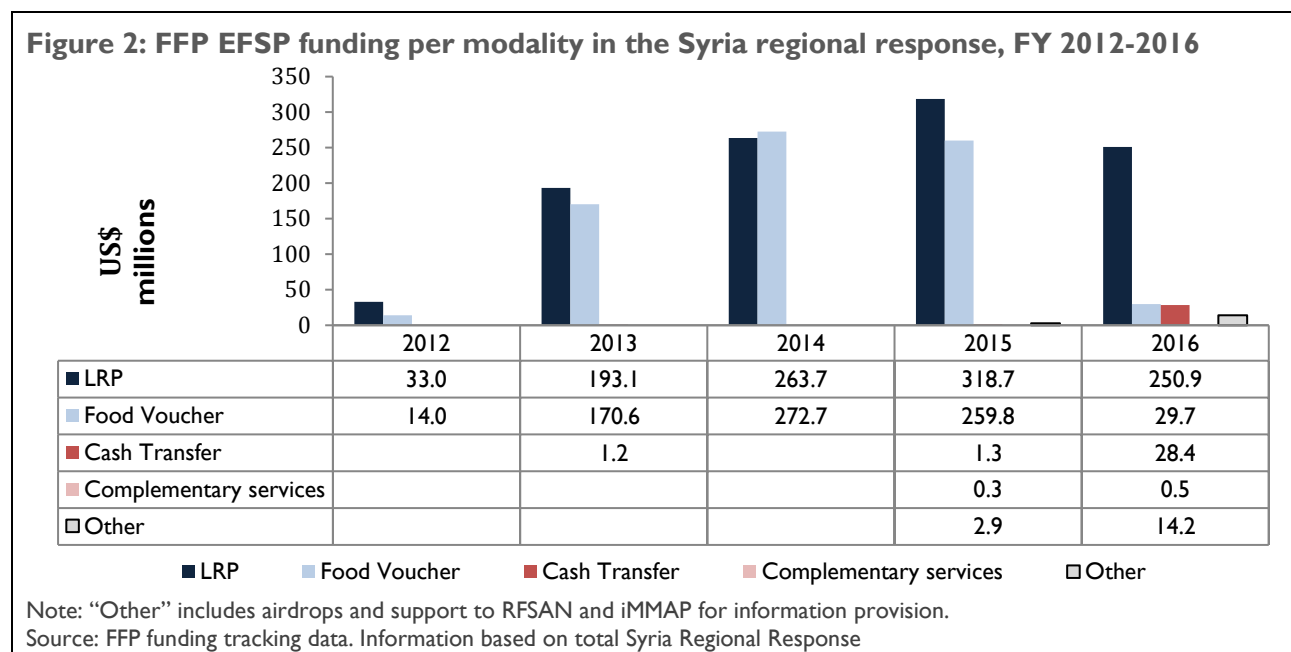


Source: FFP funding tracking sheets data for the Syrian Regional Response

⁴ This section draws from USAID EFSP Reports to Congress: FY 2012-2016, unless cited otherwise.

⁵ FFP funding supported both an internal Syria Response and a Regional Response (Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon).

FFP funding to the entire Syria regional response⁶ has been used for various MBEP modalities. Over 97 percent of the FFP EFSP funds LRP and vouchers. Just over \$1 billion or 57 percent of EFSP funding supports LRP, peaking at \$318.7 million in FY 2015. Vouchers comprise 40 percent of EFSP funding at just under \$750 million. Voucher funding peaked in 2014 at \$272 million, declining to \$29.7 million in 2016⁷. In 2016, almost all funding was used for LRP (see Figure 2). Cash transfers comprise less than one percent of FFP EFSP funding in the regional response though it increased in 2016 to \$28.4 million as IPs began to make greater use of this option.



In FY 2015 and 2016 the regional response also supported “other” activities such as information management support by the Regional Food Security Analysis Network (RFSAN), and, to a lesser extent, complementary services, which can include activities such as trainings and livelihood development.

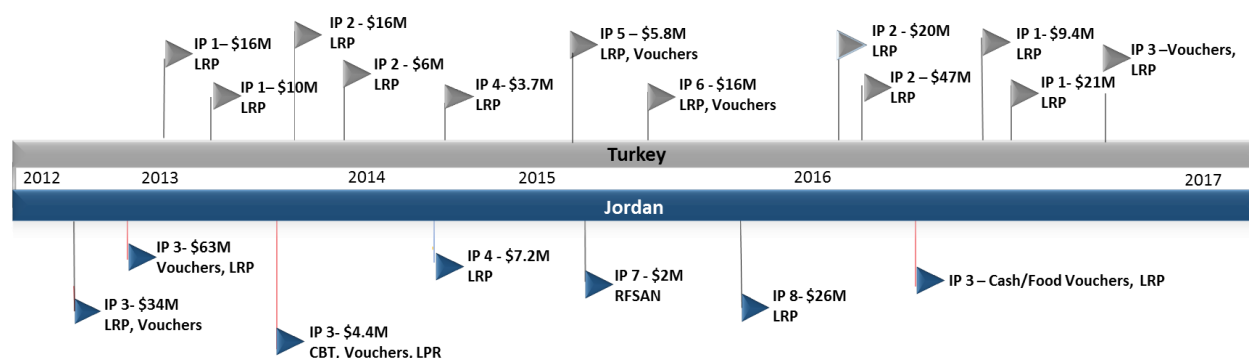
The timeline in Figure 3 (below) shows FFP contributions to the Syria regional response for activities in Turkey and Jordan based on data from FFP funding tracking sheets and award letters. The top half of Figure 3 shows FFP funding and modalities in Turkey; awards to IPs working primarily in Jordan are depicted in the bottom half.

The regional operating environment both within Syria and in hosting countries poses challenges to FFP and its partners. FFP and IPs have been flexible and creatively organized themselves to respond to changing circumstances; for example, by shifting regional managerial hubs, changing sources of bakery flour from regional purchase to local purchase in Syria, and now piloting cash transfers inside of Syria. FFP-funded activities in Jordan and Turkey provide cross-border support to crisis affected communities and bakeries in Syria, and support to Syrian refugees within Jordan and Turkey – primarily using two modalities: LRP and vouchers for local purchase of food.

⁶ The FFP regional response specifically refers to the refugee response in five countries (Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon) under the 3RP. FFP’s Syria internal response addresses Syrian IDPs under the HRP.

⁷ WFP and FFP confirmed that FFP funding for vouchers was reduced in 2016 because another donor increased its support to the voucher program, stabilizing the cash pipeline and allowing FFP to allocate funding for voucher programs to other countries.

Figure 3: FFP-supported programs in Turkey and Jordan, in US\$ millions



Notes: The timeline above shows FFP-funded programs in Turkey and Jordan based on available data. Additional activities may have been funded through awards to the regional response, which are not included here. Disaggregated data is not available for funding used per modality in Turkey and Jordan.
Source: FFP tracking sheets and award letters.

3. PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

DESIGN DECISIONS: MODALITY CHOICE, TARGETING STRATEGY, AND CHANGES

MODALITY CHOICES

Key considerations for FFP and IPs in choosing modalities were the dynamic nature of the crisis in and around Syria and the presence of highly developed markets. A Title II response was seen as not appropriate for a variety of reasons. Moreover, the rapidly changing and insecure conditions inside Syria made cash transfers and vouchers initially infeasible. Inclusion error of U.S.-funded food assistance, i.e., unintended beneficiaries receiving aid, is a major concern. The risks associated with local and regional purchase of food commodities are another consideration for design choice. These risks may have been underestimated initially by some IPs, a lesson that will be discussed in another section of this report

A number of assessments informed the choice of modalities. For example, WFP used a market assessment (2012) in Jordan and Lebanon, which showed that food vouchers were relatively low-risk and cost effective for delivering an appropriate food basket, and that the robust markets in this middle-income region could support vouchers. WFP key informants also stated in interviews that purchasing food locally was more cost efficient and would reduce the risk of spoilage and avoid challenges related to bringing commodities into port. Another factor in the decision to use food vouchers for refugees and LRP for cross-border operations into Syria instead of food imported from the United States is that over 80 percent of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Turkey are settled in urban areas with well-established markets where they can buy food. Local and regional markets also would benefit from a market-based approach. Consequently, FFP and IPs decided on a multi-modality approach using a combination of vouchers, LRP, and, most recently, cash transfers, to improve their ability to respond to the rapidly changing and varying needs of Syrians dispersed throughout the region.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PURCHASE: The first WFP emergency food security assistance in Syria began in late 2011, using LRP. As the civil conflict intensified in 2012, FFP began funding WFP's relief program. The FFP-funded response built on WFP's use of LRP as the most effective way to provide food assistance inside of Syria. This decision was supported by USAID's 2012 determination that using U.S.-sourced food posed significant risks to supply, food safety, and the safety of aid workers in conflict-affected areas, and that LRP was the most effective and efficient way to address rapidly growing food insecurity among a large population (USAID 2012).

