

Evidence Summary on COVID-19 and Food Security

Patrick Breard, international consultant, Breard & Associates



Background and objectives

Food insecurity worsened with the pandemic

- Almost 690 million people are estimated to have been undernourished in 2019
- COVID-19 added 130+ million to numbers of chronically undernourished in 2020

There is evidence on what works to support food security in times of crises

- The UN developed a framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19
- Evidence summary jointly produced by FAO, IFAD, UNIDO and WFP makes evaluative evidence easier to access and use



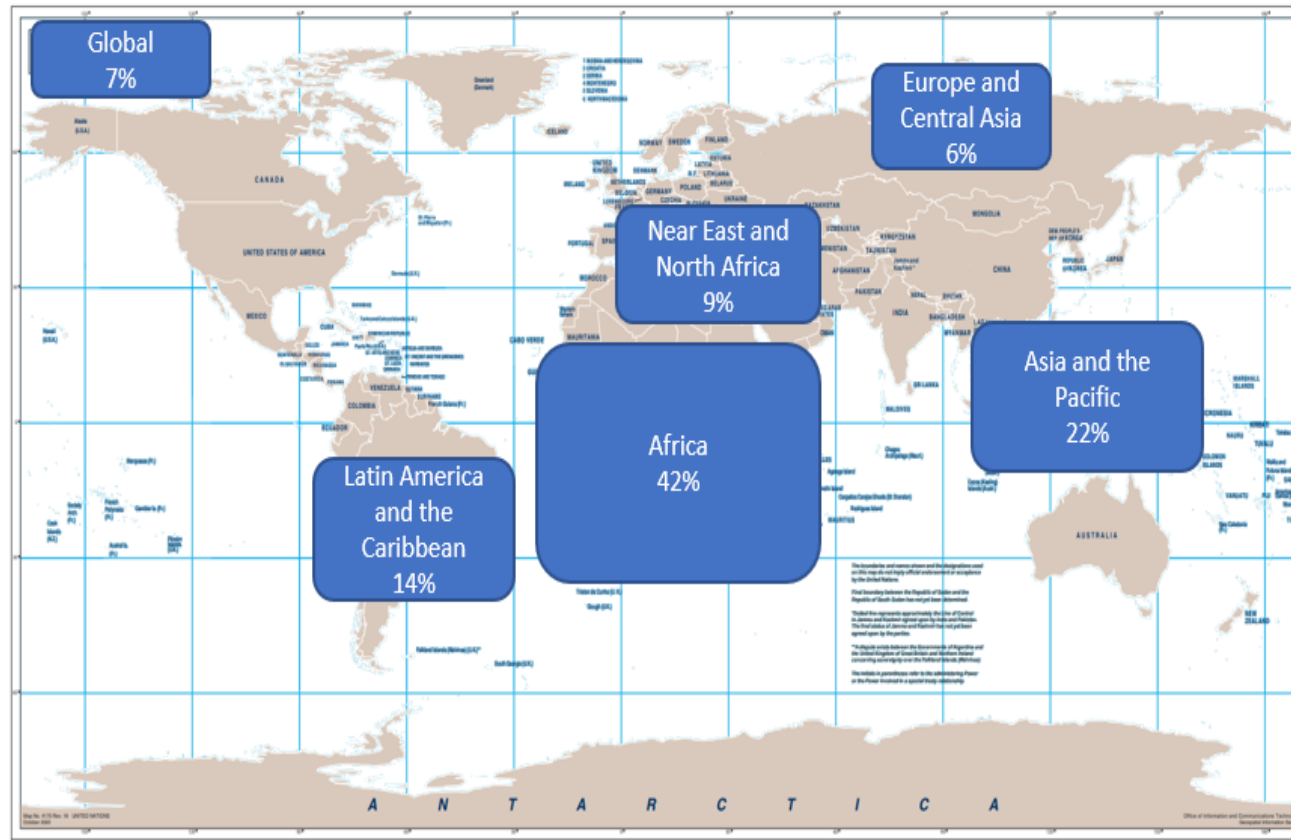
Overarching questions for the summary

- a. What interventions were effective (or less effective) in supporting **social protection and basic services** to preserve food security during crises?
- b. What interventions were effective (or less effective) in supporting **economic response and recovery** of food insecure populations in times of crises?
- c. What interventions have better supported **social cohesion** and helped vulnerable population groups become more resilient to food insecurity?



65 evaluation reports were selected (out of 252)

UN Agencies, International Financing Institutions and bilateral donors + interviews with key stakeholders in participating agencies in the UN system (FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNIDO, ILO, IOM)





Social protection and basic services



Social protection and basic services are more effective when provided in an integrated manner:

- i. **Cash transfers** are the preferred modality but can be challenging to implement and monitor.
- ii. **Food assistance** implies significant logistical efforts but can be implemented respecting social distancing.
- iii. **School feeding programmes** can be an important support to the youth although it does not always targets the most vulnerable.
- iv. **Input distribution** requires timely implementation, and be complemented with capacity development and financial services.



