



evaluation of the unrwa emergency appeals for the occupied palestinian territory and syria regional crisis 2016-21

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About UNRWA

UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 with a mandate to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to registered Palestine refugees in the Agency's area of operations, namely the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. Thousands of Palestine refugees who lost both their homes and livelihoods because of the 1948 conflict have remained displaced and in need of significant support for over seventy years. UNRWA helps them achieve their full potential in human development through the quality services it provides in education, health care, relief and social services, protection, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.

Cover Photo: Internally displaced persons sought refuge in UNRWA Salah Eldein School © 2021 UNRWA Photo by Mohammed Hinnawi

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AdCom	UNRWA's Advisory Commission
AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
AOR	Annual Operational Reports
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CBRC	Community-based Rehabilitation Centres
CO	Country Office
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DIOS	Department of Internal Oversight Services
DoP	Department of Planning
EA	Emergency Appeal
EAG	Executive Advisory Group
ERD	External Relations Department
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ERW	Explosive Remnant of War
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis
FCDO	The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FO	Field Office
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HOP	Humanitarian Operation Plans
HQ	Headquarters
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Peoples
IMTD	Information Management and Technology Department
ISF	Israeli Security Forces
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MSNA	Multi Sector Needs Assessment
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PB	Programme Budget
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PMTF	Proxy Means Test Formula
PRJ	Palestine Refugees in Jordan
PRL	Palestine Refugees in Lebanon
PRS	Palestine Refugees from Syria
PSS	Psychosocial Support
RBM	Results Based Management

RMS	Resource Mobilisation Strategy
RRIS	Refugees Registration Information System
RSS	Relief and Social Services
RSSD	Relief and Social Services Department
SFW	Summer Fun Weeks
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMT	Senior Management Team
SP	Strategic Priority
SRC	Syrian Regional Crisis
SSN	Social Safety Net
SSNP	Social Safety Net Programme
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN-SWAP	UN System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	West Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Executive Summary

The Emergency Appeals (EAs) are the funding mechanism that supports emergency humanitarian interventions targeting Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) in Lebanon and Jordan, and Palestine refugees who remain in Syria. These interventions are not covered or are only partially covered by the Agency's Programme Budget (PB) or by projects' budgets.

The evaluation acknowledges the uniquely challenging environment that UNRWA operates in and its increasing caseload and needs over time. In oPt, the humanitarian crisis persists as a result of Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and recurring escalations of violence in Gaza, already crippled by 15 years of blockade and degrading infrastructure. Regarding the Syria refugee crisis and the emergency inside Syria, conditions have continued to erode in Syria and in neighboring Lebanon and Jordan where PRS are hosted.

Beyond the political situation, the Agency's operations are also affected by developments globally that include the increase in global food; commodities and energy prices; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health outcomes, access to education, and livelihoods and employment; progress on gender equality and disability issues; and more specific country-based economic crises and increases in poverty rates, for example in Gaza, Syria and Lebanon.

UNRWA has also faced a decade of chronic under-funding and rising operational and supply costs; the volatile nature of voluntary contributions from bilateral donors to its PB and recurrent cashflow crises; funding reductions from Gulf donors; and the shortfall caused by the 2018 United States funding withdrawal, which has been reinstated in 2021 (albeit not to pre-2018 levels).

It is against this political and socio-economic backdrop that EAs are deployed. EAs have been issued for the oPt since the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, and since 2013 for the Syria Refugee Crisis. Between 2016 and 2021 the Agency spent USD 1.7 billion responding to emergencies in both oPt field offices in the West Bank and Gaza, and for the Syria Regional Crisis Field Offices in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

This report presents the findings of the Evaluation of the UNRWA Emergency Appeals for the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis (SRC). The evaluation, which was conducted between March 2022 and February 2023, has assessed the ways in which the EAs are designed, planned and used. The scope of the evaluation is the EAs for both the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis with a specific focus on interventions that have received the highest amount of funding. The timeframe of focus is the 2016-2021 period, with a view to inform priorities for 2024 onwards, recognizing that priorities for 2023 have already been developed.

The evaluation served a dual purpose of accountability and learning by assessing the functioning, use and contribution of EA funding to fulfill the needs of Palestine refugees through the following specific objectives:

- To assess how EA funded interventions have contributed to its specific outcomes;
- To identify good practices, challenges and lessons learned to assist UNRWA in improving its response to ongoing emergencies; and
- To inform future emergency programming including the approach underlying the development of the EAs and, where appropriate, harmonize the Agency's emergency work.

The geographical scope includes interventions for Palestinian refugees living in the oPt (West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip), PRS in Lebanon and Jordan as well as Palestine refugees still residing in Syria, Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and Jordan (PRJ), and ex-Gazans living in Jordan.

The audience of this evaluation includes the Evaluation Division of UNRWA's Department of Internal Oversight Services (DIOS), Department of Planning, External Relations and Communications, the Advisory Commission, Operational Departments, Field Office (FO) teams, Programme Departments as well as donors, programme partners and beneficiaries.

Methodology

The evaluation was designed in line with a theory-based approach. The evaluation team reconstructed a unified Theory of Change (ToC) for both EAs, identifying the key contextual issues, the overall functioning and programmatic scope of the EA mechanism, its strategic priorities, alignment with Humanitarian Response Plans and the Grand Bargain, as well as with identified needs of Palestine refugees. The ToC structure includes a Strategic Outcomes statement and articulates the three long-term Strategic Priorities, mid-term EA outcomes and specific outputs.

The evaluation process was grounded in the Evaluation Matrix, which mapped the evaluation questions against data sources. The evaluation criteria employed in the evaluation included Relevance; Coherence; Coverage, Inclusion and Equity; Effectiveness; Efficiency and Sustainability. Gender and human rights considerations were mainstreamed into the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach to collect primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection tools were derived from the Evaluation Matrix. Data collection methods included document review, financial analysis, key informant interviews (KIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and a household survey.

Data collection was conducted in Arabic and English both remotely and in person in Gaza, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. We conducted KIs with 107 stakeholders including UNRWA staff at HQ and Field Office level, donors, partner organizations and refugee representatives; FGDs with 69 UNRWA frontline staff and 114 beneficiaries; and 1,725 beneficiaries also participated in the household survey.

Overview of Findings

EA interventions fall into two Emergency Strategic Focus Areas as per UNRWA's Medium Term Strategy 2016-22:¹

- Response to Acute and Immediate Humanitarian Needs with interventions including cash assistance, cash-for-work, food assistance, non-food items, shelter and protection.
- Resilience and Safety Nets that includes emergency health, emergency education, emergency environmental infrastructure and health, livelihoods, psychosocial support, child and youth activities and camp infrastructure.

Relevance

The services supported by UNRWA's EA funding mechanism fully align with the Agency's 2016-2021 Medium Term Strategy (MTS), which was extended until 2022. The interventions supported through the EAs have contributed to all the strategic outcome areas identified in the MTS. These interventions clearly respond to the emergency needs of affected Palestine refugees and are highly valued by them. Nonetheless, funding constraints have led to UNRWA reducing or scaling back services in some areas and in some years, despite often sustained or increasing need.

UNRWA is widely considered to be an extremely important player in regional coordination processes, given its unique expertise, volume of caseload, infrastructure, and reach. The Agency participates in regional and country-level response planning and coordination mechanisms such as the Humanitarian

¹ UNRWA (2016) Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021, p81.

Response Plan (HRP) for the oPt, the HRP for Syria, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in Lebanon and Jordan, and OCHA's cluster working groups at country level. Nonetheless, the evaluation finds that even though UNRWA participates in these platforms, external stakeholders consider that engagement with other humanitarian agencies could be improved in relation to designing the EAs and sharing UNRWA's practices more generally.

UNRWA has frameworks in place for ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into EA design and programming. A review of EAs for the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis between 2016 and 2022 highlights a relatively widespread integration of gender considerations. UNRWA also has frameworks in place to ensure that disability considerations are integrated into programming, and there are signs that improved data is contributing to better integration into EA designs. There is no overarching framework for ensuring the integration of age considerations into EA design, although there is a specific focus on the needs of children in education and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) interventions, and livelihood interventions include targeting of youth.

Coherence

The process of EA design is led by UNRWA's Department of Planning at HQ and it is based on structured collaboration and coordination, including information sharing between relevant HQ units, between HQ and FOs, and within FOs (across departments and at various levels including frontline). This process has contributed to ensuring coherence across EA interventions, as well as complementarity between these and PB interventions. The extent to which coordination and synergies are cemented, however, can vary between FOs and sectors, although it has been particularly effective in situations of crisis or external shocks. Examples of strong coordination and synergies were found in relation to referrals under Relief and Social Services (RSS), as well as preparedness and response in collective shelters and hard to reach areas (e.g., Syria and Gaza).

EA interventions complement the PB, especially in covering needs not addressed through the PB more broadly such as humanitarian interventions and specific, time-bound projects that improve services without increasing recurrent costs. Nonetheless, differentiation between what is core and what is emergency is sometimes difficult to define. The funding shortfall that UNRWA faced in 2018, for instance, rendered the continuity of essential services at risk. Post-2018, both the PB and the EAs were affected; UNRWA moved certain lines of programming from the PB to the EA, and several interventions were discontinued from the oPt EA. Sustainable and multi-year funding remains a challenge, with many donors still pledging their contributions on an annual basis.

UNRWA's alignment with Grand Bargain commitments is evident in documentation and reporting. UNRWA publishes financial information on a quarterly basis consistent with commitments to greater financial transparency. The Agency additionally prioritizes cash-based programming as it allows for rapid delivery of assistance, and in relation to management costs continues to roll out and use health and electronic management information systems. Even though UNRWA has made efforts to ensure beneficiaries have access to timely, accurate and relevant information on the availability of its services, including during COVID-19, the evaluation found that there was limited consultation with rights-holders on the design of services and dissatisfaction with the quality of feedback mechanisms available to them.

Coverage, Inclusion and Equity

UNRWA uses a multiplicity of vulnerability assessments to identify the socio-economic and protection needs of refugees, including the Proxy Means Testing Formula in the West Bank and crisis monitoring surveys, socio-economic surveys, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDMs), Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) assessments, protection needs reviews, focus group discussions, communication with refugee camp leaders and representatives, and home visits (paused during the COVID-19 pandemic), to further ensure tailored assistance in all FOs. These have allowed the Agency to develop a combination of universal, near universal and targeted assistance based on vulnerability categories, each tailored to the needs of refugee populations in each FO. AGD criteria are included in vulnerability assessments, with specific interventions

addressing the specific needs of women and children as well as disability issues. Gender is still defined along the lines of heteronormative and binary definitions (yet mirroring the situation in the community), whereas disability inclusion would benefit from strengthening mainstreaming the Washington Group criteria on disability statistics for assessing physical, mental and sensory impairment in programming.

Despite this multiplicity of assessments, and given UNRWA's caseload, assessing needs remains a complex process which requires significant financial and staff investments and better communication from HQ on the reasons for introducing changes to the existing criteria. Though vulnerability assessments enable more targeted assistance, they are not used universally because the type of investment is unavailable to a highly resource-constrained Agency. This situation is compounded by the fact that vulnerability is not evenly distributed, it is very widespread, and can fluctuate suddenly and drastically. Eligibility categorizations could therefore exclude individuals with acute needs and no recourse to alternative sources of assistance. This would engender tensions among the community (and at times with host governments) that UNRWA already needs to regularly mitigate and manage.

Despite the above constraints, an overall revision is needed to the ways in which UNRWA identifies vulnerability, to ensure that eligibility criteria mirror refugees' realities and any changes to their situation over time are captured. This process would also benefit from better inclusion of refugee voices and participation in the ways the assistance is designed and implemented. Feedback mechanisms have allowed for refugees' input into the design and implementation of EA-supported interventions in some cases, strengthening coverage (and relevance) though there is an acknowledged need for improvement in this area.

Effectiveness

The areas of intervention covered by the EAs include mainly cash and food assistance, Education in Emergencies, Emergency Health, Protection and Neutrality, and Environmental Health, as well as non-food items and minor shelter repairs. The specific interventions covered by UNRWA's EAs have varied slightly over time in response to changes in context and the availability of resources. However, cash assistance, food assistance, health, education and protection interventions have consistently featured in the EAs in the period 2016-2021.

Emergency food assistance has been a major component of the oPt EA for Gaza and the Syria regional crisis EA in Syria. In both contexts, UNRWA moved from targeted to blanket coverage for food assistance in 2021 as a response to beneficiaries' increased vulnerability as a result of socio-economic conditions. Targeted in-kind food assistance was also provided to Bedouin and herder communities in the West Bank including East Jerusalem under the oPt EA in partnership with WFP.

In 2019 and 2020, UNRWA met all its results targets relating to food assistance in the West Bank including East Jerusalem. In Gaza, there has been a steady and sustained improvement in the proportion of annual results targets met relating to food assistance. However, new registrations have been halted since 2020 and there are 60,000 beneficiaries in need who have not been eligible so far, and there are plans to gradually include them in 2023. In Syria, on the other hand, targets were exceeded in 2019 and 2020, when targeting was in place, and in 2021 when blanket coverage was introduced.

Cash assistance was also a major component of EA-supported interventions in most areas of operation. This included both regular cash assistance as well as one-off emergency cash grants to vulnerable households or individuals during COVID-19. A considerable proportion of annual results targets went unmet in the area of cash assistance, and the evaluation finds that due to a combination of funding constraints and targeting prioritization, the amounts provided are low (e.g., in Syria they are below what is recommended by the Cash Working Group), and their frequency can vary.

Food and cash interventions were highlighted as crucial by UNRWA staff and beneficiaries. Food assistance was considered as lifesaving in both Syria and Gaza; in the latter, it was noted to be vital. Similarly, cash was identified as one of the most effective EA interventions, with beneficiaries noting that

without cash assistance they would have limited or no other sources of income, and that cash assistance was used to address basic needs such as food, rent, transportation and electricity.

Other areas of intervention covered by the EAs included Emergency Health and MHPSS, Education in Emergencies, and Protection (which include, for instance, GBV, child protection and legal assistance services). In the areas of Emergency Health and MHPSS, no FOs met its targets in any year. Under Education in Emergencies, a higher proportion of annual results targets were met compared to other strategic areas, with interventions covering the provision of educational materials to students, and individual and group PSS counseling services to students and teachers. In terms of Protection, supported interventions have included UNRWA staff training on protection, protection mainstreaming and provision of legal assistance to rights-holders. The proportion of annual targets achieved in this area was high in comparison to many other strategic areas.

Efficiency

For this evaluation, we used a specific definition of 'efficiency' in line with the current OECD/DAC criterion, but with a focus on operational efficiency (how well the intervention was managed) and timeliness (whether delivery is achieved in the intended timeframe).

Following funding shortfalls in 2018, UNRWA adjusted its requirement figures by half, forcing the introduction of harsh cost-saving measures. In the period under review, UNRWA regularly ran EAs activities at 40-45% of the budget required. Between 2016 and 2021, UNRWA received a total of USD 1.7 billion for both appeals, although EA requirements for the same period were USD 3.8 billion. Looking by EA, the proportion of funding received against funding required illustrates that both EAs faced difficulties in hitting the required amounts, around USD 400 million for each EA, with the oPt struggling more. Examining funding requirements and funding received through the lens of the three strategic priorities, Strategic Priority 1 (SP1): *Emergency food and cash assistance and humanitarian assistance for basic needs* and Strategic Priority 2 (SP2): *Refugee rights and protection, health, education, livelihoods, WASH/environmental health* received consistently a much higher proportion of funding allocation, whereas Strategic Priority 3 (SP3): *Coordination, management, safety, security and maintenance of installations* has been progressively defunded.

Visualizing these trends by EA displays a similar overall pattern. UNRWA has prioritized funding lifesaving SP1 activities as well as critical education, health and protection services under SP2, with adaptations based on needs identified in each FO, and in the context of severe funding cuts. Adjustments took place in all FOs where UNRWA had to alter its programmatic choices and intervene on personnel between 2016 and 2021.

Operational efficiency and timeliness have also been influenced by a particularly disabling economic landscape characterized by fluid evolving political and security dynamics, market and currency fluctuations, internal economic crises (for example in Gaza and Lebanon), increasing food and supply chain prices, and the specificities pertaining to certain donor requirements.

However, when funding is available, UNRWA demonstrates the ability to deploy the right skills, capacity and expertise and showed efficiency and effectiveness in its interventions, given its infrastructure, staff and reach within communities to respond swiftly. A notable example was during the COVID-19 crisis in the areas of Education in Emergencies and Emergency Health.

Sustainability

The evaluation finds that EA interventions have limited sustainability. Whilst, in principle, emergency interventions are not intended to be sustainable, there is also recognition that sustainability considerations are relevant to the EAs given the protracted crises contexts that UNRWA operates in in both the oPt and the Syria regional crisis.

Two noted challenges to the sustainability of EA interventions are predictability of funding and perceived lack of donor commitment to multi-year funding, particularly in view of UNRWA's mandate

vis-à-vis Palestine refugees. UNRWA remains the sole Agency that caters to Palestine refugees at this magnitude and scope, and it is unlikely that the Agency's caseload would be taken over by other stakeholders, be they governments or other agencies.

The current modality of annual EAs brings forth several advantages and disadvantages. In terms of advantages, the evaluation finds that the highly specific and evolving nature of contexts requires regularly revisiting budgets and interventions, which is possible under the current yearly modality. As for disadvantages, the annual approach leads to inability to ensure staff retention (particularly for positions that are perceived to be part of the core staff), and an overall inability to plan beyond the EA funded timeline, including on interventions that may fall under the EAs but require a longer timeframe to be implemented.

A multi-year approach is likely to yield more advantages than disadvantages according to evaluation participants, and some donors do provide multi-year funding. Long-term, multi-year funding, accompanied by annual budget reviews, a trend that is taking place across all UN agencies, would permit for longer-term thinking and grant the potential for improved quality of programming and consistency of services.

Recommendations

The recommendations stemming from this evaluation are provided in full recognition of the particularities of UNRWA's mandate and the status of Palestine refugee beneficiaries whom UNRWA assists and provides services to in its fields of operation. At the Agency level, UNRWA has had to adapt to severe funding deficits and contend with historical funding shortfalls in its core Programme Budget, and decisions have had to be made on what interventions to prioritize.

The recommendations outlined below identify areas where UNRWA's practice for planning, managing, and delivering on its EAs can be strengthened further. In addition to the internal decisions and resources that will be required to effectively action these recommendations, a continued and strengthened dialogue between UNRWA and donors (as well as host governments), including with regards to the implications of UNRWA's funding situation, will be crucial to supporting this process.

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Department	Timeline
1	Develop and implement a plan to refine vulnerability criteria and categories through systematic and regular revision of demographic and socio-economic indicators of populations of concern in UNRWA's case management system, accounting for the type of assistance required (cash, food, education, health, protection, etc.), the type of poverty levels across FOs and introducing measures for identifying intersecting vulnerabilities (see below), to allow systematic identification of changing vulnerabilities and emerging issues/ situations.	RSSD, in collaboration with fields and the Department of Planning	Within 18 months for the EAs 2025 planning cycle
2	Pilot the introduction of a suite of qualitative data collection methods to accompany vulnerability assessments to support the Agency in assessing the evolving, multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities among the populations of concern, and, more importantly, to demonstrate the impact of the services on people's resilience and daily lives. This will require an investment in staffing and funding that will require dedicated donor support.	RSSD in collaboration with the Department of Planning	Within 18 months for the EAs 2025 planning cycle
3	Develop and implement a plan to strengthen the Age, Gender, Diversity processes and criteria by reflecting intersectionality dimensions in vulnerability assessments: - Build on staff's extensive knowledge of the communities	RSSD in collaboration with the Department of	Within 18 months for the EAs 2025

	they work with to introduce concepts of intersectionality, what it means in practice and how it would strengthen ongoing work to identify the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded refugees; - Consider consistently introducing age dimensions across UNRWA's interventions; - Continue to refine the Agency's gender approach, wherever possible going beyond binary considerations, or at a minimum ensuring that interventions include channels for active participation of all voices and including women and girls; - Continue to refine the introduction of Washington Group criteria to nuance disability identification.	Planning and the Protection Division	planning cycle
4	Incorporate processes for using feedback from beneficiaries of EA interventions and frontline staff (e.g., adapting existing tools and/or designing a unified tool) to systematically feed into EA planning, design and implementation, and ensuring that the voices of all refugees are included by introducing gender- and age-sensitive processes to EAs design, monitoring and evaluation.	The Executive Office in collaboration with the fields and DIOS	Within 12 months, and yearly thereafter
5	Streamline all feedback and community complaint mechanisms in each FO and assign dedicated resources to address and respond to feedback and complaints received at frequent intervals, with clear communication on response times conveyed to beneficiaries.	All fields of operation	Within 12 months
6	Ensure the process underway to integrate the Agency's registration and programme management information systems unifies databases so case management and registration data are harmonized and held both comprehensively at both FO level (for field-level beneficiary data) and HQ level (for Agency-wide beneficiary data) to strengthen the design and delivery of tailored EA interventions.	RSSD , in collaboration with the Programme Departments and IMTD	Within 24 months
7	Each EA planning cycle should systematically draw on the refined vulnerability assessments to ensure the intervention areas covered by the EAs are focused on the most pressing humanitarian needs.	Department of Planning and all fields	EA 2025 planning cycle
8	Develop and implement a plan to strengthen UNRWA's EA donor engagement approach, including FOs more actively in communication and discussions about the importance of the EAs for refugee populations.	External Relations and Communication Department	Immediate and ongoing
9	Further strengthen participation in interagency humanitarian coordination channels to ensure that UNRWA's work is communicated so that others can capitalize on the Agency's presence and reach in refugee communities and vice versa.	All fields of operation	Within 6 months, and ongoing
10	Complete a review of how other agencies combine multi-year and yearly planning processes in their budgeting and planning system to strengthen resource mobilization.	Department of Planning	Within 6 months
11	Explore introducing Agency-wide multi-year planning for EAs which incorporate yearly review processes to re-assess needs and requirements (as already being done in Syria under the two-year HRP, and in the oPt and Lebanon).	Department of Planning and all fields	Within 6 months

Introduction

Background to the evaluation

1. UNRWA's Department of Internal Oversight Services (DIOS) contracted IOD PARC to conduct an evaluation of its Emergency Appeals (EAs) for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and the Syria Regional Crisis covering the 2016-2021 period. The EAs are the funding mechanism supporting emergency humanitarian interventions targeting Palestine refugees in the oPt, Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in Jordan and Lebanon, and Palestine refugees in Syria that are not covered or are partially covered by the Agency's regular Programme Budget (PB) or discrete projects' budget. The EAs have a short cyclical programming nature and funding cycle, one year maximum, and are issued in response to continued humanitarian needs that result from the complex protracted crises and at the onset of sudden humanitarian needs due to conflict, economic or health crises or natural disasters. For example, as the COVID-19 crisis hit, the 2020 and 2021 EAs contributed to the continuation as well as the expansion of key health and education services during the pandemic, especially for particularly vulnerable refugees.
2. UNRWA operates in a uniquely challenging political and operational environment with an ever-increasing caseload. In the oPt, the humanitarian crisis persists as a result of Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the recurring escalations of violence in Gaza (four major events in five years), already crippled by 15 years of blockade and degrading infrastructure. In both contexts, unemployment especially among women and youth, and food insecurity are high. In 2016 and 2017, the unemployment rate in Gaza was almost 43%, whereas 45% of the Gaza population was deemed food insecure (911,500 refugees) and a 20% drop in real wages during the period 2000-2015 was recorded.² In the West Bank, 255,000 families were food insecure, 19.5% of refugees were unemployed, 94 Palestinians were killed (including 27 refugees), over 3000 were injured by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and settler violence, and over 1,500 people were displaced as a result of punitive home demolitions.³ By 2021 the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip had increased to 49% (among the highest in the world), and 1.2 million refugees were deemed food insecure and in need of food assistance.⁴ A major military escalation took place in May 2021, resulting in the further destruction of key infrastructure. In the West Bank 255,000 refugees were still food insecure and ISF operations continued despite restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵
3. With regards to the Syria refugee crisis and the emergency inside Syria, conditions have continued to erode in Syria and in the neighboring countries hosting PRS, Lebanon and Jordan. In 2016, the operational context in Syria was still characterized as an active conflict, with widespread destruction of infrastructure including UNRWA's installations, insecurity, and violence, which affected the Agency's ability to provide essential services. Staff were killed or arrested, many installations were inaccessible, and 95% of the 450,000 refugees were food insecure and in need of sustained humanitarian assistance.⁶ Displacement into neighboring countries Lebanon and Jordan continued, with Lebanon bearing the brunt with over 42,000 registered PRS and 95% of them deemed food insecure, whereas in Jordan 80% of the almost 18,000 PRS were reliant on humanitarian assistance.⁷ By 2021, in Syria 95% of the 438,000 registered refugees were in need of cash and in-kind food assistance; and the economic crisis in Lebanon and the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 in Jordan, forced the Agency to increase its assistance under the EAs to populations that were previously excluded, especially ex-Gazans in Jordan and Palestine refugees in Lebanon.⁸

² oPt Emergency Appeals, 2017, p. 2

³ Ibid, p.3

⁴ oPt Emergency Appeal 2021, p.6

⁵ AOR 2021

⁶ Syria Regional Crisis, Emergency Appeal 2016, p. 1

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Syria Regional Crisis, Emergency Appeal, 2021

4. Beyond the political situation, a particularly disabling global environment has continued to affect the Agency's operations in the past years. Issues include increase in global food, commodities and energy prices, shortages of basic commodities, the sudden and then ripple effects of two years of COVID-19 on health outcomes, access to education, livelihoods and employment, progress around gender equality, as well as more specific country-based economic crises and increases in poverty rates (e.g., in Lebanon and Gaza).
5. It is against this political and socio-economic backdrop that UNRWA's EAs are deployed. EAs have been issued for the oPt since the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, and since 2013 for the Syria Refugee Crisis. Between 2016 and 2021 the Agency spent USD 1.7 billion responding to emergencies in both oPt field offices in the West Bank and Gaza, and for the Syria Regional Crisis Field Offices (FOs) in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.⁹ EAs have supported new interventions that required an immediate deployment of funding as well as complementing PB-funded services by covering additional caseloads (e.g. PRS in Lebanon and Jordan), and/or covering gaps in essential humanitarian interventions for which PB funding is not available/sufficient (for example, cash assistance, hospitalization).
6. The Agency continues to face numerous challenges threatening its operations: a decade of chronic underfunding and rising operational and supply costs; the volatile nature of voluntary contributions from bilateral donors to the PB and related recurrent cashflow crises; the shortfall of the 2018 US funding withdrawal, now reinstated (albeit not at pre-2018 levels) by the Biden administration; and additional funding reductions from Gulf donors.¹⁰
7. To respond to this situation, the Agency has attempted a significant internal reform including reducing crucial expenditures, staff and maintenance of vehicles and premises, although these measures have been insufficient and have affected programming.¹¹ The EAs are thus seen as a crucial, additional source of income for the Agency to address refugee needs to support resilience during protracted crises as well as when sudden crises hit.
8. However, managing recurrent crises across different funding portals and specific donor requirements for earmarked funding (especially in Syria and Gaza) remains a challenge. Since 2016 numerous Advisory Commission¹² (AdCom) sessions and meetings have recognized the need to address financial sustainability issues and express the urgency for predictable multi-year funding to be introduced.¹³ However, the Agency's dependency on the voluntary contributions of member states, a situation not unique to UNRWA, weakens the predictability of funding and sustainability of interventions. And despite recognizing the conundrum the Agency finds itself in, donors are at present unable to provide alternative funding models.¹⁴

Evaluation Purpose, Objectives

9. This evaluation assesses the ways in which the EAs are designed, planned and used. The lessons learned from this evaluation seek to inform programming to ensure the protection of Palestinian refugee rights and addressing of their needs until a just and durable solution to their displacement is achieved. In addition, this evaluation seeks to inform UNRWA's future funding efforts so that it can fulfill its mandate and continue to

⁹ Source: Amount compiled from the EAs Annual Operational Reports 2016-202 and from the funding overviews of the External Relations and Communications Department

¹⁰ Mowjee, T., Arghiros D. et al. (2021). Evaluation of UNRWA's Mid-Term Strategy 2016-2022. Retrieved at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/final_report_evaluation_of_the_agency_medium-term_strategy_2016-2022_final.pdf

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Advisory Commission was created by UN Resolution 302 (IV) on 8 December 1949. It is tasked with advising and assisting the Commissioner-General of UNRWA in carrying out the Agency's mandate. Consisting of four members when it was first created, today the Advisory Commission (AdCom) is made up of 29 Members and four Observers (see: <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are/advisory-commission>).