FFP provides three types of cross-border assistance into Syria using LRP food. These activities are implemented by WFP and INGO IPs operating from both Jordan and Turkey, as well as from Iraq. IPs supply monthly dry rations containing a variety of food items to conflict-affected areas. For recently displaced families with no cooking facilities, IPs provide family-size parcels of ready-to-eat foods (e.g., rice, bulgur, lentils, oil, pasta, canned chickpeas) (USAID 2017c).

For instance, LRP is used by one FFP IP based in Jordan to deliver 12,000 food parcels per week to IDPs and food insecure populations in opposition-controlled areas of southwestern Syria. Food is procured by Jordanian vendors and transported into Syria. When this IP began its program in 2013, it chose LRP as the only modality suitable to meet the urgent humanitarian needs in that area. At the time, the agricultural sector in Syria was not functioning, food was scarce in Syrian markets, and hyperinflation and unemployment had severely eroded purchasing power, making cash transfers or vouchers inappropriate. Insecurity and limited mobility prevented local procurement within Syria. Further, U.S.-sourced foods could not arrive quickly enough to meet emergency food needs and were deemed inappropriate given the robust markets in neighboring countries and the economic needs of countries experiencing large influxes of refugees (USAID 2013).

The third type of cross-border assistance into Syria using LRP food is the provision of flour to bakeries in Syria. FFP IPs in Jordan and Turkey provide flour, and in some cases, yeast, to commercial bakeries in Syria. IPs operating out of both Jordan and Turkey had determined that supporting bakeries in Syria both supported markets and helped meet food security needs of the general population by ensuring an affordable supply of locally produced bread, a key component of household diets. One FFP-funded IP purchases flour from a private Jordanian company to supply about 67 bakeries in opposition-controlled areas of southwestern Syria. A Syrian partner NGO that has an extensive network inside Syria was distributing an average of 600 metric tons (MT) of flour weekly. IPs report that assistance to bakeries has kept bread affordable.

VOUCHERS: Vouchers are the second-most commonly used modality by FFP-funded IPs in Jordan and Turkey. Voucher-based programs started with paper vouchers and have transitioned to more efficient e-vouchers.

For Syrian refugees in Jordan, FFP funds a large food assistance program through WFP. WFP's greatest volume of assistance in Jordan is through electronic vouchers (e-vouchers) that enable nearly half a million Syrian refugees in Jordan to purchase staple food items from over 200 designated large and medium-scale food retailers. During its initial emergency response in 2012, WFP provided in-kind food baskets to refugees through IPs. Later that year WFP moved to food-restricted paper vouchers for refugees in Jordan after market studies showed paper vouchers allow a faster response than either U.S.-sourced or LRP in-kind food. However, to improve efficiency and allow rapid scale up, WFP introduced e-vouchers in 2014. E-voucher accounts are automatically recharged by WFP; data is much easier to track than with paper vouchers, and WFP can pay vendors more quickly. This provides better liquidity for shops and makes it feasible for smaller retailers to participate in the e-voucher program. E-vouchers

allow beneficiaries more flexibility because beneficiaries do not need to spend the entire amount at once, as with paper vouchers, and balances do not expire. E-vouchers are recharged monthly and may be used at any time. Unused balances are carried over to the next month. The review team visited several of the WFP-contracted vendors for the refugee e-voucher program and observed that they had a varied supply of food items and appeared to be compliant with the program's requirements.

CASH TRANSFERS: FFP's dominant position among donors and its restrictions on cash transfers (discussed below and in "Changes made during program implementation") influenced WFP's choice of LRP and voucher modalities rather than cash through the end of 2016. While FFP has supported innovative approaches by WFP's voucher system in Jordan, other donors have supported a wider range of modality options, including cash. Cash transfers from Turkey to beneficiaries in Syria were initially ruled out by IPs due to insecurity and FFP anti-terrorism regulations. This was re-evaluated in 2017, and FFP recently approved a small cash transfer pilot program by IPs operating in Syria.

MODALITIES USED IN TURKEY: In contrast to programming in Jordan, IPs operating in Turkey report that only about 10 percent of their program is food vouchers; the majority of programs in Turkey use LRP in-kind food assistance. Most FFP programs and cross-border assistance from Turkey to northern Syria use LRP foods distributed as monthly dry rations, emergency dry rations, ready-to-eat rations, and flour for bakeries.

An innovative approach to determining optimal modality choices:

The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in 2016 conducted a randomized controlled trial of over 3000 Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon who were WFP beneficiaries to determine the optimal modality for future assistance. The study focused on beneficiaries living in host communities and stated that it may not be fully representative of refugees living in camps. The objective was to compare the impacts of WFP's food assistance delivery modality on the food security and basic needs of the beneficiaries and the cost-effectiveness on the program. The study allocated beneficiaries into three randomly selected groups: a voucher control group; an unrestricted cash group; and a "choice" group with the option to use vouchers, cash, or a combination of both. The study conducted extensive post-distribution monitoring to measure the impact of modality differences on beneficiary-relevant indicators. The study found that cash produced better or equal outcomes when compared to vouchers for food security, dietary diversity and nutrition, and enabled beneficiaries to better cope with contextual changes and shocks. While modality did not affect food expenditures, beneficiaries overwhelmingly preferred cash over vouchers (75 percent preferred cash, 15-20 percent preferred vouchers). In terms of cost-effectiveness, BCG found no strong arguments against cash, and determined that unrestricted cash for food assistance in context of the study was cost-effective.

The study recommended that WFP consider the use of unconditional cash as an effective modality for this refugee population in Jordan and Lebanon. However, it also cites several reasons why "assistance could be optimally delivered through the modality of *choice*." A choice modality would allow beneficiaries to choose between unrestricted cash, vouchers, or a mix of both. BCG cites the rational optimization of assistance observed in the study as evidence that a choice modality would also support better food security related outcomes (BCG 2017). At the time of this review, WFP was planning to pilot a choice modality in Jordan based on evidence from the BCG study.

TARGETING

This section discusses the targeting process used by IPs in Jordan and Turkey. In Jordan, WFP carried out initial targeting of Syrian refugees in 2014 and early 2015 using data from various sources, including the interagency Vulnerability Assessment Framework, WFP's Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise, the UNHCR registration data, and World Bank models. More recently, partners are standardizing on a UNHCR-coordinated vulnerability assessment framework. For refugee families in Jordan whose monthly per capita expenditure falls below the abject poverty line for Jordan (less than JOD 28, or \$40/person/month), WFP provides e-vouchers of Jordanian Dinar (JOD) 20/person/month (\$28)—this includes all camp residents. Other refugee households in Jordan living in absolute poverty (less than JOD 68/person/month and above JOD 28/person/month) that meet specific vulnerability criteria for partial food insecurity receive JOD 10 per/person/month (\$14). WFP estimates that food costs are JOD 28/person/month and that if targeting is done correctly, recipients spend the money on food. Beneficiaries confirmed in FGDs that the entire voucher is spent on food. There were few reports of food being traded or sold. This was supported by the Boston Consulting Group study (BCG 2017).

WFP has reviewed its targeting process over time to ensure accurate beneficiary targeting. WFP's 2014-2015 targeting exercise for Syrian refugees in Jordan included an appeal process in which 19 percent of families who were removed from assistance were reclassified as eligible for assistance or for increased assistance. In 2017, WFP conducted a validation exercise to verify all beneficiaries and was in the process of reviewing its current targeting model to help ensure a minimum of inclusion and exclusion errors.

Another IP proposed providing assistance to IDPs in Syria that it had selected based on beneficiary need, likelihood of reliable access from Jordan, and limited support by other organizations. Moreover, the IP based targeting on assessment findings, which indicated chronic food shortages in specific areas.

An IP that provided flour and yeast for bakeries in Syria reported that they developed a rigorous targeting plan to allocate flour and yeast to communities based on population, reported need for food assistance, assistance from other donors, bakery capacity, allocations received by neighboring communities, and accessibility. The IP reported that the targeting plan was continually monitored and adjusted to address the fluid situation inside Syria. The IP used a remote monitoring strategy that used a variety of means for cross-verification, including detailed records of deliveries and receipts, local field monitors, geo-tagged information, a hotline, and social media.

