



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

## Sierra Leone Case Study Report

REPORT BY TANGO INTERNATIONAL

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**DISCLAIMER** The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government



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## ACRONYMS

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
APS	Annual Program Statement
ARR	Annual Results Report
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CIC	Community Identification Committees
CT	Cash Transfer
CTWG	Cash Transfer Working Group
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
EFSP	Emergency Food Security Program
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FFP	Food for Peace
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
HDDS	Household Dietary Diversity Score
HHS	Household Hunger Scale
IDI	In-Depth Interviews
IP	Implementing Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
LRP	Local and Regional Purchase (of food)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
NaCSA	National Commission on Social Action
NGO	Non-Government Organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
SNAP	Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion Project
TANGO	Technical Assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations, International
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM SIERRA LEONE

### **Sierra Leone represents a remarkable experiment in market-based emergency programming using unconditional cash transfers and some conditional cash transfers**

Sierra Leone reflects the challenges of providing food assistance in the wake of a major infectious disease epidemic. Food insecurity increased due to severely restricted movement in affected communities. The epidemic created fear, confusion, and mistrust of the government, which presented great obstacles to the delivery of assistance. The review focuses on post-epidemic interventions to improve food security. This is the sole case study where larger, less frequent cash disbursements were given unconditionally to beneficiaries. The review finds that the cash modality choice and the tranche distributions were highly appropriate to the context and to beneficiary needs and preferences. There were initial delays due to establishing a cash supply chain and aligning the targeting with national social protection efforts, but once surpassed, the larger cash disbursements increased efficiency relative to more frequent distributions and allowed beneficiaries to buy foods in bulk. The savings from bulk purchases enabled beneficiaries to pay school fees and make modest long-term livelihood investments. The review team noted a high level of beneficiary enthusiasm for the program. The case also demonstrates significant coordination efforts among the FFP partners. Remarkably, cash transfers were successfully implemented despite poorly developed financial and telecommunications systems.

## 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 FY 2010 and 2016. This case study provides information about the global review's four main objectives: (1) establish a historical narrative about FFP market-based emergency food assistance programming between 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 review<sup>1</sup> is based on: FFP's guidance and award documents and partner reports; field visits to seven countries specified by FFP; and data, documentation and information provided by FFP, implementing partners (IPs), key informants, and program beneficiaries. 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 security in crisis contexts. This report concludes with recommendations for FFP about good practices and approaches to continue, and those that FFP should consider modifying.

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

Field work was conducted in Sierra Leone from February 27 to March 15, 2017 in the districts of Port Loko, Tonkolili, and Kailahun. Program villages were selected by the review team to represent beneficiary experiences in both rural and peri-urban settings. The team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders from 19 organizations, and held focus groups discussions (FGDs) with 180 beneficiaries, market vendors and community members (110 women and 70 men). The team conducted six in-depth life history interviews (IDI) with beneficiaries, three of which are provided in this report and in Annex 6. A systematic review of project documents was also undertaken. For further details, see Annexes 4 and 5, and the qualitative topical outlines in Annex 7.

## **COUNTRY CONTEXT**

Sierra Leone is a coastal West African country of approximately 7 million people (UNDP, 2016). Agriculture employs 70% of the workforce and accounts for 43% of gross domestic product in 2013 (Bermúdez-Lugo, 2015). The mining sector accounted for 93% of export revenues, but has declined due to the recent fall in iron prices. Despite recent economic growth and strides made in recovering from the 1991-2002 civil war, Sierra Leone struggled with low development outcomes before the Ebola emergency began in 2014 (USAID, 2016a). More than half of the population, 52%, lives below the poverty line of \$1.90 per day (purchasing power parity).

The average Sierra Leonean family consists of 5.9 people, and 28% of households have a woman as the head of household (Statistics Sierra Leone and ICF International, 2014). Anemia affects four out of five children as well as 45% of all women, and access to health care is limited. Lack of access to food due to poverty is considered one of the root causes of food insecurity in Sierra Leone. Chronic malnutrition is prevalent, resulting in 38% of children under five being stunted. Limited household food availability, and inadequate food consumption and dietary diversity among poor households, is attributed to low agricultural productivity and low income (USAID, 2009).

**EBOLA EMERGENCY:** The Ebola epidemic killed an estimated 11,315 people across West Africa (includes one death in the United States), with 3,955 of these deaths in Sierra Leone (British Broadcasting Company, 2016). The epidemic had severe impacts on health systems, the economy, and food security (USAID, 2017). The first cases in Sierra Leone were reported on May 24, 2014 in Kenema District, and an emergency was declared by President Ernest Bai Koroma on July 31, 2014 (UN Ebola Response, 2017). Border closures and quarantines disrupted people's ability to return to their home countries or to travel within the country, and restricted public interactions or gatherings of groups of people such as in local markets. Ebola-related fear and restrictions on movement contributed to trade disruptions, food price increases, and reduced household income (USAID, 2017). On November 7, 2015 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the country free of Ebola (WHO, 2015).<sup>2</sup> The President had already developed a Transition and Recovery Plan in March 2015 (Government of Sierra Leone, 2016). While an end to the epidemic helped to improve food security, low crop production contributed to some districts classified with "stressed" (Integrated Phase Classification Phase 2) acute food insecurity through September 2016 (Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 2016).

**MARKET FUNCTIONING:** Food markets throughout Sierra Leone have functioned since the end of the civil war in 2002. These markets sell both locally produced and imported food such as rice, oil, fruits, and vegetables. Most food sellers are small scale, single store or stall operations. The Government of Sierra Leone restricted population movement and public gathering (e.g., in local markets) in October

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<sup>2</sup> After this declaration, there was a flare-up of cases in Sierra Leone until March 2016 (WHO, 2016).

2014 which greatly reduced harvesting and processing as well as cross border and inter provincial travel and trade. This reduced both the supply of food to the market as well as the number of customers in the markets during the height of the Ebola crisis. As the crisis subsided, markets began to recover, but demand was low because of the Ebola impact on household economies.

In 2007, an Overseas Development Institute (ODI) study with the Ministry of Finance had found cash transfers in Sierra Leone to be a feasible option (Holmes and Jackson, 2007). The cash-based assistance provided by government and international actors before Ebola was limited to cash for work and public works schemes targeting unemployed youth and ex-combatants, and small scale and pilot direct transfer programs for the elderly and vulnerable groups. The World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) worked with the government to establish a Social Protection Policy in 2011 and a basic social safety net program for the extremely poor. In May 2015, the Recovery Social Safety Net was launched to include those affected by Ebola (World Bank, 2015). The program is implemented by the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) and includes monitoring mechanisms led by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

## 2. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF FFP MARKET-BASED FOOD ASSISTANCE IN SIERRA LEONE

**FOOD FOR PEACE ROLE IN SIERRA LEONE:** While the USAID Mission in Sierra Leone is small, FFP has a recent history of providing Title II commodities for emergency and development food assistance programming in Sierra Leone. In the last decade, this has included the following:

- 2006-2009 (\$27.4 million): Title II multi-year assistance program (MYAP) Livelihood Enhancement and Agricultural Development program
- 2010-2014 (\$12 million): Title II MYAP Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion Project (SNAP), implemented by ACDI/VOCA and its partners

When Ebola struck, FFP in Sierra Leone initially launched a response to address the acute food needs of directly affected households (USAID, 2016b). This assistance, provided through a mix of targeted cash transfers, seeds provision, local and regional procurement of high-nutrient food, and in-kind food distribution to households directly affected by Ebola, were designed to improve household food security and help people stay within their quarantine areas. During this early part of the response, Title II 202(e)-funded in-kind food was implemented through World Food Program (WFP) to support the medical response to the epidemic and support efforts to support quarantine aims. According to FFP officers, they were working closely with WFP to meet emergency food needs in Sierra Leone and provided \$34.5 million<sup>3</sup> to WFP, which was used for regional purchase of 240 metric tons of rice grown in USAID’s Feed the Future program in

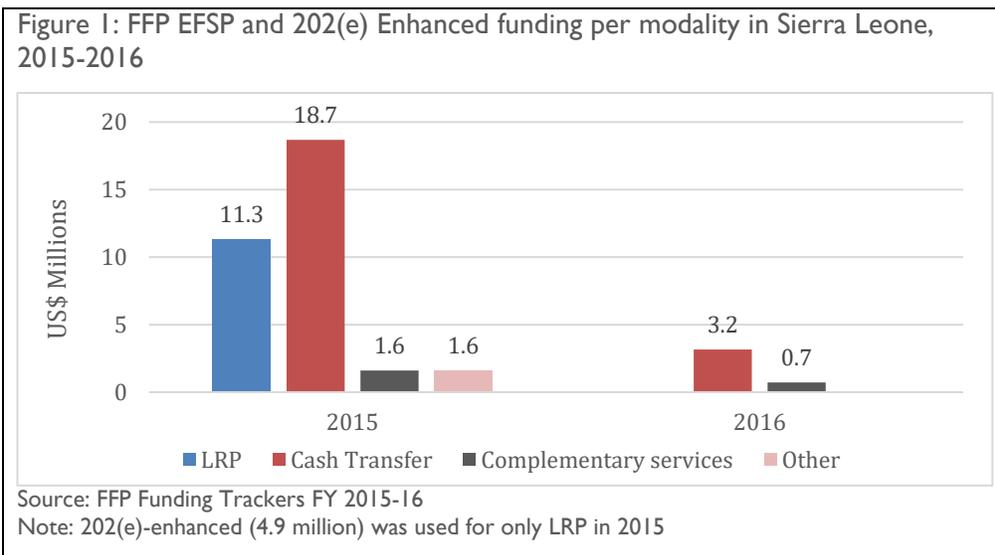
FUNDING TYPE	AMOUNT
Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP)	\$32.2 Million
Title II Emergency: 202(e)	\$4,706,195

Source: FFP Funding Trackers for FY 2015-2016.

<sup>3</sup> This funding includes international disaster assistance (IDA) and other FFP funding sources than EFSP, 202 (e) regular and enhanced.

Liberia. Although, FFP-Sierra Leone had hoped for even larger scale local and regional purchases (LRP), WFP struggled to mobilize the resources.

In order to provide direct and indirect support to communities covered by the MYAP (i.e., SNAP), the MYAP was extended to December 2016 to deliver nutrition support including mixed commodities (e.g., vegetable oil, corn-soya blend, bulgur, and lentils). However, FFP faced a larger recovery effort. In the second half of 2014, FFP Sierra Leone recognized the need to mobilize partners when many were “too scared” to act, and they determined that a new approach such as unconditional cash transfers (UCTs) was needed to facilitate widespread and swift recovery. FFP-Sierra Leone also faced the challenge of being a small mission. These challenges and opportunities were discussed with FFP Washington and an Annual Program Statement (APS) amendment was developed. Indeed, this rapid decision making across FFP offices is described as an achievement of “proactive leadership” by FFP staff and IPs.



In 2015, Sierra Leone received EFSP funds (\$28.3 million) to launch a response to the mounting food insecurity crisis that was occurring across the country as a result of the restrictions in movement and farmers’ inability to plant and harvest for the full 2014 season. The bulk of this EFSP funding was used towards UCTs (Figure 1). FFP worked with five INGO IPs, and their projects (Table 3 of Annex 3). They were: ACDI/VOCA, Save the Children, CARE, Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and World Vision, reaching six districts of Sierra Leone<sup>4</sup>. The main activity across all projects was unconditional cash transfers (UCT) to vulnerable households in areas particularly Ebola-affected. To a limited extent, these IP program components included conditional cash transfers (CCT) such as cash grants to female traders and small businesses, start-up/recovery support to savings groups, and seed inputs, which were given in-kind or through seed vouchers.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that some EFSP funds were also allocated to UNICEF in 2015 (1.6 million) to support program coordination, severe acute malnutrition treatment, training health staff of OTPs, and to conduct joint monitoring with the Ministry of Health. A portion of regional EFSP funds were also directed to Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) in May 2016 (AID-FFP-G-16-00054: \$694,028) to conduct cash evaluation and learning activities in Sierra Leone and Liberia. These ESFP programs are not further discussed in this case study.

### 3. PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### DESIGN DECISIONS: MODALITY CHOICE AND CHANGES, TARGETING STRATEGY

This was the first time that FFP used market-based programming at scale to address an epidemic emergency. For FFP in Sierra Leone, this was also the first time implementing a CT activity. This unique situation prompted FFP to amend the APS for the EFSP on March 25, 2015 with provisions that did not set a limit on the percentage of funding that could be allocated to complimentary activities.

The review team finds the cash modality choice and the tranche distributions highly appropriate to the context and to beneficiary needs and preferences. These design decisions improved logistics and management efficiencies. The targeting was cumbersome yet effective in reaching the most vulnerable households, but there is question about the strategy to target at the household level. Cash transfers were highly appropriate given the availability of food in the markets and the readiness of market systems to respond to increased demand. Infectious disease epidemics such as the West African Ebola epidemic disrupted market systems because of restricted movement and social distancing. During early recovery, stimulation of market systems was critical.