¹³ UNRWA MTS Evaluation, p.15-16

¹⁴ Ibid., p.26

deliver its services. The evaluation was requested by members of UNRWA's AdCom and was prioritized in the multi-year evaluation plan for the 2016-2022 Agency Medium-Term Strategy (MTS).

10. The evaluation was conducted between March 2022 and February 2023. It covered all UNRWA's fields of operation: Gaza and the West Bank under the oPt EA, and Jordan, Lebanon and Syria under the Syria crisis EA, as well as engaging with UNRWA HQ level functions that work on or are supported through the EAs.
11. The evaluation served a dual purpose of **accountability and learning**, by assessing the functioning, use and contribution of EA funding to fulfill the needs of Palestine refugees through the following specific objectives:
 - To assess how EA funded interventions have contributed to its specific outcomes;
 - To identify good practices, challenges and lessons learned to assist UNRWA in improving its response to ongoing emergencies; and,
 - To inform future emergency programming including the approach underlying the development of the EAs and, where appropriate, harmonize the Agency's emergency work.
12. Learning objectives aimed to understand the functioning of the EA, what kind of interventions and recipients it prioritizes, and what outcomes it is contributing to and how. This focus included the identification of challenges, lessons learned and good practices to assist UNRWA's planning and designing emergency interventions going forward.
13. Accountability objectives considered how the EA mechanism evolved in relation to programmatic priorities over time especially in the years pre and post the 2018 funding cuts, and what key changes will be necessary going forward. In practice, the evaluation looked at how the EAs complement or reinforce interventions under the PB, where there might be potential challenges or gaps, as well as tensions or overlaps in interventions.

Evaluation Scope, Timeline and Intended Audience

14. The scope of the evaluation includes the EAs for both the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis with a specific focus on interventions that have received the highest amount of funding. The timeframe of focus is the 2016-2021 period, with a view to inform priorities for 2024 onwards.
15. The geographical scope includes interventions for Palestine refugees living in the oPt (West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip), PRS in Lebanon and Jordan as well as Palestine refugees still residing in Syria, Palestine refugees in Lebanon (PRL) and Jordan (PRJ), and ex-Gazans living in Jordan.
16. The audience of this evaluation includes the Evaluation Division of UNRWA's DIOS, Department of Planning, External Relations and Communications, the Advisory Commission, Operational Departments, Field Office teams, Programme Departments as well as donors, programme partners and beneficiaries.

Methodology

17. This evaluation was designed in line with a theory-based approach grounded in a contextual understanding and systematic, rather than counterfactual, approach to identify causality in the logical chain. The evaluation team reconstructed a unified Theory of Change (ToC) for both EAs during the inception phase, identifying the key contextual issues, the overall functioning and programmatic scope of the EA mechanism, its strategic priorities, alignment with Humanitarian Response Plans and the Grand Bargain, as well as with identified needs of Palestine refugees. The process also uncovered specific assumptions and the funding risks associated with the EAs. The ToC structure includes a Strategic Outcomes statement and articulates the three long-term Strategic Priorities (long-term outcomes), mid-term EA outcomes and specific outputs (see Annex 2).
18. The evaluation process was guided by 13 evaluation questions (see Table 1), and 24 sub-questions, which can be found in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 3).

Table 1: Evaluation questions and sub-questions

Criteria	Evaluation Question
RELEVANCE	1) How adequate are the Agency's EA design, planning, and implementation mechanisms in ensuring that priorities align to the Agency's overall strategy, key stakeholder needs (especially those of the most vulnerable Palestine refugees), and relevant humanitarian response plans at country and regional levels?
	2) Are protection, gender, age, disability inclusion, and other human rights considerations in line with relevant UN guidelines and procedures and other humanitarian, protection, and accountability-to-affected-population principles?
COHERENCE	3) [Internal coherence] To what extent are EA interventions coherent and have synergies with one another? And, how coherent are they with the Agency's PB interventions?
	4) [External coherence] To what extent is the funding and implementation of the Agency's EA aligned with Grand Bargain commitments?
COVERAGE, INCLUSION, and EQUITY	5) To what extent are the Agency's vulnerability assessments effectively contributing to understanding the socio-economic and protection needs of beneficiaries, including the poorest, most vulnerable, and crisis-affected refugees?
	6) Has the emergency response design, planning, and implementation ensured inclusion, participation, and fair power relations (considering gender, age, disability, socio-economic status dimensions, and humanitarian, protection and accountability-to-affected-population considerations)?
EFFECTIVENESS	7) To what extent has the emergency response achieved its planned results? What were the major factors contributing to the achievement or non-achievement of results?
	8) Have there been any unintended consequences (positive or negative) of the emergency response?
EFFICIENCY	9) To what extent do the EA interventions reflect efficient utilization of the Agency's comparative advantages?
	10) Are the value, modality, and timeliness of assistance provided through the EA interventions adequate and sufficient to address the needs of beneficiaries?
SUSTAINABILITY	11) What have been the advantages and disadvantages of the yearly planning cycle and funding modality of the EAs? Would a multi-year planning cycle and funding modality be more appropriate, feasible, and likely to ensure more sustainable funding for EA interventions in the future?

Data collection and analysis methods

19. The evaluation process was grounded in the Evaluation Matrix (see Annex 3), which mapped the evaluation questions against data sources. The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach to collect primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data. See table 2 below for details of the data collection sources and methods employed in the evaluation process.

Table 2: Evaluation data collection methods, data sources and evaluation phases

Data collection method	Data sources	Evaluation phase
Document review	Annual EAs documents and mid-year progress reports for oPt and SRC from 2016 to 2021; UNRWA annual operational reports from 2016 to 2021; UNRWA Medium-Term Strategy 2016-2022; policies, procedures, guidance, budget, and human resources information related to EAs; monitoring and evaluations undertaken on EA interventions, e.g., mid-term and final evaluations of MADAD I, II and III, evaluation of the Directorate General of the European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) funding; field offices' and other documentation pertinent to EAs.	Inception phase
Desk-based		Data collection phase
Secondary qualitative data		Analysis and drafting phase

Financial analysis Desk-based Secondary quantitative data	Budget information related to EAs, including EA contributions, volume, and percentage of funding received against identified needs. The financial analysis explored budget information from various angles, e.g., by EA, by FO, and by sector. The financial analysis fed into mapping of the highest levels of expenditure across the EA from 2016 to 2021.	Inception phase Data analysis phase
Key informant interviews (KIIs) In-person Remote (MS Teams) Primary qualitative data	UNRWA staff at the headquarters level, including chiefs of relevant Divisions/ Departments: Planning, Finance, External Relations (including the Contributions Unit), Protection, Relief, and Social Services, Education, Health, Infrastructure, and Camp Improvement. UNRWA staff in all five Field Offices: Field Office Directors, Chiefs of Programmes, Deputy Directors of Programmes, Deputy Director of Operations and Emergency Focal Points. EA donor contributors, including from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the German Federal Foreign Office Division for Humanitarian Assistance, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), and representatives of the US government. Host government and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) representatives. UN agency representatives and relevant partners (NGOs/CBOs). Refugee community representatives.	Inception phase Data collection phase
Focus group discussions (FGDs) In-person Remote (MS Teams) Primary qualitative data	UNRWA staff (e.g., Area Chiefs, Field Support Programme Officers, Emergency Appeal Project Management Officers). Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions disaggregated by sex and community.	Data collection phase
Household survey In-person Remote (telephone) Primary quantitative data	Beneficiaries of EA interventions in the five UNRWA FOs and covering in- and out-of-camp refugees to explore refugees' perceptions of the benefits, quality, timeliness and modality of the EAs interventions and any observable change in their socio-economic condition.	Data collection phase

20. The data collection tools were derived from the Evaluation Matrix and were available in English and Arabic. Microsoft Word templates were developed for qualitative data collection to ensure consistency across the team in recording notes. Quantitative survey data was collected using KoBo Toolbox. The data collection process was undertaken in both English and Arabic depending on the preferences of participants. Data collection took place in the five Field Offices and at HQ level.
21. To systematize and harmonize data analysis, the evaluation team relied on a unified coding structure based on the evaluation questions and integrating cross-cutting and intersecting vulnerability considerations (e.g., conflict sensitivity, gender, age, disability). Data from KIIs, FGDs and selected key documents was additionally uploaded, coded, and analyzed on the specialized MAXQDA software. Survey data was quality-checked in Microsoft Excel and loaded into PowerBI to allow quick sample statistics to be extracted in a quick and straightforward process. The data was also loaded into the statistical package R for analysis and to produce population estimates with confidence intervals to test statistical significance for selected survey questions. Quantitative data from financial information was also analyzed using Microsoft Excel and PowerBI.

Sampling

22. For KIIs, UNRWA provided the evaluation team with a long list of stakeholders of relevance to the EAs at HQ and regional level, as well as per Field Office. The evaluation team selected a sample of 12-15 stakeholders for each of HQ/regional and FO levels. The selection of stakeholders included a range of UNRWA staff at different levels of seniority, as well as partner organizations, donors and refugee representatives as appropriate for each EA.
23. Two types of FGDs were conducted: with UNRWA frontline staff and beneficiaries.
- For UNRWA frontline staff, we liaised with UNRWA FOs to select staff to participate in two FGDs per field. Frontline staff represented the different sectors UNRWA covers through the EAs and roles (e.g., school counsellors, healthcare staff, emergency officers, and so forth).
 - For beneficiaries, the evaluation team also relied on UNRWA staff for the selection of participants for 2-4 FGD sessions per field, disaggregated by male and female participants. The main selection criterion was that participants were recipients of EA interventions and that they represented different vulnerability criteria and target groups.
24. The household survey was drawn from a population list provided to us by UNRWA of households registered as receiving in-scope EAs support. We operated a two-stage sample with clustering. The initial level of the sampling structure was stratification by FO – within each FO there was a sample of 340 households (see Annex 4 for details of survey sampling).
25. Table 2 below provides an overview of the sample size achieved for primary data collection through KIIs, FGDs and the household survey. The results of the household survey can also be explored by accessing this [link](#).

Table 3: Achieved sample sizes for primary data collection

Location/ Level	KIIs UNRWA, external stakeholders ¹⁵		KIIs Refugee representatives and beneficiaries		FGDs UNRWA frontline staff		FGDs beneficiaries		Household Survey	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
UNRWA HQ	14 KIIs		-		-		-		-	
	8	8								
Gaza FO	13 KIIs		2 KIIs		2 FGDs		2 FGDs		340	
	4	13	-	3	8	8	5	7	122	118
West Bank FO	9 KIIs		-		2 FGDs		4 FGDs		339	
	7	3			11	4	12	14	123	216
Lebanon FO	12 KIIs		-		1 FGD		2 FGDs		354 ¹⁶	
	7	6			3	3	6	6	122	231
Jordan FO	17 KIIs		3 KIIs		2 FGDs		4 FGDs		347	
	17	12	1	3	8	7	17	16	113	234
Syria FO	15 KIIs		-		2 FGDs		4 FGDs		345	
	6	10			9	8	16	15	154	191
Total participants	101		6		69		114		1,725	
	49	52	1	5	39	30	56	58	637	1087

¹⁵ Some KIIs had more than one participant.

¹⁶ One respondent preferred not to answer the question on gender in Lebanon.

Limitations

26. The evaluation was not initially designed to include a large-scale household survey. The inclusion of a representative survey was agreed upon following the first Evaluation Reference Group meeting in June 2022. The incorporation of the household survey required significant efforts to identify, recruit and train six enumerators per field office location, to establish supporting survey management processes, and to compile the population lists needed for sampling. These adaptations shifted the evaluation timeline and required ongoing follow-up and management. The evaluation team compressed the latter phases of the evaluation process to make up for some of the delays incurred by the inclusion of the household survey.
27. The evaluation also experienced delays when compiling population lists to sample from for the survey. These lists are not held centrally at HQ, or harmonized at FO level (i.e., refugee registers are held by sectors within FOs rather than at FO or HQ level). In addition, some of the information provided in the population lists was inaccurate, which required corroborations and cross-checks to be done by UNRWA in the first instance and, once the survey was rolled out, by enumerator teams on the ground. In addition to the main samples of beneficiaries, enumerator teams had back-up lists to resort to replace rights-holders who could not be reached or for whom contact information was inaccurate.
28. Given the sensitivity of protection interventions (e.g., GBV, child protection, legal status issues), no protection questions were included in the survey to avoid any potential harm to survey participants. As a result, the survey does not offer an insight into the perception of rights-holders on UNRWA's support in this respect. As an exception, protection issues pertaining to support in relation to house demolitions in the West Bank including East Jerusalem were included in the survey for respondents to indicate whether they had benefitted from support in this intervention area. Where possible, protection issues were explored through other data collection methods.
29. The implementation of the survey required securing permits in Syria and Jordan from government authorities. These permit processes were facilitated by UNRWA FOs in Syria and Jordan, and the time required to prepare required documentation and to secure approval caused significant delays to survey implementation, particularly in Jordan. Additionally, in Syria it was not possible to conduct household surveys through house visits, so these were undertaken in UNRWA installations (or via telephone if rights-holders experienced transportation barriers to reach installations) in Damascus and Rural Damascus, and via telephone for sampled households in all other areas of Syria.
30. The five field locations where the survey was implemented presented unique challenges related to each context. The methodology was adapted to incorporate considerations that balanced between ensuring rigour, duty of care to consultants and enumerators, and time and resource efficiency. These considerations included decisions on the criteria for in-person versus telephone engagement and clustering of locations. The West Bank including East Jerusalem and Lebanon posed additional difficulties. At the time of survey implementation, there were significant tensions in the West Bank coinciding with the yearly olive harvest and frequent settler attacks on Palestinian populations and disruptions of travel and movement. In Lebanon, the deepening economic crisis and impact of storms on travel and telecommunications also required additional considerations to ensure finalization of data collection.
31. IOD PARC was contracted to undertake the Final Evaluation of the third iteration of the EUTF-funded Project for 'Strengthening the Resilience of Palestinian Refugees from Syria in Lebanon and Jordan'. Recognizing the inputs required from the same group of stakeholders, we streamlined both processes by conducting data collection jointly for these assignments. This approach resulted in a reduced burden on respondents, but it required scope adaptation to respond to the needs of both evaluations – meaning data collection sessions covered a broader range of areas. Whilst we allocated longer times to these interviews, the evaluation team was not always able to go into the same level of detail in discussions as during interviews solely dedicated to the EA evaluation. Nonetheless, we do not note any specific concerns in terms of data quality.

Key Findings

Relevance

32. Under the Relevance criterion, we examine the extent to which design, planning and implementation lead to EA interventions' alignment with the Agency's strategies, stakeholder needs, and relevant humanitarian response plans at country and regional levels. We also explore the extent to which planning and design incorporate stakeholder consultations, and adapt to changing and evolving contexts. Finally, this section also assesses the extent to which protection, gender, age, disability, inclusion and human rights considerations are incorporated in EA processes, and their alignment with UN guidelines and procedures and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) principles.

1. How adequate are the Agency's EA design, planning and implementation mechanisms in ensuring that priorities align to the Agency's overall strategy, key stakeholder needs (especially the most vulnerable Palestine refugees), and relevant humanitarian response plans at country and regional levels?
2. Are protection, gender, age, disability inclusion and other human rights considerations in line with relevant UN guidelines and procedures and other humanitarian, protection, and accountability-to-affected-population principles?

Finding 1: EA design, planning and implementation of interventions align with the evolving conflict situation and stakeholder needs resulting from the ongoing protracted and new emerging humanitarian and socio-economic dynamics at each FO level. The EA mechanism clearly maps onto the Agency's MTS strategy, its Emergency Strategic Focus Areas and relevant Strategic Outcomes. As a service delivery Agency, UNRWA does not deviate from its unique mandate, and EA interventions are derived from analyses of the context and associated humanitarian needs of the relevant emergency at FO level, including in line with HRP's locally and humanitarian coordination mechanisms at regional level.

Finding 2: An array of vulnerability analyses feeding data from FO to HQ and including stakeholder consultation, inform the design of EA interventions, albeit it is unclear the extent to which assessments and consultations are conducted in a systematic fashion.

Finding 3: UNRWA has relevant frameworks (e.g., strategies, policies) in place for ensuring that protection and human rights, gender, disability considerations are integrated into EA design and programming and are tailored to contextualized needs. Strategies and policies mostly align with global best practice. Whilst gender is still framed within binary and heteronormative definitions, and work needs to be done to improve this approach, disability considerations include the latest Washington Group measures and indicators. There is no framework for age considerations, although data and statistics are disaggregated by age and some interventions are tailored to children's and elderly people's needs.

Finding 4: Protection is at the core of UNRWA's mandate. It is both a stand-alone programmatic intervention and it is clearly mainstreamed as a cross-cutting issue in all programmes, irrespective of funding streams. UNRWA also implements a core set of protection interventions under each of the EAs with specific outputs, indicators and activities tailored to each context, which often benefit other programmatic interventions. The most recent protection audits have highlighted scope for improvement in programmatic interventions in relation to the Agency's protection standards. UNRWA's engagement with protection beneficiaries and extensive presence in the field show alignment with AAP principles.

33. **Services supported by UNRWA's EA funding mechanism fully align with the Agency's overall strategy.** UNRWA's 2016-2022 MTS articulates five overarching strategic outcomes relating to; i) protection and promotion of Palestine refugee rights under international law; ii) provision of healthcare services; iii) provision of education services; iv) strengthening livelihoods opportunities; and v) provision of services to ensure that the basic needs of nutrition, shelter, and environmental health are met. The 2016-2022 MTS also identified two broad emergency strategic focus areas which guide UNRWA's response to emergencies; i) addressing acute and immediate humanitarian needs, and; ii) support to resilience and safety nets. As illustrated in the table below, both areas encompass several emergency interventions, each of which is mapped to the organization's overarching strategic objectives.

Table 4: Emergency programme strategic focus areas and components¹⁷

Emergency Strategic Focus Area	Emergency Interventions	Relevant Strategic Outcome
Response to acute and immediate humanitarian needs	Cash assistance	Strategic Outcome 5
	Cash-for-work	Strategic Outcome 5
	Food assistance	Strategic Outcome 5
	Non-food items	Strategic Outcome 5
	Shelter	Strategic Outcome 5
	Protection	Strategic Outcome 1
Resilience and Safety Nets	Emergency health	Strategic Outcome 2
	Emergency education	Strategic Outcome 3
	Emergency environmental infrastructure and health	Strategic Outcome 5
	Livelihoods/employment/job creation	Strategic Outcome 4
	Psychosocial Support	Strategic Outcome 2
	Child and youth activities	Strategic Outcome 1
	Camp Infrastructure	Strategic Outcome 5

34. **The interventions supported through EAs have contributed to all the strategic outcome areas identified in the 2016-2022 MTS.** Annual EAs each include field-specific strategic priorities and intended outcomes, derived from analyses of the context, and associated humanitarian needs of the relevant emergency. A review of annual EA documents indicates full alignment between the strategic priorities and specific outcomes that they identify, on the one hand, and those articulated by the overall 2016-2022 MTS, on the other. EAs between 2016 and 2022 have clearly been guided by the emergency strategic focus areas and interventions identified in the table above. Among other interventions, they have provided humanitarian assistance to vulnerable refugees in the form of food and cash assistance, contributed to the maintenance of health and education services in emergencies, provided livelihoods opportunities through cash for work and other programmes, and have consistently sought to identify and address protection risks.
35. The services delivered by UNRWA through EAs clearly respond to the emergency needs of affected Palestine refugees and are highly valued by recipients. This alignment is evident in relevant documentation, as well as in data obtained through interviews and focus group discussions with Palestine refugees themselves for this evaluation. Each annual EA includes a detailed context analysis, which identifies the broad parameters of the emergency in question, the associated humanitarian and other needs of affected Palestine refugees, and the intended steps that the Agency plans to take to address these. UNRWA's organizational structure and long history in its fields of operation render it uniquely well-placed to assess these emergency needs, deliver quickly and with minimal overhead costs and time. The Agency is deeply embedded in refugee communities, and its services are provided directly by over 28,000 staff, 88% of whom are Palestine refugees themselves. This setup keeps UNRWA well-attuned to the severe and evolving needs of Palestine refugees that emergency situations typically entail.
36. In interviews and focus group discussions held with recipients of EA assistance for this evaluation, there was a very high level of agreement that the services provided aligned strongly with needs, though as discussed later, they were often not sufficient in quantity to fully cover all needs. Results from the [survey](#) (figures 1 and 2) indicate that, apart from Syria, and to a lesser extent Lebanon for cash assistance, food and cash assistance – typically the largest and most critical components of EAs – were regarded as crucial or important for recipients. This result was particularly the case for cash assistance in Jordan, Gaza and the West Bank and food assistance in Gaza.
37. It is interesting to note that respondents in Syria considered cash assistance less crucial or important than other FOs, whereas PDMs report a very high degree of reliance on cash. However, the response from the survey may

¹⁷ 2016-2022 Medium Term Strategy, p. 81

be due to the fact that UNRWA amounts are limited by the caseload size and are lower than those recommended by the Cash Working Group. In FGDs, beneficiaries did indeed note that cash assistance amounts are small, and their frequency varies. For food assistance, it is unsurprising, given poverty levels, that it is considered crucial in Gaza.

Figure 1: How important was the cash assistance in supporting your household income?

Source: household survey. N = 989

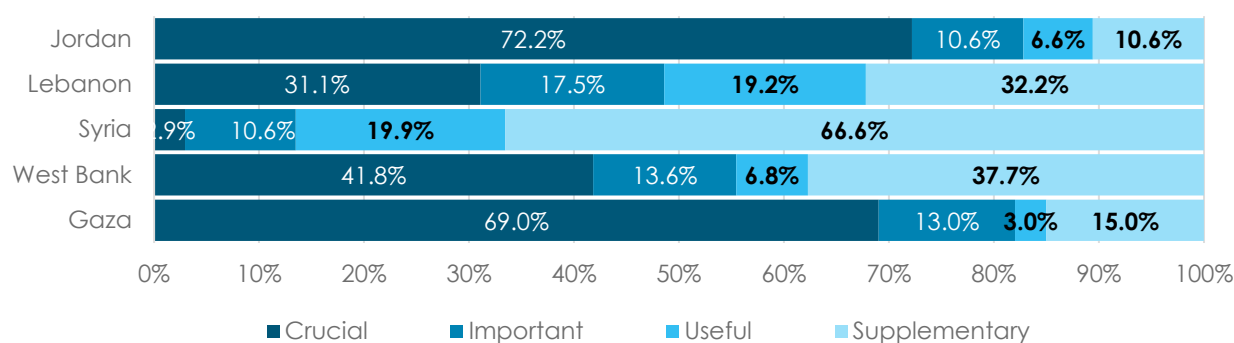
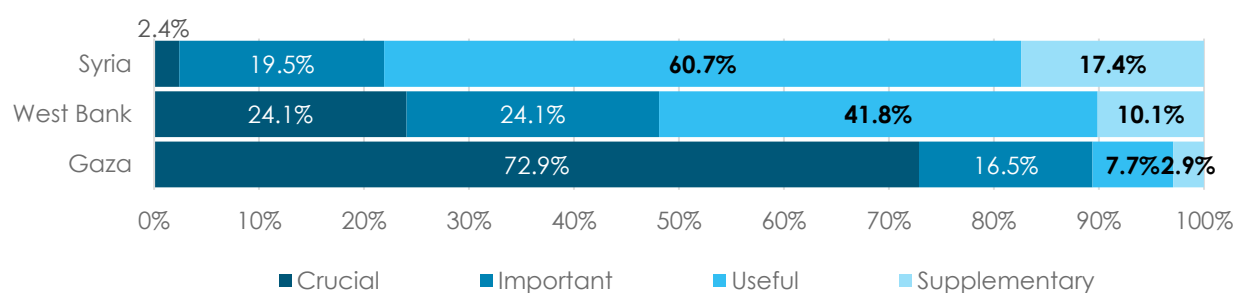


Figure 2: How important was the food assistance in supporting your household income?

Source: household survey. N = 751



38. Funding constraints have compelled UNRWA to reduce or scale back services whilst maintaining the existing caseload in some areas, despite often sustained or increasing need. As discussed below in the section on Efficiency, funding received for UNRWA's EAs has consistently fallen far below required amounts. In some cases, these shortfalls have resulted in reductions in the Agency's emergency assistance to Palestine refugees across various fields of operation, despite considerable and often increasing needs. In Syria, for example, the Agency consistently reduced planned cash disbursements to refugees, and reduced food distribution rounds from three to two throughout the EAs.¹⁸ Whilst aligning to the Cash Working Group recommendations on cash assistance in Syria, the magnitude of the caseload (over 400,000 refugees) was considerably higher compared to the amounts recommended, so UNRWA had to revise accordingly and in line with funding levels received. Between 2016 and 2021, the availability of a multi-year earmarked grant played an important role in ensuring the provision of cash assistance in Lebanon and Jordan. However, UNRWA continued to prioritize this assistance even when this contribution ended, by re-allocating other available funds to Lebanon and Jordan.¹⁹ In another example, across the years in Gaza, considerable shortfalls in funding resulted in fewer refugees than planned being hired through the Cash for Work programme, and constrained UNRWA's ability to support households affected by small scale disasters.²⁰ Such reductions have fed into perceptions among both UNRWA staff and recipients of the Agency's services that the support provided is often insufficient in terms of quantity

¹⁸ 2022 Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal, p. 6

¹⁹ 2021 Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal Progress Report, p.10

²⁰ 2021 oPt Emergency Appeal Progress Report, p. 9

to fully meet emergency needs. In FGDs with recipients of food and cash assistance in Jordan and the oPt, participants reported that while UNRWA support was highly valued, it was rarely sufficient in quantity or frequency to enable them to meet their basic needs. PDM survey data also reflects this perception. In late 2021, PDM data from Jordan indicated that only 11% of surveyed PRS felt that, when combined with other sources of income, multi-purpose cash assistance from UNRWA was sufficient to cover basic needs for food and non-food items for three months.²¹

39. Several mechanisms are available for identifying needs and vulnerabilities, and these have been used for targeting some forms of assistance. Existing mechanisms include, among others, vulnerability assessments, multi-sectoral needs assessments (MSNAs), the Crisis Monitoring Survey, post-distribution monitoring surveys, and feedback arrangements to permit beneficiary inputs into programme design and implementation. In some fields of operation, vulnerability assessments have been used to identify and target assistance towards the needs of the most vulnerable. These assessments are used to deliver targeted support such as additional cash assistance, home delivery of medications, hospitalization support, and support to cover the costs of transport to schools.
40. There is a belief among external stakeholders that UNRWA's engagement with other humanitarian agencies in the design of EAs could be improved. The Agency participates in and aligns its response to regional emergency response planning and coordination mechanisms, such as the Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), the HRP in the oPt and working groups under OCHA's cluster approach. UNRWA is viewed as an extremely important player in regional coordination processes, given its considerable experience, infrastructure, and reach in the region. However, several external stakeholders consulted were of the view that the Agency's participation in inter-agency coordination mechanisms for emergency response could be improved. The perception among external stakeholders, including both donors and staff members of other humanitarian agencies in the region, is that UNRWA's EAs were not consistently shared with clusters for discussion during the design phase, and that during implementation, progress reports, experiences, vulnerability assessments and other information were not always shared or discussed in a proactive manner. This has resulted in an information gap whereby key partners are not always fully attuned to the details of UNRWA EAs. Several UNRWA staff members themselves expressed the view in interviews that participation in interagency planning platforms is an area in which the Agency needs to improve.
41. UNRWA has frameworks in place for ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into EA design and programming, albeit gender is still framed within binary and heteronormative definitions. UNRWA's Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2021, which is based on the 2007 Gender Equality Policy, sets out the Agency's medium term approach to ensuring that gender considerations are effectively mainstreamed throughout programmes, including those supported by EAs, through; i) addressing gender-based violence; ii) including men in pre-conception care and family planning; iii) promoting economic empowerment and leadership; iv) addressing school dropout; and v) promoting awareness of females' rights. Though progress against this strategy is tracked regularly through annual implementation reports, these do not provide significant detail that is specific to programmes funded through EAs.²² In line with UN SWAP reporting requirements, a gender marker is used to monitor the extent to which the Agency's financial resources contribute to gender mainstreaming. At present, the gender marker is used to monitor specific projects and the EAs.
42. A review of EAs for the oPt and the SRC between 2016 and 2022 highlights a relatively widespread integration of gender considerations. This includes forms of emergency assistance with an explicit focus on females, including, for example, emergency food and cash assistance for female-headed households in Gaza and Syria,²³ or the provision of assistance to females identified as being at risk of gender-based violence in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.²⁴ EA results frameworks contain several gender-specific indicators relating to these interventions

²¹ 2022 Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal, p. 17

²² Note that the 2021 independent evaluation of UNRWA's Medium Term Strategy recommended that UNRWA develop more robust systems for collecting data on gender across programmes for use in informing decision making.