Turkey-based IPs targeted appropriate beneficiary populations inside Syria by selecting households that typically met one or more of up to 15 vulnerability criteria. At times, the criteria were weighted. Typical criteria included: (a) households not receiving adequate assistance from other sources; (b) households with no obvious productive assets or means of income that is functional in the current situation; (c) families hosting IDPs; (d) displaced families living in collective centers, unfinished or dilapidated buildings, tents, and makeshift houses; (e) households recognized as extremely vulnerable by the community, including the elderly, orphans, people with disabilities, people with illness, and female-headed households; (f) households with a large number of family members (over 6 members); (g) child-headed households; (h) refugee households; (i) IDP households; and (j) households with pregnant or lactating women.

Analysis of the FGD and document data suggests that targeting error is largely exclusion rather than inclusion error.

ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED

Numerous assessments have been conducted in the Syria region by FFP-funded IPs and others. This section highlights a few examples:

Regional: The Joint Rapid Food Security Needs Assessment in June 2012 estimated that 1.5 million households were food insecure in Syria and that the number would double by end of the year. Additionally, The Whole of Syria maintains an ongoing Syria needs assessment, the Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview, to help coordinate the Syrian internal and regional response (WoS). The VAM unit of WFP has continued to provide assessment data.

Jordan: In Jordan the Emergency Market Mapping Analysis (EMMA) of November 2013 and the Cash Transfer Feasibility Report of June 2014 helped inform IPs of the needs and potential for market-based approaches.

Turkey: IP key informants in Turkey reported that they conducted their own assessments and have participated in multi-agency assessments since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey. The key informants stated that they conducted FGDs in Syria through the second half of 2012 and the end of 2016. IP cross-border assessments in Syria showed that the greatest needs included: ready to eat rations for the newly displaced; flour and yeast to allow bakeries to produce the staple, bread; and vouchers to allow war-affected populations to purchase bread and other food in locations where markets continued to function. These needs were reported to be most pronounced among newly arrived refugees in Turkey as well as those living in Aleppo, rural Damascus, and Idlib, according to IP key informants in Turkey.

CHANGES MADE DURING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

IPs have made program design changes in response to the changing local environment and have proven adept at doing so. One factor that contributes to this flexibility, as reported by IPs, is that FFP has been responsive to their requests to modify their program design. For example, when security issues led Turkey to close its border with Syria to relief convoys in January 2016, distributions to Ain Al Arab and Tell Abyad Districts by one IP were suspended. The IP transferred rations already inside Syria to a local partner, and then modified its program – changing from in-kind distributions to a paper voucher-based distribution with FFP concurrence.

IPs providing assistance inside Syria also modified their programs over time to meet the changing needs of beneficiaries and IP learning regarding most effective and efficient approaches. When IPs discovered that IDPs inside Syria had no means to prepare food, IPs introduced a culturally appropriate, dry, ready to eat, locally procured ration containing olive oil, dates, canned chicken, spices (*zatar*), and sweets (*helwa*). Shortages of cooking gas and the use of hotplates also spurred IPs to provide quicker-cooking foods. The initial rations were designed to cover 50 percent of nutritional needs. As the situation in Syria deteriorated, this was increased to 70 percent. Minor adjustments also were made to the mix of rations based on beneficiary feedback (e.g., less pasta, more tomato paste). IPs that initially provided only flour to bakeries inside Syria added yeast to their distributions so that bakers did not need to monetize (i.e., sell) a portion of the wheat flour to buy yeast.

Most significantly, IPs scaled up their programs' size to better meet the needs of an increasingly large and vulnerable group of beneficiaries. As it became more difficult to send LRP rations across the border from Turkey to Syria, more IPs adopted voucher-based programs to deliver food assistance inside Syria. In Jordan, WFP changed from paper vouchers to e-vouchers based on the administrative and cost

benefits of using electronic systems, while inside Syria, IPs stayed with paper vouchers due to beneficiary preference.

For operations inside Syria, key informants report that FFP attempts to be as flexible as possible with IPs in terms of how IPs respond to needs, and that being able to use multiple modalities both enhances FFP responsiveness in a fluid environment though it is more complicated to manage. Despite this flexibility, key informants reported that FFP partners in Syria find vouchers administratively demanding and want to test alternatives such as cash programming. The USG has been slower to respond due to a range of issues that needed to be addressed, including staff safety, the impact on local markets, the due diligence and end-use monitoring required of IPs, and the risk of cash going to unintended recipients. FFP has approved small cash transfer pilot programs by some IPs after FFP felt proper procedures were in place to minimize risk.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

PROCUREMENT: LRP has been a mainstay of the Syria regional response, and the highly developed market structure in Jordan and Turkey contributed to the timeliness and cost efficiency of LRP. While Jordan is a net importer of foods, Turkey has a vibrant agricultural sector. However, in both cases, markets are both regionally and internationally sourced. These are efficient markets that deliver food to FFP IPs in a timely and cost effective manner. Orders are filled within days or weeks as compared with U.S.-sourced Title II food, which would take months to arrive.

Turkey has a highly developed market economy that lends itself well to LRP programs. Prior to the restrictions on NGOs in Turkey, IPs were generally able to tender and accept competitive bids from vendors capable of providing food in compliance with required specifications. Some IPs, who continue to do LRP for cross-border distribution, procure goods in Iraq and its Kurdish-controlled areas. LRP, however, carries inherent risks related to the procurement process, which were experienced in Turkey and resulted in significant improvement of procurement fidelity as a result.

The Jordanian government has strict standards for imported foods, which undergo multiple inspections upon arrival, indicating that food quality is high, and refugees receive the same quality food as Jordanians. Vendor KIs noted the diversity and sophistication of supply chains and the considerable effects of FFP on markets. For its cross-border food assistance into Syria from Jordan, WFP undertakes approximately \$30 million in local purchase from 15 vetted suppliers within Jordan. Local partners observed that WFP's strategy is to have multiple suppliers to ensure it gets an immediate response when needed.

GOVERNMENT POLICY: Both countries have policies that affect the delivery of assistance to refugees and the ability of refugees to transition from humanitarian assistance. While Turkey was initially permissive on refugee rights to work in Turkey, that has changed over time. Jordan has sustained a conservative stance towards refugee rights to work, given its high domestic un/under-employment levels, though some recent progress has been made to allow refugees limited opportunities for formal employment through work permits. Turkey also levies a 22 percent tariff on imported and transshipped food stuffs, making it prohibitively expensive for IPs to cost effectively import food assistance to Turkey or transport through Turkey to Syria. Another aspect is the difficulty INGOs have in obtaining legal status and work permits for international staff. The operating environment for NGOs in Turkey became very challenging due to government registration requirements. This eventually led to INGOs either being asked to leave by Turkish officials, or to INGOs leaving on their own accord because of the difficult government operating environment. Some IPs have decided to manage their operations and procurements remotely from other countries. Initially Turkey prohibited WFP from assisting refugees

not living in camps. This has severely restricted WFP's activities, even though the prohibition has subsequently been relaxed, and WFP is able to assist through local partners. This is a very fluid environment, including within hosting countries; in order for NGOs to provide assistance, they had to be very flexible and mobile.

Some national governments, most notably Turkey, have established safety net programs for refugees; others are beginning to consider integration of refugee into safety net programs. These are important developments that were not prominent in the discussions with KIs but are important considerations in the design of interventions.

ACCESS/SECURITY: Access to Syrians inside Syria is challenging. Ongoing war in Syria seriously affected FFP's Jordan and Turkey-based partners. Access is very fluid as government and opposition controlled areas shift on an almost daily basis. This severely restricts IP staff access to distribution sites inside Syria. Beginning in January 2016 and intermittently since, Turkey has closed road access to Syria. More recently, relief goods are unloaded from Turkish trucks at the border and reloaded onto Syrian vehicles for onward transport across the border into Syria.

CAPACITY: IPs based in both Turkey and Jordan built on extensive experience in market-based approaches that they had developed during decades of emergency responses in the Balkans, the India earthquake, Afghanistan, the Aceh Tsunami, and elsewhere. Each of the IPs has internal procurement manuals and policies and procedures for in-kind, voucher, cash, and NFI programs in emergency situations. Each of the IPs has a decade or more of experience in the region, responding to emergency situations in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Local staff in Turkey and Syria received training in the use of the M&E systems, complaints mechanisms, and targeting criteria. Several IPs bring staff together for quarterly refresher training. Still, most key informants felt that more regular exchange was strongly desirable and that additional ways to monitor bakery interventions are needed.