**MODALITY CHOICE:** FFP drew upon numerous assessments and data to determine with its IPs the appropriateness of cash. Data sources included the World Bank, FFP’s former Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada project (Bellmon Analysis), and FEWS NET. FFP officers and IPs then conducted on-the-ground validation of market conditions concluding that food was in the markets and/or available but the severe deterioration of household economy diminished their ability to buy food. At least one IP carried out a formal risk assessment. The deciding factor for FFP to mobilize INGOs to use the cash transfer modality was that most markets remained operational, though an impending food market breakdown was imminent if demand was not stimulated. They also assessed UCT distribution mechanisms and found that at least two partners could help them implement the UCTs, Airtel and Splash Mobile Money (hereafter “Splash”).<sup>5</sup> They concluded that spurring demand through UCTs would strengthen local markets and facilitate recovery with the least delay in comparison with other approaches.

As mentioned above, FFP provided funding for LRP through WFP, which had greater logistical capacity than the NGO partners, as a way to buttress markets on the verge of collapse. LRP supported importers, wholesalers, and transporters until households could create more demand in the markets. The review team notes LRP would be difficult in Sierra Leone for many reasons including the fact that, like neighboring Ebola-affected countries Guinea and Liberia, Sierra Leone is classified by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as a Low Income Food Deficit Country. Countries in this category must import food staples to meet the basic nutrition needs of the population. However, despite the imports and due to factors such as low foreign exchange reserves and household income, a net caloric deficit remains among the population. Among other factors working against large-scale LRP in Sierra Leone were weak national marketing infrastructure, limited food testing laboratory capacity, limited processing milling and packaging capacity, small holder dominance of the agriculture sector limiting bulk purchases, and poor regional transport infrastructure. Supporting this broader market infrastructure through LRP was a relatively small but important contribution of FFP to market recovery.

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<sup>5</sup> Two IPs started their projects with Airtel but switched to Splash soon after the first distribution rounds because of constraints with Airtel’s ability to deliver; this is discussed further in the next section.

The review team confirmed the appropriateness of the UCT modality over vouchers or in-kind food. All five of the IPs reported that they conducted some form of rapid assessment, market analysis, or needs assessment to design their projects. This was reflected in award documents and accompanying documents, KII, and beneficiary FGDs. Most IPs considered beneficiary preferences, noting that cash was preferred. This was corroborated by FGDs conducted by the review team. Most of the target households were farmers who needed to pay for labor and buy inputs (especially seeds). UCT was deemed the fastest way to meet those household needs. One IP noted that their original design included cash vouchers for labor, which was revised to UCT per FFP guidance to remove all potential implementation complications.

Some of the IPs implemented activities complementary to household UCTs. Cash transfer grants to small traders (also value chain recovery grants) were deemed appropriate because of an assessment showing that market actors, especially small vendors, were struggling to operate under the duress of the Ebola epidemic and the obstacles posed by the restriction of movement. The provision of seeds directly to beneficiaries or seed vouchers to purchase through vendors was also highly appropriate considering the dual need to support market traders, and to support farmers with inputs, which aligned with government strategy. World Vision's seed activity was implemented collaboratively with multiple government agencies including the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security, and in 2016, distributed seed vouchers for 65 kg rice seed to about 3,300 farmer households (World Vision 2016).

**TARGETING:** IPs were required to follow the NaCSA targeting guidelines,<sup>6</sup> using geographic targeting based on poverty maps, pre-listing potential beneficiaries using community identification committees, and then using a light proxy means test of 13 indicators to identify the most vulnerable people for beneficiary registration. The senior female of households was preferred to receive the cash transfer where possible. Mapping (i.e., Who, What, Where, When “4W” Matrix) was coordinated between FFP, IPs, and NaCSA to prevent overlap within the same districts. The IPs agreed that the government-led targeting was important because it fostered a coordinated approach, and added legitimacy to the selection in communities, which was critical to the success of the program. However, the targeting process took a long time because of NaCSA's limited ability to support such a large scale expansion of its targeting approach, which resulted in delayed implementation of the UCT distributions. While this caused delays in the first planned cash distribution for some IPs, most KI's recognized the need for serious community engagement to execute such a large scale cash distribution. IP staff pointed out that even with Title II food, IPs still would have to go through a lengthy targeting process.

*“In very rural areas you cannot distinguish one vulnerable household from another. Once you did [a proxy means test], you're just drawing lots,”  
~IP staff*

However, IP and NaCSA staff agreed that despite rigorous targeting criteria, it was difficult to differentiate people who were more affected by Ebola in a community. They also agreed that program coverage was insufficient. During FGDs with NaCSA district level staff, they indicated that targeting caused distress for both their community members and themselves, explaining “one of the community members had to leave the community before the final selection was determined. She left crying and saying she couldn't bear to learn that she wasn't selected.” Some stakeholders interviewed believed targeting at the household level may not have been the most appropriate approach during a crisis,

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<sup>6</sup> Except for Save the Children that conducted community targeting.

Box 1: Quotes from beneficiaries and community members about targeting

***“When Ebola struck, it killed almost my whole family, and that is why I was selected to receive this cash.” ~male beneficiary***

***“We still have a lot of poor people in this community who didn’t benefit since the [IP] staff told us that they have a target, otherwise the whole community would have been part of the program.” ~female beneficiary***

suggesting a review of how to better modify social protection programs to handle crisis response. This finding is supported by a recent analysis of crisis responsive social transfer programs (Oxford, 2017).

Despite the stress of the targeting process, all community FGDs reported clear consensus that ultimately no serious issues or conflicts were caused by the household targeting, and they reiterated the sentiment that there were few targeting inclusion errors but rather targeting exclusion errors.

In all, due to Community Identification Committees (CIC) socialization of targeting methods, some sharing of distributions/resources among community members, and community level positive effects of the cash infusions, there were no major conflicts related to targeting noted in project documents, KIIs, or in beneficiary FGDs. The CIC members interviewed in each region reported they would use this targeting method again, and some members contend there was no confusion caused by the selection of some households over others. Quotes from beneficiaries and community members across the three regions illustrate their perspectives on targeting (Box 1).

**RECIPIENT PREFERENCES:** All IPs and most stakeholders interviewed, who had experience with previous Title II food aid, agreed on the greater benefits of cash in comparison to commodities. The main themes around these perceived benefits were that cash is more empowering for beneficiaries, simpler from a logistics standpoint for the IP, and easier for both IP and beneficiary to protect from loss or leakage (see Table 2). One IP reported the decision of his organization to implement their first cash project in the Sierra Leone national office as the “most valuable transformation... of their organization,” They learned what empowerment really meant for themselves and their beneficiaries.

**TABLE 2: IMPLEMENTING PARTNER AND BENEFICIARY PREFERENCE: CASH VERSUS COMMODITIES**

PREFERENCE	RATIONALE
<b>IP and stakeholders prefer cash</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cash is <b>empowering</b> for recipients: gives freedom of choice; meets other household and livelihood needs</li> <li>✓ Cash is <b>logistically simple</b>: no shipping and customs; does not require warehouses or trucks; and can access communities with bad roads</li> <li>✓ Cash is less visible, thus <b>easier to protect</b>: less theft or leakages; not shared as much as food; no cost to beneficiary for transport</li> </ul>
<b>Beneficiaries who prefer of cash over commodities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improves ability to address household needs (medical, school, livelihood)</li> <li>✓ Enables beneficiaries to buy food the household wants to eat</li> <li>✓ Easier to collect and carry compared to commodities</li> </ul>

TABLE 2: IMPLEMENTING PARTNER AND BENEFICIARY PREFERENCE: CASH VERSUS COMMODITIES	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cash does not spoil and is less likely to be stolen (kept on person)</li> <li>✓ Commodities have to be sold to have income for other needs, but then the amount is too small</li> </ul>
<b>Stakeholder consensus is unclear</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If pay point distribution is less chaotic than food distribution points, and if beneficiaries had to travel too far (or the same distance) to collect the cash</li> </ul>
<b>Why 3.6% of beneficiaries prefer in-kind food:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Food commodities are preferred by households where food production is very low and family size is large.</li> </ul>

Beneficiary FGDs quickly uncovered the difficulties surrounding assessment of beneficiary preferences. The question cannot be asked without specific reference to comparable amounts and distribution times of different types of transfers. When beneficiaries had previous experience with in-kind transfers, they handily indicated that UCTs were superior in their current contexts. In fact, 96% of the male and female beneficiaries interviewed preferred the cash transfer (108 out of 112 FGD participants). This finding was mirrored by the assessments conducted by IPs. Beneficiaries cited the greater flexibility to meet basic needs, ability to meet dietary needs and preferences, ease of handling, efficiency (no need to sell commodities) and the lack of spoilage (Table 2). The four focus group participants who preferred food over cash all were older men from the same rural community who were very concerned with the need for agricultural inputs.

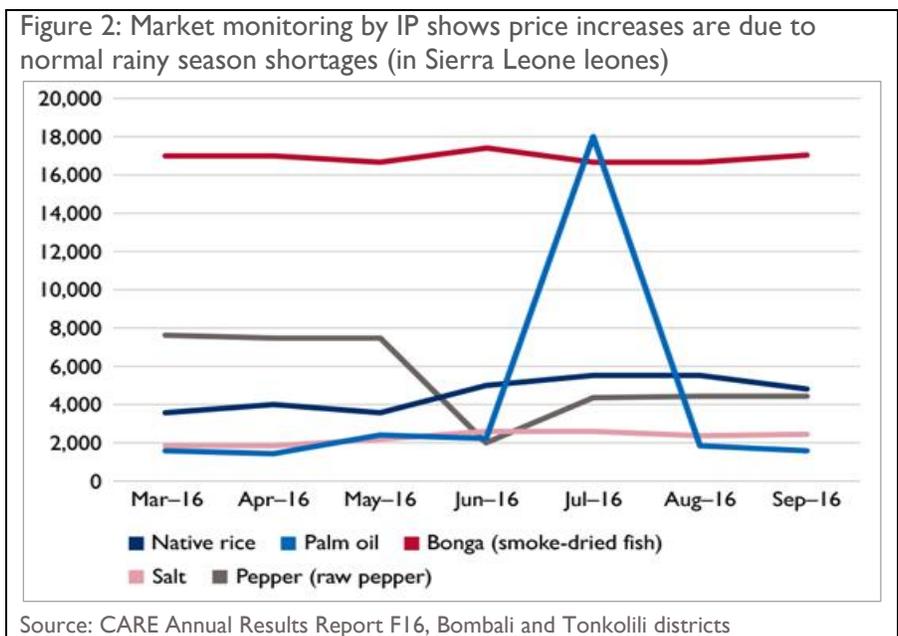
***“We realized that giving communities the opportunity to decide what they want to do and how they want to spend their resources is the best way to go.”***  
*~IP staff*

**CHANGES TO THE DESIGN:** FFP and IPs demonstrated adaptability by altering design in response to a changing context. The main design changes were related to the amount, frequency, and timing of disbursements. The changes were made in response to project delays, price trends, beneficiary feedback, and changes in the exchange rate of the leone against the dollar.

While IPs conducted quarterly or more frequent price monitoring that showed no impact of the UCTs on market prices, some commodity prices were increasing over time due to the dependence on imports, rising fuel prices, and the deterioration of the leone’s exchange rate. The prices of rice and other imported foods increased in the second and third quarters of FY2015 (WFP, 2015). At the same time households suffered major harvest losses and low production. IPs changed their plan for monthly cash transfers to three-month tranches so households could purchase rice in bulk (discussed further below).

In another example, using monthly market monitoring data one IP detected increased prices for fish in 2016 but in this instance determined that no change to the cash transfer amount was needed at that point because other affordable proteins were still available on the market to complement the food basket (Figure 2). The chart also shows a price spike for palm oil in July 2016, which the IP determined

was consistent with the expected variation of prices during the raining season and not as a result of cash transfer activities.



FFP, IPs, and NaCSA, in a coordinated fashion, decided to revise the distribution schedule to quarterly disbursements of three-month transfers. Stakeholders reported that benefits of this approach included allowing households to plan and purchase food in bulk, address other household needs such as school fees and livelihood inputs, and was more logistically efficient— one distribution instead of three.

The majority of beneficiaries interviewed preferred the lumpy (larger, less frequent) distribution of UCTs. Three-quarters of the focus groups (9 of 12) conducted with beneficiary men and women unanimously preferred the three-month tranche over monthly payments; the remaining three focus groups had less consensus though the majority of participants in these groups also preferred the larger transfer. For the majority that preferred the three-month tranche, they indicated that this larger sum allowed them to address other household needs. One male beneficiary explained, “If I receive \$30 in a month, I will not be able to do anything reasonable, but if I receive \$90, I will be able to do something better for my household. A bag of rice is \$30. If you receive \$30, the only thing you will buy is a bag of rice and nothing else.” Of the three out of twelve focus groups in which a few recipients preferred monthly payments, their preference stemmed from the desire for regular cash flow. Their reasoning was that because they were elderly or disabled recipients they are unable to earn income outside the household to supplement the CTs, and so they preferred to receive a regular monthly distribution.