²³ 2016 oPt Emergency Appeal, p. 18; 2017 oPt Emergency Appeal, p. 13

²⁴ 2017 Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal p. 13; 2018 Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal p. 50; 2021 Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal, p. 36, 50; 2022 Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal, p. 40.

and also include sex-disaggregated data for numerous other indicators. Furthermore, the context and needs analyses that accompany EA documents, as well as the narrative descriptions of interventions under specific strategic priorities, often identify the gendered dimensions of emergency needs and how UNRWA aims to address them. Evidence obtained through interviews and focus group discussions generally suggests that gender considerations are well integrated into EA programming.

43. UNRWA also has frameworks in place to ensure that disability considerations are integrated into programming, and there are signs that improved data is contributing to better integration into EA designs. This includes the 2017 Disability Inclusion Guidelines, and the recent 2022 Disability Policy which aims to ensure that all UNRWA's programmes and services address the needs and interests of Palestine refugees with disabilities. The Agency adopts a definition of disability that is consistent with that outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and regularly reports against indicators in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. While in the past a lack of data was perceived to be a major obstacle to disability inclusion, there are signs that this is improving. Since 2020, UNRWA has taken steps to improve its ability to systematically identify Palestine refugees living with disabilities to better address their rights and needs, including through the incorporation of the Washington Group Questions on disability into the Agency's e-health platforms. Reporting on disability within EAs has also recently improved. The Department of Planning has begun including disability-disaggregated results indicators into EAs. The 2021 EA for the oPt, for instance, contained 15 disability disaggregated results indicators while the 2021 EA for the Syria regional crisis contained 37.²⁵ The Agency has also worked with the evaluation team in the application of the latest guidance and best practice on disability reporting, using the Washington Group criteria on disability statistics²⁶ for assessing physical, mental and sensory impairment in the household survey – a process the Agency should start to introduce more regularly in its assessment.
44. **There is no specific framework for ensuring the integration of age considerations into EA design.** Whilst some specific interventions are tailored to the needs of children and youth (e.g., mental health and psychosocial support for children and cash for work targeting young graduates in Gaza, youth livelihood interventions in Lebanon and Syria), UNRWA does not have policies or strategies in place to guide its work on meeting the specific needs of either youth or elderly persons. Age-specific outcomes and indicators have not featured in the results frameworks that accompany reviewed EAs between 2016 and 2022. That said, old age is considered as a criterion in some of the vulnerability assessments conducted by UNRWA to inform targeted emergency interventions.
45. Conceptually, UNRWA's protection mandate is treated as a cross-cutting issue of relevance to all programmes irrespective of funding stream, though the most recent protection audits have highlighted scope for improvement in the degree of programmatic interventions with the Agency's and international²⁷ protection standards. UNRWA's 2021 Protection Policy requires the provision of protection across all programme areas by ensuring that service delivery conforms to minimum protection standards. A protection mainstreaming toolkit was developed in 2020 to support the integration of protection principles into all programming, whether funded through the EAs or the PB, and periodic Protection Alignment Reviews (formerly known as Protection Audits) serve as an accountability mechanism in this regard by systematically assessing the degree of alignment with protection standards across all programmatic areas. The most recent of these reviews, however, was conducted in 2019. A summary of Protection Audits carried out in 2017 and 2018 found that the degree of alignment with UNRWA protection standards across all programmatic areas was 51.8%, representing a slight decrease from 2016 levels, when the degree of alignment was 56.4%²⁸.

²⁵ 2021 Disability Inclusion Annual Report, p. 8

²⁶ See: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/resources/methodology/>

²⁷ UNRWA's AAP framework specifically reports alignment to Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Tools to Assist in Implementing Inter-Agency Standing Committee Accountability to Affected Populations, Core Humanitarian Standard Guidance Notes and Indicators and Collaborative for Development Action Do-No-Harm Framework.
See: https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_framework_for_accountability_to_affected_populations.pdf

²⁸ Summary Report: Protection Audits 2016-2017, pg. 3

46. In parallel to the cross-cutting nature of the Agency's protection mandate, UNRWA's EAs have treated protection as a distinct strategic outcome area with dedicated output-level results indicators. EAs for both the oPt and the SRC have consistently featured outcome and output indicators and targets explicitly related to protection activities and their anticipated results. Some of the protection-related activities delivered through Emergency Appeal funding are implicitly supportive of protection mainstreaming across other programmatic areas. For example, in Jordan, Lebanon, and Gaza, EA funding was utilized to support the training of thousands of frontline UNRWA staff members to better enable them to identify and address protection risks. EA funding has also supported more direct efforts to address protection risks when these are identified. In Lebanon and Syria, for instance, thousands of individual Palestine refugees identified as experiencing protection risks were referred for legal aid services with Emergency Appeal support. In the West Bank including East Jerusalem, Emergency Appeal funding was used to support protection monitoring, involving the documentation of protection risks and related advocacy efforts targeting relevant duty bearers.

Coherence

47. The Coherence criterion explores the extent to which EA interventions are coherent with one another, and how they complement interventions under the PB, as well as the factors that contribute to synergies between the EA and PB. This section also highlights where EA interventions align with the Grand Bargain commitments, and with the work of other stakeholders working in UNRWA's fields of operation.

3. To what extent are EA interventions coherent and have synergies with one another? And, how coherent are they with the Agency's PB interventions?
4. To what extent are the funding and implementation of the Agency's EA aligned with Grand Bargain commitments?

Finding 5: There is a structured EA design process, led by the DoP in HQ and closely coordinated with FOs, that ensures the coherence of emergency interventions between different UNRWA sectors and with emergency teams. Coherence is carried over to implementation, which relies on capitalization on UNRWA's established working practices and increasing operationalization of referral processes.

Finding 6: There is limited incorporation of EA interventions in PB-funded programmes, mainly due to funding constraints that limit the options for increasing the scope of the PB in areas of sustained need. Nonetheless, there are some exceptions in case management, in disability, and in protection in relation to GBV and child protection interventions, which were recognized by the Agency as requiring sustainability.

Finding 7: The EA has complemented PB interventions (e.g., in MHPSS) as well as been drawn on to cover critical funding gaps in the PB (e.g., SSN caseload in Syria). Decisions to draw on the EA to support PB interventions rest on an assessment of PB shortfalls having a knock-on effect on the delivery of EA interventions, or on beneficiaries' access to life-saving services and assistance.

Finding 8: The evaluation found evidence that the EAs align with Grand Bargain commitments in relation to making financial information publicly available, in its commitment to cash-based programming, and in management of costs, as well as in relation to amalgamating reporting practices on the EAs, PB and COVID-19 appeals. However, even though beneficiaries have access to information on UNRWA services, and feedback and complaint mechanisms are available to them, there is an identified need to strengthen community engagement and improve beneficiary satisfaction with the Agency's processes for addressing feedback and complaints.

Finding 9: There is evidence of EA interventions' alignment and complementarity with country and regional planning processes and with the work of other relevant agencies at the level of inter-agency coordination. Nonetheless, there is a desire from external stakeholders for UNRWA to more actively share its experience with and rationale for EA design. UNRWA and other agencies confirmed that they address the needs of different groups and synergies in implementation are limited, with some exceptions such as in protection referrals.

48. UNRWA follows a structured process to ensure coherence across EA interventions, and planning of the EAs relies on ongoing coordination between HQ and FOs, and within FOs between different sectors and with emergency teams. EA planning is led by DoP in HQ which, along with Finance and FO teams, put in place plans for EA design. DoP follows an iterative process with FOs for establishing priorities and needs and provides templates and guidance to FOs; and each FO has a process in place for providing inputs to EA design. For example, in Syria EA design takes over one month with consultations conducted at different levels: with community representatives in different geographies facilitated by UNRWA Area Chiefs, and within and

between sectors at FO level. Similar processes are followed in other FOs. Along these lines, collaborations and coordination (including information sharing) have rendered responses under the EAs coherent; sectorial collaboration is considered as key to the success of EA implementation, for example between health and education during the COVID-19 response in Lebanon, MHPSS interventions in health and education, and inputs from all FO departments feeding into food basket distribution assessments in Gaza.

49. Strong coordination is based on established practices and lessons learned in different FOs of working across sectors and intervention areas. Referrals between sectors (e.g., across social services and between health and education) are a case in point that EA implementation has built on, and that relies on high levels of coordination between staff at the frontline level.
50. The operationalization of certain processes, such as referrals, has had a positive impact on coherence and implementation of interventions and there are areas where operationalization could be strengthened further. There is evidence that increased coordination has improved in areas such as Relief and Social Services (RSS) for instance, whereby a referral system has enhanced coherence (and relevance) to a large extent for cases pertinent to psycho-social support and GBV. RSS referral mechanisms constitute an important point of coordination and ensuring of synergies, reflecting Agency-wide reforms and initiatives in this respect. In Syria, for instance, the referral mechanism introduced at the end of 2020 has permitted for greater formalization of referral procedures, for example in the areas of child protection and PSS. Prior to 2020, most of the coordination between programmes/ sectors was in the form of informal and verbal exchanges for referrals. Similarly, joint activities between sectors are also implemented across FOs, as well as coordination with external providers. Under RSS, synergies were also clear in multiple areas including: (1) a system for referring GBV cases identified through the health system to case managers under the RSS; as well as (2) school health teams and provision of MHPSS in schools. In line with findings from the evaluation of the MTS, there remains a general view that UNRWA could improve mechanisms for working internally across sectors with suggestions including the creation of joint task forces, inclusive strategic planning, adequate information sharing, as well as sharing experiences, lessons learned and best practices from the field more frequently and in coordination with HQ.
51. **Coherence and synergy are most evident in situations of crisis or external shocks.** This was true for COVID-19 (all FOs), the Beirut blast to a certain extent (Lebanon), the May 2021 Gaza escalation of hostilities, protection in the West Bank, and changes in ability to access and reach beneficiaries in Syria, where cooperation and lines of communication across sectors and responses were heightened at FO level. Increased cooperation and communication largely informed coordination beyond these situations of crisis (and external shocks). These synergies trickle down to information-sharing, awareness sessions, and largely highlight multiple components of complementarity across different sectors and lines of programming (whether within the EA itself, or between the EA and PB, elaborated on below).
52. In relation to COVID-19, as reported in its Annual Operational Report (2021), UNRWA continued to build on its existing programmes and infrastructure and adjusted its services to integrate COVID-19 prevention and response measures.²⁹ The provision of relief assistance through the Agency's existing cash assistance and food operations was maintained and, when possible, expanded to mitigate the additional hardship created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the Agency prepared a training plan for staff providing psychosocial support to gain relevant skills for remote communication in emergency situations, telecommunication, and provision of remote advice, self-care and protection. Coordination and cooperation between psychosocial support staff and teachers to identify cases that needed extra support and individual counselling additionally proved to be a best practice throughout the COVID-19 response that ensured complementarity and synergy across sectors.³⁰ Another illustration of complementarity and synergy relates to the response to the May 2021 hostilities in Gaza, where UNRWA issued a standalone humanitarian and early recovery appeal which included both immediate and longer-term assistance. This encompassed assistance to IDPs in collective shelters alongside longer term recovery and rehabilitation needs, including support for shelter rehabilitation and PSS. Along these lines, damage assessment of the affected shelters and the identification of the eligible caseload were conducted in

²⁹ Annual Operational Report 2021, UNRWA

³⁰ Covid-19 Response Summary (2020), UNRWA

close coordination with the Shelter Cluster, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, as well as other relevant early recovery actors to ensure complementarity and avoid duplications.

53. **Coordination within FOs under external shocks was also evident in the areas of referrals to external services.**³¹ As numerous external services such as protection case referral were abruptly halted as an immediate result of the pandemic, several National Working Group Meetings, specifically on Education, Psycho-Social Support, and Protection were held in order to develop and undertake a number of measures to offer emergency support.³² This included national hotlines, as well as emergency Child Protection/Gender Based Violence hotlines.³³
54. An integrated approach to service provision coupled with strengthening of management functions facilitates complementarities between the EA and the PB and vice versa. In 2021, UNRWA strengthened its senior management governance structures through the establishment of an Executive Advisory Group (EAG), tasked with advising the Commissioner-General in decision-making on issues of Agency-wide significance.³⁴ This step was further complemented with the establishment of the Senior Management Team (preceded by a Management Committee), to enhance information-sharing and consultations within the Senior Management.³⁵ The EAG, consisting of a smaller group of UNRWA senior management meets on a monthly basis, and since its inception in October 2021, supported endorsement of the Agency's Education/Digitalization Strategy; restructured its finance operations; developed a new Area Staff Selection Policy; and supported the Gaza After Action Review, as well as 2022 EAs for the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis.³⁶ There are substantial coordination efforts that feed into these exchanges at strategic level by the EAG and that are led by UNRWA's Department of Planning (DoP), which include the substantive discussions taking place between DoP, programmes and fields in the planning phase of the EAs which then feed in to the EAG. Regular monitoring also takes place over the year, led by Planning and Finance Departments with the fields and involving specific programmes as needed.
55. UNRWA's EA interventions are coherent and complementary to PB interventions especially in covering needs not addressed through the PB more broadly such as humanitarian interventions; and specific, time-bound projects that improve services without increasing recurrent costs. Some key examples include covering the SSN caseload in Syria through EA funds; filling critical gaps in the purchase of part C medicines in Gaza; providing hospitalizations to PRS in Lebanon and Jordan; and the provision of MHPSS in Gaza are much better examples of how EA funds can be used to complement services offered by the PB. Other examples of this complementarity in terms of EA interventions being integrated into the PB were identified in UNRWA's inclusive education strategy. In Gaza, through this strategy, UNRWA continued to support vulnerable Palestine refugee children with disabilities through Community-based Rehabilitation Centres (CBRCs) during the pandemic. While the Agency received no funding for this intervention under the EA, 670 students with disabilities (268 girls, 402 boys) continued to be provided with specialized education through PB funds. Another example is related to the Agency's reform of its protection case management activities during the second half of 2021. In 2021, the West Bank Field Office began implementing an Agency-wide reform of its RSS program that brought together all protection case management activities, regardless of funding source, under RSS staff management. As a result of this reform, the entire GBV and child protection component of the EA is now covered in a more sustainable and cost-efficient manner under the Agency's RSS program. In 2021 alone, 132 protection cases (GBV and child protection survivor cases) were managed by RSS social workers or through referrals to external partners. Along similar lines, UNRWA continued to provide environmental health services

³¹ Quality Education in the Context of Covid-19 Pandemic: Learned and Future Implications, Education Department, UNRWA HQA, November 2020.

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Annual Operational Report (2021), UNRWA.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

to Palestine refugees; however, in Lebanon, these interventions primarily continued under PB and project funds due to EA funding gaps.³⁷

56. Tapping into EA funding to cover the PB has taken place when doing so is crucial to ensure continuity of emergency programming delivery. The funding shortfall that UNRWA faced in 2018, in particular under its PB, rendered the continuity of essential services at risk, and limited the Agency's ability to meet the objectives and reforms stated in its MTS. In 2021, EA funding for the oPt reached 72.4%, while the Syria regional crisis EA, covering Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, was 49% funded.³⁸ According to the MTS evaluation, the fact that PB is not fully funded limits the Agency's ability to provide a meaningful amount of assistance adjusted to the rising inflation experienced by the country. Sustainable and multi-year funding also remains a challenge, with many donors still pledging their contribution on an annual basis. Post-2018, following cuts to PB, certain salaries of individuals deemed core staff were moved from PB to EA. This decision permitted for staff retention in key positions that were needed to ensure the continuity of emergency programming, for instance Gaza food staff, Syria food and cash staff, and staff in the West Bank working in education and health interventions.
57. **EA alignment with Grand Bargain commitments is evident in documentation and reporting.** Consistent with commitments to greater financial transparency, UNRWA publishes financial information on a quarterly basis, providing information on the Agency's programme budget, EAs and projects.³⁹ Moreover, the evaluation found that the flexibility of cash-based programming remains a priority for UNRWA, with 155,000 beneficiaries reached through cash-based assistance every quarter in the West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan (SSN caseload), in addition to approximately 418,000 refugees who receive cash assistance in Syria.⁴⁰ In the areas of management costs, UNRWA continues the rollout and use of health and education electronic management information systems (e.g., by the end of 2020, 139 out of 140 health clinics had fully implemented the e-Health system).⁴¹ In line with its reporting requirements, UNRWA shifted its reporting to amalgamating results reporting across UNRWA's PB, EAs, COVID-19 Flash Appeals and RMS, as well as continuing to provide emergency assistance in parallel with human development activities as part of its humanitarian-development engagement. This amalgamation of reporting has been held up as an example of good practice in the Grand Bargain, but it is worth noting that plans to do so were already in place.
58. UNRWA continues to ensure that its beneficiaries have access to timely, accurate and relevant information on the availability of the Agency's services. UNRWA continues to encourage feedback, complaints and appeals its beneficiaries through a hotline, as well as through direct contact with UNRWA field staff; however, FGDs highlighted that beneficiaries were not satisfied with the quality of these mechanisms and did not find that their complaints and feedback were directly or indirectly impacting programming or responses. In the case of the Syria FO, there is a specific AAP team that is coordinating efforts to strengthen community engagement and this initiative is included under the Syria EA.

Coverage, Inclusion and Equity

59. Under the criteria of Coverage, Inclusion and Equity, we look at the appropriateness of UNRWA's vulnerability assessment mechanisms and tools to identify beneficiary needs, where possible noting how the Agency's approach converges or differs from those of other stakeholders and international best practices. This section also examines how intersectional needs and vulnerabilities are considered in the design, implementation and monitoring, and how identified barriers in these respects are addressed.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Evaluation of UNRWA's Medium Term Strategy (2016-2022).

³⁹ UNRWA Narrative Report 2022

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

5. To what extent are the Agency's vulnerability assessments effectively contributing to understanding the socio-economic and protection needs of beneficiaries, including the poorest, most vulnerable, and crisis-affected refugees?
6. Has the emergency response design, planning and implementation ensured inclusion, participation, and fair power relations (considering gender, age, disability, socio-economic status dimensions, and humanitarian, protection, and accountability-to affected-population considerations)?

Finding 10: UNRWA uses a wide array of vulnerability assessments with the purpose of identifying socio-economic and protection needs of refugees and to address them across different areas of their work. Vulnerability assessments allow UNRWA to understand and respond to worsening and emerging needs. Throughout the years UNRWA has adapted its approaches and currently has settled on a combination of universal and categorical approaches. These approaches are adapted in relation to what is identified at each FO level, considering key categories of vulnerability, but also on the basis of donor requirements in each FO and adjusted to the available funding levels (see Efficiency section for more detail on this). However, it remains unclear how frequently and systematically these assessments are administered and there is criticism among donors and some staff that universal approaches do not mirror the purpose of an Emergency Appeal.

Finding 11: There is a need to improve vulnerability assessment and eligibility criteria to strengthen adequate identification of need, while at the same time ensuring that the wider registration system mirrors the changing circumstances of refugee households, the emergency conditions in which vulnerability can fluctuate, and that data informs identification of multiple vulnerabilities. UNRWA recognizes these elements and is currently in the process of revising eligibility criteria and tools.

Finding 12: Other agencies use other types of vulnerability assessments that align with their specific mandate and type of caseload. Agencies involved in coordinated humanitarian response use the MSNA, which represents best practice in identification of People in Need (PiN). UNRWA considers this method too granular and unfit to identify and address the magnitude of its beneficiaries' needs. UNRWA, however, regularly refers to the MSNA in its needs assessments.

Findings 13: The evaluation finds plenty of examples across the EAs of how UNRWA has attempted to equitably identify and respond to the needs of specific vulnerable groups considering AGD and AAP criteria. The Agency uses either existing or new assessments including in response to additional emergency situations (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, Gaza hostilities). Universal interventions run in parallel with approaches that aim to target specific vulnerabilities, and which include vulnerable females, elderly people and children with disability, female headed households, and so forth. Strengthening vulnerability targeting will require efforts to increase voice and participation of all refugees in the planning and implementation of the EAs more systematically.

Finding 14: Despite AGD criteria being integrated in various needs and vulnerability assessments, the Agency's ability to address intersectional dimensions will require more nuanced data, as well as personnel with skills to collect it. This type of information is currently lacking, and intersectionality is certainly an area the Agency needs to work on.

60. UNRWA uses a multiplicity of vulnerability assessments to identify the socio-economic and protection needs of refugees, and each FO plays a crucial role in the identification of the poorest, most vulnerable and crisis-affected refugees in each context. From the early 2000s up until 2018, UNRWA relied on the World Bank Proxy-Means Test Formula (PMTF) to determine household poverty levels. The PMTF allows 'to estimate income or consumption when more precise measurements are missing or difficult to obtain'.⁴² In UNRWA the PMTF was calculated through the assessment of up to 82 poverty related indicators against a set poverty line for each country.⁴³ The PMTF included a detailed analysis of the underlying causes of poverty, costs of food commodities and socio-economic and protection factors supporting the identification of abject poor (i.e., food

⁴² World Bank Social Protection and Labor Team (n.d.). Measuring income and poverty using Proxy Means Tests. Retrieved at: <https://olc.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/1.pdf>

⁴³ Relief and Social Services Department. Approaches to determining need-based targeting of relief assistance poverty and vulnerability. September 2020

insecure) or absolute poor (i.e., not able to meet the entire basket of basic of needs including food) refugees and determining the type of assistance they should receive.⁴⁴

61. As the PMTF was applied in each FO and to all portfolios of work, the poverty lines were defined using national data and updated according to the Consumer Price Index in each field.⁴⁵ In 2018, the PMTF was revised into a categorical approach linked to high dependency ratios to include female, elderly, disabled-headed households and orphans. This would cover one third of the entire eligible Palestine refugee population. In 2020, RSSD further recommended the introduction of categorical targeting in parallel to 'a universal, non-conditional 'emergency programme', limited in time and resources and consisting of a basic universal package of cash and food assistance depending on the situation and crisis'.⁴⁶ Today the PMTF is no longer used in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Gaza but it is still in use in the West Bank, albeit being deemed as outdated by staff. In the West Bank, the PMTF is currently calculated by looking at demographic and health indicators and six categories reflecting high dependency ratios⁴⁷ within the existing caseload, to identify the most vulnerable people in need, who then receive an increased cash transfer amount per month per person.
62. Other sectoral needs assessments include the crisis monitoring surveys, socio-economic surveys, PDMs, AGD assessments, protection needs reviews, focus group discussions, communication with refugee camp leaders and representatives, and home visits (paused during the COVID-19 pandemic), to further ensure tailored assistance. These have resulted in a combination of universal and targeted assistance, each tailored to each FO. To date this combination of approaches is mirrored in targeted field interventions such as, for example:
 - In Syria: 91% of Palestine refugees (418,000) are considered to be in extreme poverty and receive cash assistance at rates adjusted based on available funding. Additional vulnerability criteria are applied to provide additional cash assistance for special hardship cases, which include female-headed households, people with disabilities, elderly heads of household, and orphaned children. Staff are currently unable to conduct home visits for needs assessments.
 - In Gaza: as the ongoing blockade continues to influence insecurity and poverty, at the time of the evaluation the Agency was progressively transitioning from absolute/abject poor categories to providing near universal assistance via a unified food basket targeting to 1.2 million refugees. This choice was based on internal UNRWA RRIS data and physical verification of need and increased poverty levels, the fact that UNRWA's food operation is perceived to stabilize the Gaza food market and that it is less expensive than a meaningful multi-purpose cash transfer. This was also in response to a 2018 study commissioned by then DFID and in alignment with the requirements of the US donor, which required against provision of cash assistance in Gaza.⁴⁸ This approach is currently highly contested by some donors, who would like a revision of the study to assess its validity in light of best practice recommendations on cash assistance and Grand Bargain principles.
 - In Jordan and Lebanon: the influx of PRS with immediate humanitarian needs created a significant additional burden to services which could not be met through the assistance provided under the PB. In addition to immediate cash and food assistance, UNRWA therefore scaled up existing education and health services. In Jordan, cash assistance of 53 JOD per quarter is currently provided to PRS who are registered with UNRWA Jordan FO and mostly have access to some or all government services. Those without Jordanian documentation (who cannot access services due to government policy) and

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Inception interview with HQ Department of Planning staff

⁴⁶ RSS Department, September 2020

⁴⁷ These include: (1) Families with children one year old or less; (2) The aged and their family members; (3) Female headed families; (4) People with disabilities; (5) People with severe chronic illness; and (6) Head of families with disability and chronic illness. Under 3, if the family has a male aged 25-55 years in the family, the family will be excluded. Under 6, if the family has a male aged 25-55 years in the family, only the head of HH receives the assistance. Source: RSS Department. Introducing vulnerability targeting for Palestine refugees in the West Bank. September 2020

⁴⁸ Key Aid Consulting. Social Transfers in the Gaza Strip. Comparative analysis of the different modalities to deliver assistance. November 2018

originally registered in other UNRWA fields get 85 JOD every quarter. In Lebanon the most vulnerable PRL were included in recent years to alleviate the effects of COVID-19 and the economic crisis. These categories include: PRL enrolled in the UNRWA SSN programme (who receive a top up through the EA), PRL with children 0-5, elderly and chronically ill PRL.