Economic response and recovery

Must account for multi-faceted contextual factors:

- i. **Cross-sectoral diagnoses** for different types of target beneficiaries are key for designing relevant interventions.
- ii. **Remote data collection** tools can cope with situations where staff movement is restricted or that require social distancing, but need to mitigate the risk to exclude vulnerable target groups.



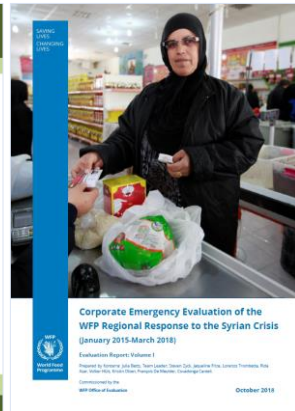
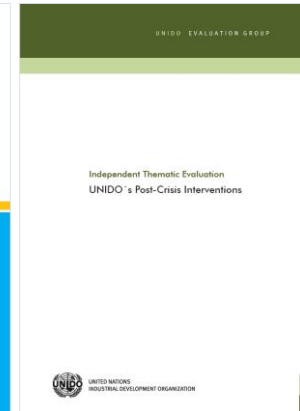
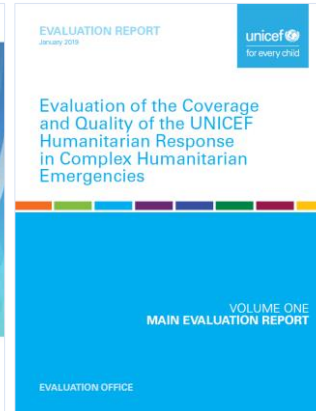
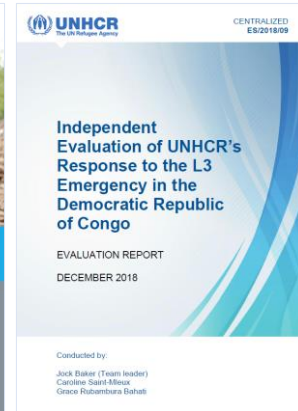
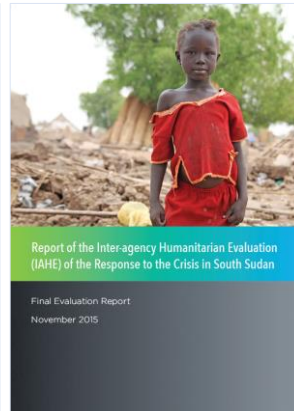
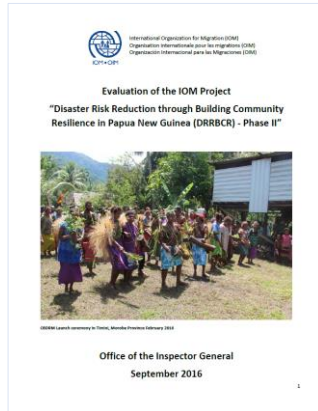
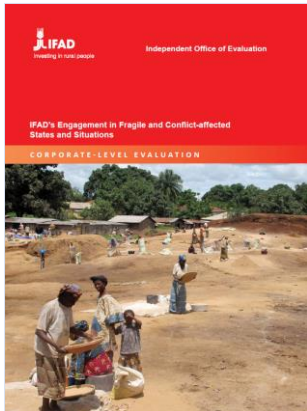
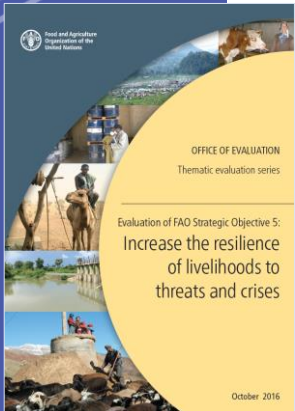
Economic response and recovery

Economic recovery interventions benefit from clear scaling-up strategies

- i. **Food supply chains can** promote economic recovery when involving the private sector and addressing marketing, rural finance, behavioural change, and infrastructure.
- ii. Legislative and regulatory frameworks are more effectively improved when **policy-oriented interventions** are embedded in existing policymaking processes and leverage (resource) partnerships.
- iii. Programmes that support **rural employment and entrepreneurship** are effective for certain groups of poor and vulnerable populations such as the youth, but require a long-term multisectoral commitment and effort to produce lasting change.

Social cohesion and resilience

- Development interventions can contribute to social cohesion and more resilient communities by:
- - I. Including **social dialogue** and conflict resolution mechanisms.
 - II. **Avoiding limited scope** and focus on small target groups.
 - III. Including **civil society organizations** in the design and implementation of interventions.





Conclusions

Social protection interventions:

Are more effective when designed as a bundle of complementary modalities tailored to the local context and specific needs of target beneficiaries and involve adequate partnerships



Conclusions

Economic response and recovery programmes:

Are more effective when designed and implemented taking into account systemic dimensions (e.g. economic, financial, infrastructural, political, environmental, social) and including clear scaling-up strategies with involvement of partners, private sector and political actors



Conclusions

Social cohesion interventions:

Are more effective when broadening scope to include not only core target beneficiaries but also the most vulnerable