A final important contextual factor affecting IP projects was the increased exchange rate difference between the dollar and leone and its impact on the purchasing power of the cash transfer. With the savings from the high U.S. dollar exchange rates, four of the IPs made at least one extra payment as a top up before the harvest season or increased the number of total monthly payments to the target beneficiaries, and the fifth IP added additional beneficiary households with the savings. See Annex 3 for the timeline of payments in relation to the farming/hunger calendar.

## IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

There were initial challenges in establishing a cash supply chain, and in aligning the targeting with national social protection efforts. Once these initial challenges were surpassed, a unified and concerted effort among FFP, the IPs, and their delivery agents resulted in a reliable cash delivery approach that greatly contributed to program efficiency and effectiveness. After initial investments in infrastructure, UCTs were on time and organized. The gender-focused programming contributed to the most effective use of the cash. IPs made sufficient investments in their capacity and prioritized coordination. There were few issues around fraud, loss, or protection. This case study shows the potential to implement cash effectively even with very limited mobile and banking infrastructure.

**CASH DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM:** Sierra Leone represents one of the more difficult environments for humanitarian CT programs. This ultimately affected the efficiency of the Sierra Leone UCT experience. Without a robust banking infrastructure and with low cellular phone coverage, IPs largely used only traditional approaches such as cash and carry distribution. Splash was a mobile cash distribution company with a fairly well developed national network and an interoperable platform that included a network of field operators throughout the country. Two IPs started with a mobile network provider (Airtel) for this task, but the constraints of connectivity, lack of mobile phone ownership and literacy among the target population, and the limited liquidity of banks in rural areas hardest hit by Ebola compelled those IPs to switch to Splash after the first transfer round.

However, the scale of the UCTs and the limited reach of financial institutions in rural areas initially challenged cash distributions. Cash distribution points, like food distribution points, need to be close to beneficiary households. NaCSA and IPs designed a cluster system for distributions where villages in close proximity to each other comprised a cluster with a unique distribution point. The first challenge was to hire and equip enough Splash agents to enable a large-scale distribution schedule. The second problem was cash liquidity in rural areas. The network of community banks provides some coverage in many parts of the country but overall banking infrastructure is limited. The APEX bank of this network was instrumental as a partner to ensure cash liquidity for distributions, and the interoperable Splash platform also facilitated greater access to cash supplies.

All IPs reported general satisfaction with Splash as an adaptable partner that could work through challenges as they arose. Overall, stakeholders described Splash distributions as relatively efficient and timely, even with the intensive coordination required of this partnership and the expense of safely delivering cash in envelopes at a large scale.

A persistent administrative issue IPs faced was the lack of timely distribution data from Splash. This issue was due to their antiquated management information systems. During case field visits, IPs engaged Splash to adopt new technologies for the mobile upload of data, and improvements were made to Splash's reporting. The IPs also learned that it is crucial to sensitize and train the Splash agents interacting with communities in the field so as to reinforce project messaging.

**TIMELINESS:** Timeliness of the recovery response was affected by both by the proposal award process and the initial establishment of a supply chain for cash, including a targeting system. The time from concept note submission to award was also long, ranging from three to nine months. The long proposal phase was not due to FFP or the cash design, explained an IP, but was due to their own internal processes that have now improved. Turnaround was reduced to two weeks for the Phase 2 proposal. This lag time of months between

*"Cash is faster, and more efficient." ~IP staff*

award and first cash distribution may not be less timely than for commodities; as one of the IP project proposals explains, if Title II food was ordered it would likely take up to four months or more to arrive. Delays in the roll out of EFSP projects were due to the novel challenges of programming and of establishing a cash transfer supply chain in the Sierra Leone context.

Establishing cash distribution systems and targeting were the main challenges. For four out of five IPs, this meant missing the lean season when their first distribution would have been desirable. After the cash, supply systems infrastructure was set up, subsequent transfers were timely.

IP staff said that after the initial delay they eventually had a good system in place with their team. Subsequent distributions only took one to two weeks from the time the money was sent from headquarters until the local cash provider was activated (via Splash), community and government officials were mobilized, and deliveries were completed.

The review team explored whether or not the delayed start affected the overall goal to help the most affected households recover from the crisis. It appears that the robustness of the response compensated to a great degree for the delay, though our review was not able to establish a good counterfactual for assessing the effects of the delay. A Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security official reported that even with the start-up delay, the EFSP's timing was appropriate, both to contribute to the President's Recovery Plan and to meet household needs. It injected cash at the village level at a time when almost all economic activities were stalled after months of crisis. CIC's interviewed in each region

***“We are grateful to the American people because that amount of money came when we were badly in need. We had nothing to eat when that money was given to us.” ~male beneficiary***

agreed with this point, that the need was still great when the program began implementation. This was the main sentiment of the beneficiaries who commented on this topic as well: i.e., ideally the first payment would have come during the rainy/lean season, but the most important thing to them now was that the cash assistance arrived, not when it arrived. Some of the FGDs reported

that their communities were resorting to various coping strategies to survive before the cash arrived, and some households even migrated in search of food, but when the UCTs started, they were able to return home and recover.

**ACCESS/SECURITY:** This program was remarkable in that virtually no fraud or security incidents were noted by IPs, beneficiaries, or FFP staff. This program's distribution model, however, faced security risks to SPASH and agents carrying large amounts of cash in backpacks travelling via motorbike to remote communities and areas where trucks carrying food aid could not travel. To minimize the risk, Splash agents never carried more than \$2,000.<sup>7</sup> IPs and stakeholders confirmed there were no security incidents. One IP employee pondered if Sierra Leone was just a unique context, with no protection or security incidents in such a large cash transfer program, and whether that could be expected elsewhere. All stakeholders interviewed suggested that security issues were more likely to occur with food distributions than with cash. Many WFP and IP staff had experience with both cash and food distributions; they unanimously indicated that in the Sierra Leone context, cash was less risky than food. The reasons mentioned included: food is bulky to carry or transport and thus makes the vehicles and the beneficiaries targets; other factors included the chaotic environment of food distributions—e.g.,

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of the fieldwork, the IPs were conducting a due diligence check with Splash for the second phase, which includes working out a warranty/insurance system in case of an incident involving loss.

taking hours to complete due to scooping, attracting a crowd, and involving police officers who sometimes have a difficult time maintaining the peace. Of the 113 beneficiaries polled during the focus groups on whether or not their cash was stolen, only two people responded that a small amount of their UCT was taken from them (in both cases from a relative in the household), and all the interviewed beneficiaries agreed that cash is easier to keep secure than food.

**GENDER:** The cash transfers were provided primarily to the senior female of the household. KIs and beneficiaries agreed that this approach led to empowerment of women and better use of resources for household well-being outcomes. Of 121 beneficiaries polled on this topic in focus groups, almost all (120) agreed it is a good idea to give women the cash. Reasons cited were: women oversee the home; women care for household well-being; women have suffered more, especially widows; women are more active in petty trading; and women are more responsible with cash. During FDGs, community members were asked to discuss the effects of providing transfers to women on intra-household dynamics. Many of the FDGs concluded that spousal disputes had decreased with more “peace” in those households, and that those husbands respected their wives more (see beneficiary quotes below). There were no indications that cash transfers to women resulted in intra-household conflict.

*“Wives are the safest bank to keep money.” ~male beneficiary*

*“The other point is that it [UCT] reduces our dependency on men in the community and allows us to take the lead in providing certain services for our children and the family as a whole.” ~female beneficiary*

*“No more fighting in the house because what used to cause fighting was poverty, but with the little [cash] people have in the house, there is peace.” ~male beneficiary*

**WASTE/FRAUD:** Waste and fraud, similar to security, were remarkably low and compared favorably with food aid. KIs were aware of a few instances of waste or corruption with the CT modality. One IP staff described how a community “tax” was being levied and they worked quickly with the ACC to address the situation. The ACC explained that this issue could be one of corruption or of misunderstanding, and it was prevented in other communities by providing clear messaging that if the UCT recipient owes taxes, this is not the time to collect such monies. The ACC representative interviewed said they were able to catch a few instances where individuals were showing up to collect cash multiple times or trying to claim the cash for sick family members. Interviews with IP staff with previous in-kind food aid experience described how with food aid, customs agents asked for bribes, or trucks loaded with commodities were stolen; but that had not happened with cash. Also, a major advantage of cash is that it comes directly from the cash provider in the presence of the IP and then is transferred directly to beneficiaries; fewer intermediaries are involved. Some IPs, however, felt that cash is more susceptible to fraud, though, both IPs and beneficiaries reported very few cases of actual fraud or abuse, and all were dealt with swiftly. This achievement was largely attributed to the effectiveness of the ACC along with effective monitoring by the IPs and CICs. The commission was ever-present in the field, apparently a very effective mechanism for capturing abuses.

In addition, the community support for UCTs was so high that community buy-in/engagement may have been a significant reason for the low levels of waste/fraud. This was an intervention very much valued

and desired by the community. They did not want to jeopardize their access to this program. In general, we found beneficiary feedback and complaints reporting systems to be both robust and effective.

A potential issue mentioned by some KIs was that unconditional resource transfer programs for political gain by incumbent politicians at various levels of government could facilitate clientelism. This issue was raised by KIs and has been noted by expert reviews of social transfer programs (Oxford, 2017). Conditional transfers can mitigate the problem where CCTs are appropriate. Given the unusual nature of the Sierra Leone crisis, CCTs were a complement to rather than a substitute for UCTs. CCTs could be used productively to enhance the impact of UCTs, however, especially in the areas of financial literacy/planning and potentially governance.

**PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT:** The EFSP Ebola response had a notable effect on private sector engagement. Sierra Leone has major capacity gaps in relevant private sector infrastructure including banking and cellular telephone networks and other cash distribution systems. The EFSP Ebola response appears to have stimulated conversations for growth in these areas (UN Ebola Response, 2014). IP staff members noted the need for capacity building initiatives related to finance and markets and to advocate to the Government of Sierra Leone to incentivize relevant private sector expansion. Some KIs suggested that opportunity could exist for community banks if the government and development actors support that vision. They felt that expansion of the private sector would be facilitated by including the Ministry of Finance in the Cash Transfer Working Group (CTWG).

Even the KI for the mobile cellular network provider, who did not succeed within the EFSP projects, stated that mobile inclusion, and thereby financial services inclusion, was part of the company strategy. In addition, while partnership with this EFSP did not work out, they were confident they could provide these services in the future. This KI reported that their exposure to rural communities as a partner at the start of the response resulted in noticeably increased phone use by some beneficiaries, including basic phone use as well as an uptake in money services. Also, because of this project, more than 70 new mobile money agents have been hired across the country. The mobile provider said they were in conversation with APEX banks, NaCSA, and other banking and development actors to explore partnerships.

***“It’s a lost opportunity for doing things differently. It’s still possible: bringing in financial inclusion among unbankable populations.” ~ IP staff, referencing the inability of IPs to successfully use mobile or banking infrastructure for this EFSP***

**LESSONS LEARNED/MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E):** Thanks to FFP leadership in Washington and the field, IPs were well coordinated and engaged regularly in learning and exchange. Through the informal Cash Working Group, IPs met regularly and genuinely collaborated to problem solve the response to this unique crisis. In addition, quarterly and annual reporting is well-organized and of good quality, including results monitoring and price monitoring. All five IPs conducted post-distribution monitoring and market and food price monitoring and tracked food security indicators at least at baseline and endline. All of the IPs report hiring additional M&E staff and building capacity in this area. At least two IPs conducted mid-term mixed method evaluations.

However, there is a gap in systematically documenting the developmental impacts on households, communities, and local economies; this includes monitoring and exploring possible links to resilience capacities. Given the unique nature of the crisis and response described above in sections 2 and 3, i.e.,

implementing widespread UCT programs in an infectious disease epidemic context, monitoring/assessing developmental effects is an important gap. These developmental impacts are further discussed in section 5. FFP may fill this gap, however, with systematic work to be undertaken by stakeholders such as CaLP.