RISK ASSESSMENT/WASTE/FRAUD: A good practice developed by several IPs working in Turkey is the use of institutional risk matrices that are used to assess the program environment and explore mitigation measures. Among the risks measured are staff and program operational safety and security, as well as the risk of waste and fraud. The risk matrices allow IPs to assess the potential effects and the internal systems that can be used or put in place to avoid or quickly catch, mitigate, and remediate fraud or waste and manage staff security. The Office of the Inspector General also developed waste, fraud and abuse guidelines and has been particularly effective in highlighting cases of potential fraud and waste and obtaining restitution to USAID for the limited number of cases found.

In-kind LRP food aid has been lost when caught in the fighting. One IP's capacity was overwhelmed, leading FFP to suspend its program and turn its procurement over to a larger IP. A new regulation that forced the transfer of relief cargoes from Turkish trucks to Syrian trucks at the border between the two countries raised costs for the double handling of cargoes and increased the risk of loss due to breakage. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that fewer than half the USG's implementing partners' risk assessments analyzed and offered mitigation of the risk of fraud (2016). By October 2017, the GAO had reported that FFP conducts a range of activities to monitor FFP-supported food assistance to Syrian refugees through WFP. GAO also reported that FFP's 2017 USAID APS requires all IPs to submit a risk assessment and that FFP is instituting country monitoring plans that use a risk-based approach (GAO 2017).

Nevertheless, LRP also has inherent risks. In addition to potential food safety issues there are risks associated with selecting honest and reliable vendors, which requires substantial knowledge of the

market place and protocols for reducing risk. IPs working on the Syria response have learned important lessons on how to reduce this risk.

BENEFICIARY PREFERENCE: In FGDs, beneficiaries in Jordan preferred cash as the modality of choice but not universally. Participants in urban FGDs tend to prefer cash while among rural FGD participants, most preferred food. A rigorous study by BCG for WFP in Jordan and Lebanon (2017) found 75 percent of all beneficiaries polled preferred cash to vouchers and 90 percent of those beneficiaries who received cash, preferred cash to vouchers. In a key informant interview, one IP reported that among cross-border recipients served from Turkey who had first received in-kind food and then received food vouchers, more than 96 percent of recipients preferred cash over in-kind food. In contrast, a Turkey-based IP key informant reported that 70 percent of respondents preferred vouchers, nearly 30 percent preferred cash, and 0.5 percent preferred in-kind assistance.

LESSONS LEARNED/M&E: Partners in Turkey and Jordan implementing MBEP in Syria cross-border and refugee programs operate in an extremely uncertain environment. The security situation in Syria makes remote monitoring necessary. IPs employ a range of tactics to maintain monitoring information system integrity. At least one IP had developed a sophisticated compensated-volunteer system inside Syria. IPs have also developed creative approaches to complaint mechanisms for beneficiaries. Added monitors are layered into the system to “monitor the monitors.” Monitors are rotated from site to site, and workshops with both staff and beneficiaries seek to develop a sense of shared responsibility for the program’s success.

IPs have learned about the difficulties of serving refugee populations in these middle-income countries where domestic pressures make it difficult to provide livelihood development strategies for refugees.

The war-affected population in northern Syria, served from Turkey, asked that IPs provide paper vouchers instead of electronic vouchers, because beneficiaries feared that e-vouchers might contain tracking devices that could allow combatants to target them.

Given the fluidity of the Syrian crisis and the large size of the FFP portfolio in the Syria Region a more vigorous learning environment within the FFP community of partners would be beneficial. IPs and FFP staff have noted that FFP partners do not have regular response level learning and exchange events that encourage the dissemination of lessons learned and greater IP cooperation.

LOGISTICS: Roads are good, and vehicles are readily available for hire in Jordan and Turkey. IPs report that the long lines of trucks at the Turkey-Syria border crossings lead to delayed aid deliveries. Delays and insecurity are major factors affecting timely implementation. By 2016, a change in Turkish regulations forced IPs to truck supplies to a government designated humanitarian border crossing where the relief cargoes were transferred from Turkish to Syrian registered trucks (as discussed above). Food testing facilities are readily available in Turkey, and LRP commodities are tested both before and after packaging. Samples are also taken from trucks and brought back from the distribution sites in Syria (when possible) for quality retesting. Logistics issues at the Turkish border caused IPs to switch from LRP commodities to vouchers sooner than they had originally planned.

GENDER ISSUES AND PROTECTION, POWER DYNAMICS, AND VULNERABLE GROUPS: A design consideration in the provision of food rations, especially the staple, bread, is that by receiving food assistance, women were less vulnerable to exploitation or early marriage. For security reasons, females from more conservative communities who are heads of households can, during registration, designate a male to collect their rations. Gender is particularly an important issue in designing livelihood

support programs because Syrian women typically do not work outside the home, and this is a strong gender norm.

In Syria, IPs report that distribution sites have not been attacked, but protection of distribution staff is an issue. In Turkey, refugees employed by IPs have been detained by authorities and threatened with deportation.

Beneficiaries report few problems with e-voucher technology. In FGDs in Jordan, beneficiaries verified that the payment system is easy to use and very efficient and that the right people receive assistance. Refugees report that most of the food they need is available in the supermarkets, and prices have been largely stable since their arrival in 2013-2014. All focus groups reported that the women in the household decide what food is bought with the e-voucher, which is consistent with the traditional responsibilities of women in Syria. The shopping is either done by women, or women tell their husbands what to purchase. FGD participants of both sexes report that they feel safe shopping and travelling to and from supermarkets. Participating supermarkets display posters with information about what foods refugees can purchase with the e-voucher, and cashiers are informed about which foods are allowed. Refugees report that they are treated well in shops. The main complaint is that they must pay to transport their groceries home, which is an additional expense not covered by the e-voucher.

“The payment system is very efficient and only the real beneficiary receives the cash.”
- WFP beneficiary, Jordan

In FGDs, beneficiaries in Jordan said that the food voucher helps ensure their food security but is not enough to cover all their food needs. Key informant vendors in Jordan observed that refugees tend to buy only what they can purchase with the e-voucher and will prioritize purchases and put back items not covered by the e-voucher; one stated that “it is rare for someone to make up the difference from their own pocket.” WFP estimates that a person’s average monthly food expenditure is JOD 28, and WFP provides JOD 20 to the poorest families. In households where the adult male is disabled or absent, beneficiaries reported that it is common for teenagers, especially boys, to drop out of school and work informally. Among refugee boys between 15 and 18 years of age, 37 percent are economically active, though this is reported to be in line with practices in Syria before the war (ILO 2015). FGDs indicated that many households are in debt due to their inability to get jobs and the high cost of living in Jordan. Rent is a significant expense for refugees in Jordan, and many beneficiaries reported feeling insecure about their ability to pay rent. Refugees who receive UNHCR cash assistance said they spend most of it on rent, and others reported being several months behind on their rent, having been evicted for non-payment, or having to move frequently into lower-cost, poorer quality housing. It should be noted that many Syrian refugees in Jordan receive several different types of assistance. In addition to the food vouchers from WFP, many receive a cash transfer from UNHCR and a child grant for families from UNICEF. One study of cash transfers to Syrian refugees in Jordan notes that the cash allows households to prioritize their spending according to their needs (ODI 2017d).

TIMELINESS: FGDs reported that WFP’s e-voucher is renewed monthly, is on time, and generally has not presented any problems. The only drawbacks to the electronic system cited by refugees in FGDs are that the UNHCR system occasionally shuts down or procedures for qualifying for entitlements were not transparent (this often leads to refugees depending entirely on their e-voucher for support), and if a beneficiary loses a card it takes a long time to replace. Once IP programs were approved in Turkey, they established quickly. Timely FFP modifications and subsequent awards allowed the partners to carry out their distributions without pipeline breaks.

SEASONALITY: Seasonality does not affect the flow of food assistance to Syrian refugees, IDPs, and war-affected populations. WFP beneficiaries in Jordan are mainly urban residents who redeem food vouchers at commercial markets year-round. However, cold winters put people's food security at risk as they require more calories in cold weather and more cash to pay for heat and other protection against low temperatures. FFP partners stated that they would monitor winter 2017 needs and make adjustments to maintain beneficiary household food security.

ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR: The highly developed markets and infrastructure in Jordan and Turkey have presented significant opportunities for public-private partnerships in humanitarian operations, enabling FFP IPs to leverage partnerships to affect timely and lower cost delivery of food assistance. FFP IPs and a variety of private local importers and vendors report that they have established good working relationships. Jordanian vendors and suppliers voiced pride in participating in a program that provides food assistance to Syrian refugees.

WFP and MasterCard partnered in 2012 to set up the e-voucher system in Jordan (and Lebanon), using a pre-paid card that the beneficiary swipes through a card reader at a local supermarket. The partnership includes a Jordanian bank, which issues the e-cards, receives funds from WFP, and reimburses retailers for food bought by beneficiaries at their stores.

Smaller and medium-sized vendors benefit more than large vendors (i.e., supermarkets such as Safeway) from the e-voucher program as the additional activity often represents significant new revenue. One medium-sized vendor estimates that e-vouchers comprise 30 to 35 percent of its business, compared to less than one percent reported by larger supermarket chains. Vendors and suppliers who are receiving a substantial percentage of their income from the voucher program stated that they were able to expand the supplier base and the variety of products they sold, especially fresh foods, and hire more employees (including some Syrian refugees). One key informant of a large supermarket chain complained that WFP re-negotiated prices in 2015 were pushing their profit margin to a critically low level.

PARTERSHIPS TO DELIVER MBEP: WFP's voucher program was initially implemented through four IPs and later reduced to two IPs to improve management and cost efficiencies. The expansion of cash-based programming by WFP has implications for WFP's traditional partnerships with NGOs. WFP's piloting of block chain technology (described below in section 5, Development Impacts) and adoption of e-vouchers have the potential to eliminate intermediary banks and greatly reduce the need for NGOs in their traditional roles of service delivery (especially with in-kind food), monitoring and data collection, and reporting. With these functions mostly handled electronically, the need for NGO services is reduced in cash-based programs. However, WFP felt that IPs could be instrumental in providing complementary services (which represent up to 20 percent of FFP's MBEP allocation). IPs also have a major role in delivering assistance to conflict areas within Syria. From the IP perspective, they find FFP to be adaptable and a good partner. FFP works collaboratively with OFDA and is working at headquarters and field levels to find better ways to collaborate.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS: Coordination is both geographic and sectoral. The Whole-of-Syria Food Security Cluster works through hubs in South Turkey (Gaziantep and Antakya), Syria (Damascus), and Jordan (Amman) and links with key actors operating from Iraq. Jordan serves as the locus of regional coordination for UN agencies and many IPs. While each hub delivers on core cluster functions, the office in Jordan is responsible for conducting the overall analysis of needs, response, and gaps; linking hubs on different operational and technical issues; and providing an overall service to the WoS related activities. There are two primary sectoral working groups, a cash-based feasibility study advisory committee, and a Food Security Sector Technical Working Group (FSSWG). Current members are

FAO, NRC, RFSAN, WFP, and multiple INGOs. WFP, together with the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation, co-chairs the FSSWG, which provides coordination for food security partners in terms of implementation, funding, and data collection and supports capacity building.

WFP introduced the OneCard system in Jordan in 2014 to provide assistance to Syrian refugees. The OneCard system is an electronic platform managed by WFP that consolidates assistance from different agencies on a single re-loadable plastic card for beneficiaries. To implement the system, WFP partners with Jordan Ahli Bank. In 2016, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees partnered with WFP to use WFP’s OneCard System.

Other working groups include a Food Security and Livelihoods Working Group, a Cash Based Response Technical Working Group, and a Humanitarian Liaison Group.

FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES: WFP reports fluctuating food security results for its regional operation. The mixed results are in part due to shortfalls in funding that required cutbacks in beneficiary transfer amounts. Drastic cuts in late 2015 and early 2016 had an impact on food security in both Turkey and Jordan, resulting in increases in negative coping strategies and the number of refugees with poor or borderline food consumption scores (WFP 2016). However, mid-year funding contributions allowed for full monthly transfer values, which helped to reversed food security trends in 2016; by the end of the third quarter in 2016, regional food consumption scores had begun to stabilize (WFP 2016).

Data from a Turkey-based IP illustrates the fragility of food security status among the war-affected beneficiaries in Syria. One IP operating in Turkey reported generally positive outcomes among its beneficiaries for household food security between Sept 2015 and October 2016, then a strong decline by February 2017 (Table 3). This decline may be partially explained by disruptions caused by a large loss of commodities suffered by the IP in November 2016. A key informant stated that when distributions are interrupted due to

logistics or security, the IP sees a dip in food security scores among beneficiaries. Conflict-affected populations in northwestern Syria served by the IP have little access to livelihoods in Syria, making regular in-kind food aid or voucher deliveries key to maintaining food security. The IP reported that a significantly higher percentage of households reporting moderate hunger was consistent across all geographic areas and modalities – though slightly less acute in voucher villages.

Table 3: Median scores on Household Hunger Scale and Household Dietary Diversity Score among IP-sampled households from 2015-2017						
Indicator	Base-line Feb 2015	Sept 2015	Feb 2016	April 2016	Oct 2016	Feb 2017
Percent of households reporting little to no hunger	55 %	99 %	83 %	95 %	80 %	40 %
Median score on Household Dietary Diversity Score	6.2	7.3	5.5	6.16	6.31	6.36
Source: IP Quarterly Report for August 2017						

According to one IP key informant the winter season can also negatively affect food security outcomes due to the arrival of new IDPs, greater sharing of food, and increased fuel costs and heating needs and limited seasonal work opportunities.

One FFP key informant brought up a concern regarding the Syrian bakery interventions, particularly in the lack of ability to monitor end-user access to and consumption of the bread produced.

A larger concern is that the combination of targeting exclusion errors as well as the insufficiency of nonfood transfers leads to food security volatility among the affected Syrian population.

4. COST-EFFICIENCY TRENDS

Data on cost efficiency are not systematically reported by IPs in Jordan or Turkey in FFP-required program documents, and reported cost data is usually for estimated, not actual costs. In a 2014 proposal, one IP estimated that Title II in-kind food would have an average cost of \$650/MT and freight of \$165/MT and attract ITSH of at least \$125/MT, totaling \$940/MT for in-kind Title II. This is higher than the estimated cost of wheat flour purchased from Iraq for \$825/MT and delivered to bakeries in Syria, an estimated savings of \$115/MT. The review team did not find follow up reports with actual costs, which limits FFP's ability to compare the cost-efficiency of modalities.

FFP developed a Commodity Calculator to help IPs compare estimated food costs. The FY 17, Q4 FFP Commodity Calculator shows the cost of bagged wheat flour at \$490/MT; freight is \$203/MT; and ITSH is \$125/MT, totaling \$828/MT.

Items regularly procured locally in Jordan and Turkey for food baskets - tomato paste, pasta, and olive oil—are not on the Title II Commodity Calculator. Lack of comparable price information in the calculator makes comparisons between LRP and U.S.-sourced food costs difficult. In addition, any food transhipped through Turkish ports attracts a 22 percent tariff.

E-voucher vendor key informants report that WFP has worked to protect donor and refugees' interests by negotiating lower prices with vendors. One large vendor stated that this has reduced profit margins to the point where it is becoming less appealing to participate in tenders, given the narrow margins and highly competitive nature of the retail food sector in Jordan.

It is important to note that Jordanian vendors are supplied by numerous and varied importers. Many of the food items that can be purchased with vouchers by refugees are American food products, most notably medium grain rice and almonds. These commodities were price-competitive with similar products from the region or South Asia.

5. DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

CASH AND VOUCHER IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES, MARKETS, AND VENDORS: The e-voucher program supported in part by FFP has provided substantial support to the Jordanian economy. As of 2016, WFP's e-voucher program alone brought over \$1.7 billion into local economies of the five countries hosting Syrian refugees and has created more than 1,300 jobs (USAID 2017a). As of 2014, WFP estimated that the e-voucher program stimulated investments of around \$2.5 million in physical infrastructure among large participating vendors (almost all of which was in the refugee camps) and generated US\$6 million in additional tax receipts for the Jordanian government (USAID 2017a). Key informants stated that WFP is dispensing over \$10 million per month to vendors in Jordan.