- West Bank: the PMTF is still used but its criteria are perceived as outdated. There are currently long lists of potentially eligible refugees that remain uncovered by the SSNP, who have been supported by EA assistance. In general, in the West Bank, lower poverty levels require the use of additional exclusion characteristics to identify cash-strapped vulnerable families, including female-headed households, older persons and persons with chronic diseases, families with orphans and persons with disabilities, and large families, in addition to specific categories such as Bedouin communities living in the Seam Zone or in Jerusalem areas. As Palestinian nationals, West Bank refugees are eligible to receive Ministry of Social Development services and the Ministry of Social Development-managed Cash Transfer Programme and other agencies' food programmes, thus creating a risk of 'double dipping'. The Palestinian Authority is currently working on its vulnerability thinking with the World Bank and EU; thus, any potential change to vulnerability dimensions would influence UNRWA's assessments. In addition, and given the situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the EAs in the West Bank are also particularly focused on protection threats (e.g., home demolitions).
- In the health outcome area (especially Lebanon), assessments are used to target additional support for particularly vulnerable or at-risk cases in the form of access to secondary and tertiary care. In the education outcome area, UNRWA uses a matrix for rapid assessments looking at access and learning environment, teaching and learning practices and materials, support to teachers and personnel and community participation and coordination (with integrated AGD criteria).
- Assessments resulting from Flash Appeals have also been used to complement the EAs to deliver urgent assistance as a result of sudden crises. For example, additional Health in Emergencies (HiE) and hospitalization, Education in Emergencies (EiE), Sanitation and Waste Management services as well as cash and protection assistance were provided in all FOs to families affected by COVID-19 in 2020.⁴⁹ Flash Appeals were also issued to respond to mounting tensions in the West Bank and increased hostilities in Gaza, resulting in additional funding for displaced families in Gaza, and interventions for, inter alia, MHPSS, emergency cash, EiE, HiE, protection and shelter.⁵⁰

63. Despite this multiplicity of assessments, and given UNRWA's sheer caseload, assessing needs is considered by many staff members a complex process, which requires significant financial and staff investments and better communication from HQ on reasons for introducing changes to the existing system. In some FOs staff and refugees alike found it hard to register new information or send updates to the existing system (for example with information on changes to household composition due to marriages and births or changes in documentation). Across all FOs, staff worried about working with outdated or inaccurate data on the refugee caseload, whereby some people might not be eligible for assistance, whereas others are excluded. Furthermore, concerns were raised that some information is wrong (e.g., addresses or phone numbers) or that eligibility based on registration location (especially with PRS) might exclude vulnerable groups. For example, one staff member in Jordan mentioned: "Selection criteria are still based on the PRS registration office. This happened after the US cuts. This was not good. No one asks us about our opinions about changes. They often ask us to convince PRS that the criteria are fair, but we are not convinced ourselves. There are examples of the same brothers, with very similar vulnerability, who receive different amounts based on where they were registered only".

64. Whilst UNRWA recognizes the importance of identifying multiple intersecting vulnerabilities, assessing the most vulnerable among an already extremely fragile refugee population can be risky, although there is recognition that the current system needs revision. Though vulnerability assessments enable more targeted assistance, they are not used systematically because they require a significant investment of time and financial

⁴⁹ UNRWA. Flash Appeal for the Covid-19 response reports for March – December 2020

⁵⁰ UNRWA. Updated humanitarian and early recovery appeal – hostilities in Gaza and mounting tensions in the West Bank. May – December 2021

resources which are often unavailable to the highly resource-constrained Agency. There is also a feeling among some Agency staff that the sheer scale of emergency needs means that vulnerability assessments and vulnerability-based targeting for vital humanitarian assistance would entail significant risks. Though vulnerability is not evenly distributed, it is very widespread, and in unpredictable, emergency environments it can fluctuate suddenly and drastically. Eligibility thresholds could therefore carry the potential to exclude individuals with acute needs and no recourse to alternative sources of assistance. Given the highly unstable and fluctuating environments in which UNRWA operates, accurate and equitable targeting would require frequent vulnerability assessments, with considerable resource implications.⁵¹ Given the widespread levels of poverty, which required expanding coverage, UNRWA therefore opted for universal coverage for some components of EA-supported assistance, including food assistance in Gaza, and food assistance in Syria.

65. Addressing vulnerability in a more systematic fashion is constrained by financial and systemic difficulties, which donors recognize, but are unable to feasibly address. For example, in reflecting on the situation in 2021 in Gaza, with over 80% of the population living below the poverty line, 33% of families categorized as 'extremely poor' and 66% dependent on UNRWA for food assistance, and with vulnerabilities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, staff believe that vulnerability is de facto universal and that even with the current universal food approach, certain refugees are still unfairly excluded from food assistance. One staff member, in relation to rehousing post the 2014 Gaza war, mentioned: 'We try to keep professionalism reaching the most vulnerable groups, but not all those in need are targeted. 30% of those affected by the 2014 war have not been targeted yet and they're still left behind (200,000-230,000). 12.5% of the beneficiaries are ineligible.' Another staff member also expressed that 'vulnerability is certainly something we struggle with at UNRWA, because our mandate is to provide basic services to the community, and so we go into the basket and see who needs what. It is not about targeting people with disabilities, but rather integrating them into larger schemes and services. As mentioned in the relevance section, UNRWA's caseload coupled with unevenly distributed vulnerability, which can change suddenly due to crises, can affect the ability of the Agency to develop more targeted approaches.
66. Other agencies (e.g.: UNHCR, WHO, OCHA,) are informed by the MSNA framework or sector-specific assessments that in turn inform the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the HRP. Some UNRWA staff deem the MSNA too inaccurate to assess the full plethora of Palestine refugee needs. As mentioned in the Relevance section, UNRWA actively engages with the UNCT and the cluster system and contributes key information to OCHA for the definition of the country-level HNO and HRPs. MSNA/HNO include a detailed inter-sectoral analysis of the magnitude and severity of humanitarian needs among crisis-affected population groups through the calculation of sectoral and inter-sectoral PiN and severity figures. This is done in alignment with the joint intersectoral analysis framework methodology that measures living standards, coping mechanisms and physical and mental wellbeing of refugees. The MSNA is a solid assessment tool that is used globally in different fragile and conflict-affected settings by humanitarian coordination mechanisms and findings are trusted by donors. However, UNRWA regularly refers to the MSNA in EAs and AOR documents, but there is a view that the MSNA is too granular for an agency like UNRWA given their caseload, and especially with the lack of funding and staff to conduct this type of assessment. Multiple staff viewed the MSNA as inaccurate to fulfill UNRWA's mandate, mostly as the MSNA formula underestimates the magnitude of refugee needs. This could be true for the oPt crisis, where the refugee caseload managed by UNRWA dwarfs that of other humanitarian actors; in Syria, UNRWA's caseload is also substantially higher than that of other agencies.
67. However, there may be benefits from better coordination with humanitarian actors that utilise the MSNA to integrate refugee needs. Coordination and communication with other agencies remain essential, especially to ensure the set-up of partnerships where others can provide reach where UNRWA cannot due to finding/staff constraints.⁵² For example, in the West Bank some staff expressed some frustration at missed opportunities, while recognizing the reality of staff constraints: "We could coordinate with others for specific services, for

⁵¹ For example, the decision in Gaza to provide a single, unified food basket to all eligible refugees, rather than different baskets based on poverty levels, was driven by financial considerations and resources implications of conducting assessments on an annual basis given the very large scale of the case load.

⁵² This is less the case in Syria where access to Palestine refugee camps is severely restricted by the government, which advises other agencies to work through UNRWA.

example, GBV, where UNFPA can generate the funding, run the activities, and we would do the referrals. But there is fear that we cannot start new interventions and then they can be taken away and this creates issues. If others are providing services, it also signals that we don't, and this is again a problem. But continuing this way, we miss out on opportunities because we are not coordinating with others where we could direct refugees to these activities. But also, we don't have the staff to go to all these meetings".

68. As explained in the relevance section, **AGD criteria are integrated in needs assessments, crisis monitoring surveys, PDMs as well as the PMTF**, with a large amount of quantitative data and gender disaggregation of key basic indicators across all interventions and FOs. This is evidenced, for example, in the detailed needs assessments included in the EAs and AOR documentation as well as in the large statistical compendium at the end of the latter. Key policies, guidelines and strategies have been introduced (e.g., the Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2022 and Disability Inclusion Guidelines) to further support identification of high-need groups, in addition to the categorical approach to vulnerability based on high dependency ratio criteria and other factors.
69. From a gender perspective, staff highlighted the targeting of female-headed households for emergency cash, food, and other forms of assistance, the numerous interventions across various fields of operation that seek to address GBV, and the establishment of a Gender Task Force to increase coordination and communication across programmes and fields of operation. From a disability perspective, UNRWA uses a 'twin-track' approach ensuring accessibility to all services as well as strengthening prevention and support services to persons with disabilities and as mentioned, is engendering utilization of the Washington Group criteria on disability statistics for assessing physical, mental and sensory impairment.⁵³
70. Interviews with staff and beneficiaries highlighted various means through which EA designs have addressed the rights and needs of Palestine refugees with disabilities. At a minimum, UNRWA aims to ensure that all its facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. Though good progress has been made in this regard, funding constraints have reduced the Agency's ability to ensure that all its facilities are accessible. Disability is also often included among the vulnerability criteria for targeted services supported by EAs. For example, households including persons with disabilities are among those targeted with additional emergency cash assistance in Gaza⁵⁴ as well as in Syria. In the area of education across multiple fields of operation, children with disabilities are referred for further support, often to other agencies or organizations that provide specialized services. In some cases, improved data on disability has facilitated targeting for EAs. For example, in 2021 UNRWA's RSS contributed data on persons with disabilities for EA planning, which enabled the prioritization of persons with disabilities for shelter rehabilitation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.⁵⁵ One area identified by staff as particularly challenging for ensuring disability inclusion was emergency cash for work programming.
71. Some staff also reflected that currently 'gender' still equates with female and girls' issues and that full appreciation of diversity and inclusion is still in its infancy as well as a contentious topic in the community. This mirrors experiences of other agencies and across different sectors in the Middle East and is by no means unique to UNRWA. However, even within the confines of accepted binary gender definitions, a thorough intersectional⁵⁶ analysis of multiple vulnerabilities, for example, how poverty, age, health status, and gender compound to enhance exposure to and experience of disadvantage, and how these impact different population groups is still lacking. Analyzing inclusion, participation and fair power relations would require measuring results and producing aggregation at outcome level, complementing the wealth of quantitative

⁵³ See: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/resources/methodology/>

⁵⁴ 2022 oPt Emergency Appeal, p. 9

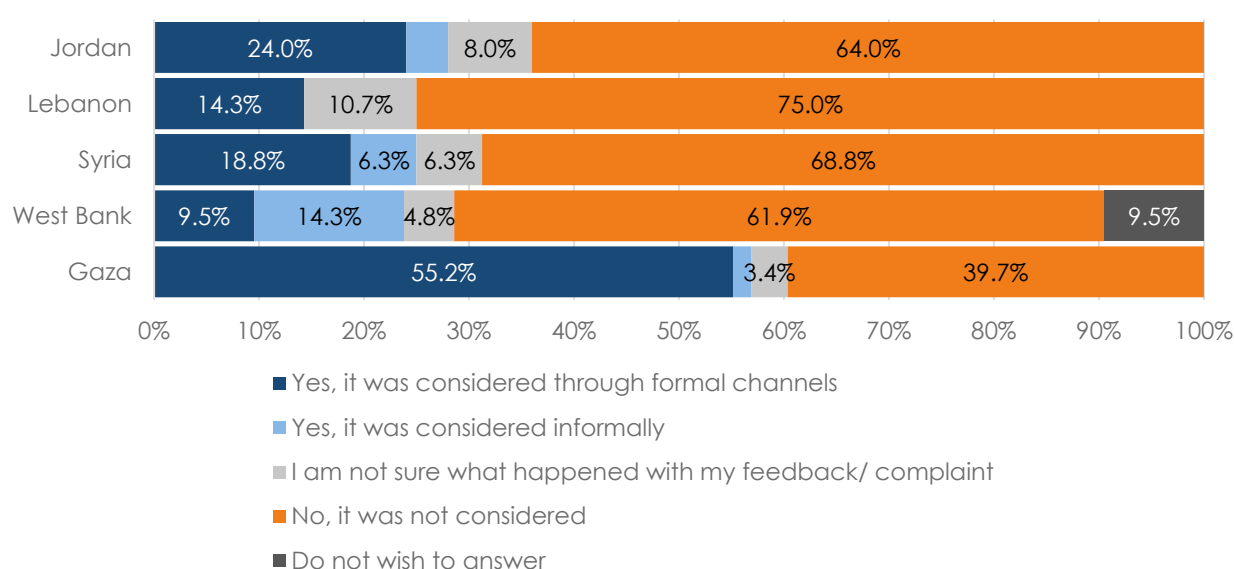
⁵⁵ 2021 Disability Inclusion Annual Report, p. 10

⁵⁶ The term 'intersectionality' was coined by black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, to describe the multiple forms of identity and disadvantages that compound themselves to create obstacles to an individual's attainment of health, rights etc. In simpler terms, intersectionality means "that a person's identity is made up of multiple, intersecting factors such as age, poverty, class, race, ethnicity, caste, language, migration or displacement status, HIV status, disability, gender identity and/or sexual orientation, which combine to both benefit and disadvantage them, and which cannot be separated" when assessing and understanding their situation. See: UN Women, Intersectionality resource guide and toolkit, 2021 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit>

data with in-depth qualitative data and analysis. At the moment, EA reporting remains largely output-driven and quantitative. Intersectional analysis would also require specific monitoring staff with the right skills and experience to explore specific issues from a gender and intersectional lens. The lack of nuanced data and the staff to perform this type of analysis makes it hard to assess the extent to which intersectional needs are addressed, and the evaluation has found limited evidence in this respect.

72. Feedback mechanisms have allowed for refugees' input into the design and implementation of EA-supported interventions in some cases, strengthening coverage (and relevance) though there is an acknowledged need for improvement in this area. Recipient feedback relating to cash and food assistance, for example, is captured regularly through post-distribution monitoring surveys in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Data from these surveys has been used in the past to inform the design or adjustments to EA supported assistance. For instance, PDM data from 2020 relating to the significant economic impact of COVID-19 restrictions on PRS in Jordan informed the decision to complement regular cash assistance with two rounds of top-up cash of USD 100 per person.⁵⁷ In addition, data from PDMs in Jordan, which revealed a substantial deterioration in socioeconomic conditions facing PRS families since initial assessments in 2018, contributed to the Agency's decision to revise its targeting approach for cash assistance.⁵⁸ The available evidence also indicates that feedback from Palestine refugees in the West Bank and Gaza has been obtained and has been used to inform the design of EA supported assistance. For example, feedback from Palestine refugees in the West Bank led to modifications in the food basket provided, to include items such as flour, rice, oil, beans, and milk.⁵⁹ Modifications to food basket contents were also made in Syria in response to feedback from refugees. At the same time, interviews and focus group discussions (and confirmed in the graph below) with both UNRWA staff and refugees revealed a widespread acknowledgement that there is an outstanding need to improve feedback mechanisms, and procedures for ensuring Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) more generally. While hotlines and boxes for complaints are available, [survey](#) results also indicate dissatisfaction among beneficiaries about the efficacy of these (apart for Gaza) as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: If you have provided UNRWA with feedback or submitted a complaint, was it considered?



⁵⁷ 2022 Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal, p. 47

⁵⁸ Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal Progress Report January – July 2021, p. 38

⁵⁹ 2022 oPt Emergency Appeal, p. 30

73. Focus group discussions and interviews with both staff and beneficiaries further suggested that issues raised through other channels, such as meetings with parents in UNRWA schools or meetings with camp development committees, were rarely resolved. There is a feeling among many interviewed staff that there is a need for a broader approach to accountability that goes beyond the provision of complaint mechanisms, and which provides regular opportunities for input by Palestine refugees into the design and delivery of EA supported assistance. This sentiment aligns with findings from recent protection audits,⁶⁰ as well as findings from the 2021 independent evaluation of UNRWA's MTS.⁶¹ Recent EAs have committed to efforts to systematically increase the degree of participation by Palestine refugees in programme design and delivery.⁶²
74. Despite these efforts, there is criticism among donors and some former and existing staff alike that universal approaches or providing assistance to the highest number of people do not mirror the purpose of an Emergency Appeal. Some donors are of the view that EAs should not be used to support blanket assistance, and that UNRWA should make more efficient use of limited EA resources through more selective, vulnerability-based targeting. According to this view, some of the Agency's emergency interventions are not sufficiently grounded in detailed analyses of needs and vulnerability, which should be coordinated and aligned with the analyses of other humanitarian agencies in the region through OCHA's cluster approach. Many of these concerns relate to Gaza, where questions have been raised regarding the appropriateness of universal food distribution, which commenced in 2021 with the Agency's decision to end resource-intensive poverty assessment surveys,⁶³ and the possibility of shifting from food to cash assistance.⁶⁴ The wider suggestion from some donors is that funds raised through EAs should be used to provide vulnerability-based assistance to address acute, emergency needs, while forms of blanket, status-based assistance should be covered exclusively through the PB. In the absence of substantial and sustained increases to the Agency's PB, however, it is difficult to see how this would be feasible without significant compromises to the quantity and quality of services delivered to Palestine refugees, including for emergency needs.
75. Similarly, some evaluation participants view that the current approach does not engender a stronger vulnerability mindset and that UNRWA needs to find ways to mitigate the reputational risks associated with appearing to withdraw or cut assistance: "We fear people who don't need the assistance are in the system but it is risky to get them out of the lists because it would show that we are withdrawing from our mandate. UNRWA continues to fall back to provide services to the maximum number of people possible, that doesn't engender a vulnerability mindset at all – the bigger question is: are there ways in which to better target the core services vs going down the EAs? If UNRWA wants to have that dialogue, it needs to make sense and manage it politically but having donors in a position to support that initiative... they need that, it's a future for them".

Effectiveness

76. In the Effectiveness section we examine the extent to which planned targets for EA interventions have been met, trends in the overall number of beneficiaries supported through EA interventions, and the factors that influenced achievement and non-achievement. We also seek to highlight examples of flexibility in implementation and management to adapt to changes in context, as well as any unintended positive and negative consequences of EA interventions.

⁶⁰ 2021 Annual Operations Report, p. 24-25

⁶¹ 2021 Independent Evaluation of Medium Term Strategy, p. 40

⁶² 2022 Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal, p. 30

⁶³ 2021 oPt Emergency Appeal, p. 15

⁶⁴ Note that food assistance provided through emergency appeals in Gaza in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 was targeted at the most vulnerable households through poverty assessment surveys conducted through home visits by Agency social workers. In 2018, however, UNRWA shifted to blanket food assistance in Gaza.. Note that a study commissioned in 2018 on this issue concluded that, for several reasons, shifting from food to cash assistance in Gaza was inappropriate.

7. To what extent has the emergency response achieved its planned results? What were the major factors contributing to the achievement or non-achievement of results?
8. Have there been any unintended consequences (positive or negative) of the emergency response?

Finding 15: UNRWA's results reporting for Emergency Appeals is almost exclusively output oriented.

The results frameworks that accompany Emergency Appeals between 2016 and 2021 do not distinguish between output and outcome indicators. The great majority of indicators and associated targets are activity focused or quantify the number of refugees in receipt of UNRWA services on an annual basis. Where outcome-level indicators are included, these are not consistently reported on an annual basis. As such, while results frameworks accompanying the Emergency Appeals provide a relatively solid basis for assessing the effectiveness of delivery at the output level, they cannot be used to provide an assessment of outcomes.

Finding 16: A review of output-level results indicates that Emergency Appeal funded-interventions reached significant numbers of refugees across all areas of operation with emergency assistance. This was the case for all programmatic areas. Interventions included but were not limited to emergency cash and food assistance, support to ensure the continuity and expansion of education and health services in emergencies, and targeted support to facilitate the identification of and legal support to refugees facing protection risks.

Finding 17: Whilst a review of consistently reported output level indicators reveals that most annual targets were not fully met across all areas of operation, this should not detract from the fact that reported results clearly illustrate that significant numbers of refugees were supported across various programmatic areas through Emergency Appeal funding. Beneficiary inputs to the evaluation emphasized that such support was critical, and often lifesaving. Data collected through the evaluation [survey](#) highlighted the criticality of food and cash assistance in particular. The principal cause of unmet targets (as well as dropped interventions) was insufficient funding in the face of extreme need.

Finding 18: Limited unintended consequences were identified by the evaluation, mainly in relation to conflict sensitivity, where tensions were noted to have arisen between beneficiaries not receiving EA support and those who did; as well as in relation to beneficiary reactions to changing levels of support or discontinuation of services and assistance.

77. This section focuses primarily on intervention areas that have consistently featured in EAs and across fields of operation: food assistance, cash assistance, health, education, and protection. Where complete data exists, aggregate annual results vs. targets are presented for the period 2016-2021 for separate fields of operation. To provide an assessment of the extent to which planned results were achieved, information is also displayed regarding the percentage of annual targets that were fully met for each strategic outcome area across the different fields of operation. For example, if in a given year, five out of 10 targets were fully met in a strategic outcome area, then this will be reflected as 50% of annual targets fully met. Crucially, figures relating to the percentage of annual targets fully met do *not* illustrate the degree to which individual targets were met for specific indicators. This information is instead captured by the annual results vs. targets graphs, which show considerable variation in the extent to which specific indicator targets were met. All the information for these graphs was compiled from the EA results reporting contained within Annual Operational Reports.⁶⁵ It is important to point out when interpreting these figures that in many cases, the low proportion of annual results targets fully met is clearly attributable to a lack of funding for the relevant intervention.
78. The interventions covered by UNRWA's EAs have varied slightly in response to changes in context and the availability of resources. As noted in the Relevance section, EA interventions align strongly with the Agency's overarching strategic priorities, though the emphasis has varied across both field of operation and time. Table 5 below draws on information from UNRWA's EA documents and results reporting to provide a summary of which interventions were supported by EAs across Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria between 2016 and 2021.

⁶⁵ When compiling this data, a target was considered met if the achieved value for any given result was equal to or greater than 98% of the targeted value.

79. The Agency also demonstrated considerable flexibility in EA implementation in response to sudden and severe changes in context, including the COVID-19 outbreak that started in early 2020, and the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in May 2021. The Agency's response to the COVID 19 pandemic included measures to ensure the continued delivery of services to the greatest extent possible through the rapid development and roll out of online modalities in education and health; the redeployment of school janitors as cleaners in camps in Gaza; the widespread provision of PPE to healthcare workers; and support to the health ministries of host governments/authorities in vaccine rollout. During the May 2021 escalation of hostilities in Gaza, UNRWA installations were utilized as emergency shelters during active hostilities to provide shelter for up to 70,000 people and the Agency raised funds for the reconstruction of damaged WASH infrastructure and housing in the aftermath.

Table 5: Overview of EA interventions in UNRWA's five fields of operation

Intervention/FO	Gaza	WB & EJ	Jordan	Lebanon	Syria
Emergency food assistance	2016-21	2016-21			2016-21 ⁶⁶
Emergency/regular cash assistance	2016 and 2021	2019-21	2016-21	2016-21	2016-21
Emergency health	2016-21	2016-18 and 2021	2016-21	2016-21	2016-21
Education in Emergencies ⁶⁷	2016-21	Only in 2021	2016-21	2016-21	2016-21
Livelihoods	2016-18			2016-21	2016-21
Cash for Work	2016-21	2016-18			
Protection	2016-21	2016-21	2016-21	2016-21	2016-21
Environmental Health	2016-19	Only 2021	2018-19 and 2021	2016-21	2016-21
Others	MHPSS (2016-21) Summer Fun Weeks (2016-18) ERW awareness (2016)	MHPSS (2016-18)	N/A	N/A	MHPSS (2016-21) Summer Learning Activities (2018-21) ERW awareness (2018-2021)

Emergency Food Assistance

80. Emergency food assistance has consistently featured as a major component of the oPt EA for Gaza. The number of Palestine refugees receiving food assistance increased by almost 30% over the 2016-2021 period, from approximately 874,000 in 2016 to over 1.1 million in 2021. At least some of this growth is attributable to UNRWA's decision to include SSNP refugees that had previously been covered by the PB. UNRWA's caseload over time has also increased due to the growing intensity of needs in Gaza, which has witnessed a rapid growth in poverty amidst deteriorating economic conditions.
81. Targeted emergency food assistance has also featured consistently as a component of UNRWA's EA interventions in Syria. Between 2016 and 2018, over 390,000 most vulnerable Palestine refugees were provided with emergency food assistance in Syria. In 2019 and 2020, the number of Palestine refugees that received emergency food assistance reduced by over 50% to 136,074 and 145,365 respectively, though by 2021, when

⁶⁶ Food assistance in Syria was not a distinct/separate outcome area. It was incorporated into the outcome area "Cash Assistance, NFIs, and Food Aid".

⁶⁷ Note that education in emergencies features a component relating to psychosocial support provided to students, and sometimes to parents.

a decision was made by the Agency to offer blanket assistance to beneficiaries in light of the deepening socio-economic crisis⁶⁸, these figures had recovered to 2016-2018 levels.

82. In the West Bank including East Jerusalem targeting is vulnerability-based. Between 2016 and 2018 food vouchers were provided to a target population of 155,000. These food vouchers were provided in combination with other forms of assistance such as emergency cash and cash for work. In addition, in partnership with WFP, UNRWA provides in-kind food assistance to a target population of 35,000 Bedouin and herder communities. During COVID-19, some families in quarantine also received in-kind food assistance to meet their specific needs, although this assistance has been discontinued.
83. The proportion of results targets fully met for food assistance in Gaza and the West Bank has been variable. As figure 7 below illustrates, between 2016 and 2018, most annual targets relating to food assistance in the West Bank including East Jerusalem went unmet. In 2019 and 2020, UNRWA met all its results targets relating to food assistance in the West Bank including East Jerusalem; and in 2021, with COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, only half of these targets were met as there was less need to provide families in quarantine with in-kind food baskets. In Gaza, there has been a steady and sustained improvement in the proportion of annual results targets met relating to food assistance. In 2016, less than half of results targets for food assistance in Gaza were met, but since 2017 most targets in this area have been met, and all targets were met in 2020 and 2021.