## **IP INVESTMENTS IN CAPACITY**

All IPs reported to have strong support from headquarters or regional advisors to prepare proposals and conduct necessary needs assessment work for program design. For all IPs, this was their first CT program in Sierra Leone. IPs believe their capacity to implement market-based emergency or recovery programming in the future has significantly improved. Overall, the key factors to which they attributed their success in implementing a new modality include: (1) years of experience in country (i.e., established infrastructure and relationships with the government) and past experience working with USAID; (2) pre-existing community leader relationships, or the ability to develop good local relations quickly when moving into new areas; (3) strong staff capacity and program leadership; and (4) organizational support from their region or headquarters and from FFP. The IPs also noted that their experience with this EFSP program had increased their organization's interest in similar programs, providing an exchange between country programs and an opportunity to strengthen their intra-organization community of practice on cash modalities. All IPs have applied learning from this program to make internal changes such as with procurement and finance processes, or to improve monitoring activities. The CaLP trainings in country are specifically cited by two IPs as particularly helpful for building IP capacity and helping them to access resources and learning on cash transfer programming.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION:** FFP leadership was exemplary in many ways and especially in the area of coordination. The CTWG was cited by IPs and stakeholders as the key coordination mechanism that supported efficient and effective delivery across the projects. As per KIs, the CTWG met bi-weekly and ended up focusing on the EFSP cash transfer program, and although other actors had been involved previously, they stopped attending when their programs ended. The CTWG had its first meeting on November 25, 2014 in Freetown (CaLP N.d.). It was formalized with Terms of Reference in May 2015 with the World Bank as co-chair along with ACDI/VOCA and Save the Children. OCHA's support to the CTWG was mainly for information management capacity and the 4W mapping (CTWG 2015). IPs report the CTWG was effective in harmonizing CT programming, at least among FFP IPs. Through the CTWG, IPs ensured there was no overlap in geographic targeting; they matched cash amounts and coordinated distribution timelines to avoid confusion among government contacts and beneficiaries in the field. IPs reported lines of communication were open between IPs and with FFP Sierra Leone, noting this inclusive and collaborative tone exceeded their experiences elsewhere. "We were learning together, so there was a lot of transformation there," one IP commented. IPs recommended that FFP standardize and encourage this strong working group model and collaborative environment across FFP portfolios in other countries. Other stakeholders interviewed suggested this type of committee should be permanent and that the government counterparts (e.g., NaCSA in Sierra Leone) and other humanitarian actors should still be encouraged to participate.

Organizations implementing cash transfers have consulted with one another and NaCSA to harmonize transfer values. In 2015, NaCSA, ACDI VOCA, ACF, and Save the Children, consulted and agreed to set their transfer value at or near US\$30/month (USAID and ACDI VOCA, 2015). In its FY2016 Annual Results Report (ARR), Save states that it set UCT transfer levels in coordination with other EFSP partners and in consultation with NaCSA, at 40% of caloric needs for a family of six.

## FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES

This section describes the food security outcomes reported from secondary data triangulated with discussion from the review’s qualitative primary data collection. Overall, significant improvements in household hunger and diet diversity are documented across IP areas. One IP study that included a counterfactual shows beneficiary households are more food secure than non-beneficiary households at end of program.

Four of the five IPs reported on food security outcome indicators for their projects,<sup>8</sup> including household dietary diversity scores (HDDS) and household hunger scores (HHS).

They attributed achievements in food security in part to sensitization on nutrition and to messaging that promoted the use of UCTs to address household food security first and then other needs. Figure 3 presents findings from IPs, with dramatic decreases from baseline to the end of FY2016 in the percent of beneficiary households experiencing hunger.

Without CT, some IP reports describe the likely coping strategies that would have prevailed among the target households, such as borrowing food from neighbors, eating bush crops like yams, borrowing money, selling assets, eating less preferred foods, reducing meals, and working as laborers as far away as Liberia. All IPs reported large improvements in HDDS among beneficiaries from baseline to end of FY2016 (Figure 4).

ACDI/VOCA designed a quasi-experiment, conducting exit interviews with a random sample of their beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

Overall, the study found that UCT recipient households were more food secure than non-beneficiary households. Also, households were more vulnerable to food insecurity if their children had dropped out of school, if there was a death in the family or major healthcare costs, and if they lacked agricultural income. These findings were interesting in light of FGDs conducted by the review team in which almost all focus group participants reported spending their UCTs on food and education, along with other household needs. The other main reported uses of the UCT were for healthcare costs, to conduct business or agricultural activities, and to contribute to savings (either household or group savings). These results are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 3: Percent of households experiencing moderate to severe hunger significantly decreased across all IP programs

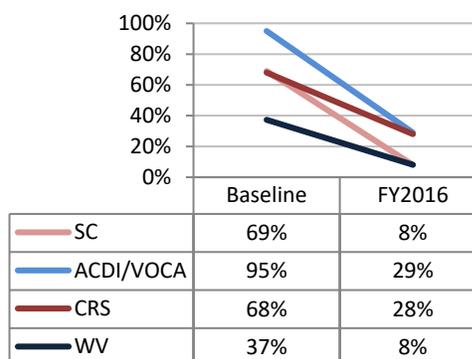
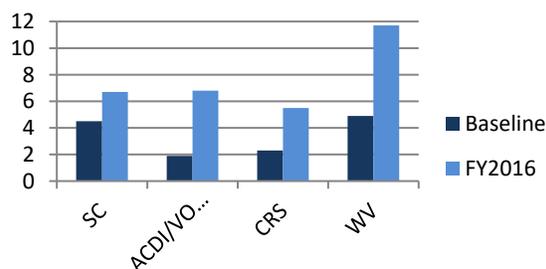
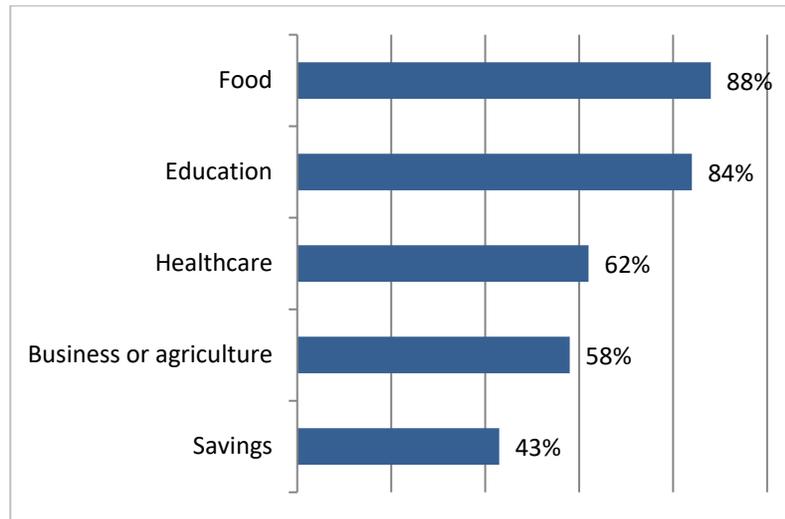


Figure 4: Average number of food groups consumed by households (HDDS) increased from baseline to end of FY2016



<sup>8</sup> CARE reports on negative coping strategies, but no food security indicators are reported.

Figure 5: Percent of FGD beneficiaries reporting using UCT for food and other household needs



Source: Beneficiary FGD data from review team field work.

*“When I received the money, the first thing I did was buy food for my children and also buy some medicine.” ~female beneficiary*

*“I want to thank God and the American people. When [the IP] came to assist us, Ebola had ended but hunger was too much, and if it was not for their help we would have passed away.” ~male beneficiary*

#### 4. COST-EFFICIENCY TRENDS

Cost-efficiency analysis is particularly problematic in the Sierra Leone context because so much of the cost relates to investments required to establish cash distribution supply chains. Prior to launching the program, USAID-BEST/ FEWS NET collected data to inform food assistance options and to conduct cost-efficiency analyses. However, IPs did not calculate value for money when deciding between cash or food modalities. IPs reported generally lower overhead and logistics costs with cash in comparison to food or vouchers.

#### 5. DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS

In all, developmental impacts were prominent at the household, community, market systems, and financial/telecommunications systems levels. The program accelerated market recovery, stimulating business (especially for female vendors), new markets, and products. UCTs promoted savings, increased participation in community governance, and strengthened social capital. Households improved their access to education, livelihood inputs, and health services, and felt increased confidence and hope. The banking systems and other financial service providers were also stimulated by the UCTs.

**Impacts on the local economies and markets:** This is one of the big story lines for FFP. All evidence from documents, KIIs, and beneficiary FGDs pointed to the developmental impacts of FFP programs. Beneficiaries within all 12 FGDs remarked how the UCTs stimulated their business activities in markets, and they attributed increased amounts of or new products available from traders in markets to the CT program. They observed new household shops set up and the appearance of small markets within their villages (there was no indication of predatory practices), allowing them to access products without travelling to the ‘weekly markets’ that are often miles away. UCT recipients who have engaged in this local market activity expressed pride that they were meeting the needs of their larger village to access products and hoped to expand these business activities.

Some beneficiaries within each of the 12 FGDs started new business activities because of the UCTs. Some reported making a profit from that business investment, which was used for other household needs or put into a village savings and loan association. Farming households reported being able to buy seeds and increase crop land area, making food more available for the entire community. In addition, six of the FGDs reported indirect benefit to non-beneficiaries that were hired by beneficiary households to help with clearing land and farming.

The “Life History 1: Jenneh” below illustrates the serious challenges one beneficiary has experienced throughout her life and the perceived improvements UCTs brought to her life. Two more life histories in Annex 7 provide further accounts of beneficiaries who struggled in Sierra Leone and were able to buy food, make livelihood investments, and pay school fees with their cash transfers.

**SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS**

**HOUSEHOLD LEVEL**

- Improved food security
- New/expanded business activities
- Increased crop production
- Increased income and savings
- Psychosocial benefits
- Improved health
- Improved status of women, and peace within the household
- Access to education for children

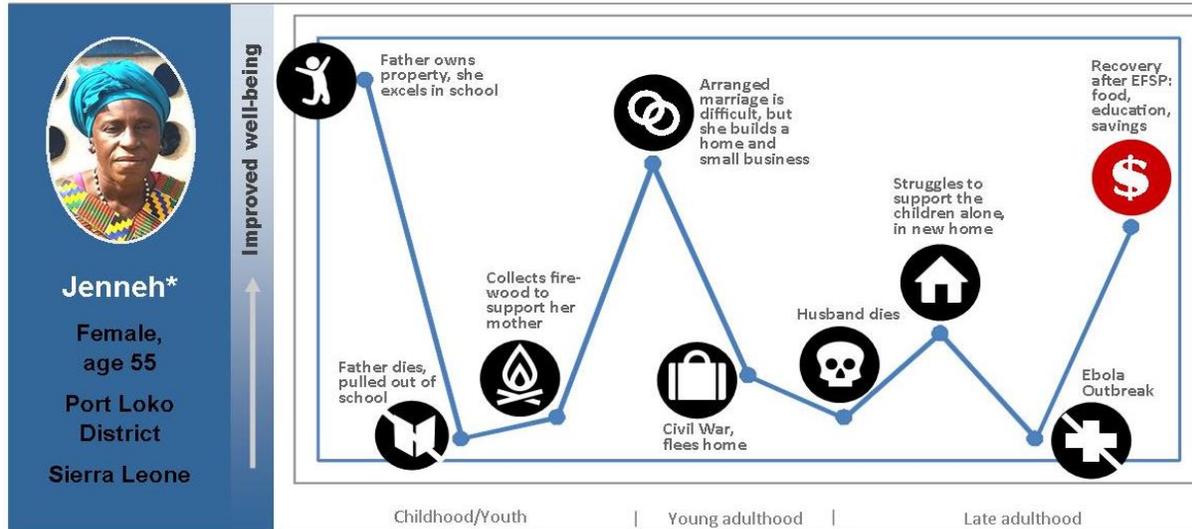
**COMMUNITY LEVEL**

- Expanded village markets and available products
- Jobs created/demand for labor
- Less conflict from indebtedness
- Increased participation in community governance
- Increased participation in village savings and loan association or other village safety nets
- Bonding/bridging social capital
- Improved status of women

**NATIONAL LEVEL**

- Stimulating business interest in expanding banking and mobile money market systems
- Positive visibility of Government: NaCSA and ACC

## Cash transfers after Ebola provide “great relief” and recovery for widow



\*Name has been changed. Note: the graph for this case study was developed by subjective ratings of life events by the TANGO team.

*“This amount of money has greatly improved my life and the lives of my children.”*

**Jenneh** was born in 1962 in a village of Tonkolili District, Sierra Leone. Her well-being was very good as a young child. Her father owned property and had some money. When Jenneh was seven years old, her father died, and her mother could not pay school fees for both Jenneh and her brother—Jenneh’s brother continued school, but she did not. Moreover, her father’s assets were divided amongst relatives who left nothing to Jenneh’s mother. Jenneh attributes her current low socio-economic status to her lack of education.

Jenneh grieved her father’s death through her youth. Her mother was often too sick to work, and Jenneh foraged for firewood and items to sell. Because of their hard life, Jenneh’s uncle arranged for her to marry when she was about 20 years old, and a bride price was provided to her mother. Per custom, she moved to Bombali District to live with her husband’s family. At first it was very difficult because she was a stranger, but as time passed she felt accepted by her in-laws, and life was getting better. Jenneh started a small business and raised goats and chickens. The first decade of marriage, however, was unhappy and abusive, but she accepted this because she had nowhere else to go. She and her husband built a house and had four children. She regularly sent some earnings to her mother. When the Civil War began in 1991, Jenneh fled with her children back to her native village. After the war ended in 2002, she was reunited with her husband in Port Loko District, but he fell ill and died soon thereafter. Jenneh felt the great burden of providing for her children alone. She did not have enough money to send the children to school. Jenneh’s brother helped her start a new home.