Private sector key informants in Jordan report that FFP-supported programs have had a positive effect on their businesses, increasing sales, creating jobs, and improving the quality of products. Key informants were positive about USAID's benefits to the refugees and its role in helping boost and stabilize the Jordanian market at a time when the country's economy is challenged by regional conflicts. A representative of one large import company stated that having food assistance programs has had a positive effect on the market by making larger quantities of goods available; they did not contribute to any shortage of commodities on the local market but rather encouraged companies to import more.

WFP uses over 200 vendors in Jordan and reports that many of them are large with multiple shops, and approximately 30 vendors are small-scale sellers. Large-scale local suppliers of food products stated that FFP-supported assistance accounts for around 10 to 14 percent of their business, while smaller vendors reported that the e-voucher program accounted for 30 to 35 percent of their business. Most large vendors were already using bank card technology and did not need to make additional investments for the voucher program, though smaller vendors needed card readers and technical capacity transfer. One IP teaches vendors inside Syria how to follow procurement processes, which builds capacity.

LRP IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES AND MARKETS: Local private food import companies draw on local and regional markets, which have adequate quantities of food available to supply emergency food assistance programs without a negative impact on prices or commercial trade. Vouchers can strengthen local markets by enabling participating local vendors to sell more food. Debit card or mobile phone cash transfers and electronic vouchers may benefit local banks and mobile phone companies.

Support to bakeries in Syria allowed bakeries to continue operating, preserve jobs, and provide a staple food to millions of conflict-affected people at a stable, affordable price in a highly inflationary market. IPs have used other funding streams in addition to FFP to purchase generators and make structural repairs to keep the bakeries operational in war-affected areas.

Staple food prices in Jordan have been largely stable since 2011, as has the U.S. dollar exchange rate, which have preserved WFP's buying power in terms of the vouchers (WFP VAM). Key informants among large scale suppliers said that food assistance has not increased commodity prices for staples such as lentils and wheat; from their perspective, relief commodities are fast-moving goods, and if they are not distributed rapidly, they can be re-exported to avoid having surpluses. This observation attests to the sophistication of the Jordanian food import sector and its ability to absorb additional demand generated by relief programs

PSYCHOSOCIAL BENEFITS/CONFIDENCE: FGD participants in Jordan reported that e-vouchers provide them with security, dignity, and a familiar diet (See Life History 1: Azza). The vouchers provide security as no one else knows when people receive their entitlements, and they provide the dignity of being able to shop in the same stores as non-refugees and in the same manner as they were accustomed to in Syria. Beneficiaries can purchase familiar foods that meet their family's needs and tastes.

However, e-vouchers are the only reliable transfer for many beneficiaries and long-term dependence on an entitlement that covers a small proportion of basic costs of living results in great stress for refugees. Between the inadequacies of transfers and the inability to freely participate in economic activities, refugees were under a great deal of psychological and economic stress.

LIVELIHOODS: Syrian refugees in Jordan are not allowed to work without a special permit, which excludes many professional jobs and is too expensive for most households to obtain, FGDs reported. A 2015 study by the International Labour Organisation found that while around 53 percent of male refugees are employed, only 10 percent have formal work permits. Consequently, most refugees who

can find work do so informally (see Life History 2: Fadwa). Syrian refugees in informal employment receive lower wages, and work longer hours under worse working conditions than Jordanians (ILO 2015). Furthermore, unemployment among Jordanians is at a record high of 18.3 percent, and the employment of refugees is a sensitive issue. In FGDs, refugees spoke of their fear about being arrested or deported or losing their benefits if caught working illegally. FGDs report many families are in debt, mainly because they cannot pay the high monthly rents in Jordan. Eviction and frequent moves to less expensive living quarters are common.

It is important also to note that refugee women do not commonly work outside the home. They are willing to and do work from home, which again limits household livelihood options.

FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT: Both WFP and UNHCR in Jordan are using sophisticated technology enabled by strong IT capacity and a reliable communications infrastructure. The most notable innovations are the use of biometric iris scan by UNHCR for beneficiary identification and WFP piloting of a block chain platform.

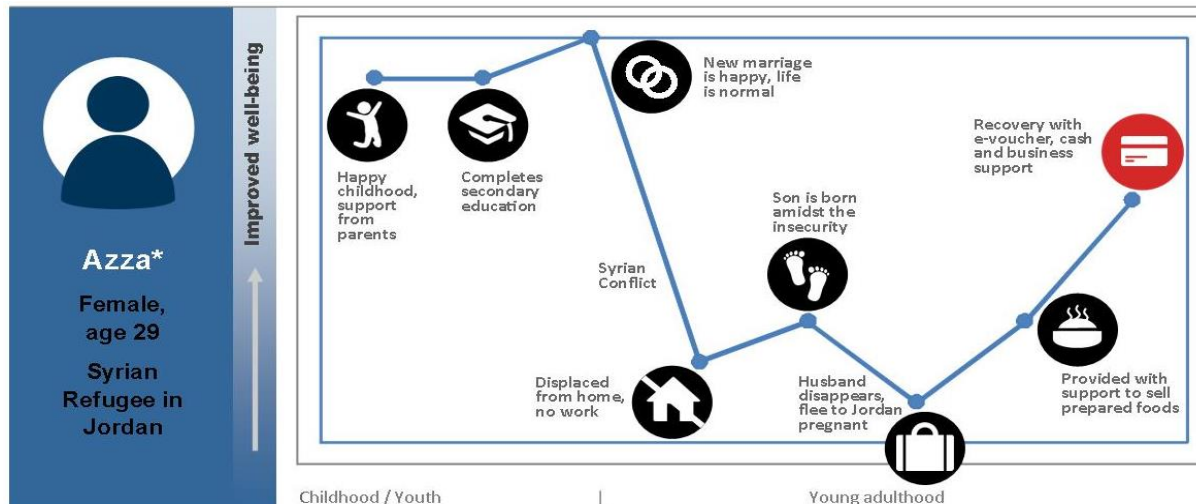
The WFP e-voucher system uses UNHCR's registration data, which uses a biometric iris scan for beneficiary identification and verification. When purchasing food, refugees present their UNHCR identification cards, swipe their e-vouchers, and input a four-digit security code. Initially many refugees were not familiar with bank cards, and many of the refugees are not highly literate, so WFP provided information to explain the e-voucher system. WFP informs beneficiaries via SMS when their voucher is reloaded electronically, eliminating the need for beneficiaries to travel to a distribution center to collect their entitlement. Text messages (i.e., SMSs) are also used to inform beneficiaries about new developments and changes to the program. In FGDs, beneficiaries reported that they are comfortable with the e-vouchers and mobile phone technology, though the brevity of text messages can sometimes cause confusion, as one FGD revealed that beneficiaries did not understand a recent message about a program cutoff date.

As of July 2017, WFP Jordan is piloting the use of block chain technology. WFP's electronic vouchers for food assistance involve over 500,000 transactions per month. Without block chain, the e-voucher system requires a three-way transaction between WFP, the retailer, and a bank, and the bank charges a fee on each transaction, adding to the cost of the e-voucher program. Block chain technology is expected to allow WFP to directly recharge e-vouchers for beneficiaries without a bank as intermediary, saving transaction costs, increasing the speed of transactions, and improving protection of financial transactions and beneficiary information. Eliminating the bank is expected to create savings for WFP and reduce monitoring costs and the risk and incidence of fraud among its 206 retailers. It will also create savings for beneficiaries by eliminating ATM fees for cash withdrawals (for UNHCR payments and WFP choice modality), which is the most expensive component to beneficiaries. A potential broader application is use by the Jordanian government for its social protection payments.

Another innovation was a plan at the time of the review team's visit to connect the payment system in a highly secured and encrypted manner to UNHCR's registration database, which uses the same biometric identity verification system. Once this connection is in place, it will allow any partner in the refugee response to deliver cash assistance through the bank and will use the most recent registration information as updated by UNHCR. This will eliminate the problem of outdated data being used by partner organizations.

Life History I: Azza

Voucher, cash, and business support are the turning point for a widow of the war



*Name has been changed. Photo not available.

Note: the graph for this case study was developed by subjective ratings of life events by the TANGO team.