Figure 4: Gaza, Number of Palestine refugees receiving emergency food assistance

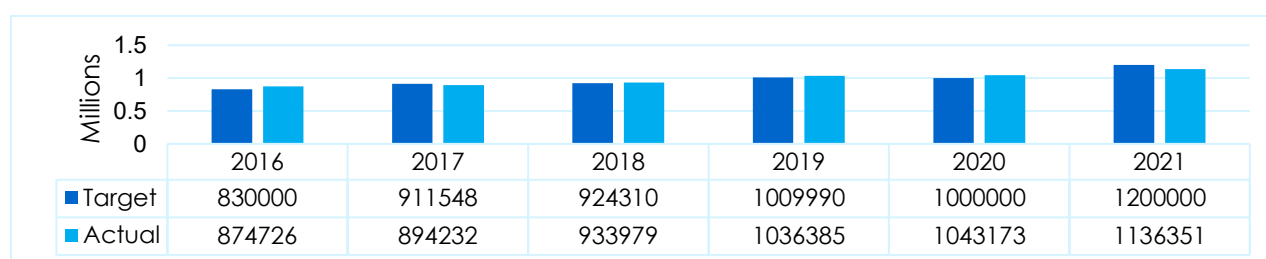


Figure 5: WB including EJ, Number of individuals benefiting from joint WFP-UNRWA food distribution for vulnerable and herder communities in Area C

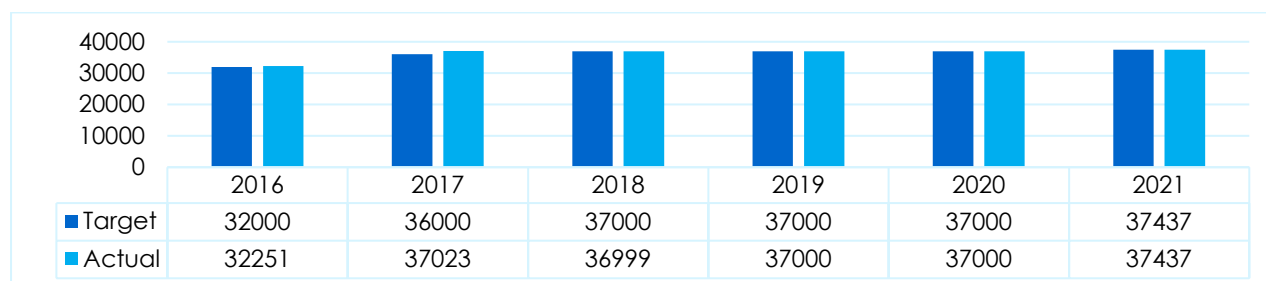
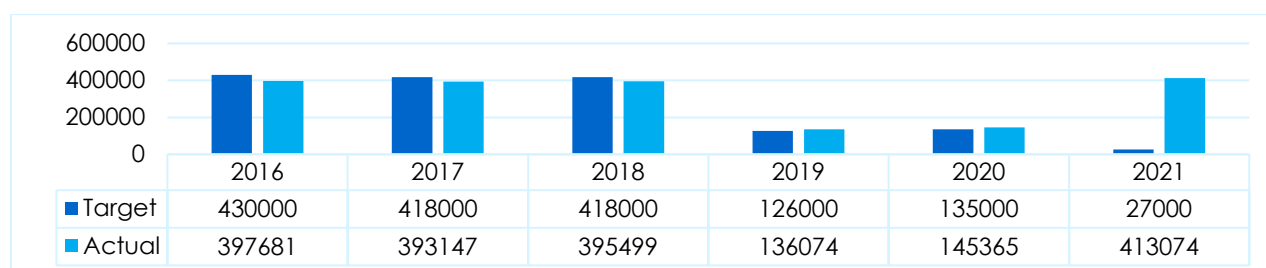
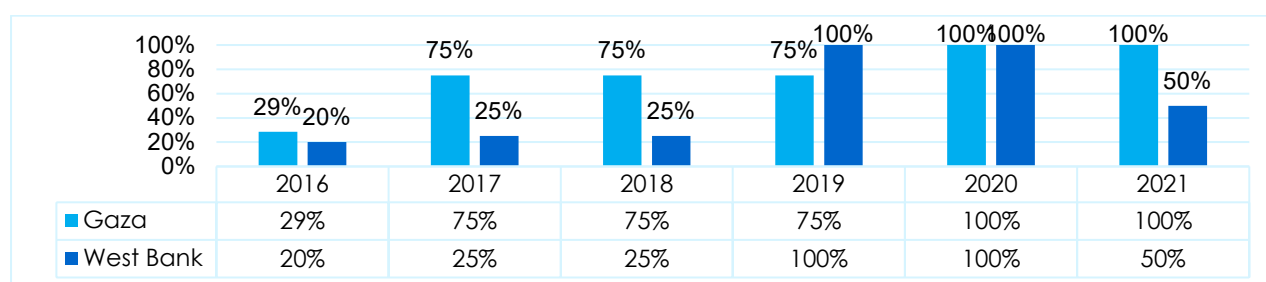


Figure 6: Syria, Number of most vulnerable refugees provided with food assistance



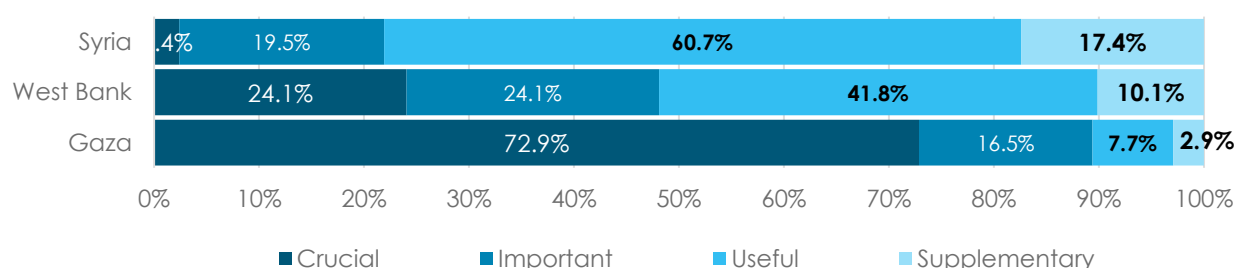
⁶⁸ 2021 SRC Emergency Appeal, pg. 15

Figure 7: Percentage of annual targets fully met for emergency food assistance in Gaza and the WB



84. In interviews and focus discussions, staff and recipients repeatedly emphasized the importance of food assistance in Gaza, where it was considered by many to be a life-saving intervention, in light of the severe socio-economic consequences of the ongoing blockade of the area and repeated outbreaks of violent instability. This view is reflected in [survey](#) results, where 36% of respondents indicated that without UNRWA's food assistance, they would have very little or no other food, and 18% indicated that food assistance accounted for the majority of their consumption. There is also a widespread view among both staff and recipients of food assistance that although this intervention is vital, the amounts provided were insufficient to fully meet needs. This was exacerbated by high food prices and few opportunities for income generation. Surveyed beneficiaries' perception of the importance of food assistance to meet household needs showed a slightly different pattern of responses in Syria. Food assistance was considered useful for nearly 61% of surveyed beneficiaries, with noticeably lower scores for those considering food assistance crucial (2.4%) and important (19.5%).

Figure 8: How important was the food assistance in supporting your household food needs?



85. As noted above, UNRWA has transitioned from vulnerability-based distribution of food assistance in Gaza, which involved the differentiated food baskets according to vulnerability status, to a modality involving blanket distribution of a unified food basket. While this has entailed an increase in the number of Palestine refugees receiving food aid in Gaza, interviews with staff indicated that a sizeable number of refugees in the area do not benefit from assistance because of the suspension of the registration system in 2020 as a result of shortfalls in funding. Suspension of registration has meant that new families cannot register for food assistance, and therefore receive nothing. It is estimated that this may affect up to 200,000 individuals. In Syria, food assistance is based on blanket distribution.

Emergency Cash Assistance

86. Cash assistance was a major component of EA-supported interventions in most areas of operation. This included both regular cash assistance as well as one-off emergency cash grants to vulnerable households or individuals during COVID-19. Cash assistance was a particularly prominent feature of UNRWA interventions in areas of operation covered by the Syria Regional Crisis EAs. As illustrated in figure 9, in Syria, the number of individuals in receipt of cash assistance has fluctuated between 2016 and 2021 but has remained within the range of 400,000 and 421,000 individuals per year. Figure 10 illustrates that in Lebanon, at least 27,000 PRS have received cash assistance between 2016 and 2021, and in Jordan, as illustrated in figure 11, the number of PRS in receipt of cash assistance has grown steadily from approximately 14,400 in 2016 to approximately 18,700 in 2021. Cash assistance to abject poor families commenced in the West Bank including East Jerusalem in 2019, and the numbers in receipt of assistance have reduced slightly in this period from approximately 25,600 to 24,000. These families had previously been receiving cash for work or other interventions, which had to be discontinued after the 2018 funding cuts.

Figure 9: Number of individuals receiving cash assistance in Syria

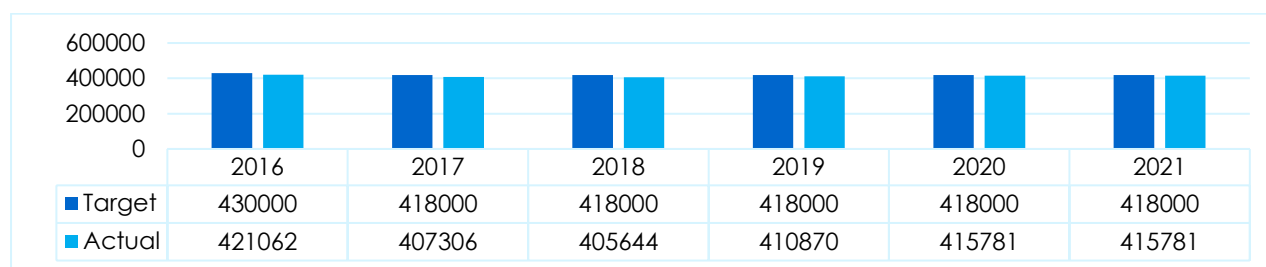


Figure 10: Number of individuals receiving multipurpose cash assistance in Lebanon

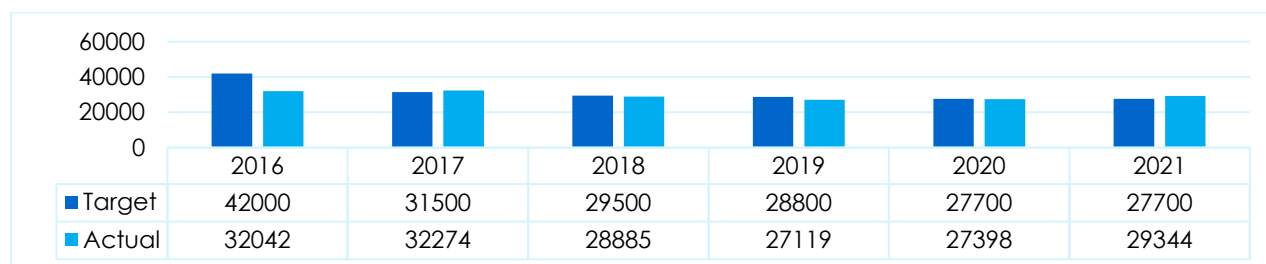
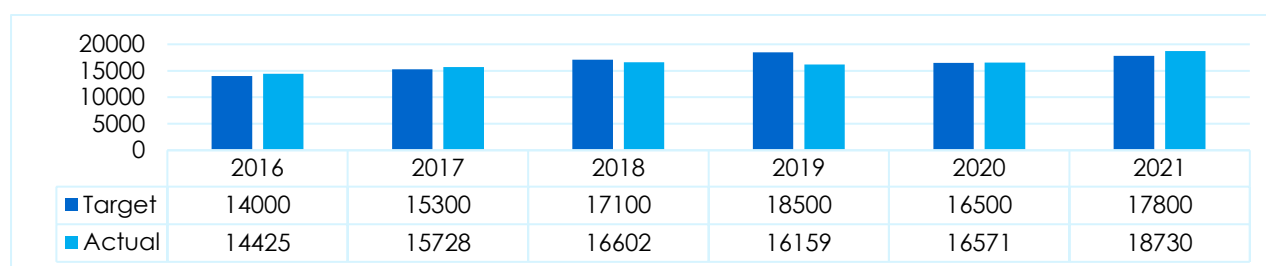


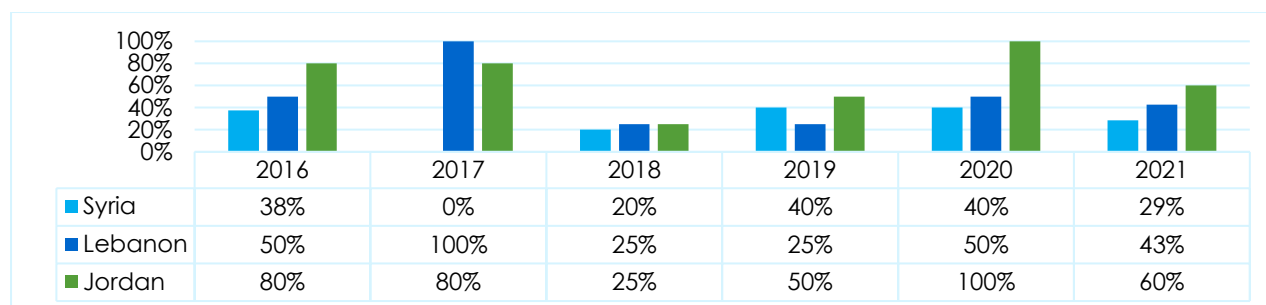
Figure 11: Number of individuals receiving cash assistance in Jordan



87. In the area of emergency cash assistance, a considerable proportion of annual results targets were not fully met in most years across all fields of operation. As illustrated by figure 9, the extent of full achievement of annual results targets relating to cash assistance has varied across years and areas of operation. In Syria, less than half of annual results targets were fully met in all years between 2016 and 2021, and the data suggests no improvement in this respect. In Lebanon, although all targets relating to cash assistance were met in 2017, half or less than half of targets were fully met in all the other years. In Jordan, all targets were fully met in 2020, the majority of targets were fully met in 2016 and 2017, and half or less than half were fully met in 2018, 2019, and 2021.
88. In interviews with UNRWA staff, funding shortfalls coupled with high and increasing levels of demand were identified as the most persistent challenges relating to achieving targets in the area of emergency cash assistance. In Syria in particular, difficulties in recruitment were also identified as a key factor hindering the achievement of results. HR challenges were identified as resulting both from budget constraints but also from a general lack of suitably qualified candidates in the field of operation. Similarly, in Gaza, staffing shortfalls resulted in very high, and often unsustainable, workloads on UNRWA personnel.
89. Although annual results targets were not always fully met, cash assistance was identified by many UNRWA staff and beneficiaries as the most effective intervention supported by EAs. Regular, multi-purpose cash assistance was not a feature of EA interventions in Gaza. However, other forms of cash assistance did feature, with different targeting criteria. In 2016, for instance over 8,000 refugee families received Transitional Shelter Cash Assistance of USD 220/250 per month to support temporary rental or stay with host families, and 5,400 refugee families received cash assistance for undertaking minor and major repairs on shelters damaged during the

2014 hostilities.⁶⁹ Focus group discussions with refugees in Gaza indicated that both forms of shelter-related cash assistance were highly valued.

Figure 12: Percentage of annual results targets met for cash assistance in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan



90. [Survey](#) data generally supports the view expressed in interviews and focus groups that cash assistance was greatly valued. In aggregate, 33% of respondents reflected cash assistance was crucial, and that their households would have very little or no other sources of income in its absence, and 12% indicated that it formed the majority of household income. Discussions with recipients indicated that the cash was used to address a variety of basic needs, including food, rent, transportation, and electricity. In Syria, however, cash amounts were noted to be too low to make a significant difference – particularly given that they are paid out in Syrian pounds – and the unpredictability of when cash transfers will come through makes it difficult for beneficiaries to rely on them.

Emergency Health and MHPSS

91. Emergency health interventions were a consistent feature of all EAs, with the exception of the West Bank including East Jerusalem, where health-related interventions ceased during the period 2019-2020. Health interventions delivered through EAs included but were not limited to support for the recurrent costs of UNRWA primary health care centres to enable increased numbers of consultations, the supply of vital medicines, and support for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related hospitalizations. MHPSS featured as a distinct Strategic Outcome area in Gaza and the West Bank, while in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria PSS interventions supported by EAs were integrated into the education Strategic Outcome area.
92. Results in this area point to declining numbers of beneficiary visits to UNRWA health facilities between 2016 and 2021 in Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, as illustrated by figures 13 to 15. In Jordan and Lebanon, the decrease in the number of PRS visits to UNRWA health facilities was particularly pronounced. In Lebanon, the number of visits decreased from over 243,000 in 2016 to just over 66,000 in 2021, a fall of over 70%. In Jordan, the number of PRS visits to health centres dropped from approximately 17,000 in 2016 to approximately 8,700 in 2021, a decrease of 49%. In Syria, the decline was less pronounced, from approximately 998,000 in 2016 to approximately 753,000 in 2021, a fall of approximately 25%. The decline in visits to health centres in 2020 and 2021 is likely to be at least partially attributable to COVID-19 restriction.

⁶⁹ 2016 Annual Operations Report, p.58

Figure 13: Number of PRS visits to UNRWA health centres in Jordan

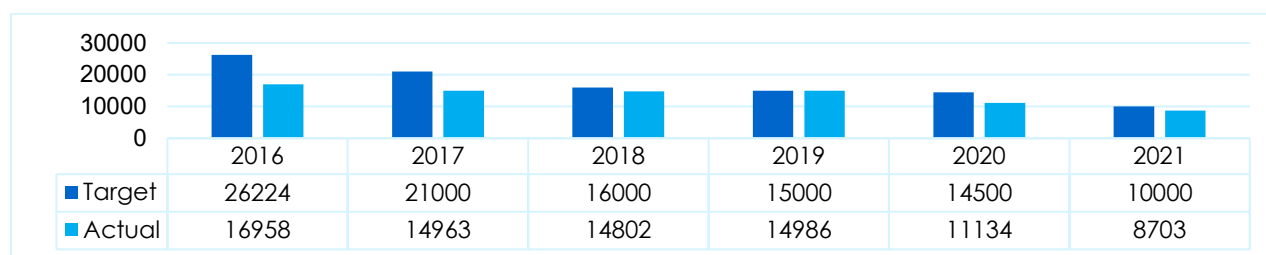


Figure 14: Number of PRS visits to UNRWA health centres in Lebanon

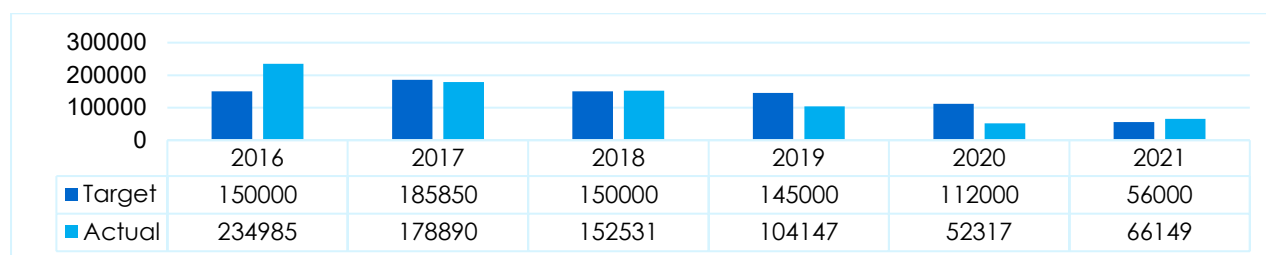
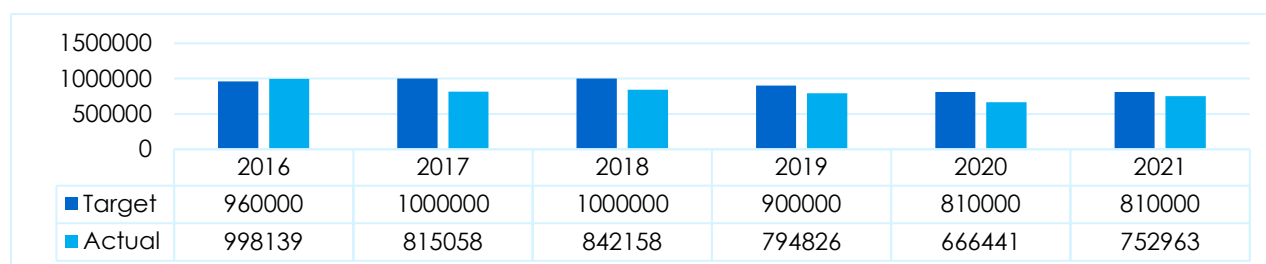
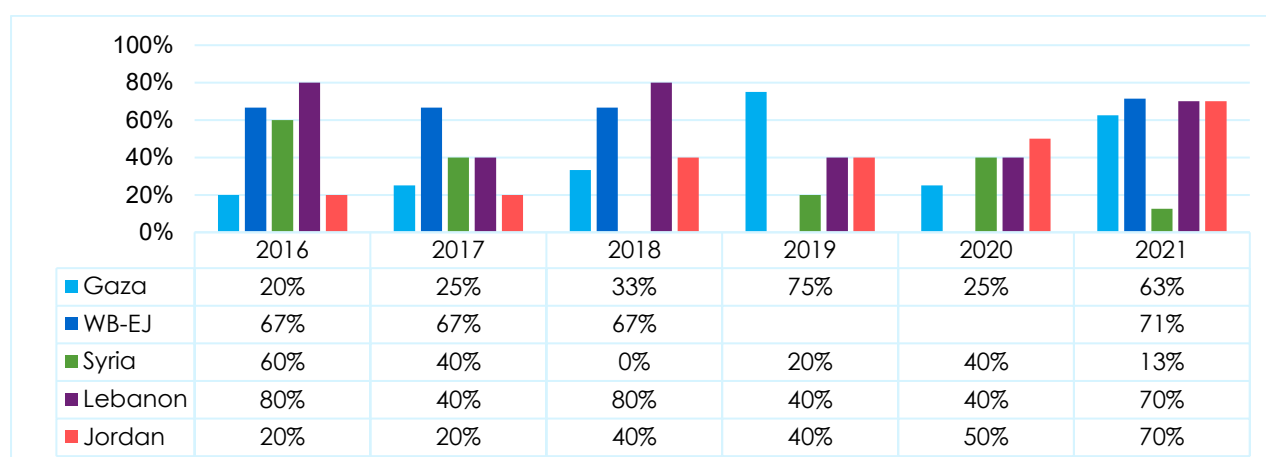


Figure 15: Number of refugee visits to UNRWA health centres in Syria



93. As figure 16 below illustrates, no FO fully met 100% of annual results targets in any year. The only FO to consistently fully meet at least half of annual results targets in the area of emergency health was the West Bank including East Jerusalem (although emergency health was not included in its EAs for 2019 and 2020). In other FOs, less than half of annual targets were fully met in most years.

Figure 16: Percentage of annual targets met for emergency health interventions



94. In interviews and focus group discussions with UNRWA staff, several important achievements to the health Strategic Outcome area are noted. UNRWA was widely regarded to have played a very positive role during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing personal protective equipment to primary health centres, supporting vaccination uptake, and covering hospitalization costs. In Gaza, the integration of PSS services into primary

healthcare was also identified as a success story. Concerns were raised by several interviewees, however, regarding the frequent unavailability of basic medicines at Primary Health Centres in Gaza.

Education in Emergencies

95. Education interventions supported through EAs featured consistently in all areas of operation except for the West Bank including East Jerusalem. Interventions in this strategic area included but were not limited to support for the integration of PRS students into UNRWA schools in Lebanon and Jordan, provision of educational materials to students, and provision of individual and group PSS counselling services to students and teachers.
96. In Lebanon, the number of PRS students enrolled in UNRWA schools remained steady between 2016 and 2018, while in Jordan, the number enrolled dropped fairly significantly from 1,350 in 2016 to 913 in 2021, a fall of 31%. While some of this decline will be attributable to PRS students graduating from the schooling system, interviews did indicate that school dropouts affected all areas of operation. In Syria, the number of students enrolled in schools was more stable. The integration of PSS counselling into education was considered by many stakeholders to be a strong case of success. As figures 19 to 21 illustrate, in all fields of operation covered by the Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal, a large proportion of students received PSS counselling each year. Interviews indicated that this support was extremely valuable. In Syria, most students received educational materials each year with the exception of 2019, when there was no funding available for this intervention.

Figure 17: Number of PRS students enrolled in UNRWA schools in Jordan

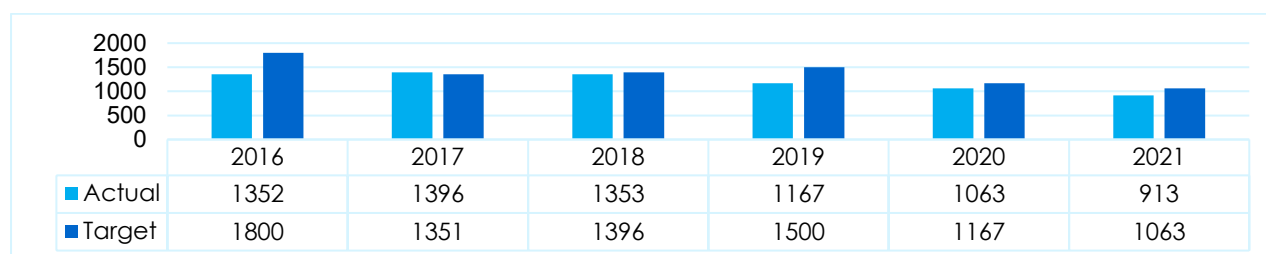


Figure 18: Number of PRS students enrolled in UNRWA schools in Lebanon

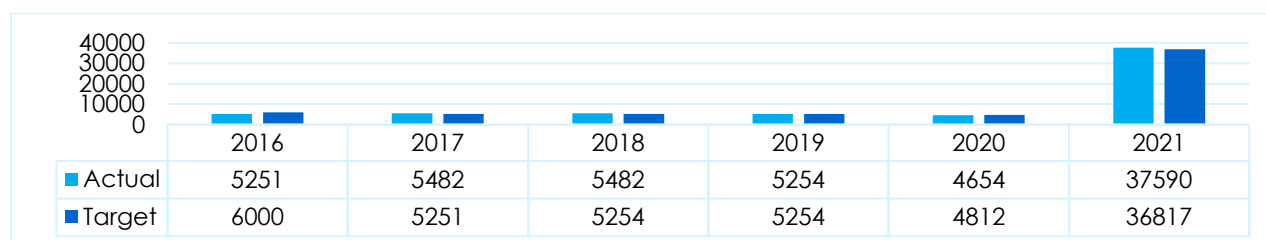


Figure 19: Number of students that received at least one PSS session in Syria

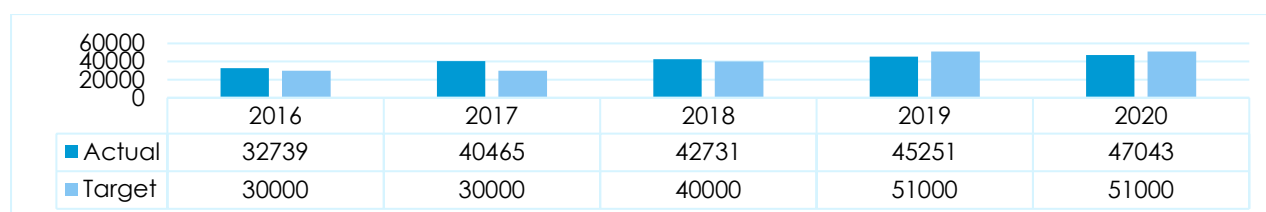


Figure 20: Number of students receiving PSS support in Lebanon

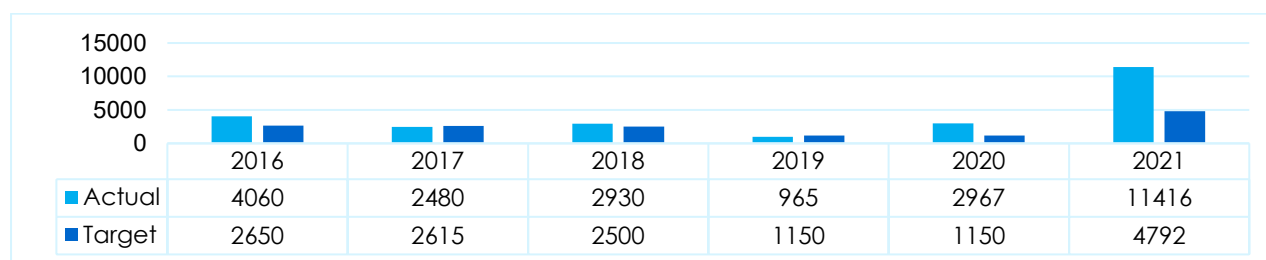
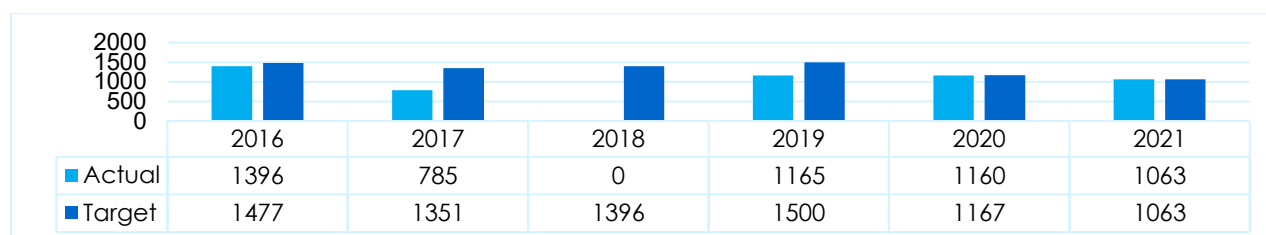
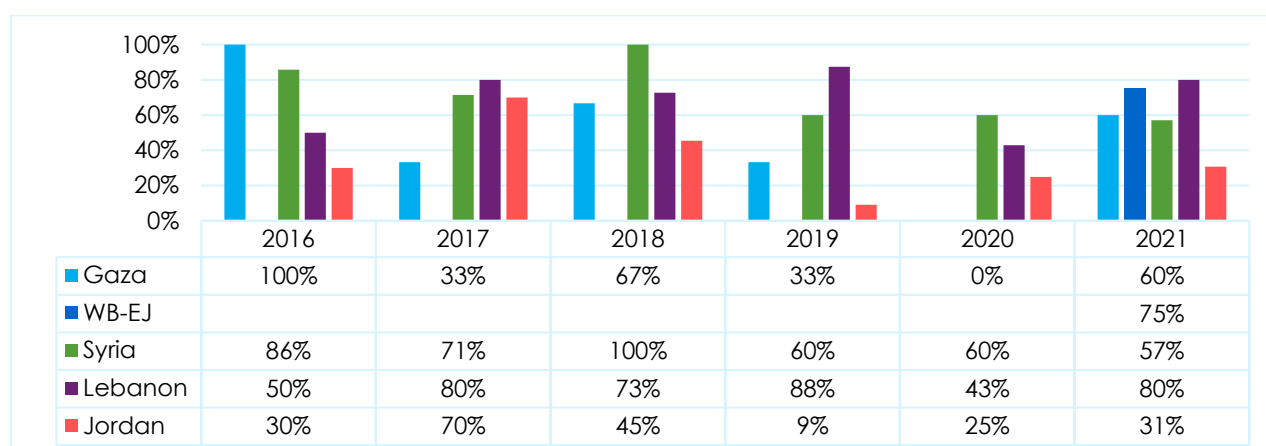


Figure 21: Number of students receiving PSS in Jordan



97. Overall, a higher proportion of annual results targets were fully met in the education strategic area than in many other strategic areas. In Syria, for instance, over half of annual results targets were fully met for in all years. In Lebanon, at least half of annual results targets were fully met for all years with the exception of 2020. In Jordan, under half of results targets were fully met in all years with the exception of 2017, when 70% of results targets were met.