When Ebola struck the area, the impact was devastating. Hunger was widespread. Her brother lost his wife to Ebola, so his three children moved in with Jenneh. With the EFSP cash transfer (CT), she provided food for her household, and she sent the children back to school with uniforms and books. This made the children very happy. It was a “great relief” from their suffering. With the second CT tranche, she invested some money in a small business conducting petty trade in nearby villages. She contributes a portion of her profit every week to a village savings and loan association. This was the first time in her life she has had savings. At the end of the year, she plans to use savings and loan funds to further expand her business.

**Impacts on vendors:** Vendors interviewed confirmed the findings above on the great benefits of the CT program to local markets. All 21 vendors interviewed across the three districts reported that their businesses benefited from the CT program. They reported that an increased demand for their goods stimulated engagement with other traders as well. Interviews with both beneficiaries and vendors pointed to another community-level benefit - increased bonding and bridging social capital as connections are made to new vendors, and as products are sold within the community and to neighboring villages.

*“After receiving the financial support from [the IP], people in this community started buying and selling cooking oil and groundnut in the community.” ~Female beneficiary*

*“I was working in the field alone but now pay people. As a result of the money I now have a role within the society.” ~Male beneficiary*

*“It was effective (particularly in rural areas) because people took the opportunity to bring the market to them.” ~IP staff*

**Other impacts:** Another important story line is the psychosocial effects of the FFP programs on beneficiary well-being and motivation. Every beneficiary FGD spoke of the psychosocial benefits of receiving UCTs during their time of need, which gave them hope. The UCTs brought them peace of mind because critical household needs were cared for, their self-esteem and dignity were lifted from not having to beg, and overall, this psychological boost was quite notable by the review team in multiple interviews. After numerous indications of the tremendous enthusiasm for the UCT program, the review team asked focus groups about their thoughts about a sign in Freetown, which reads “Happiness is positive cash flow” (Figure 6); all FGDs agreed with the sign’s message.

Beneficiaries felt that their health status also improved because they were able to use the cash to help them access medicines and health care. Multiple respondents even believed receiving the cash helped to save their lives.

Figure 6: An ATM sign in Freetown with a message about happiness from cash flow



***“Since we received the cash, we began to work in unity, the community consulted us for every meeting and we made decisions together. They looked at us with so much respect since we received the cash.”***

***~female beneficiary***

Some community-level impacts have already been discussed above, such as improving local markets, joining village savings and loan associations, employing community members, and building social capital. Other community benefits include increased participation of even the poorest households and women in local governance such as community meetings, and less inter-household conflict (that often has to

be resolved by community leaders) due to excessive debts that could not be repaid. In fact, all FGDs agreed that the benefits of the EFSP project extended to non-beneficiaries in their communities.

While FGD respondents preferred for the program to continue, 11 of the 12 FGDs explained strategies they are employing to invest in their livelihoods and to sustain themselves; they expressed confidence in sustaining the recovery progress they made in their lives and communities.

***“The benefit is life-long and will continue to the next generation. This is because, if you educate a child the benefit will come back to this community and, as you have heard, most of us used part of the money to pay fees for our children in this community.”***

***~female beneficiary***

***“That is why I am doing business, because when somebody is helping you, he might stop one day, but if you are doing business you can support yourself.” ~male beneficiary***

## **LIFE HISTORIES**

In-depth individual life history narratives of beneficiaries are included in Annex 6: Life history interviews.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES THAT SHOULD CONTINUE**

#### **Learning from this program that can benefit the FFP community of practice:**

- Consider the timing and calendars for UCT distributions in relation to the seasonal/cyclical cash needs of the context
- Recognize that messaging and soft conditionalities are a dynamic process
- Draw upon approaches used in this program for working effectively in environments with limited electronic connectivity and banking capacity
- Apply approaches developed by the program for working effectively in a public sector framework to harmonize efforts and curb corruption
- Learn from the unique lessons provided by the program due to the nature of the crisis:
  - How to address disease fear factors
  - CT standard operating procedures in infectious disease contexts

- Highlight this program as a positive case study in collaborative learning and adaptation, in particular how the collaborative spirit among IPs can be promoted by FFP in other contexts.

## **APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES TO MODIFY**

- Review targeting strategy: FFP should review the targeting strategy employed in this response in order to provide guidance for future responses on strategic recovery-oriented targeting versus chronic poverty targeting.
- Linkage to CaLP review: FFP should work with IPs and stakeholders to conduct research that focuses on quantifying the different categories of developmental/knock-on effects to build on those identified in this review.
- Explore capacity building needs: FFP should explore in more depth with stakeholders such as CaLP the issue of capacity building needs and how to tailor these to different crisis contexts and capacity needs. This includes guidance for just-in-time training.
- Monitor developmental impacts in next phase of program: FFP and IPs should begin to monitor developmental impacts in the ongoing programs including how UCT affected social capital, aspirations, and resilience capacities.
- Develop more strategic approaches for linking CCT and UCT: FFP and IPs have the opportunity to better develop strategic linkages and synergies between CCT and UCT activities, both at the beneficiary and community levels to launch households and communities on to resilience pathways.
- Consider sharing and validating the response results with beneficiary communities: FFP and IPs should consider organizing a beneficiary-oriented conference where developmental impacts are highlighted and recognized publicly (e.g., with individual traders, village savings and loan associations, farm savings accounts, self-help groups).
- Commission efficiency/value for money study: FFP should consider commissioning an efficiency/value for money review of CCT and UCT programs, with the aim of enhancing efficiency/value for money analysis in future responses.
- Support government in applying learning from this response to national social protection program: FFP should consider providing capacity support to government to build on their experiences from this response and to improve linkages between social protection and crisis modifier programming.

## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I: REFERENCES

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## ANNEX 2: SIERRA LEONE ESFP TIMELINE

**Figure 7: Timeline of ESFP household cash transfer activities during Sierra Leone Ebola emergency**

	2015												2016												2017
Farming/hunger calendar	Land prep			Lean season, planting/weeding						Harvest			Land prep			Lean season, planting/weeding						Harvest			
Implementing partners	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan		
Save the Children	Award	Startup			XX	XXX			XX Jan. planned end	XXX NCE (10 mo. total)			approved	XXX CE, new and original HHs			XX, CE	XX, CE END							
ACDI/VOCA					Award	XXX			XX	XXX Dec. tranche planned end			XXX NCE, extra tranche from savings (11 mo. total)			XXX CE, new and at-risk HHs			XXX, CE			XXX, CE END			
CRS								Award	Startup			XXX			XXX (plus May top-up from savings)			XXX (plus July top-up from savings)			top-up			END	
CARE								Award	Startup			XXX			XXX			XXX	X (10 mo.)	half-pay top-up	END				
World Vision								Award	Startup			X	X	XX			XXX, expanded HHs from savings			XXX (10 mo. total)				END	
School fees* due																									
Major events	Health									Economy															
Health:	First cases detected in SL May 2014; WHO declares Ebola emergency Aug. 2014									WHO declares SL Ebola-free Nov. 7th 2015, but 2 new cases confirmed Jan. 2016, successfully controlled						FEWSNET predicts: IPC phase 2 (stressed) for two districts, slow but steady recovery during lean season									
Economy:	Mining industry collapse, intensified movement restrictions Oct. 2014							Major harvest losses, low production					Inflation rate increases, out of control by Jan. 2017					Fuel price increases 63%							

**Note: X= one month of CT (merged cells show multiple-month tranches)**

Other acronyms used in this figure: CE= Cost extension; HHs= Households; IPC= Integrated food security phase classification; NCE= No-cost extension

\*While school fees were officially abolished in 2004, there are various other fees and expenses that households are expected to pay.

Note: This timeline only shows UCT activities; it does not include other project activities or project extensions for FY17.

## ANNEX 3: SUMMARY OF FFP FUNDING IN SIERRA LEONE

**Table 3: Summary of FFP ESFP in Sierra Leone Ebola Response**

Partner and Project No.	Project Name	Districts	Award Dates	Original Budget (USD)	Key Planned Activities
<b>ACDI/VOCA</b> (sub: IMC) AID-FFP-G-15-00050	Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion Plus (SNAP+)(Title II <sup>9</sup> )	Kailahun Bombali Tonkolili (Koinadugu <sup>10</sup> )	4/14/15 – 4/13/16 (ext. to 12/31/16)	\$9 million	Cash transfers to households; Seeds to farmer groups; Enterprise and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) recovery grants to village savings and loan associations; Sierra Mix for MAM children
<b>WFP</b>	N/A	N/A	11/14/2014	4.5 million	LRP
<b>UNICEF</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.6 million	Other
<b>Save the Children</b> AID-FFP-G-15-00024	Kailahun Food for Emergency Ebola Virus Disease Support (FEEDS)	Kailahun	3/1/15 – 1/31/16 (ext. to 12/31/16 <sup>11</sup> )	\$4.4 million  3.2 million (cost extension 2016)	Cash transfers to households; Cash grants to mostly female small traders; Logistical support for government distribution of seed and fertilizer
<b>CARE</b> (2 CSOs <sup>12</sup> ) AID-FFP-G-15-00074	Rapid Ebola Social Safety Network and Economic Recovery Program (RESSNER)	Bombali Tonkolili	8/15/15 – 11/15/16 (ext. to 12/31/17 <sup>13</sup> )	\$2.8 million	Cash transfers to households
<b>CRS</b> AID-FFP-G-15-00080	Cash Based Food Security Assistance for EVD–Affected Sierra Leoneans in Kenema	Kenema	8/26/15 – 1/31/17 <sup>14</sup>	\$2.5 million	Cash transfers to households

<sup>9</sup> Supplemental ration of CSB and veg oil remaining from SNAP originally planned to transfer to SNAP+, but kept with/to deliver through SNAP development program instead as per NCE/Mod 3/2016. Surplus Title II commodities were distributed to cash transfer program families under the MYAP and the team continued procuring locally produced Sierra Mix under the EFSP with FFP consent. Partner International Medical Corps is continuing to assess children linked to mother care groups to identify children at-risk or with MAM who will be served through local procurement.

<sup>10</sup> Koinadugu was not part of the cash transfer activity.

<sup>11</sup> Another cost extension from 1/1/17-10/31/17 is pending at the time of drafting this report, which would add additional household economic activities.

<sup>12</sup> The civil society organizations (CSO) are: Mankind's Activities for Development Accreditation Movement (MADAM) in Tonkolili and Rofutha Development Association (RODA) in Bombali.

<sup>13</sup> This extension was to continue UCT and add a new activity: seed vouchers and community trainings on various topics: health/nutrition, WASH, vegetable gardens and improved agricultural practices.

<sup>14</sup> While no time extension, modifications were made: added project complimentary/sustainability activities (from September 2016-January 2017), including farmer groups and a proposed agricultural project where selected farmer groups receive a cash grant and trainings on nutrition and on financial management and savings.

**Table 3: Summary of FFP ESFP in Sierra Leone Ebola Response**

Partner and Project No.	Project Name	Districts	Award Dates	Original Budget (USD)	Key Planned Activities
World Vision  AID-FFP-G-15-00075	Emergency Food Assistance to Port Loko District	Port Loko	7/28/15 – 1/27/17	\$3.6 million	Cash transfers to households; Rice seed vouchers to farming households

**ANNEX 4: INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS CONDUCTED****Table 4: Stakeholders interviewed during the Sierra Leone field mission and/or via Skype**

Organization	Name	Stakeholder type/title
USAID	Lawrence Oromo and Lovetta Sannoh, Debrief with Ambassador HE John Hoover	FFP Officer, Food Security Monitor
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Security (MAFFS)	Leslie Scott	Government of Sierra Leone, Coordinator of Agricultural Development
NaCSA	Alpha Sankoh	Government of Sierra Leone, Senior Director of Programs, and all district coordinators
WFP	Kainday Samba	Deputy Country Rep and Head of Programs
World Bank	Andrea Martin	Social Protection Operations Officer
FAO	David Mwesigwa	Head of Programs
ACDI/VOCA	Georgia Beans	IP, Chief of Party
	James Flock (via Skype)	IP, (former) Program Manager
CRS	Francis Kyobe and Idalia Amaya	IP, Food Security/Cash Program Manager, Ebola Response Coordinator
	Heather Dolphin, Francis Kyobe, Leona Garber, Amanda Lewis (via Skype)	IP, Head of Programs, Food Security/Cash Program Manager, Business Development Specialist, Regional Technical Advisor for Agriculture
World Vision	Kevin Weseni	IP, Project Manager
	Tom Ombogo (via Skype)	Cash Transfer Specialist
Save the Children	Edditon Chinyoka	IP, Director USAID Program
CARE	Morie Amadu and Veronica Avila	IP, Operations Manager, Livelihoods Manager
Helen Keller International (HKI)	Mary Hodges	Country Director
FEWSNET	Alusine Kamara	National Technical Manager
APEX (bank)	Momodou Sesay	Managing Director
IFAD	Mustapha Kella	Programme Coordinator
Splash	Daniel Osei-Antwi	Private service provider, Managing Director

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Stakeholder type/title</b>
Airtel	Madeleine Bart-Williams	Private service provider, Corporate Manager
Anti-Corruption Commission	Patrick Monrovia	Government of Sierra Leone, Special Investigator
United Nations Development Programme	Ghulam Sherani	Manager Payments Program & Livelihoods Rehabilitation