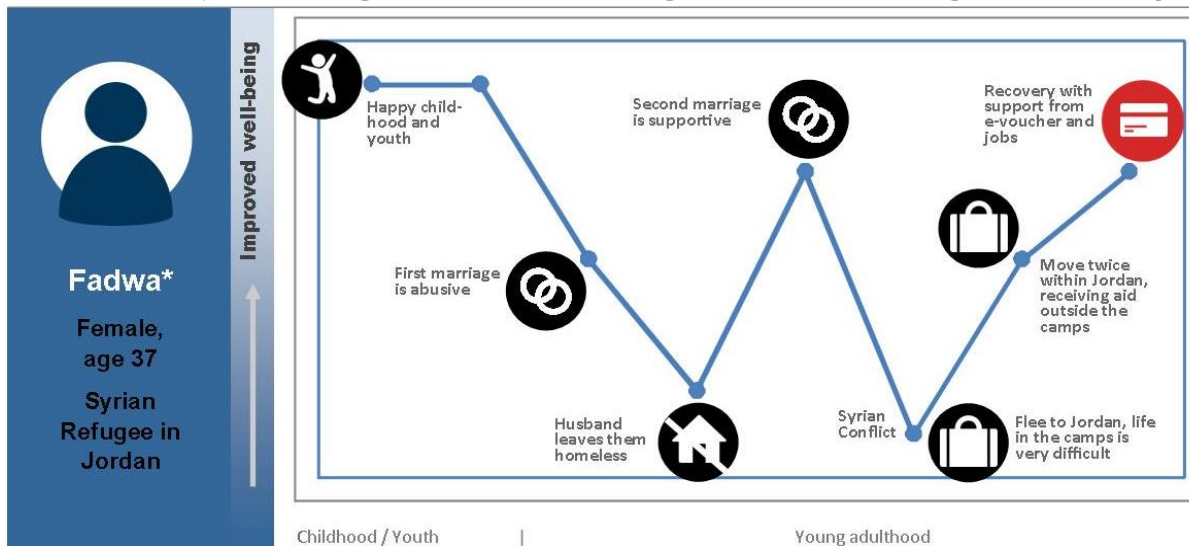
Azza is 29 years old. She described her childhood and youth as happy with abundant support from her parents. She was able to complete secondary education. At age 19 she married a man from her village; her husband was supportive, and life seemed normal for three years until the conflict started.

Azza and her husband were displaced from their home by the ongoing conflict. Life was very difficult, and her husband could not find work. During this time, she gave birth to their first child, a boy. They fled the horrors of war several times, moving within the country. They suffered from lack of security each day. Her husband's life was threatened multiple times until one day when he disappeared. Azza was 23 years old at the time and has not heard from him since. She knew she had to leave Syria and fled to Zatari Camp in Jordan. Upon arrival, she received two months of food aid. She was pregnant and gave birth to a girl just one month after entering the camp. She felt fortunate to find a Syrian trading association in Jordan looking after war widows. She was provided with a small apartment outside of the camp free of charge near Baqa region in Jordan. The association helped her buy kitchen supplies, allowing her to cook food to sell in the market. Despite this support, she described this phase settling in Jordan as very difficult for her and her children; their level of well-being was low.

Once settled in her apartment, Azza received a paper food voucher, which is now distributed as an e-voucher with food value and a cash transfer. The impact of this assistance was immense, she said, as it enabled her to cope with the difficulties of life as a refugee. She said that finding a job is very difficult and working from home is safer for women. Cash assistance has had a stronger impact on her life than food aid because she could use part of the cash to buy supplies for her home-based food production business. The cash gave her more flexibility and options. She worked hard to create a customer base for her products in the local market and now makes some profit. She explained that the support from her community, the Syrian association, to build and promote her business has played a strong role in strengthening her resilience. Once again, she said, she is moderately happy.

Life History 2: Fadwa

Voucher and job training are crucial for refugee families residing outside camps



* Name has been changed. Photo not available.

Note: the graph for this case study was developed by subjective ratings of life events by the TANGO team.

Fadwa was born in Syria in 1979. Her childhood and youth were happy, and her parents were able to provide her a good life. At the age of 19, Fadwa married her first husband. They were married for 10 years and had three children; however, this was a difficult time for her. She suffered from her husband's abuse and aggression. One day her husband left the family, and she and the children were expelled from the home. She had no home or money, and her parents and relatives supported some of their basic needs. Fadwa could not find a job because it is not customary for women to work outside of the home.

Fadwa's life made a turn in a positive direction when her parents arranged a second marriage to a man considerably older than she. However, he was a good husband who supported Fadwa and her children. She had one child with him, a boy, in 2011. For a brief period before the Syrian conflict, she was moderately happy. When the Syrian crisis began, though, life became difficult. She and her family were caught in a very dangerous situation and were forced to escape Syria for Jordan.

Life in refugee camps was extremely difficult. They had to depend on food and cash assistance. They tried to live in the Zadari camp and then Azraq camp but decided it was better to live outside the camp in Jordan Valley. The community in Jordan Valley was generally poor, but they were able to get some help, and the community was even able to find them a basic house. It was initially very difficult because they stopped receiving aid available in the camp, but they were soon able to get food assistance from UNHCR and WFP: 50 Jordanian Dinar (JD) per month in the form of paper voucher and later e-vouchers. Her husband secured an informal job laying tile; this helped, but life was still difficult.

Recently, Fadwa and her family moved to Salt, where their lives have started to improve. Fadwa's husband found work, and Fadwa found a job training program that will lead to a permanent position as a tailor. She once again feels moderately happy with her life. They feel that they have been resilient to the refugee problem because of the cash-based assistance they received and the new jobs they have found, which allows them to be more self-reliant.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Syria response is by far the largest component of FFP's emergency food assistance portfolio. The unique context and scope of this emergency provide many opportunities for FFP office-wide learning. The recommendations below are based on a limited review of this large response; and are thus relatively general in nature.

APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES THAT SHOULD CONTINUE

- FFP should continue to support testing new modalities, as in the planned WFP choice modality pilot, and gather lessons learned and best practices. Formative research, illustrated by the BCG report, can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of food assistance, especially with larger programs such as the Syria Response. This research can be conducted at a relatively low cost in this region because information technology and local research talent are available.
- Continue to provide IPs with the flexibility needed to meet situational requirements. The fluid nature of this crisis and on-the-ground experience should continue to support this good example of adaptive management
- Continue to support innovations in the use of information technology to improve effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of assistance. Jordan's lower middle income and relatively urban context provides an excellent context for the piloting and adoption of novel strategies for providing food assistance.

APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES TO MODIFY

- If the WFP choice modality pilot is successful, FFP should consider working with other donors and IPs to provide assistance mechanisms that allow refugees greater choice with regard to the modality through which they receive assistance.
- In support of MBEP activities and partnerships, FFP should consider increasing its focus on resilience building among war-affected populations through durable responses that expand complementary program components such as livelihood support activities and education/training.
- With over 85 percent of the refugees living in urban centers and no clear resolution to the Syrian conflict in sight, FFP should consider engaging with other donors to examine the appropriateness of supporting national social protection programs in Jordan and Turkey to better address the needs of long-term refugees.
- FFP should consider encouraging WFP, IPs and other agencies such as UNHCR to collect measures of indebtedness and review the adequacy of transfer amounts. Refugee concerns, expressed in FGDs, about their ability to pay rent, indicated that many households may be in debt due to their inability work and the high cost of living.
- Ongoing cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency data should be collected by partners or a contracted third party from pre-program through implementation.
- FFP should consider supporting the establishment of a more vigorous learning environment, with regular response-level learning and exchange events. This can be in the form of workshops, learning events, increased partner communications or other available means.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: SUMMARY OF FFP-FUNDED PROGRAMS IN JORDAN AND TURKEY