Figure 22: Percentage of annual targets met for education in emergencies interventions



98. Information from interviews identified the remote learning programme during COVID-19 as demonstrative of UNRWA's adaptability in the face of rapidly changing circumstances. Though the remote learning programme did face challenges, including internet access and increased pressure on parents, it was widely seen as an effective alternative to in-person lessons in light of the circumstances. Internet access difficulties were particularly pronounced in Gaza, where UNRWA staff indicated that several thousand students had insufficient access to enable them to keep up with the curriculum, putting an increased burden on parents. In Lebanon, efforts were made to mitigate internet access challenges by supporting refugees with connections, printed and other educational material. Some staff members suggested that UNRWA draws on the experience of COVID-19 to develop a well-considered approach to digitalization in its educational programmes, including appropriate training for teachers and ensuring the right infrastructure across the Agency's schools.

Protection

99. Protection interventions supported through EAs featured consistently in all areas of operations each year. Supported interventions included but were not limited to the training of UNRWA staff members (including

front-line staff) on protection, the provision of legal assistance to Palestine refugees identified as having protection risks, and interventions relating to protection risks targeting external actors and duty bearers.

100. Results indicate hundreds of staff members received protection training between 2016 and 2021, though the number receiving training frequently fell well below the number targeted, particularly in Jordan and Gaza. In Gaza in 2020, no funding was allocated to protection under the EA, explaining the non-achievement of targets, though trainings did continue using PB and earmarked project resources. In Syria, the number of Palestine refugees that received legal advice grew significantly over the period, from 1,078 in 2016 to 5,101 in 2021, an increase of 373%. In Lebanon, the number receiving legal assistance was more consistent, though high. In Jordan, far fewer PRS received legal assistance, and the number declined between 2016 and 2020, before rising significantly in 2021.

101. As figure 13 illustrates, the proportion of annual targets achieved in this area was high in comparison to many other strategic areas. In the West Bank including East Jerusalem, for example, at least half of the annual results targets were met each year.

Figure 23: Percentage of annual targets met for protection interventions

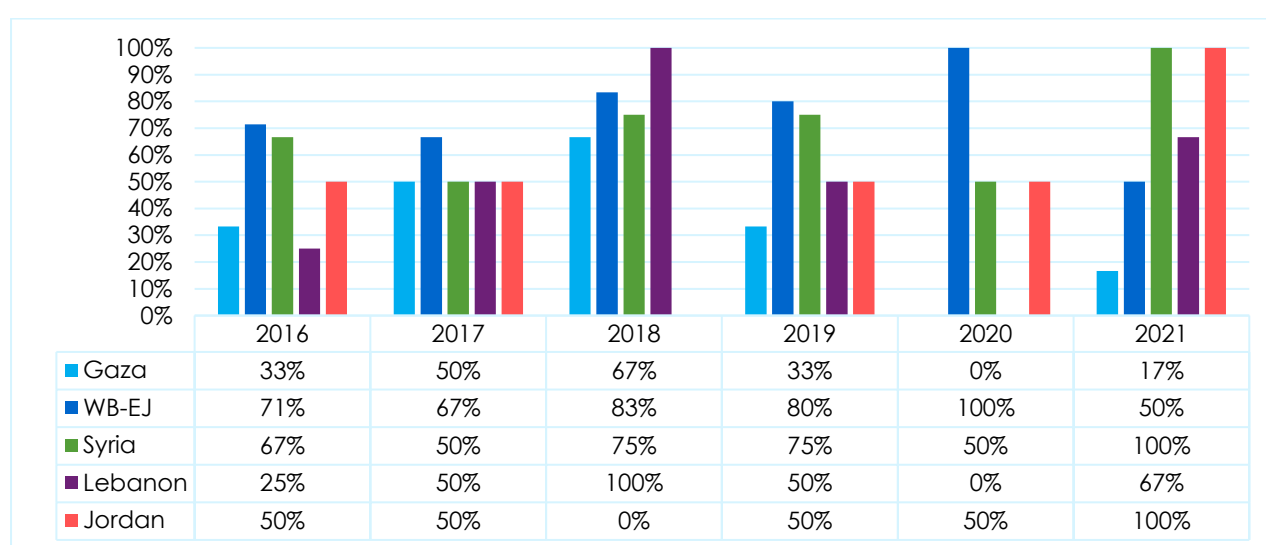


Figure 24: Gaza - number of staff members trained on protection

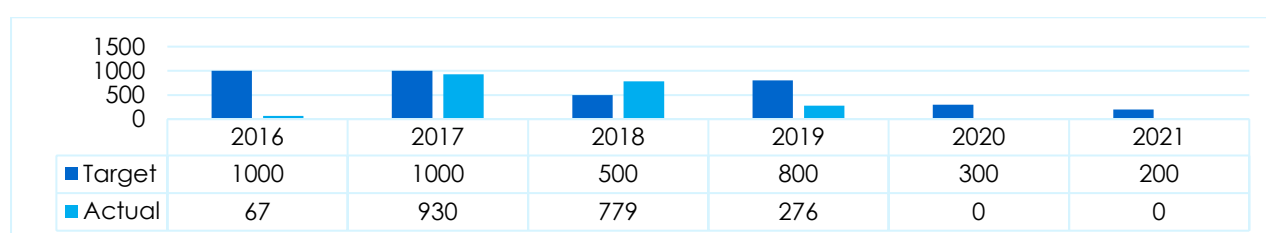


Figure 25: Lebanon - number of staff members trained on protection

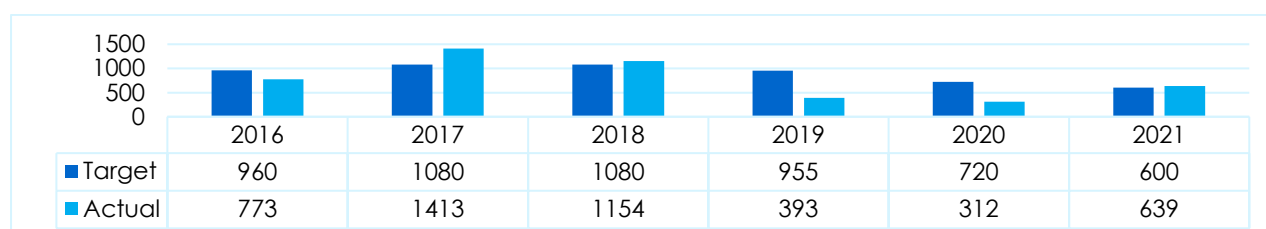


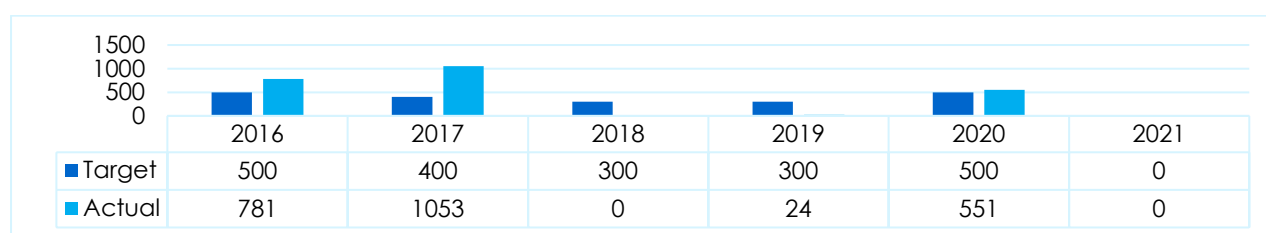
Figure 26: Jordan - number of staff trained on protection⁷⁰

Figure 27: Syria - Number of Palestine refugees provided with legal assistance via referrals

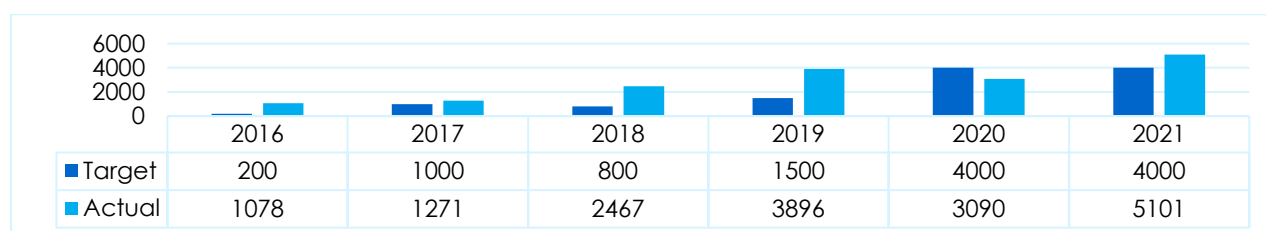
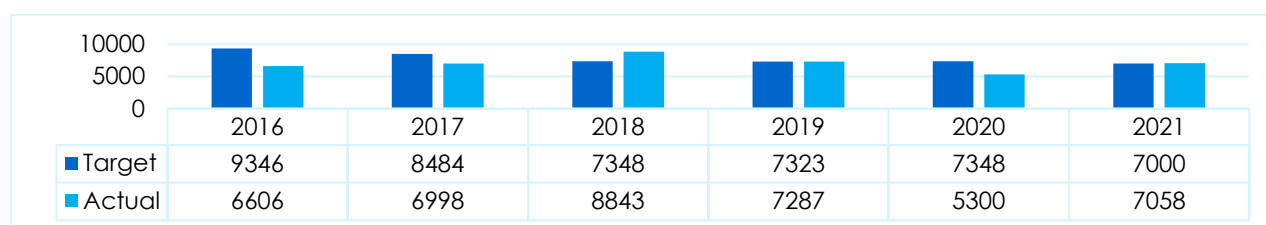
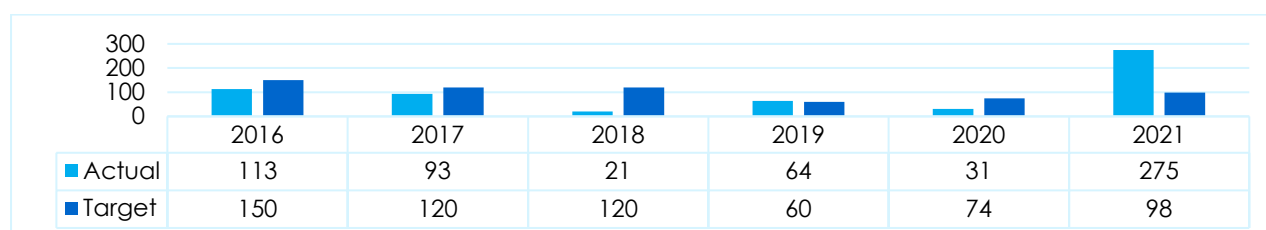


Figure 28: Lebanon - number of Palestine refugees provided with legal services

Figure 29: Jordan - number of Palestine refugees referred for legal advice⁷¹

Unintended consequences

102. The evaluation identified minimal-unintended consequences of Emergency Appeals interventions. Some staff members reported that there was resentment among Palestine refugees who were not targeted with certain forms of support because they did not fulfill the requisite vulnerability criteria. Sudden cuts or changes to services due to funding shortfalls also implied the unpredictability in some service areas and were perceived by UNRWA staff to have eroded trust between the Agency and its beneficiaries. The need for UNRWA to continue delivering services in a highly resource constrained organizational setting operating in a context characterized by intense and escalating needs also put considerable strain on both frontline and managerial staff, exerting a heavy emotional toll on many.

⁷⁰ Note that in 2021, this indicator is identified as not applicable for Jordan.

⁷¹ Note that actuals and targets are lower in Jordan than in Lebanon and Syria due to the limited scope of Jordan's legal aid programme, which until recently only involved referrals of PRS in need to external legal partners. The limited number of potential external providers of legal aid services, and the protection risks that raising cases could have entailed limited the number of PRS targeted in Jordan.

Efficiency

103. The Efficiency section examines the value, modality and timeliness of EA assistance and the way in which UNRWA prioritizes funding amid financial constraints, as well as how it draws on its comparative advantages to deliver EA interventions. In addition, this section explores the extent to which beneficiary opinions feed into EA design, implementation and overall management.

9. To what extent do the EA interventions reflect efficient utilization of the Agency's comparative advantages?
10. Are the value, modality, and timeliness of assistance provided through the EA interventions adequate and sufficient to address the needs of beneficiaries?

Finding 19: The EAs cover an array of interventions that cater to a growing caseload and emerging refugee needs that arise in a particularly disabling socio-political context and compounded by the effects of global crises (e.g., Ukraine war). The unresolved chronic funding shortages (in terms of received vs required) exacerbated by the funding cuts from 2019 onwards forced the Agency to introduce programming and staffing cost-saving measures, and to prioritize what it considers life-saving interventions under SP1 and 2, with adjustments in line to the amount of funding received.

Finding 20: When funding is present, UNRWA can deploy its unique expertise, demonstrating that the Agency's comparative advantage is linked to its unique mandate, knowledge of its beneficiaries, its staff, reach, and trust. In all different geographical locations, UNRWA's beneficiaries consider the Agency as the only institution that will take care of their needs. At the same time, the politics of UNRWA's status-based mandate, refugees' expectations, and donor requirements, make it challenging for the Agency to change, drop or introduce interventions and UNRWA regularly considers ways to mitigate reputational risks associated with appearing to withdraw or cut assistance.

Finding 21: The particularly challenging political and economic situation the Agency faces, coupled with the unstable economic and security landscape locally and globally, has affected the value, timeliness and modality of assistance, and several interventions and staffing levels underwent significant cost-saving measures. The changes were felt by refugees who reported delays or insufficient assistance to meet their basic needs. Better integration of refugee views would support the Agency to improve its targeting.

104. For this evaluation, we used a specific definition of 'efficiency' in line with the current OECD/DAC criterion, but with a focus on **operational efficiency** (how well the intervention was managed) and **timeliness** (whether delivery is achieved in the intended timeframe). As agreed at inception, we did not focus on economic efficiency or cost-effectiveness. However, we have attempted to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which EAs' finances were allocated in the time period by FO and EA and the decisions UNRWA had to make, accounting for the difficult market conditions each EA operates in. We initially conducted a financial analysis of the EAs' budget (requirements, amounts received and expenditures) by crisis, by FO and by the three EAs Strategic Priorities to provide an overview of budget allocations and engender specific reflection on the effects of the funding cuts.

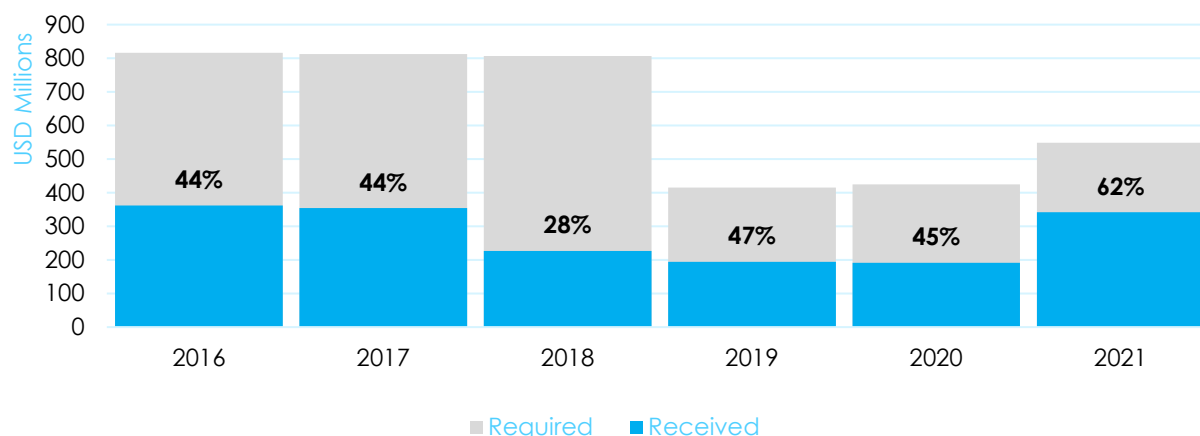
105. Firstly, it is important to explain how the EA budget is managed. The Humanitarian Operation Plans (HOP) managed by the Department of Planning and Finance and produced by each field based on the External Relations Department (ERD) forecast for the year, plus the available carry forward funds is the tool employed to monitor and allocate EA funding. In addition, the Funding Gap Spreadsheet tracks all activities and interventions. These tools inform allocations of the EAs budget and are used to monitor cashflow. Budget officers report on a monthly basis and undertake quarterly reviews, then submitted to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Department of Planning to advise them of the financial situation and the critical needs under the EAs, which helps the Senior Management Team take strategic decisions.

EAs overall budget trends: receivables vs expenditures

106. Between 2016 and 2021, UNRWA received a total of USD 1.7 billion for both appeals. EA requirements for the same period were USD 3.8 billion. Figure 30 shows the distribution of this over time, with funding received declining towards 2020. The Agency regularly runs EA activities at 40-45% of the budget required. This was an issue in 2016-17, and UNRWA entered a critical funding shortage in 2018, when the Agency received only 28% of the funding required. Following funding cuts in 2019, UNRWA adjusted its requirement figures by practically half (49%), forcing the introduction of harsh cost-saving measures. This was experienced by those making

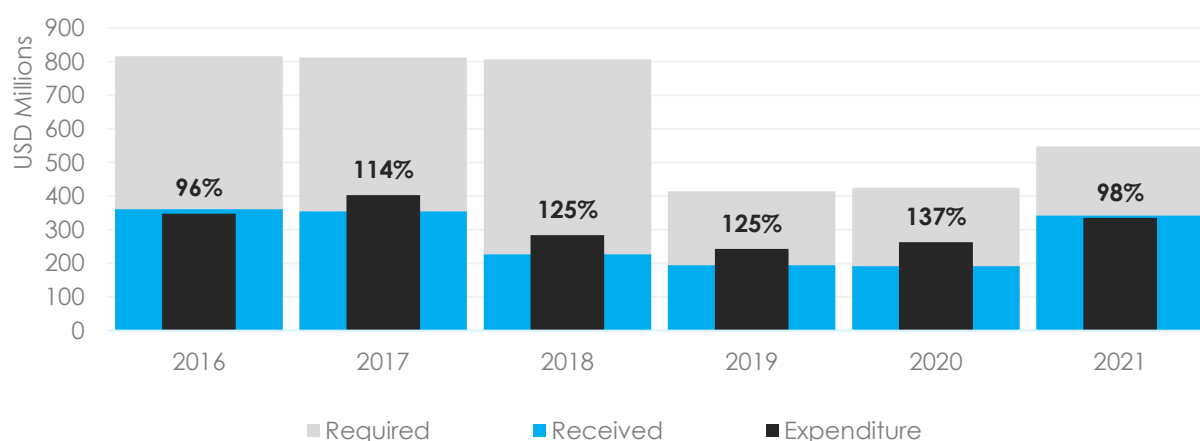
programmatic decisions where important interventions were halted or suspended, as well as met through temporarily cutting staff, suspending or deferring salaries (as an emergency measure in 2018) and reducing non-staff expenditures.⁷² Funding received remained low in 2019 and 2020, only reaching a reasonable level of attainment at 47% (2019) and 45% (2020) because of the seriously reduced funding requirement (due to the cuts). Receivables have declined year over year since 2016. In 2021 the funding recovered somewhat, reaching pre-2018 levels.

Figure 30: EAs funding received as % of funding required



107. Figure 31 introduces an additional layer of detail in expenditure (for both EAs) over time, against the context of funding required and received. With funding carried over from the previous years as part of the HOP, **in four of the last six years expenditure to deliver services exceeded receivables**. Overall, the difference year on year between expenditures is less than that of funding required and funding received. This is logical considering that the challenges faced have not subsided, and in many cases have worsened.

Figure 31: EA expenditure as % of funding received. Includes context of funding required.



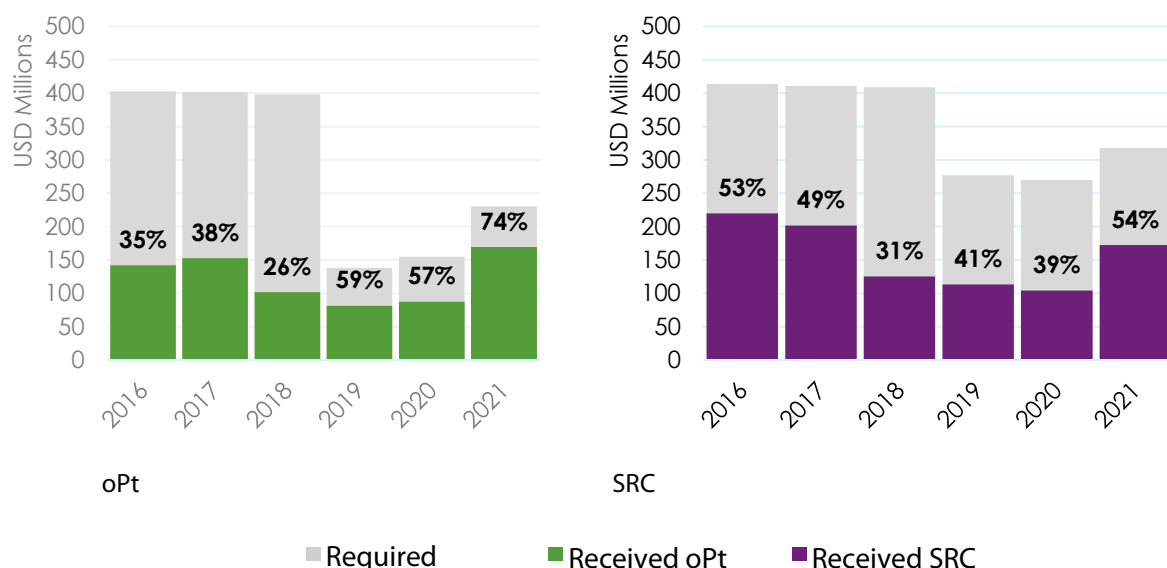
*Includes expenditure against 2021 Gaza Flash Appeal and COVID-19 appeal

108. This issue was reflected upon in discussions around cashflow and planning with HQ finance staff: "The main issue is the cashflow. For example, we used to get large tranches in January and June from one donor. This year (2022) we only received USD 10 million in January and the big one only in July, which was 60 million. We need a more realistic cash inflow to avoid worrying about timing it with our activities (e.g., when food distribution rounds take place in March, June, September and December)".

⁷² UNRWA (2021). Annual Operational Report 2020.

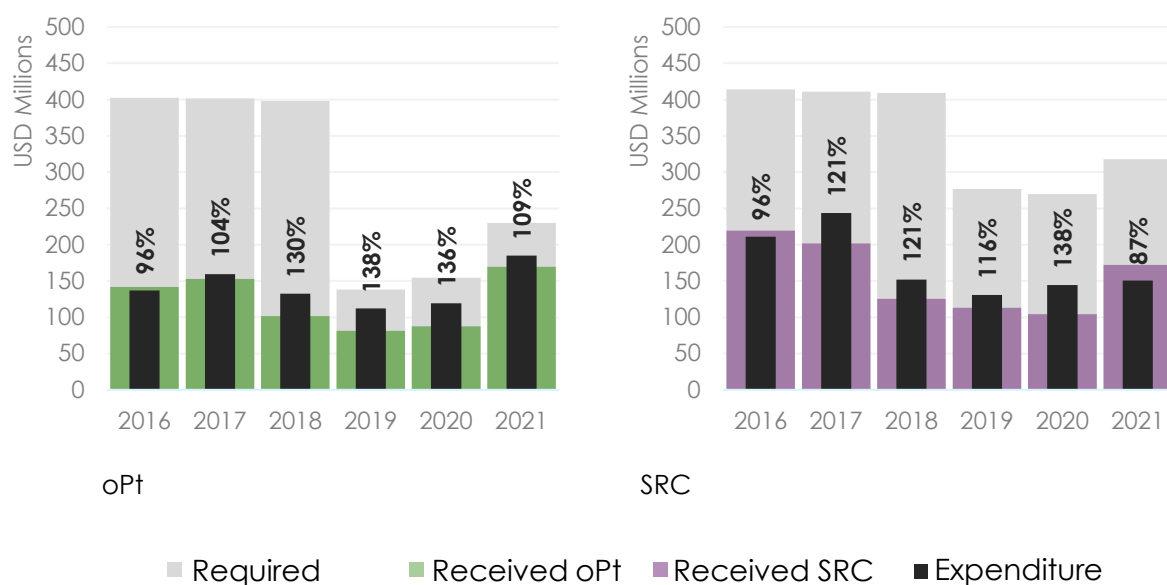
109. Looking more closely by EA, the proportion of funding received against funding required illustrates that both EAs faced difficulties in hitting the required amounts, around USD 400 million for each EA, with the oPt struggling more. Funding received was recorded as 35%, 38% and 26% prior to the most significant reassessment of funding requirements and cuts in 2019. The SRC on the other hand records 53%, 49% and 31%, noticeably higher than the oPt, but still well below the funding requirements for each year. While oPt shows a greater level of achievement against funding required for 2019, 2020 and 2021, at 59%, 57% and 74% respectively, this can be largely attributed to the fact that funding requirements are much lower overall.