**Table 5: Focus groups/interviews conducted in Sierra Leone: locations and number and type of participants**

Location (district, village, urbanization)	FGD or IDI	# of participants	Type of participants
Port Loko, Masiaka (peri-urban)	FGD	8	Male beneficiaries
Port Loko, Masiaka (peri-urban)	FGD	27	Female beneficiaries
Port Loko, Maforki (urban)	FGD	11	CIC (7 male/4 female)
Port Loko, Maforki (urban)	FGD	5	Vendors (5 male)
Port Loko, Maforki (urban)	IDI	1	Female life history
Port Loko, Buya (rural)	FGD	8	Male beneficiaries
Port Loko, Buya (rural)	FGD	10	Female beneficiaries
Port Loko, Buya (rural)	FGD	6	CIC (4 male/2 female)
Port Loko, Buya (rural)	IDI	1	Male life history
Tonkolili, Makelfa (rural)	FGD	3	Male beneficiaries
Tonkolili, Makelfa (rural)	FGD	8	Female beneficiaries
Tonkolili, Makelfa (rural)	FGD	3	CIC (2 male/1 female)
Tonkolili, Makelfa (rural)	IDI	1	Female life history
Tonkolili, Konike/Masiaka (peri-urban)	FGD	5	Male beneficiaries
Tonkolili, Konike/Masiaka (peri-urban)	FGD	9	Female beneficiaries
Tonkolili, Makalie (rural)	FGD	6	Vendors (1 male/5 female)
Tonkolili, Konike/Masiaka (peri-urban)	IDI	1	Male life history
Kailahun, Njaluahun (peri-urban)	FGD	12	Male beneficiaries
Kailahun, Njaluahun (peri-urban)	FGD	12	Female beneficiaries
Kailahun, Njaluahun (peri-urban)	FGD	12	CIC (12 females)
Kailahun, Njaluahun (peri-urban)	IDI	1	Male life history
Kailahun, Jawei (rural)	FGD	12	Male beneficiaries
Kailahun, Jawei (rural)	FGD	7	Female beneficiaries
Kailahun, Jawei (rural)	FGD	10	Vendors (10 females)
Kailahun, Jawei (rural)	IDI	1	Female life history

## ANNEX 5: APPROACH

This country case study is part of a larger study by a review team. Please refer to the corresponding Global Report for more information. Field work was conducted in Sierra Leone from February 27 to March 15, 2017, during which time the review team interviewed stakeholders from 19 organizations, and conducted interviews and focus groups with 180 beneficiaries, market vendors and community members (110 women and 70 men). A systematic review of project documents was also conducted.

The primary data collection utilized a qualitative and participatory approach including KII with donors, government, IPs, and FGDs with beneficiaries, CICs, and vendors. The schedule included:

- KII with stakeholders in Freetown February 27 – March 3 and March 6-9
- FGDs in 3 districts with 3 IPs: Port Loko (March 3, 9, 10), Tonkolili (Mar 9-10), Kailahun (March 13-14), 2 villages per district. Villages were purposively selected to represent both rural and peri-urban program areas.
- Debrief presentation with USAID/Ambassador and IPs on March 9 before the departure of the TANGO team
- IDI Life Histories were conducted using methodology adapted from a study by ODI (Scott and Diwakar, 2016)
- Responses from participants were triangulated across the data sources to crosscheck the reliability of information.

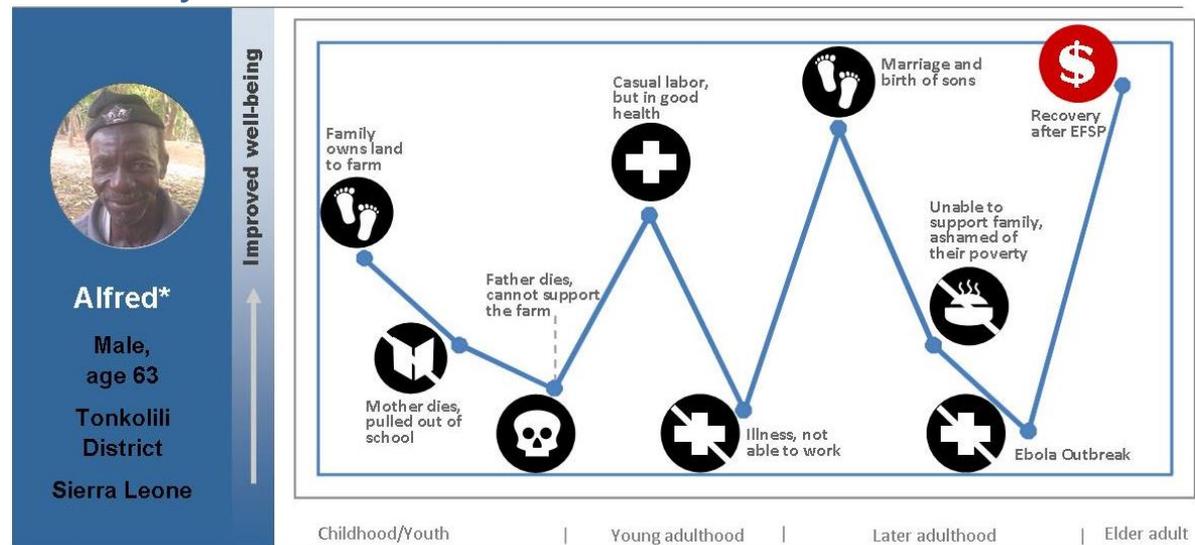
The TANGO study team was comprised of two international (females) and one national (male) consultants with extensive experience with humanitarian contexts in the region and in qualitative methods. To ensure quality, the team analyzed the data on a daily basis, implementing systematic checks on accuracy, consistency, reliability, and validity of the data through regular communication with FFP and IPs.

The international team members were assisted during fieldwork by local researchers who also assisted with interpretation as needed. The local researchers were identified through Dalan Consultants and vetted by TANGO. Fieldwork was preceded by a half day of training with the local researchers. The training consisted of reviewing team roles, responsibilities and logistics, as well as thoroughly reviewing the tools with the teams prior to data collection. This allowed the team to thoroughly understand together how and why each topic was to be approached, discussed, and analyzed. The team piloted and adjusted the tools together in nearby Port Loko district.

## ANNEX 6: LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEWS

Life History 2: Alfred

### Cash tranches after Ebola provide tremendous recovery for chronically vulnerable



\*Name has been changed. Note: the graph for this case study was developed by subjective ratings of life events by the TANGO team.

*“You don’t know me, but you have changed the circumstances of my life.”*

**Alfred** was born in 1954 into a family of farmers who owned a small plot of land. He was the third of six children. As a child, he watched the health of his parents deteriorate. When Alfred was 10 years old, his father died, and Alfred was pulled out of school to work on his family’s farm. His mother passed away a few years later. He describes this as a low point in life because without his parents, the family could no longer farm. He began working as a casual laborer on nearby farms.

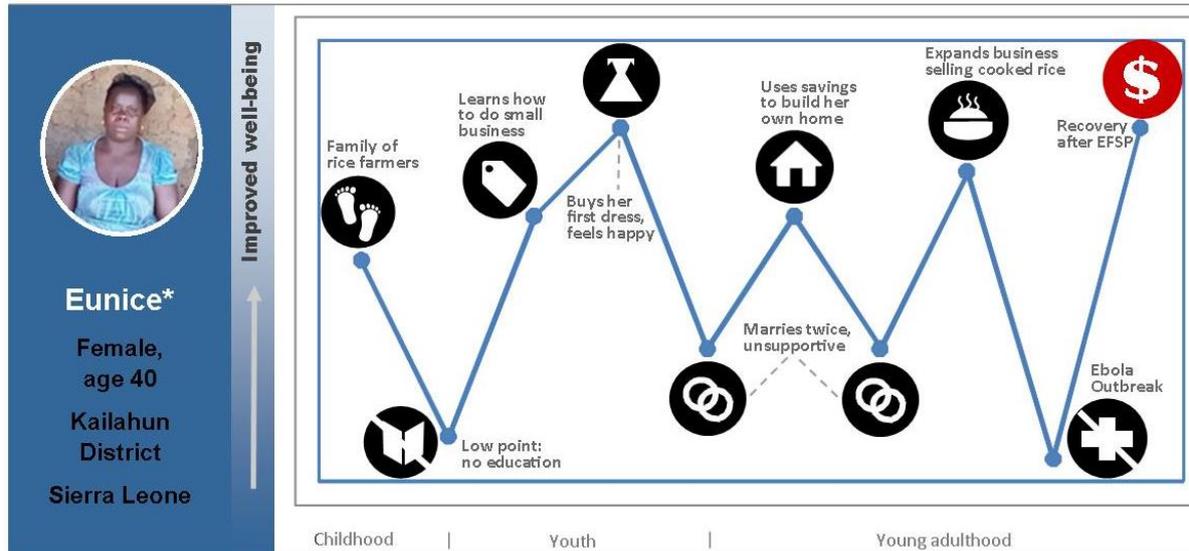
In his youth, Alfred was poor but in good health. This was not true in Alfred’s adult life, much of which was defined by illness. Because he could not access medical care, he was not able to recover from many ailments and could not work. Life was very difficult, as he had no support system on which to rely; most of his siblings died as young adults.

Around the age of 40, he married a woman from the same village. They had two sons; he describes their births as the highlight of his life. However, despite this joy, he and his wife struggle daily to make ends meet. His wife earns some income for the family, but he is limited in his ability to do any physical labor because he is continually plagued with illness. They also cannot afford to send their children to school. Because Alfred could not provide for his family, he was ashamed of their poverty. He also felt that his community did not respect him.

The Ebola Outbreak negatively affected Alfred and his family, and they faced even greater struggles to feed themselves. When cash transfers began, the first thing Alfred did was to buy a bag of rice and enroll his sons in school. He then used the remaining payments to hire labor to start farming his family’s land again and start some petty trading in nearby villages. With the profit from his farming and small side business, he has enough to feed his family and continue to pay school fees. He proudly talks about his son’s good performance at school. Now, for the first time, he is invited to community meetings and is known in nearby villages for his petty trade. This money has “changed everything about [his] life, with [his] family and [his] community.”

### Life History 3: Eunice

## Cash tranches after Ebola support female-headed household to bounce back better



\*Name has been changed. Note: the graph for this case study was developed by subjective ratings of life events by the TANGO team.

**Eunice** was born in 1977 in a village of Kailahun District into a family of rice farmers. At the age of two, she was sent to live in with her aunt in another village who could better provide for her. When she was five, she received news that her father had died, and she remained living with her aunt. As a child, she had wanted to attend school it was not permitted because she needed to tend to the family's farm. Eunice attributes her current life status to never attending school and sees it as the low point of her life.

Despite not attending school, she describes her childhood as happy and healthy. She spent most of her time working on the farm and after each harvest, her uncle would give her money that she would use to buy raw ground nuts to roast and sell. She was motivated to save the little profit she made to buy a dress, similar to the ones she often saw other girls in the village wear, which was a significant moment for her. From this, she learned valuable skills about how to run a business that would help her earn income as she grew older.

When Eunice turned 18 years of age, a marriage was arranged. Although she bore three children with him, she was unhappy in her marriage. Her husband abandoned her and the children, and left her with nothing. She was forced to move back to her village to live with her brother. This was a stressful time for her. From the little she had saved from petty trading, she built her own mud hut; this is where she currently resides. She again married but shortly after the birth of their second child, he migrated to a bigger town for work and did not return. Her business continued to grow and eventually she expanded it into selling cooked rice. With the money she made, she could afford to feed her children and send them to school.

The Ebola Outbreak had a negative impact on Eunice's livelihood. She could not sell the rice she cooked and was forced to close her business. She relied heavily on what little savings she had accumulated and found it difficult to feed her five children during this time. She credits the cash transfer program with helping her to revamp her rice business. The business is now thriving. With the money she makes, she is able to adequately feed her children, pay for school expenses, and has even made upgrades to her mud hut.

## ANNEX 7: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW TOOLS

### FGD: BENEFICIARIES

**Moderator to read out loud:**

#### Introduction:

“Hello. Let us introduce ourselves. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_.

We are here today to speak with people who are part of this community and who have been identified as having received support through the cash transfer money. We will ask some questions about your living situation, how you access food and other basic needs, and what is accessible to you in the local market. We will also like to find out more about your views of how you have been receiving cash assistance and if there is anything that can be done better by programs operating in this area.

Finally, we will end with a few questions to learn more about how the community (not just yourselves in this group) intends to move forward, in terms of any immediate or future plans to improve food security as well as what your needs are going forward, especially with respect to building resilience to tackle the future emergencies or food shortages.

Please know that your decision to participate is strictly voluntary – you will not be in trouble for deciding to leave the discussion.

All information discussed is confidential and people will not be individually identified in the reporting of findings.

Any questions?

Let us begin by going around the circle and introducing ourselves to one another.”