IP/ Project Name	Award number	Award Project Dates	Original Budget (USD)	Key Activities	Title II/202e, EFSP, or both?
FFP funded programs in Jordan					
IP 3	AID-FFP-IO-12-00008	3/21/2012	\$6 M	LRP	EFSP
	AID-FFP-IO-16-00005	1/22/2016	\$57 M	LRP/Vouchers	EFSP
IP 3	AID-FFP-IO-12-00016	6/28/2012	\$8 M	RP/Vouchers	EFSP
	AID-FFP-IO-16-00004	1/15/2016	\$26 M	Vouchers	EFSP
IP 3	AID-FFP-IO-13-00013	9/1/2013	\$2.4 M	Regional procurement (RP)	EFSP
	AID-FFP- IO-USA- C-00994-01	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	EFSP
	AID-FFP-IO-15-00025	6/25/2015	\$2 M	RP	EFSP
IP 7	AID-FFP-IO-15-00001	10/29/2014	\$2 M	RFAN	EFSP
IP 8	Unknown	FY 15	\$26 M	LRP	EFSP
IP 3	Unknown	FY 16	Unknown	LRP/Vouchers	EFSP
IP 4	AID-FFP-G-13-00048	8/31/2014	\$7.2 M	RP	EFSP
FFP funded programs in Turkey					
IP 1	AID-FFP-G-13-00018	7/23/2013	\$16 M	RP	EFSP
IP 1	AID-FFP-G-13-00021	8/15/2013	\$10 M	RP	EFSP
IP 2	AID-FFP-G-13-00027	5/31/2014	\$16 M	RP	EFSP
IP 2	AID-FFP-G-13-00058	8/8/2014	\$6 M	RP	EFSP
IP 4	AID-FFP-G-14-00059	9/11/2014	\$3.7 M	RP	EFSP
IP 5	AID-FFP-G-15-00086	8/5/2016	\$5.8 M	Vouchers	EFSP
IP 6	AID-FFP-G-15-00020	1/29/2015	\$16 M	RP/Vouchers	EFSP
IP 2	AID-FFP-G-16-00036	3/18/2016	\$47 M	RP	EFSP
IP 2	AID-FFP-G-16-00037	3/30/2016	\$20 M	RP	EFSP
IP 1	AID-FFP-G-16-00038	5/4/2016	\$21 M	LRP	EFSP
IP 1	AID-FFP-G-16-00043	4/15/2016	\$9.4 M	RP	EFSP
IP 3	Unknown	FY 16	Unknown	LRP/Vouchers	EFSP

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ANNEX 3: INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Table 4: Stakeholders interviewed during the Jordan field mission May 5-19, 2017 and/or via Skype prior to the field mission

Organization	Name	Stakeholder type/title
Mercy Corps (WoSC)	Brenna Carmody	Senior Program Officer
Mercy Corps (WoSC)	Barbara Bitton-Neault	Food Security Cluster Co-Coordinator
IRD	Roger Carsten	Director of Humanitarian Assistance
IRD	Aida Tatic	Director of Operations
IRD	Boraq Al Wreikat	Senior Project Coordinator
IRD	Raima	M&E Specialist
IRD	Lana	M&E Specialist
WFP	Sherif Georges	Head of Supply Chain
WFP	Leila Meliouh	Head of Sub Office Cross Border Operations
WFP	Haya Abassi	Consultant WFP Voucher Programme
WFP	Claire Conan	Deputy Country Director
WFP	Ahmad Abuzaid	Programme Officer Cash and Voucher
WFP	Edgardo Yu	Chief Beneficiary IT Solution Services
WFP	Robert van der Zee	Treasurer and Deputy Director
WFP	Mahadevan Ramachandran	Chief, Planning and Cash-based Transfers
Chemonics	Rula Katkhuda	Field Director
WATTAD	Sawsan Mohammad	Director
VAM	Erin	M&E
VAM	Ali	Monitoring and Assessment
Save the Children	Deema Saleh Al-Hamban	MEAL Coordinator
Save the Children	Tamer Salah	MEAL Manager
USAID	Melanie Mason	FFP Officer
ACTED	Moath Jafar	Food Security Project Coordinator
UNCHR	Elisabeth Barnhardt	Senior CBI Coordinator
Yeast Industries Co.	Ibrahim Barakat	Sales and Export Responsible
South Amman Mills	Ahmed H. Mizher	General Manager
Seady Foods	Mustafa Al-Seady	General Manager
Safeway	Warda	General Manager
Safeway	Dr. Laith A. Abu Hilal	Chief Commercial Officer
Vendor	Al Farid	Director of Branch
Vendor	Najam al Wadi	Owner of 2 stores in Amman

Table 5: Summary data for focus groups/interviews conducted in Jordan: locations, number, and type of participants

Location	Focus group (FGD) or interview	# of participants	Type of participants
As Salt City	FGD	9	Beneficiaries, female and male
As Salt City	FGD	7	Beneficiaries, female and male
As Salt City	FGD	11	Beneficiaries, female
Urban Amman	FGD	7	Beneficiaries, female
Urban Amman	FGD	7	Beneficiaries, male
As Salt City	FGD	2	Beneficiaries, male

ANNEX 4: APPROACH

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

This review of FFP market-based emergency programming (MBEP) activities from 2010-2016 has four objectives: (1) document the history and evolution of FFP market-based emergency assistance; (2) review program design and implementation processes; (3) analyze program cost-efficiency trends;⁸ and (4) qualitatively assess the effects of FFP projects on local economies and market actors.

The review team used a multi-layered approach that drew on an expansive body of literature relevant to emergency food assistance programming, program documents from FFP and its implementing partners (IPs), an online survey, quantitative indicator data from FFP project, Key Informant (KI) interviews⁹, and field visits to case study crisis sites where emergency food programming is on-going. Case study countries were selected to represent ongoing FFP programming around the world and included a mix of slow-onset crises, acute crises, and regional emergencies.

Levels of analysis: The review employed two levels of analysis. The first was a systems-level analysis of the evolution of market-based programming at FFP and the second a comparative case analysis in seven ongoing crises.

1. **Systems-Level Analysis:** Food assistance programming is one of the most rigorously studied areas in the development and humanitarian sectors. Almost 2,700 program documents on the design and implementation of food assistance programs were provided for this study, in addition to context documents. The impetus for this large body of literature stems from theory (political economy), strong evidence about the positive performance of market-based programming and cash transfers, and international consensus on beneficiary-centered programming.

The review examined program documents¹⁰ from both FFP and implementing partners (e.g. Annual Program Statement) for changes in the structure, organization, guidance for implementing partners, and staffing of FFP during the study period. The review looked at the quality of a sample of FFP project applications over time. KI interview data was used to triangulate and interpret systems-level findings. Finally, an online survey was conducted with FFP staff and IP program managers to assess the strengths, limitations, and capacity needs.

2. **Comparative Case Analysis:** The second level of analysis was a comparative case analysis in seven ongoing crises. In order to assess the extent to which systems level change has translated in the field, seven case studies collected in-depth information about active projects on the ground. The purpose of the case study analysis was to review in closer detail how projects were designed, implemented, monitored, evaluated and adapted, comparing and contrasting the strengths and limitations of different modality applications in each case. The analysis looks at the extent to which these projects were well-coordinated and complementary to address food security needs, noting any constraints to an effective response. The review also explores and documents promising practices from these field cases that may be emergent best practices. Finally, a comparative analysis

⁸ The appropriate program documents and data on cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness were not available from FFP/W for TANGO to perform the cost-efficiency analysis

⁹ KI include donors, government officials, implementing partners, and beneficiaries

¹⁰ Desk review of metadata including reports from technical papers from VAM, WFP Bulletins, USAID, GAO, EFSP APS, IP program proposals, award documents, Quarterly Reports, Tracking data from FFP, and Annual Results Reports.

of these cases was done to identify factors that enhance or constrain FFP's ability to maximize the results gained from its newly acquired programming flexibility.

Cases were selected to reflect FFP strategic interests and variation in types of disaster/emergency context, market and finance environment, and geography. The emergency contexts include active conflict, recurrent drought, epidemic threats. Contextual factors include food and market systems, host country political environments, and financial access infrastructure. Case study selection criteria were finalized in collaboration with USAID and the reference group.

Field work in Jordan was from May 5-19, 2017, including 31 key informant interviews, two in-depth beneficiary profiles (Life Histories)¹¹, and six focus group discussions.

Stakeholder engagement: The review maintained regular engagement and dialogue with FFP staff and advisors. Because this is a learning-focused (as opposed to accountability) review, regular engagement with FFP staff was essential. The team leaders of the country case studies met with FFP personnel to discuss substantive progress and issues. Several webinars and workshops were held during the review process to capture stakeholder feedback during the review.

LIMITATIONS: The review spans the entirety of the FFP emergency food assistance portfolio during the study period. This involves several hundred individual projects. The breadth of this review requires reliance to a large degree on existing project tracking databases and project documents. The reporting requirements vary by type of funding source (Title II, 202e regular and enhanced, and EFSP) and over time, which may limit the types of information that can be analyzed. Based on assessments of project document availability during the review, *it is clear that project specific documentation is challenging to obtain.* Case study field work was limited in time and may also be limited by changes in USAID and IP staff. Political considerations and changing security contexts in case study sites also may affect the review team's ability to gather required data (e.g. Kenya and the Syria Response case studies). To help mitigate this risk, case studies will include only active projects.

¹¹In-depth qualitative interviews methodology adapted from ODI (Scott and Diwakar 2016)