Figure 32: Funding received against funding required by EA



110. Figure 33 below mirrors figure 32 - introducing expenditure as a percentage of funding received per EA – showing that **for each EA, expenditure exceeded receivables in most years**. Prior to the funding cuts in 2018 the oPt was spending within 4% +/- of funding received, at 96% and 104%. Following the funding cuts, expenditure was reduced by 16% (from USD 159.2m in 2017 to USD 132.4m in 2018) yet still rose to 130%, 138% and 136% of receivables (or USD 93.1 million for 2018-20). Funding received is much higher in 2021, but expenditure still exceeds this figure at 109%. The SRC budget follows a similar pattern, with a notable drop off between 2018 and 2020, and a rise in 2021. Expenditure was already higher than receivables as early as 2017 at 121%, and continued to exceed between 2018 and 2020, though not quite to the same extent as oPt at 121%, 116% and 138% (or USD 84 million for 2018-20). The impact of the funding cuts looks more severe for SRC, with a drop of 38% between 2017 and 2018 (from USD 243.7 million to USD 152.1 million in 2018). It is important to remember that the expenditure for SRC was higher overall, standing at USD 243.7 million in 2017, compared to oPt's USD 159.2 million. Expenditure then only slightly increased in 2021 by 4% (or USD 6.2 million) to account for 87% of funding received.

Figure 33: EA expenditure as % of funding received. Includes context of funding required.



*Includes expenditure against 2021 Gaza Flash Appeal and COVID-19 appeal

Budget trends by Strategic Priority

111. UNRWA EA interventions are classified in line with the following three strategic priorities and related interventions (which have undergone changes in name over time for oPt, but retain the same meaning).

Table 6: EAs Strategic Priorities

oPt	SRC
Strategic Priority 1 oPt: Strategic priority 1 (2018 to 2020): crisis-affected Palestine refugee households facing acute shocks have increased economic access to food oPt: Strategic priority 1 (2017) / Strategic Objective 1 (2016): Food-insecure households and those facing acute shocks have increased economic access to food SRC: Preserve resilience through the provision of humanitarian assistance (2016)	
Emergency food assistance	Cash assistance for essential needs, including food, shelter and NFIs
Emergency cash-for-work	Non-food items (NFIs)
Emergency cash assistance	Food assistance
Strategic Priority 2 oPt: Strategic priority 2 (2019 to 2021): Palestine refugees maintain access to critical services and are protected from the most severe impacts of the crisis oPt: Strategic priority 2 (2018): Palestine refugees enjoy their rights to critical services and assistance oPt: Strategic priority 3 (2018): Palestine refugees are protected from the effects of the conflict and violence oPt: Strategic priority 2 (2017) / Strategic Objective 2 (2016): Crisis-affected refugees enjoy their basic rights to services and assistance	

oPt: Strategic priority 3 (2017) / Strategic Objective 3 (2016): Protection of Palestine refugees from the effects of the conflict and violence	
SRC: Provide a protective framework for Palestine refugees and help mitigate their vulnerability	
Livelihoods	Livelihoods (microfinance, vocational training, income generation, social cohesion for Lebanon)
Emergency health	Emergency health
Emergency health / mobile health clinics	Education in emergencies
Non-food items and emergency shelter repair	Protection
Non-food items	Environmental Health
Emergency shelter repair	Shelter
Emergency shelter and shelter repair	
Transitional shelter cash assistance	
Mental health and psychosocial support	
Community mental health	
Protection and neutrality	
Protection	
Neutrality	
Operations support officers	
(Emergency) Environmental health	
Education in emergencies	
Gaza summer fun weeks (SFWs)	
Explosive remnants of war education	
Strategic Priority 3	
oPt: Strategic priority 3 (2017) / Strategic Objective 3 (2016): Protection of Palestine refugees from the effects of the conflict and violence	
oPt: Strategic priority 3 (2019 to 2021) / Strategic Priority 4 (2017 to 2018) / Strategic Objective 4 (2016):	
oPt: Effective management and coordination of the emergency response is ensured	
SRC: Strengthen humanitarian capacity, coordination and management	
Coordination and management	Safety and security
Emergency preparedness	Capacity and management support
Safety and security	Emergency repair and maintenance of UNRWA installations

112. Looking at funding requirements and received through the lens of the three strategic priorities, SP1 and SP2 consistently received a much higher proportion of funding allocation/requirements, whereas SP3 has been progressively defunded (see figure 34). SP1 received a high volume of funding as well as a relatively high (though overall still very low) attainment against funding requirements. SP2 displays a similar level of funding requirements at around USD 500m for 2016-18, though receives a significantly lower contribution at 34%, 29% and 13%, in comparison to SP1 46%, 49% and 37% for the same period. The impact of the funding cuts in 2018

through to 2020 is much more pronounced for SP2 and SP3, though the adjustment of requirements/ impact of funding cuts can be seen across the three SPs.

113. Visualizing these trends by EA displays a similar overall pattern (figure 35 below). For the oPt, the funding received for SP1 appears to stay relatively stable between 2016 and 2020, within a range of USD 25 million, with attainment of requirements between 43% and 65%. The SRC for the same period displays a range of USD 74 million, declining year on year, with an attainment between 33% and 54%. The drop-off from the much higher initial received figure for the SRC is much more pronounced, and both EAs begin to flatten out at a 'floor' of around USD 80 million in receivables. SP2 and SP3 for the oPt show a significant drop in funding received in 2018, to just 6% and 12% of required. **This may explain UNRWA's prioritization in funding towards 'survival critical' SP1 activities in terms of funding received in the context of severe funding cuts.**

Figure 34: EAs funding received as % of funding required, by Strategic Priority

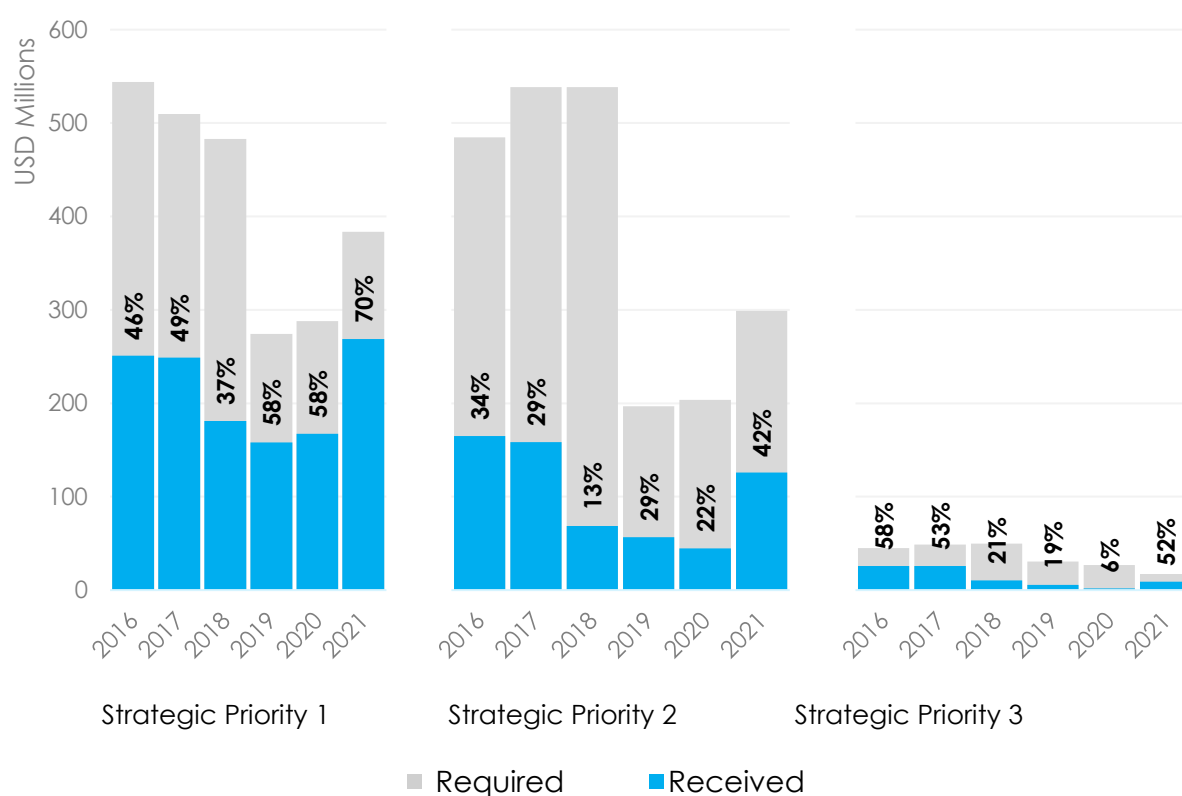
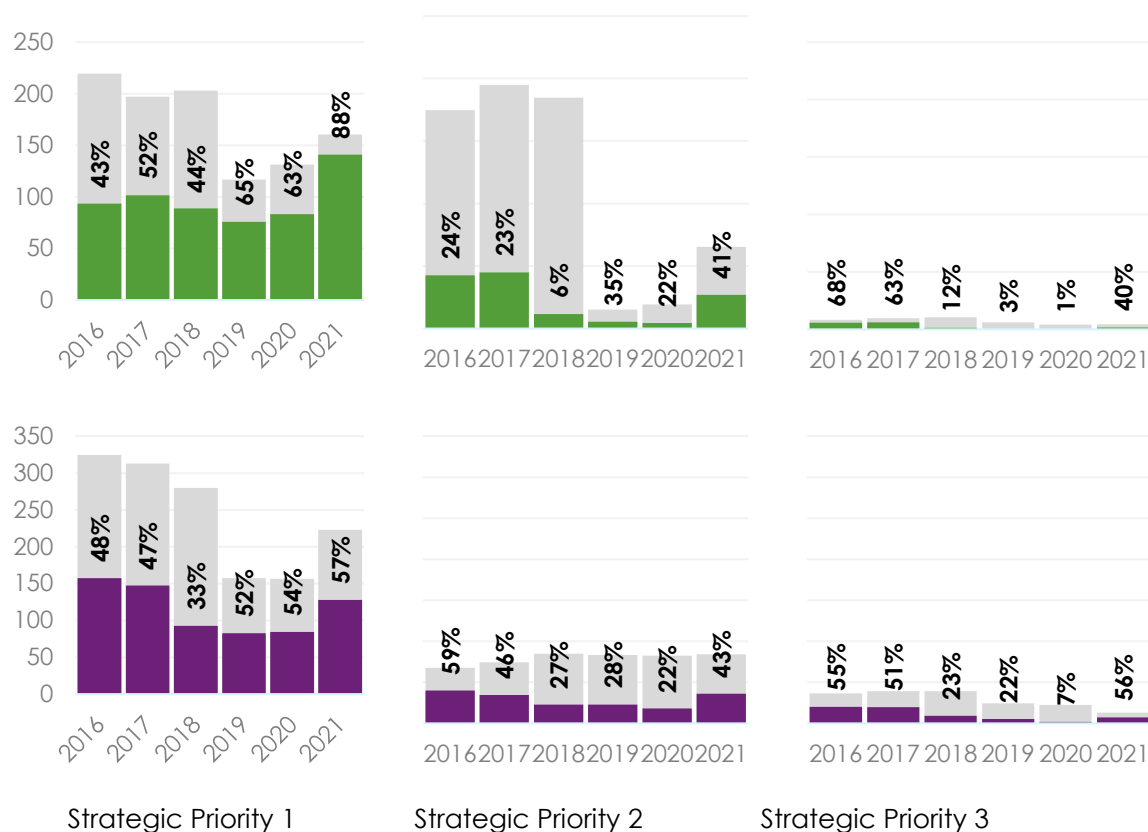


Figure 35: oPt and SRC funding received as % of funding required, by Strategic Priority

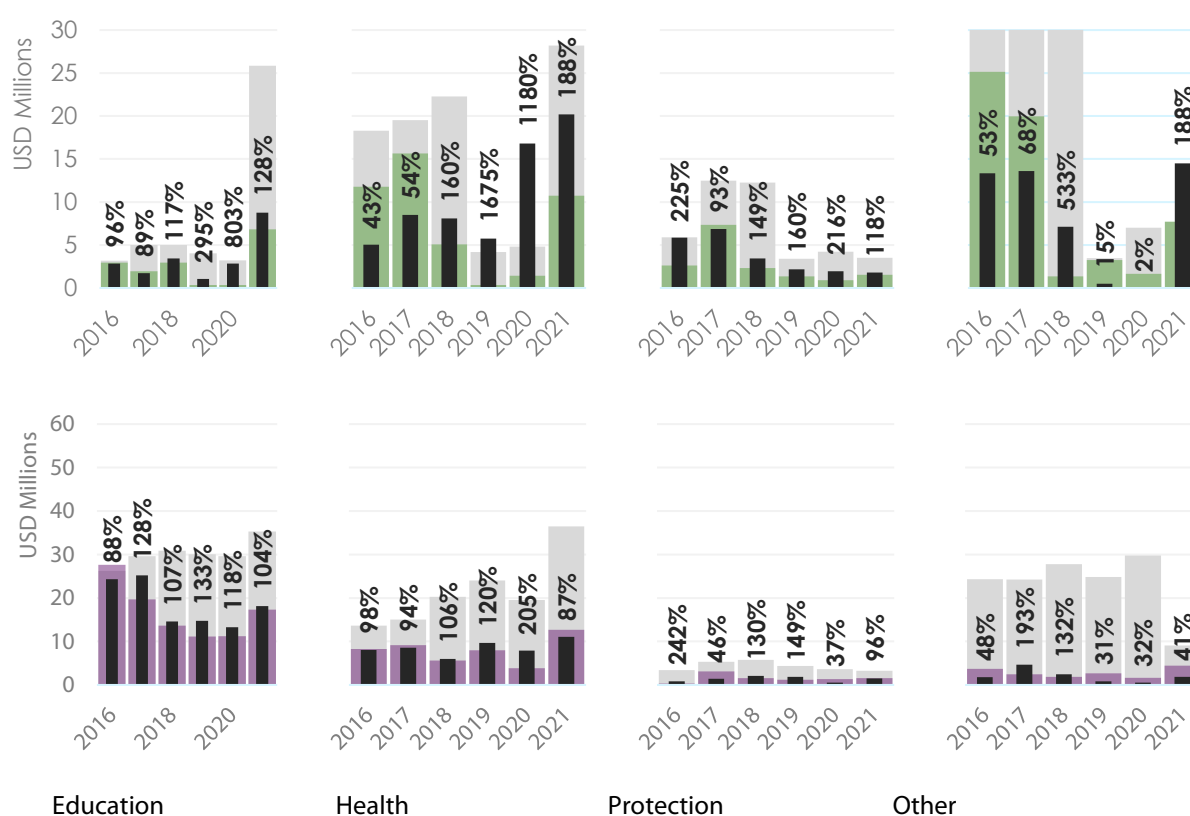


114. **Addressing** this conundrum took place in all FOs and numerous examples outline where UNRWA had to alter its programmatic choices and intervene on personnel between 2016 and 2021:

- In Syria, a targeted approach was introduced, whereby a portion of the caseload (most vulnerable) continued to receive a higher cash transfer, while the remaining refugees received a lower allowance. Even so, the amount planned in the EA could not be disbursed and the rate was adjusted to the available funding (but always provided through a two-tier approach).
- In Jordan changes were introduced to cash assistance whereby PRS without Jordanian documents or protection cases receive a higher amount, while the others received a lower allowance. In Gaza, a unified standard food basket was introduced in light of increased vulnerability levels and to mirror the changing operational context.
- In all FOs, there were alterations to the food basket composition and quantities (e.g., milk was no longer available in the West Bank, and rice and lentil quantities were reduced; increased variety of food basket components was introduced in Syria to avoid over-supply of specific products to households)
- In all FOs, specific health services such as mobile health clinics, diagnostic tests or repeat prescriptions were removed, as well as resilience strengthening interventions such as Cash for Work or MHPSS in the West Bank and Lebanon.
- In the West Bank and Syria installations and shelter maintenance services and winterization services were defunded, and in Gaza and Syria maintenance was significantly reduced.

115. Looking more closely by EA at SP2, it also emerges that specific EiE, HiE and protection interventions were maintained, albeit with local specificities. The figures below illustrate the trends for programmatic categories under SP2 for oPt and SRC. We separated EiE, HiE and protection interventions from all other interventions under SP2, which were categorised as 'Other'. For oPt, a sharp decline is noted in 2019 for funding required, falling from USD 145m to just USD 3.5m. A significant amount of the 2018 figure (95%) was made up of shelter installation and maintenance, which was cut in 2019. Health and Protection also display the Impact of the 2019 funding cuts in both required and received funding, though this is far less severe. Education is much more mixed and experiences a sharp increase in requirements in 2021. SRC requirements are less varied year on year, and show an upward trend over time for Health, Education and Other. Funding received for Education decreases year on year from 2016 to 2020, recovering slightly in 2021. Health is more mixed and receives the greatest funding volume in 2021.
116. The analysis, however, shows that in terms of expenditure, Education, Health and Protection are each retained to a greater extent than activities which fall into the 'Other' category. This is most pronounced for oPt. For both oPt and SRC, expenditure in Education and Health exceeded receivables for 2018, 2019 and 2020. For oPt, the expenditure for 2020 and 2021 is buoyed by funding associated with the COVID-19 and Gaza Flash Appeals, contributing an additional USD 3.2m for Education and USD 13.4m for Health.

Figure 36: oPt and SRC funding under SP 2, expenditure as % of funding received



*Includes expenditure against 2021 Gaza Flash Appeal and COVID-19 appeal

117. Overall, the analysis above points to a relative 'stability' of life-saving interventions under SP1 and critical education, health and protection services under SP2, with adaptations based on needs identified in each FO as above described. These seem to represent the core of most regular EA interventions across the years under consideration.
118. Interviews and FGD with staff and refugees alike showed the urgency of the situation and the extent to which the monetary value of assistance was perceived as insufficient in relation to need. Staff had to regularly contend with funding shortages beyond three months periods: "I need to explain [to management] that this USD 15 million will run out for this activity - MHPSS and food distribution - in the next three months, I have only USD 10 million and now because of huge increase in prices, actually the whole activity costs me USD 30 million. I have funds for food but no funding for staff for delivering it and the management must decide whether to

keep those staffing or not". The budget deficit will take time to recover and might entail significant reframing of the agency's approach to responding to refugee needs, as the sustainability section will show.

119. **Operational efficiency and timeliness have been also influenced by a particularly disabling economic landscape** characterized by fluid evolving political and security dynamics, market and currency fluctuations, internal economic crises (for example in Gaza and Lebanon), increasing food and supply chain prices, and the specificities pertaining to certain donor requirements. This influence is very clear for Gaza. Whilst food assistance remains the preferred modality for some donors, staff reported that food prices increased five-fold due to disruption in the supply chain due to COVID and in 2021 because Israeli suppliers withheld grains and wheat due to the Ukraine crisis. This may have created the conditions for the overspent experienced in the oPt. The issue of timeliness was also confirmed in the results from the [survey](#) in figures 37 and 38 below: perceived delays were particularly felt in Syria and the West Bank and across the FOs, both male and female respondents alike rated delays in reaching or receiving assistance among the biggest barriers to accessing services for the household they represented.

Figure 37: How would you rate the timeliness of the services you receive from UNRWA?

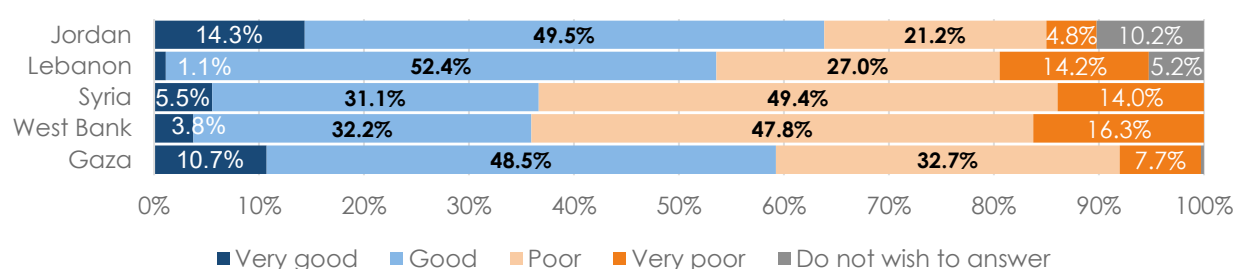
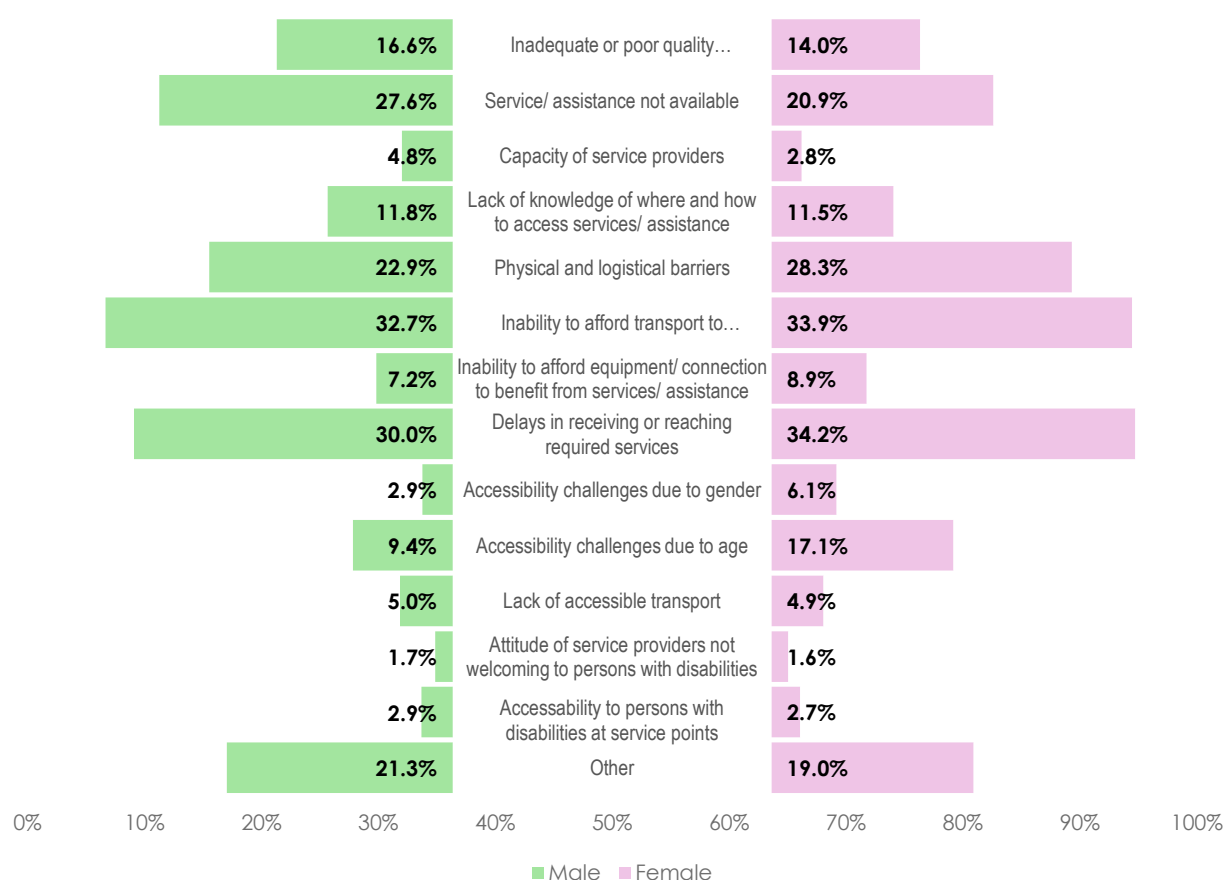


Figure 38: What are the barriers your household experiences in accessing UNRWA services?



120. However, when funding became available, UNRWA demonstrated the ability to deploy the right skills, capacity and expertise and showed efficiency and effectiveness in its interventions, given its infrastructure, the staff and the reach to respond swiftly. A notable example was during the COVID-19 crisis. Refugees across all FOs provided positive feedback on Education in Emergencies and Emergency Health interventions during COVID-19, aided by the additional input from the Flash Appeals in 2020. Positive feedback also emerged about protection interventions, case identification, management and response (especially in the oPt and from ex-Gazans in Jordan), with swift deployment of staff, quick turnaround of information, appropriate referral systems in place and regular refugee feedback sought and acted upon. In a sense, some sectors show the right efficiency fit to the nature of an emergency funding mechanism. For instance, the COVID-19 response, protection, cash and shelter assistance in Gaza after the May 2021 escalation or the Great March of Return event shows efficient and rapid utilization of EA funding responding to -addressing immediate needs and high risk and critical cases. In Syria, the proportion of funds that go for direct assistance to the beneficiaries (e.g., emergency cash, food, NFIs and shelter repair) amounts to almost 80% or above of the entire EA budget, also showing operational efficiency.
121. This further demonstrates that UNRWA's comparative advantage is linked to its unique mandate, history with refugees, staff, reach, presence, and trust. Ultimately, however, UNRWA's mandate, refugees' expectations, and donor requirements, make it challenging for the agency to change, drop or introduce interventions. Donors understand this comparative advantage but wish for more transparency and timely communication in utilization of shock-responsive resources in relation to what they perceive as plugging ongoing PB gaps. They also want more direct communication with FOs rather than this being a centrally managed process.
122. As explained in the Relevance section, improving the modality and timeliness of assistance would benefit from thorough involvement and participation of refugees, including ensuring fair representation of all groups (female, children, elderly, the disabled, and so forth). **There are many channels for refugee feedback but these seem ad hoc and non-systematized.** Despite the presence of hotlines, staff visits, office visits, complaint boxes, WhatsApp, online platforms, and PDM surveys as systems for refugee participation, even when feedback is received, there is no funding for follow up beyond the gravest cases. Overall, it seems that the **Agency still can improve its culture of refugee integration in EAs design, implementation and M&E.** Despite a solid RBM system, data collected is mostly quantitative with a few examples of qualitative engagement to collect stories of change that demonstrate resilience. As previously expressed, this requires the right staff with the technical skills and abilities, and the funding to run this type of beneficiary feedback mechanisms.

Sustainability

123. Under the Sustainability criterion, we examine the advantages and disadvantages of annual and multi-year funding modalities for the EAs, both in relation to planning and in terms of meeting refugees' evolving needs.

11. What have been the advantages and disadvantages of the yearly planning cycle and funding modality of the EAs? Would a multi-year planning cycle and funding modality be more appropriate, feasible, and likely to ensure more sustainable funding for EA interventions in the future?

Finding 22: Whilst the lack of a political solution to the Palestine question and its intergenerational consequences and ramifications renders EA interventions not sustainable, some aspects of the EAs that require prolonged investment to yield results (e.g., education, health) could become more sustainable.

Finding 23: The current modality of annual budgeting allows UNRWA to quickly respond to the highly specific and evolving nature of contexts. However, the annual modality affects staff retention, and prevents UNRWA from planning beyond the EA funded timeline, due to the emergency teams being funded outside the PB. A multi-year approach would allow for longer-term thinking and planning, improving quality and consistency of programming and services and higher staff retention rates.

124. In principle, emergency interventions are not intended to be sustainable; and it is challenging to consider sustainability in relation to UNRWA's mandate on Palestine refugees when a political solution to their displacement has not been achieved. Furthermore, noting the protracted context within which UNRWA operates, the evaluation recognizes that EA interventions are not sustainable for multiple reasons. The EAs are contingent on fluctuating external funding, as illustrated under Efficiency above, and closely linked to political will surrounding long-term and durable solutions for the conflicts in the oPt and Syria, and ultimately to Palestine refugees' displacement.