**Reminder to researcher/note-taker: for each question indicate how many agree or disagree and include explanations or examples for those responses.**

#### Record for each interview:

**Total number of people: #, male or female**

**District/community name/implementing project area:**

**Rural/remote or peri-urban (off a main road)?**

**Date:**

#### Opening questions:

- 1) Have you been involved in [IP project name]? (should be all because these are beneficiary FGDs)
- 2) (If they received assistance) What kind of assistance have you received through this program? (For this program, it will be unconditional cash transfer, cash for work, small grants, seed or seed voucher)
  - Number of participants who received cash transfers=
  - Number of participants who received small grants (to farmer or VSLA groups)=
  - Number of participants who received seed or seed voucher=
  - Other, Specify=

### Let us discuss Food Aid (FOOD SUPPLY):

- 3) In the past did you receive food supply? (explain what food supply we are referring to, like rations of food, vegetable oil etc. such as what may have been provided years ago during the war)
  - Number who received food supply in the past=
- 4) Which do you prefer, food supply or cash assistance? Why?
  - Number who prefer food supply, and why=
  - Number who prefer cash, and why=
  - Other notes=

### Cash Transfer (CT):

- 5) Just after receiving the first cash transfer, what was the first thing you did because you had the CT? Explain/Examples.
  - a) What other things did you do because you had the CT money?
- 6) Raise hands for categories of general uses of the cash: *of any of the cash received* (count the hands after each category): How many used the cash for:
  - Food=
  - School fees=
  - Business activities=
  - To pay back a loan=  
If yes, loan from who? (VSLA, moneylender, or bank/micro-finance)
  - To join an farmer savings association (FSA)=
  - To keep some for personal savings (household box)=
  - To put into a VSLA/savings group= If yes, did you use the cash to contribute to the starting of a group, or to a group that was already going on?
  - Medical assistance=
  - Home construction/improvements=
  - Cell phone= (if none, ask how many owned own a cell phone= )
  - Clothes and/or jewelry=
  - Ceremonies= (Specify)
  - For other purposes not listed yet?= (Specify)
- 7) Of all these things, what did you use the cash for most? All agree? (using 10 stones/piling method)
  - Number that agree for cash spending= (? /10 stones for \_\_\_\_; ? /10 stones for \_\_\_\_ etc.)(Record on backside of this paper as needed, take photos of stones exercise if consent is given)
- 8) Did any of you start *new* business activities because of the CT money?
  - Number that started new business=

Explain/Examples: (Probe for what new products they are selling, or if they got products from new sellers, or visited new markets to sell)

9) Did any of you improve your *regular* business activities because of the CT money? If so, how?

- Number that improved regular business=

Explain/Examples:

a) If not, why?

10) With these new or improved business activities, were you able to make a profit above the amount of the CT you received?

- Number of people that made profit more than CT amount=

Explain/Examples:

11) Targeting: Some receive the cash transfer in your village, some do not, is that a problem? (If they respond that the problem was unhappiness among those who didn't receive, probe if any actual problems or conflicts arose)

- Number that say real problems were caused in the village=

a) Do you know why you were selected to receive the CT money (or voucher/cash grant)?

Give explanations, and do all agree?

b) Do you think the CT (or voucher/cash grant) is provided to the people who need it most? Why or why not?

Give explanations, and do all agree?

12) Security: Did anyone have their cash stolen?

- Number that had cash stolen, and explain=

a) What assistance is easier to secure: the cash or food supply?

- Number that say cash is easier to secure=

Explain/Examples:

13) Gender: Mostly women received the cash for the household, was it a good idea or a bad idea to give women the cash? Why?

- Number that think it is a good idea to give women the cash=

Explain/Examples:

- Number that think it is a bad idea to give women the cash=

Explain/Examples:

(See possible follow up probes below):

a) Has domestic violence/wife-beating increased, decreased or stayed the same for households where women received cash?

b) Who is making the decision about how to use the cash? Are women who received the cash making more decisions?

14) \*Community-level benefits\* Is the community as a whole (including those who got cash and those who did not) better because of the cash transfers?

- Number that think the whole community is better= If so, in what ways?

- Number that think the whole community is not better= If not, why not?

(See follow up probes below, get number of those who agree and explanations for each):

- a) Tension in the community: less because of paying off loans, etc....or more because some that need it are not receiving?
- b) Markets are better? (Note: this will be expanded on in the next question)
- c) Forming savings groups?
- d) Hiring labor with the cash such as for farms or other business?
- e) Others?

15) Markets: (for each question, differentiate what type of market and provide explanations for each)

- a) What markets do you typically buy food at? Sell at? How far away are these markets by car or by foot?
- b) How many of you are selling food in the market? What types of food? (List number, and types)
- c) Have you noticed any changes in market prices since people started receiving the CT?
- d) Have you noticed any changes in what is available at the market since people started receiving CT?

16) Distribution schedule: What do you think is better, to get a smaller amount more often or a larger amount of money less often (but the same total amount)? For example: 30 dollars every month for 9 months or 90 dollars every three months three times during the same 9 months. Why?

- Number who prefer smaller amount more often (\$30 every month) = Why?
- Number who prefer larger amount less often (\$90 every 3 months) = Why?
- a) Does the quarterly tranche (\$90 every 3 months) help them more, less, the same as monthly? Why?
- b) If you had gotten the first payment in July 2015 (the same total amount but just starting earlier), do you think you would be better off today? Yes or no? In what ways? Why?
  - Number that say 'yes' =

Explain/Examples =

17) Other types of assistance: Aside from CT money/vouchers/small grants, what other types of assistance have you received since 2014 when Ebola began?

- a) Were community members required to help build any community assets in order to receive assistance? What work was done? What impact, if any, did this work have on community attitudes about people's ability to shape their future through creating community assets?

## **BENEFICIARY FGD: SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS**

**For agricultural areas only: SKIP if peri-urban/non-farming**

- Were there enough good seed available to plant as you planned (for last planting season)? If no, why not?
- Where do people in your community obtain seed?
- Did you get seed from [IP name]?
- Did the seed make a difference in your ability to get a good crop? If so, why and if not, why not?
- Are there changes that should be made to the seed program?

- Some people got cash transfers but no seed, do you think it makes a difference to get seed even if you get CT? What differences

**For areas with VSLA/Savings Groups only: SKIP if no VSLA/savings groups in communities**

- Are you currently actively involved in the VSLA/Savings group?
- Has the VSLA/Savings Groups changed since the CT? In what ways?
- Has the VSLA/Savings Groups helped you to make your life better than before Ebola? If not, why? If so, in what ways?

**Concluding thoughts:**

We have come to the last part of the discussion. Before we end, we have a few short questions to ask you to help us be able to improve the program that supports this community.

- 18) Are there any other changes to your lives because of the cash you want tell us about? (Probe for hope, less stress, prolonged lives, and what that has looked like for them. Example: With the hope you felt from the cash, what did you do?)

- Number that agree=

Explain/Examples:

- 19) There is a sign in Freetown that says 'Happiness is positive cash flow'. Do you agree that happiness is cash flow? Why? (Probe, the cash relieves stress, gives hope, makes me feel able to do things I couldn't do before)

- Number that agree=

Explain/Examples:

- 20) What do you think are the good points of this program for you as women / men /young people and your community (ies)? (Probe: In your view, what helped this program succeed?)

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

- 21) What are the negative points or gaps in this program?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

- 22) In your opinion, what could be done to improve this program? Is there anything you think should have been done differently with this cash transfer program?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

- 23) Now that the funds have stopped, what do you think other people are going to do to pay for food? To pay the next school fees?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

- a) What can this community do to meet its own food needs?

- 24) How can this community work together so that emergencies or disasters do not affect people as badly?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

## FGD: VENDORS

### Moderator to read out loud:

#### Introduction:

“Hello. Let us introduce ourselves. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_.

We are here today to speak with people who are part of this community and who have been identified as being market sellers in communities that received cash support during the Ebola emergency to enable them to access food. We will ask some questions about the market situation. We will also like to find out more about your views of if there is anything that can be done better by these types of cash assistance programs operating in this area.

Finally, we will end with a few questions to learn more about how the community (not just yourselves in this group) intends to move forward, in terms of any immediate or future plans to improve food security as well as what your needs are going forward, especially with respect to building resilience to tackle the future emergencies or food shortages.

Please know that your decision to participate is strictly voluntary – you will not be in trouble for deciding to leave the discussion.

All information discussed is confidential and people will not be individually identified in the reporting of findings.

Any questions?

Let us begin by going around the circle and introducing ourselves to one another.”

**Reminder to researcher: for each question indicate how many agree or disagree and include explanations or examples for those responses.**

#### Record for each interview:

**Total number of people: #, male/female**

**District/community name/implementing project area:**

**Rural/remote or peri-urban (off a main road)?**

**Date:**

#### Questions for all vendors:

- 1) Who supplies food commodities to vendors like you?
  - Provide count/number of different sources:
- 2) What determines the price you pay to sellers? What determines the price you charge?

All agree? Explain/examples:
- 3) Do you think the cash transfers given in the area had an effect on *your* business, yes or no? If so, how? (Probes: maybe they moved their business to where cash beneficiaries were; or had more clients/more demand; or prices went up because they didn't have adequate supply)
  - Number responding 'yes'=  
Explain/examples:
- 4) Do you think the CT money provided to households in the area has any effects on *markets*? If so, what effects?
  - Number responding 'yes'=  
Explain/examples:

- 5) Do you think the cash is provided to the people who need it most? Why or why not?
- Number responding 'yes'=  
Explain/examples of why or why not:
- 6) Have you seen any changes in your community because of the cash from this program? Describe.

**FOR SEED VOUCHER VENDORS ONLY: Port Loko (Skip if no vouchers in this area)**

When did you start working with [IP project name]?

Did you have to make any changes to your business in order to participate as a vendor? Describe.

All agree? Explain/examples:

Were you able to get the supply of quality seeds that you needed in order to meet your client needs? Why, or why not?

All agree? Explain/examples:

Do you think the seed voucher is provided to the people who need it most? Why or why not?

All agree? Explain/examples:

Have you had any problems with this program? Probe if needed.

All agree? Explain/examples:

Do you think providing seed vouchers is a good way to help people in this community? (Probe: What would you do differently?)

All agree? Explain/examples:

**Concluding thoughts: for all vendors**

We have come to the last part of the discussion. Before we end, we have a few short questions to ask you to help us be able to improve the program that supports this community.

- 7) Are there any other changes to your lives because of the cash in your community you want tell us about?
- Number that agree=  
Explain/Examples:
- 8) There is a sign in Freetown that says 'Happiness is positive cash flow'. Do you agree that happiness is cash flow? Why? (Probe: the cash relieves stress, gives hope, makes me feel able to do things I couldn't do before)
- Number that agree=  
Explain/Examples:
- 9) What do you think are the good points of this program for you as vendors and your community(ies)? (Probe: In your view, what helped this program succeed for the community)?
- Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 10) What are the negative points or gaps in this program? (Probe: vendors may be unhappy that the cash is ending because it has provided them with customers)
- Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

11) In your opinion, what could be done to improve this program? Is there anything you think should have been done differently with this cash transfer program?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

12) In your view, what can this community do to meet its own food needs?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

13) How can this community work together so that emergencies or disasters do not affect people as badly? (probe: emergencies like preparations for Ebola/epidemic, flooding/droughts, times of restricted movement, and what can they do to reduce the bad impacts next time)

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

## FGD: COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

### Moderator to read out loud:

#### Introduction:

“Hello. Let us introduce ourselves. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_.

We are here today to speak with people who are part of this community and who have been a part of the cash assistance that households received in this area. We would like to find out more about your views of the impacts for those who have been receiving cash assistance and for the communities, and would like to know if there is anything that can be done better by programs operating in this area.

Finally, we will end with a few questions to learn more about how the community (not just yourselves in this group) intends to move forward, in terms of any immediate or future plans to improve food security as well as what your needs are going forward, especially with respect to building resilience to tackle the future emergencies or food shortages.

Please know that your decision to participate is strictly voluntary – you will not be in trouble for deciding to leave the discussion.

All information discussed is confidential and people will not be individually identified in the reporting of findings.

Any questions?

Let us begin by going around the circle and introducing ourselves to one another.”

**Reminder to researcher: for each question indicate how many agree or disagree and include explanations or examples for those responses.**

#### Record for each interview:

**Total number of people: #, male/female**

**District/community name/implementing project area:**

**Rural/remote or peri-urban (off a main road)?**

**Date:**

## COMMUNITY CASH TRANSFER/COORDINATION COMMITTEE:

### Community Committee perspectives on markets and market changes in the area:

- 1) How far do people travel to market? How do people get there? (Probe re: any problems with reaching a market, e.g., distance, safety/security, roads/terrain, seasonal differences, need for transportation)

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

- 2) Have you noticed any changes in market prices since people started receiving cash through this program?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

- 3) Have you noticed any changes in what is available in the market since people started receiving cash through this program?

Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

### Community Committee perspectives on the program and the impacts:

- 4) What do you think have been the impacts, good or bad, of the cash transfers on the community? (Probe: impacts on markets other than stated in questions above, on economic activities, on conflict or tension, on groups starting or ending, on children in school or not)  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 5) We understand the Community Identification Committee was really important for targeting, would you target the same way if you had to do it over again? Why? Or differently? Why?  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 6) Do you think the quarterly payment of 390,000 Le was too high, too low, or just right? Why or why not?  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 7) Do you think the first payment happening in January 2016 had impacts on the well-beings of households, if so, what are those? If not, why not? (Note to researcher: most communities starting receiving cash in January 2016, but some may have received in July or Sept 2015)  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples of 'why or why not':

### Concluding thoughts:

We have come to the last part of the discussion. Before we end, we have a few short questions to ask you to help us be able to improve the program that supports this community.

- 8) Are there any other changes to *your* lives because of the cash you want tell us about? (Probe for hope for the community or most vulnerable, less stress, more confidence or leadership, and what that has looked like for them)  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 9) There is a sign in Freetown that says 'Happiness is positive cash flow'. Do you agree that happiness is cash flow? Why?  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 10) What do you think are the good points of this program for you as committee members and your community (ies)? (Probe: In your view, what helped this program succeed?)  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 11) What are the negative points or gaps in this program? (Probe: In your opinion, were there things that prevented this program from succeeding?)  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 12) In your opinion, what could be done to improve this program? Is there anything you think should have been done differently with this cash transfer program?  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
- 13) Now that the funds have stopped, what do you think people are going to do to pay for food?  
To pay the next school fees?  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:
  - a) What can this community do to meet its own food needs? Do all agree?  
Explain/Examples:
- 14) How can this community work together so that emergencies or disasters do not affect people as badly?  
Do all agree? Explain/Examples:

## KII: PARTNERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

**Topical Outline:** It should be noted this is a guide used for a semi-structured interview.

### Background/capacity to implement

- What is the history of organization in the country, such as your mix of donors and activities, to help us understand better the evolution of EFSP in response to Ebola? How ESFP may have changed your programming strategy?
- Learning as a new org to this activity: any trainings or ways you prepared yourselves? Any institutional technical support? How does your org develop capacity?
- Have you participated in CaLP trainings?
- Did you implement CT in new geographic areas or communities? What made this possible or not? Challenges? Would you have seen different outcomes if your org had been present before Ebola?
- How has inclusion of CTP with EFSP introduced any administrative barriers/challenges within the org? (i.e., finance or logistics procedures) How were they overcome?

### Response analysis/modality choices

- We understand you are using (fill in the blank) modalities in this context. What were the key factors that led you to decide to use this mix of modalities? Did the mix change between the original application and now? In what ways?
- For Ebola, do you know why UCT was decided?
- Did you conduct response analysis or other assessments to guide your design?
- How appropriate was the targeting?
- What important lessons have you learned about when to choose different modalities (e.g., Title II commodities, cash transfers, food vouchers, and LRP)? Or conditional versus unconditional assistance?
- Have beneficiaries in discussions ever compared in-kind food experiences with cash? Have you asked about their preferences?

### FFP/coordination

- Harmonization efforts with other partners, other donors doing CT, WFP/UN?
- How was the functioning of the cash transfer working group? How did coordination effect implementation?
- What was the involvement/support provided by FFP?
- What was the involvement/support provided by government (e.g., district officials, NACSA or anti-corruption commission), was this effective/helpful?

### Efficiency

- What is your opinion on the time consuming nature of this APS process and how it can be streamlined?
- Reasons for other delays (impact of delays on well-being/coping strategies of beneficiaries)?
- How CT may be different than Title II programming in terms of timeliness and efficiency for start-up and distributions?
- How would you compare the cost-effectiveness of cash versus commodities?

- Implementation challenges with EFSP?
- Reasons for changes to the project, like switching to 3-month tranches?
- Related to waste/fraud/abuse, compare cash vs. commodity? Did you face any issues of waste/ fraud with the CT, and if so, how was this addressed?

#### **Market changes/ private sector readiness**

- How were the labor or food prices during that time period without much cash circulating? And how did that fluctuate over time delivering CT?
- What kind of market or price monitoring did you undertake?
- Do you have thresholds for deciding if cash is adverse to market prices? How are thresholds decided? Ever taken action if thresholds exceeded?
- Overall, rate experience with private institutions engaged with the distributions?
- Market interested in expanding to be that provider? Stimulated/or not because of CTs?

#### **Gender/ protection**

- How were household gender dynamics affected because of predominantly giving cash to women?
- Did you monitor intra-household tensions or conflict caused by CT?
- Are there any protection risks specific to CT?
- How did you monitor and gather complaints/feedback? What were the complaints?

#### **Effectiveness/ food security**

- What food security indicators did you measure? What were the results?
- What percentage of the cash do you think was actually spent on food by the beneficiaries? What were the other main uses, and did the usage change over time/or in different seasons?

#### **Developmental impacts**

- Were any of your projects/project areas particularly impressive in terms of their results? At both household and community levels?
- In your opinion, why did these projects produced impressive results?
- Do you think any of your projects had disappointing results? Which projects, which aspects and why?
- To what extent has MBEP affected developmental impacts of your programs? (e.g., food security, savings groups, social capital, market functioning, linking to community banks)
- What were the main contributors to these impacts? What conditions were in place to enable this success?
- What recommendations do you have for future projects of this type? What complimentary activities would further bolster the results? (e.g., financial literacy trainings)
- What further research is needed?

## IDI: LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Selection:** The interview team should develop a detailed profile of 1-2 individual beneficiaries at each site. The profile, or in-depth interviews (IDI), will give the recent history of the beneficiary and describe the impact of market-based assistance on their lives.

If a person has received both food and cash assistance, ask the person to compare the two types of assistance and the impact on their lives.

The different profiles should be selected for diversity in household status, access to infrastructure and services, ecological conditions, and engagement with formal and informal markets and financial institutions.<sup>15</sup>

**Outputs:** The outputs of the life history interview will be (1) a narrative of the respondent's life and (2) a life history map/infographic (see end of document for an example).

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### Introduction, focus, and consent<sup>16</sup>

- When you arrive at the household, introduce yourself and the research.
  - Purpose of the research (learning about cash, food, voucher emergency assistance)
  - Explain our focus in as much depth as you need to – you want to understand changes in assets and well-being during their lives and why positive and negative changes happened. Explain to them that you will ask questions about five time periods in their lives: what has enabled them to improve their lives; if they have fallen back, why they have done this; if they were able to manage in the face of shocks, how were they able to do this.
- Obtain informed consent, i.e., ensure that the respondent agrees to take part in the interview
  - The interview will be anonymous: it will not include their name. Participants may choose to not answer a question. The interview team will respect the participant's request, move forward, and not repeat the question. Participants may end the interview at any time. (Please see consent form)
- You will take notes that you will share only with other members of the research team.
- You will write short stories from the interview, which will not contain their name.
- Information from this interview will be shared with the US Government for future policy development. This interview will not affect current food/cash assistance participants are receiving. We will change names to protect sensitive information.
- Ask permission to take a photograph. The photo (without their name) might be used in a report that will be publicly available.

### Getting started

- Write down interviewee's name, age, and gender and the interviewer's name
- Note individual's appearance and demeanor (happy, sad, anxious, etc.)
- Describe house and compound

[Note to researcher: This is a good time to locate the respondent on Y-axis of the life history diagram, attached.]

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<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Scott, L. and V. Diwakar. 2016. Ensuring Escapes From Poverty Are Sustained In Rural Bangladesh. USAID Report prepared by ODI for ACDI/VOCA with funding from USAID/E3's Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO) project. Washington, DC. July. Accessed from: <https://dl.orangedox.com/Transitory-escapes-Bangladesh-2016-n>

<sup>16</sup> Consent forms were completed for each interview.

**Life history diagram:** The interviewer should explain the diagram, the time periods (see below), and the scale of positive and negative events. During the interview, draw the life history diagram with the interviewee, and ask the interviewee to indicate on the diagram the how good or bad events were and how events compare to others in terms of scale.

- Life periods are:
  - Childhood: 0–12 years
  - Youth: 13 years to marriage, start of own household, OR 20 years (whichever is relevant)
  - Young adulthood: Marriage, start of own household, OR 20–40 years
  - Late adulthood: 40 years – 60 years
  - Older age: 60 years +
  
- Ensure you identify well-being levels at these points:
  - Childhood
  - Just before start of own household/marriage
  - Just after start of own household/marriage
  - Now

\*Focus on the impact of market based assistance on their lives.

\*Need to establish benchmarks for high and low events.

### Childhood

– Approximately 0–12 years old

- When and where were you born?
- How would you rate your well-being during your childhood?
- What factors contributed to that level of well-being?
  - Probe: education, parents' livelihoods and assets, food security, siblings, shocks/stresses, access to services, general health...

### Youth

– Approximately 13 years to marriage (or 20 years old, whichever is more appropriate)

- How would you rate your well-being during your youth (age 13 to marriage/age 20)?
- What factors contributed to that level of well-being?
  - Probe: education, parents' livelihoods and assets, food security, siblings, shocks/stresses, access to services, general health...

Probing questions could include:

- When did you leave **school**?
  - Probe: if, when, and why respondent left school?
- Livelihoods: What livelihood activities did you engage in?
  - First job/enterprise/livelihood activity: What was it? Rank livelihood activities at this period of your life in terms of their importance to household income and food security (e.g., farming, livestock rearing, job, small enterprise, etc.)?
  - If you migrated away from the village, did you have a job before you went? How did you find this job? How did you send money back to your family?
  - If you started a non-farm enterprise, why did you decide to start this? If so, who and how did this work?
  - Describe **working conditions**/constraints/profitability/shocks/risks/coping strategies associated with the different livelihoods activities.
- Any **credit**/loans taken out? For what? Largest amount? Ever taken loans to repay loans?

- Any participation or engagement in **social safety nets**? How important is this for your household? When/ in what event has it been especially important?
- Looking back at your life, are there any **positive or difficult events** that stand out? (Use this to probe for opportunities, investments, and resilience.)
- **Assets** during youth and before marriage/starting own household: What assets did you have before starting your own household? How does this compare with assets during childhood? Account for changes in asset holdings – probe reasons for sales and main source of finance for purchases or main reasons for acquisitions and from whom.
- Key **relationships**: landlords, friends, employers, richer households, social networks, kinship networks, employment relations, cooperatives, and banks

## Now

- How would you rate your well-being now?
- What factors contributed to that level of well-being?
- What type(s) of food assistance (cash, and seed vouchers) have you received and how did it affect your life?
  - What would you do if you didn't receive cash/seed vouchers through this program?
  - How does the cash provided affect your life? Do you think providing cash is a good way to help people in this community? Is there anything you would change about the assistance system?
  - Preferences for a certain type of assistance - vouchers versus cash or food aid.

## Probing questions

- Marriage:
  - Are you married?
  - How did you meet your husband/wife?
  - Parent's/family's views of the match?
  - Was there a dowry? How much? Was all of it able to be paid? What was the source of the dowry and where did it go?
  - If moved to spouse's village – feelings about that/problems; setting up home; relationship with in-laws/ extended family/community; relationship with spouse
- Livelihoods:
  - Assets at marriage – livestock, agricultural implements, land, etc.
  - What livelihood activities do you engage in? Which are the most important assets for each particular activity?
  - For each livelihood activity given:
    - Describe the working conditions
    - Constraints
    - Profitability
    - Shocks
    - Risks and coping strategies associated with each livelihood activity.
  - If involved in crop agriculture, why are you farming? Which crops are you farming? Who owns the land on which you farm? If sharecropping/leasing, what are the arrangements of this? Is it easy to find land to sharecrop/lease here?
  - If have livestock, what type? Who owns the livestock? Which is the main contributor to your livelihood, crops or livestock?
  - Have price changes of agriculture goods or livestock (either inputs such as seeds or the sales price of crops) affected you? How?
  - What did you do to improve your livelihoods during these years?
  - Did you ever migrate? How did you get the good/better job if you did?
  - Social networks that helped you get jobs/work/improve your livelihood?
  - Any credit/loans taken out? For what? Largest amount? Ever taken loans to repay loans?

- Children:
  - Make sure dates of births have been identified
  - Any difficulty with births?
  - How have you financed the education of your children?
  - Remittances from older children/kin
- Health:
  - Health of interviewee and family?
  - Impact on household well-being?
  - Were there any periods of sickness? If so, who was sick, and where did you go for treatment? How much did it cost, and how did you find that money?
- Relationships
  - Ask about the relationships that have been important for building their livelihoods and for coping with shocks.
  - Key relationships: landlords, friends, employers, richer households, social networks, community leaders, kinship networks, employment relations, cooperatives, banks
- Any participation or engagement in social safety nets? How important is this for your household? When/in what event has it been especially important?

Looking back over your life, are there any positive or difficult events or periods that stand out? (Use this question to probe for shocks, coping strategies, channels of support [relatives, friends, NGOs, churches, moneylenders, etc.], changes in asset levels, and changes in livelihood strategies, resilience.)