125. Along these lines, two pivotal and impeding challenges to the sustainability of the EA intervention are: predictability and the perceived lack of donor commitment. Staff highlighted the importance of sustainable funding in catering to the “unique nature of the conflicts at hand,” insisting, that “Palestine refugees are different,” and that multi-year funding remains essential amid a lack of political consensus to displacement of Palestine refugees in the aftermath of 1948. Presently, and particularly amid uncertainty around the question of sustainability of the EA, the evaluation notes, as is known and conveyed across interviewed stakeholder groups, that there is no replacement for UNRWA. UNRWA remains the sole Agency that caters to Palestine refugees at this magnitude and scope, and it is unlikely that the Agency’s caseload could be absorbed (i.e., handed over) to hosting governments or governance structures. As one respondent from the West Bank mentioned: ‘[...] it is hard for us to measure sustainability while the occupation persists. But what we can do is focus on psychological needs, and immediate needs. We sadly cannot ensure sustainability until the occupation is over. Without UNRWA, the situation would be much worse for us on all levels.’
126. While it remains difficult to assess the sustainability of all EA interventions, respondents insist that some components of the EA response could be more sustainable than others, with adequate time and resources. Specific responses in the areas of health and education, are viewed as “more impactful in the long term, but in need of more time and multi-year funding to yield results.” This sentiment applies to interventions that require longer than a year to bear results, for example in relation to livelihood interventions. Along similar lines, respondents insist that the EA interventions should be better suited to the protracted nature of the crises that UNRWA is addressing. Moreover, recommendations around shifting some EA to the PB when it comes to basic services is viewed as essential to appropriately respond to UNRWA’s caseload and its rights-holders’ needs.
127. **The EA currently constitutes a lifeline for the Palestine refugees in all countries of focus.** As one respondent from Jordan explains, “[...] for protection cases, without political and legal solutions to their problems, they will continue to face the same problems and they will continue to need extensive resources from UNRWA and donors. There is a huge risk if the EA fund does not continue and PRS are not supported. Many of them have no other sources of income and have lost their jobs during COVID-19.” As one refugee from Syria insists: “There is no replacement for UNRWA. We would starve. UNRWA is like our government. It is the only authority that takes care of us on all levels. We already live in difficulty; without UNRWA the situation would be much worse.” In Gaza, UNRWA remains the only Agency with the capacity, resources, available staff, and technical skills to provide services to Palestine refugees at that magnitude and scope. A refugee from Gaza explains: “[...] I am not able to meet the basic needs without UNRWA’s support. The Agency provides schools as shelters for the displaced refugees in wars and emergencies, and provides basic services such as food, education and health to all refugees. The mandate of the Agency needs to continue to provide services while the occupation persists.”
128. Achievement of refugee self-reliance remains complex amid a lack of sustainability in the EAs. This unattainability, according to respondents, is rooted in the fact that, for example, for PRS, employment opportunities are not sustainable or accessible in contexts such as Lebanon and Jordan. As one respondent from Jordan explains: “[...] to pretend that as a result of the EA people are going to become self-reliant, well this is not going to happen. [...] . With short-term humanitarian programmes it remains increasingly difficult to achieve sustainability, even if they are helpful in the areas of lessons learned and some best practices. The sustainability question is a tricky one.”
129. The current modality of annual EAs brings forth a number of advantages and disadvantages. In the areas of advantages, the evaluation found that the highly specific and evolving nature of contexts requires measuring vulnerability as well as revisiting interventions and budgets in shorter periods – a matter that is possible under the current modality. This allows the EAs respond to unforeseen events and emerging needs in rapidly evolving contexts in the oPt and Syria, and also in gradually worsening contexts such as Lebanon (i.e., Lebanon’s ongoing economic and financial crisis). In the aforementioned contexts, shifts to value for money and costs/currency value benefited from this modality, as budgets could be adjusted according to inflation and resource allocation.
130. Disadvantages to the current annual modality/approach, include an inability to ensure staff retention (particularly for positions that are perceived to be part of the core staff), and an overall inability to plan beyond the EA funded timeline due to the emergency teams being funded outside the PB. This has created an overall lack of efficiency around annual planning/contracting (explained in section on Efficiency more elaborately). As one respondent from Jordan explains: “[...] The entire emergency team is funded by the EA. Now we are struggling because when we plan, we have to go beyond the emergency appeals’ funded timeline. My

recommendation would be to provide some sustainability to key positions that need to stay, and that can only be done through the PB. Some of these positions are core positions that need to stay.” Similarly, a respondent from the West Bank, highlighting the centrality of protection human resources to identify and build trust with communities, respond promptly to incidents, stressed that for protection interventions “all people in the team coming to the end of the project cycle do not know if they are funded. This impacts on staff retention and maintaining funding predictably is hard”. This affects trust with the communities.

131. Other disadvantages involve what respondents call the “parachuting” of services – particularly mental health and psychosocial support – or the shift between availability and halting of services depending on funding availability. This creates a false sense of hope and security for beneficiaries from these services and violates the Do No Harm principle. According to a respondent from Lebanon, while the current annual modality is “attractive to donors and makes it easier to receive funds”, it promotes “weak continuity, security, and sustainability.” For this reason, a multi-year approach is anticipated to yield more advantages than disadvantages according to UNRWA staff. According to respondents, long-term/ multi-year funding, a trend that is taking place across all UN agencies (see box on UNHCR’s experience below), would permit for longer-term thinking and grant the potential for improved quality of programming, and consistency of services – especially in the areas of health and education in-line with the Do No Harm principle. In addition, multi-year funding allows for higher rates of staff retention and avoids the aforementioned “parachuting” across various sectors (particularly reiterated in the areas of mental health by staff from Lebanon, Jordan and Syria). It would also enhance planning and continuity (for example in the areas of education and academic programming/planning). In Syria, the first two-year HRP is being trialed, with the possibility for stock-taking after the first year of implementation; this model is considered by some UNRWA stakeholders as potentially promising. In many cases, multi-year approaches are perceived by respondents as able to “mitigate a lack of donor commitment”. In the areas of disadvantages, respondents insist (particularly for the Gaza, the West Bank and Syria), that multi-year earmarked commitments are less flexible in responding and adjusting swiftly to emerging and unforeseen crises due to the fact that the budget cannot be revisited as frequently.

UNHCR’s experience in shifting from yearly to multi-year humanitarian funding

132. In response to the growing protractedness of displacement situations and the elusiveness of implementing durable solutions, UNHCR slowly piloted multiyear planning in 2016 in six COs and then increased to 22 COs in 2018, before introducing multi-year planning as an institutional approach as of 2021. This was a long and complex process which involved all aspects of humanitarian planning and financial system. It built on reflections around Nexus approaches, the need to move away from short-term humanitarian programming linked to annual planning cycles, building local stakeholders’ capacity, promote self-reliance and support national protection systems.

133. The change process evolved slowly. The RBM system and budgeting systems were revised to encourage operations to devise high level 3-5 years costing plans, with allocations on an annual basis based on best projections on funding to allow a margin of flexibility for resources management. This process also required a significant adjustment to RBM tools: 65 objectives were reduced to 16 outcomes and five enabling areas and the very high number (185) of impact indicators was reduced to 15 core indicators. UNHCR encouraged better AGD disaggregation. While keeping core indicators globally, COs were allowed to retain flexibility at output level to adjust to local realities and donor-related indicators, as long as the plans fed into high-level global indicators. This process required significant institutional investments, and the approach is still being refined based on lessons learned.

134. To promote Nexus programming, UNHCR identified certain major areas of work:

- decentralize the planning process, shifting from a global planning cycle to CO-led planning cycles within determined parameters, but in line with the local situation;
- offer a three-year transitional period to set the process in place and allow COs to build their multiyear planning processes in line with their capacities and the local context;
- offer flexible standard outcomes / impact core indicators aligned with Global Results Areas and areas of work but COs define their own indicators;
- reporting should stress that progress is done in collaboration with others.

Source: KII with UNHCR team from Transformation and Change Service

Conclusions

135. This evaluation of the UNRWA Emergency Appeals for the oPt and Syria Regional Crisis during the 2016-21 period has assessed the ways in which the EAs are designed, planned and used. EAs have been issued for the oPt since the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000, and since 2013 for the Syria Refugee Crisis. Between 2016 and 2021 the Agency spent USD 1.7 billion responding to emergencies in both oPt field offices in the West Bank and Gaza, and for the Syria Regional Crisis Field Offices in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.
136. **The evaluation acknowledges the uniquely challenging environment that UNRWA operates in.** UNRWA's beneficiaries are, for the most part, dependent on the Agency for humanitarian assistance and unlikely to be absorbed by hosting governments or other agencies, and a change to this outlook pivots on a political solution to their displacement materializing. Furthermore, beneficiary populations' vulnerability can and has changed rapidly over time given the protracted crises situations in each field of operation and broader contextual shifts in the countries, the region and globally – often to situations of greater vulnerability. The evaluation demonstrates that the services and assistance provided by UNRWA, including under the EAs, are essential and considered to be so by beneficiaries themselves.
137. At the level of the Agency, UNRWA has had to adapt to severe funding deficits and to contend with historical funding shortfalls in its core Programme Budget, and decisions have had to be made on what interventions to prioritise. The evaluation has identified that it can sometimes be difficult to define what is and is not an emergency in protracted situations that can quickly shift to active crises, and the line between core and emergency services can become blurred, depending on the potential impact of contextual developments on beneficiaries.
138. At a **strategic level**, the interventions supported through the EAs have contributed to all the strategic outcome areas identified in the Agency's 2016-2022 MTS. In terms of coordination and participation in regional and country-level response efforts, UNRWA is part of the Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria, the HRP for the oPt, the regional 3RP and OCHA's cluster working groups and Humanitarian Country Teams at field level. As a member of these fora, it is highly respected for its experience and reach; and at the level of beneficiaries, UNRWA interventions are acknowledged to clearly respond to emergency needs and are highly valued by them. (Relevance, Finding 1; Coherence, Finding 9)
139. However, **funding constraints** are found to have impacted on both engagement at inter-agency level as well as in the services provided to beneficiaries. External stakeholders highlight that there would be benefit in UNRWA further engaging in inter-agency coordination mechanisms and sharing its practices and lessons learned from implementing the EAs as its scale of operations is broader and serving a much higher caseload than others. More expansive engagement is noted by UNRWA to be constrained in relation to the resources available to participate more actively than is currently the case. Funding constraints have also led to the reduction or scaling back of services in some areas, despite often sustained or increasing needs of beneficiaries. The evaluation finds that funding levels have an impact on what UNRWA prioritizes both in terms of programming focus and in relation to its participation in regional and country coordination mechanisms. (Relevance, Finding 1; Coherence, Finding 8)
140. **AGD is an area where there is evidence of intent and a positive trajectory to improve practices.** UNRWA has frameworks in place for ensuring that gender and disability considerations are integrated into EA design and programming, although further work can be done to consolidate efforts in this respect, as well as in relation to incorporating age considerations more systematically. In terms of protection, this is an area that is core to UNRWA's mandate, both as a stand-alone programmatic intervention and its clear mainstreaming into programmes. (Relevance, Findings 3 and 4)
141. Collaboration and coordination to ensure coherence in EA design, and in ensuring complementarity with the PB is led by UNRWA's Department of Planning in close coordination with other departments at HQ level and between HQ and FOs; these processes for the most part to work well and support an iterative process to EA programming. EA planning processes involve FOs at frontline, sector and senior management level, as well as interactions between FO and HQ levels led by the Department of Planning. These collaboration efforts build on existing UNRWA practices that have established processes for cross-sectorial coordination. Nonetheless, the evaluation finds that particularly at the frontline level there is a sense that further participation would be beneficial for EA planning and design. (Coherence, Findings 5, 6 and 7)

142. **Despite the multiplicity of needs and vulnerability assessments used by UNRWA to tailor interventions to each FO context**, these are complex processes that require significant financial and staff investments and better communication from HQ on reasons for introducing changes to targeting decisions and criteria. Refined vulnerability assessments that would enable more targeted assistance would require significant investment of time and financial resources, which are often unavailable to the highly resource-constrained Agency. (Relevance, Finding 2; Coverage, Inclusion and Equity, Findings 10, 11 and 12)
143. Feedback mechanisms have allowed for refugees' input into the design and implementation of EA-supported interventions in some cases, strengthening coverage (and relevance) though there is an acknowledged need for improvement in this area. The evaluation concurs with the sentiment conveyed by interviewed staff that there is a need for a broader approach to accountability that goes beyond the provision of complaint mechanisms, and which provides regular opportunities for input by Palestine refugees into the design and delivery of EA supported assistance. Some positive examples were identified during the evaluation process, but these practices are by no means systematic. (Coverage, Inclusion and Equity, Findings 13 and 14)
144. **Food and cash have been the two most significant intervention areas supported by the EAs in both the oPt and SRC.** UNRWA staff and beneficiaries highlighted food and cash interventions as crucial. Food assistance was considered as lifesaving in both Syria and Gaza; in the latter, it was noted to be vital. Similarly, cash was identified as one of the most effective EA interventions, with beneficiaries noting that without cash assistance they would have limited or no other sources of income, and that cash assistance was used to address basic needs such as food, rent, transportation and electricity. Nonetheless, in the context of Syria, beneficiaries highlighted that the amounts provided as well as the frequency of payments made reliance on cash payments difficult. This finding suggests that there would be benefit in considering the breadth of interventions supported (or aimed to be supported) under the EAs and whether prioritization to most pressing needs could allow for more significant support to be provided to beneficiaries most in need. (Effectiveness, Findings 15, 16, 17 and 18)
145. **Emergency Health, MHPSS, Education in Emergencies and Protection are also areas of intervention highly valued by beneficiaries**, and which have been consistently prioritized in the EAs – to the extent possible given funding shortfalls. It would be expected that continued prioritization of these areas will be required in the years to come. (Effectiveness, Findings 15 and 16)
146. **UNRWA has regularly run EAs activities at 40-45% of the budget required.** In terms of implementation, this has meant a focus on funding 'survival critical' activities related to food and cash assistance and having to alter programmatic choices (including in relation to personnel, variable coverage of interventions under Strategic Priority 2, and the progressive de-funding of Strategic Priority 3). However, when funding is available, UNRWA demonstrates the ability to deploy the right skills, capacity and expertise and showed efficiency and effectiveness in its interventions, given its infrastructure, staff and reach within communities to respond swiftly. A notable example was during the COVID-19 crisis in the areas of Education in Emergencies and Emergency Health. (Efficiency, Findings 19 and 20)
147. **UNRWA's operational efficiency and timeliness** have also influenced by a particularly disabling economic landscape characterized by fluid evolving political and security dynamics, market and currency fluctuations, internal economic crises, increasing food and supply chain prices, and the specificities pertaining to certain donor requirements. (Efficiency, Findings 19 and 21)
148. Two noted challenges to the sustainability of EA interventions are predictability of funding and perceived lack of donor commitment to multi-year funding, particularly in view of UNRWA's mandate vis-à-vis Palestine refugees. The current modality of annual EAs provides programming flexibility to adapt to the highly specific and evolving nature of the context within which UNRWA operates. However, this modality also leads to an inability to ensure staff retention (particularly for positions that are perceived to be part of the core staff), and an overall inability to plan beyond the EA funded timeline, including on interventions that may fall under the EAs but require a longer timeframe to be implemented. Consideration of a multi-year approach may be beneficial to allow for longer-term thinking and grant the potential for improved quality of programming and consistency of services. (Sustainability, Findings 22 and 23)

Recommendations

149. The recommendations stemming from this evaluation are provided in full recognition of the particularities of UNRWA's mandate and the beneficiaries it is mandated to assist and provide services to, as highlighted in the Conclusions. The recommendations outlined below identify areas where UNRWA's practice for planning, managing, and delivering on its EAs can be strengthened further. In addition to the internal decisions and resources that will be required to effectively action these recommendations, a continued and strengthened dialogue between UNRWA and donors (as well as host governments), including in regard to the implications of UNRWA's funding situation, will be crucial to support this process.

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Department	Timeline	Relevant Evaluation Criteria
1	Develop and implement a plan to refine vulnerability criteria and categories through systematic and regular revision of demographic and socio-economic indicators of populations of concern in UNRWA's case management system, accounting for the type of assistance required (cash, food, education, health, protection etc.), the type of poverty levels across FOs and introducing measures for identifying intersecting vulnerabilities (see below), to allow systematic identification of changing vulnerabilities and emerging issues/ situations.	RSSD, in collaboration with fields and the Department of Planning	Within 18 months for the EAs 2025 planning cycle	Relevance Coverage, Inclusion and Equity Effectiveness
2	Pilot the introduction of a suite of qualitative data collection methods to accompany vulnerability assessments, to support the Agency in assessing the evolving, multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities among the populations of concern, and, more importantly, to demonstrate the impact of the services on people's resilience and daily lives. This will require an investment in staffing and funding that will require dedicated donor support.	RSSD in collaboration with the Department of Planning	Within 18 months for the EAs 2025 planning cycle	Relevance Coverage, Inclusion and Equity Effectiveness
3	Develop and implement a plan to strengthen the Age, Gender, Diversity processes and criteria by reflecting intersectionality dimensions in vulnerability assessments: - Build on staff's extensive knowledge of the communities they work with to introduce concepts of intersectionality, what it means in practice and how it would strengthen ongoing work to identify the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded refugees; - Consider consistently introducing age dimensions across UNRWA's	RSSD in collaboration with the Department of Planning and the Protection Division	Within 18 months for the EAs 2025 planning cycle	Relevance Coverage, Inclusion and Equity

	interventions; - Continue to refine the Agency's gender approach, wherever possible going beyond binary considerations, or at a minimum ensuring that interventions include channels for active participation of all voices and including women and girls; - Continue to refine the introduction of Washington Group criteria to nuance disability identification.			
4	Incorporate processes for using feedback from beneficiaries of EA interventions and frontline staff (e.g., adapting existing tools and/ or designing a unified tool) to systematically feed into EA planning, design and implementation, and ensuring that the voices of all refugees are included by introducing gender- and age-sensitive processes to EAs design, monitoring and evaluation.	The Executive Office in collaboration with the fields and DIOS	Within 12 months, and yearly thereafter	Relevance Coverage, Inclusion and Equity Effectiveness
5	Streamline all feedback and community complaint mechanisms in each FO and assign dedicated resources to address and respond to feedback and complaints received at frequent intervals, with clear communication on response times conveyed to beneficiaries.	All fields of operation	Within 12 months	Coverage, Inclusion and Equity Effectiveness Efficiency
6	Ensure the process underway to integrate the Agency's registration and programme management information systems unifies databases so case management and registration data are harmonized and held both comprehensively at both FO level (for field-level beneficiary data) and HQ level (for Agency-wide beneficiary data) to strengthen the design and delivery of tailored EA interventions.	RSSD , in collaboration with the Programme Departments and IMTD	Within 24 months	Relevance Coverage, Inclusion and Equity Effectiveness Efficiency
7	Each EA planning cycle should systematically draw on the refined vulnerability assessments to ensure intervention areas covered by the EAs are focused on the most pressing humanitarian needs.	Department of Planning and all fields	EA 2025 planning cycle	Effectiveness Efficiency
8	Develop and implement a plan to strengthen UNRWA's EA donor engagement approach, including FOs more actively in communication and	External Relations and Communication Department	Immediate and ongoing	Relevance Coherence

	discussions about the importance of the EAs for refugee populations.			Sustainability
9	Further strengthen participation in interagency humanitarian coordination channels to ensure that UNRWA's work is communicated so that others can capitalize on the Agency's presence and reach in refugee communities and vice-versa.	All fields of operation	Within 6 months, and ongoing	Relevance Coherence Sustainability
10	Complete a review of how other agencies combine multi-year and yearly planning processes in their budgeting and planning system to strengthen resource mobilization.	Department of Planning	Within 6 months	Coherence Sustainability
11	Explore introducing Agency-wide multi-year planning for EAs which incorporate yearly review processes to re-assess needs and requirements (as already being done in Syria under the two-year HRP and in the oPt and Lebanon).	Department of Planning and all fields	Within 6 months	Coherence Sustainability

List of Annexes

Annex 1: Management Response

general response:

date of management response: 20 March 2023	reference number: DIOS/EVAL/2023/2
Office and person coordinating the management response / recommendation follow up: Sam Rose, Director of Planning, UNRWA Headquarters Amman	
How has this evaluation influenced UNRWA Emergency Appeals: This is the first comprehensive evaluation of UNRWA's emergency programming since 2007 and is thus extremely important for organisational learning. It has contributed to ongoing internal reflection on how the Agency can best ensure the continued provision of lifesaving humanitarian assistance and protection to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees affected by acute or protracted crises. The evaluation, which was conducted at the same time as the Agency was finalizing the preparation of its new Strategic Plan, covering the period 2023 – 2028, confirms the continued relevance of the EAs as a mechanism to support some of the most vulnerable communities in the Middle East. It further recognizes the criticality of UNRWA's emergency assistance as well as the expertise of Agency staff in the field and at HQ in the planning, coordination and delivery of this support. In view of the fragility of the Agency's operating environment, the acknowledgment of the effectiveness of UNRWA's emergency mechanisms and structures in adapting to changing conditions and different types of crises, including complex emergencies, protection crises, escalations in violence and the COVID-19 pandemic, is particularly welcomed. A number of the recommendations in the evaluation are aligned with initiatives already under way within UNRWA. This includes: the issuance of updated instructions for the provision of social assistance, enhanced monitoring of poverty and vulnerability to inform humanitarian programming (and in particular how UNRWA identifies the most vulnerable), measures to strengthen the Agency's approach to Accountability to Affected Populations, further integration of programmes' management information systems and strengthened donor engagement. UNRWA will continue working on these issues, building on ongoing initiatives and incorporating new elements based on the recommendations from this evaluation, as applicable. Acting on some recommendations will require additional funding and progress will be resource dependent. The Agency is also committed to exploring multi-year approaches to emergency planning in situations of protracted crisis, such as those experienced in the occupied Palestinian territory and Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. This work will be informed by approaches taken by the humanitarian country teams in these locations, which continue to guide and provide the framework for the Agency's emergency programming. UNRWA welcomes the opportunity for continued discussions with donors about the challenges of delivering emergency assistance in protracted emergencies, ensuring that humanitarian needs are met while mainstreaming a nexus approach across interventions. With poverty levels above 80 per cent in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza, amid deteriorating socio-economic conditions in all fields of operations, UNRWA remains a lifeline for Palestine refugees affected by emergencies and is often the sole provider of humanitarian assistance for this population. It is therefore critical that the Agency continues to discharge this assistance as effectively as possible and has the capacity to adjust its response rapidly to changes in conditions.	

response to specific recommendations:

recommendation owner and recommendation	management response (agree, partially agree, disagree):	action planned / taken / reason for partially agreeing or disagreeing	planned date for implementation
Owner: RSSD, in collaboration with fields and the Department of Planning. Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a plan to refine vulnerability criteria and categories through systematic and regular revision of demographic and socio-economic indicators of populations of concern in UNRWA's case management system, accounting for the type of assistance required (cash, food, education, health, protection etc.), the type of poverty levels across FOs and introducing measures for identifying intersecting vulnerabilities (see below), to allow systematic identification of changing vulnerabilities and emerging issues/ situations.	Partially agree	UNRWA has already taken actions that go some way to addressing the recommendation. On 1 April 2023, new Relief Services Instructions came into effect, which systematically define different modalities of targeting of relief assistance, including through near-universal approaches, proxy means testing and categorical targeting, and how these should be applied at field level. The instructions are designed to ensure greater coherence across field offices in the provision of relief assistance and other services provided on the basis of vulnerability. The Department of Planning (DoP) will continue to coordinate the development of the Emergency Appeals with the Relief and Social Services Department (RSSD) and field offices, to ensure that the new instructions guide the identification of caseloads and most vulnerable groups and that the modalities for the provision of assistance are aligned with UNRWA's policies. The EAs will continue to be developed on the basis of needs. With regard to socio-economic indicators, UNRWA regularly monitors poverty levels through bi-annual High Frequency Crisis Monitoring Surveys in Gaza, Syria and Lebanon. These are supplemented by less frequent larger scale assessments (currently planned in Jordan and Lebanon). In fields where poverty levels continue to exceed 80 percent of the refugee population, the Agency plans to continue providing near-universal basic assistance through emergency appeals, with top ups for the most vulnerable (identified through multi-dimensional categories).	Ongoing

		UNRWA is often the only assistance provider for Palestine refugees, and given the persistence of very high poverty levels, basic humanitarian assistance needs to be provided to the whole caseload as a minimum support to their basic needs. Any change in this approach, aiming at reducing this assistance, will face strong rejection by the community and risks further suffering amongst already vulnerable communities. Where surveys show significant reductions in poverty, UNRWA will review the targeting modality in the respective Field Offices with a view to refining its assistance, as has happened in WBFO and JFO in recent years, as part of an EA transition exercise (WBFO) and in response to needs arising from COVID-19 (both fields).	
Owner: RSSD in collaboration with the Department of Planning Recommendation 2: Pilot the introduction of a suite of qualitative data collection methods to accompany vulnerability assessments, to support the Agency in assessing the evolving, multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities among the populations of concern, and, more importantly, to demonstrate the impact of the services on people's resilience and daily lives. This will require an investment in staffing and funding that will require dedicated donor support.	Agree, subject to availability of funds	RSSD will review its current approaches to ensure that qualitative methods are used alongside existing approaches and efforts undertaken at field and HQ level to identify vulnerability and the most needs caseloads. Qualitative methods will also be built into evaluation components of future EA programming and new project proposals. It should be noted that the development of new tools to analyse vulnerability is subject to the availability of additional resources. In addition, regular post-distribution monitoring is being undertaken by Field Offices to gather beneficiary voices and assess the impact of the assistance on the refugee population. In the next months, changes will be implemented in the Registered Refugee Information System (RRIS) to allow systematic review and analysis of post-distribution monitoring across UNRWA. Strengthening of the Agency's approach to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) will	Depending on funding availability

		also incorporate emergency programming (see recommendation 4 below). UNRWA also remains committed to participating in joint qualitative assessments organised at country level.	
Owner: RSSD in collaboration with the Department of Planning and the Protection Division Recommendation 3: Develop and implement a plan to strengthen the Age, Gender, Diversity processes and criteria by reflecting intersectionality dimensions in vulnerability assessments: — Build on staff's extensive knowledge of the communities they work with to introduce concepts of intersectionality, what it means in practice and how it would strengthen ongoing work to identify the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded refugees; — Consider consistently introducing age dimensions across UNRWA's interventions; — Continue to refine the Agency's gender approach, wherever possible going beyond binary considerations, or at a minimum ensuring that interventions include channels for active participation of all voices and including women and girls; — Continue to refine the introduction of Washington Group criteria to nuance disability identification.	Partially agree, subject to availability of funds	The current targeting approach in Syria and Gaza, which is used to identify most vulnerable groups for the provision of top ups/higher cash transfer value, already includes gender, age and disability categories. Including additional dimensions would require additional funding to expand assistance to additional beneficiaries. In Lebanon and Jordan, UNRWA is currently undertaking household surveys to identify vulnerability categories. Subject to data availability, the analysis will identify different dimensions of vulnerability among categories of beneficiaries. As noted above, in the West Bank, UNRWA is working to harmonize its approach with the NCTP hence the inclusion of intersectionality dimensions depends on their reflection in the Government's Proxy Means Test Formula (PMTF). In all cases, any changes in the assistance provided will need to be discussed and approved by the community that relies on UNRWA to meet basic needs. RSSD will review the results of the vulnerability surveys currently underway in Lebanon and Jordan and will liaise with the Protection Division and other departments as needed to expand the inclusion of different dimensions in the provision of relief assistance by end of 2024. When taking into account age dimensions, UNRWA will ensure a child-sensitive approach alongside the identification of other vulnerable groups based on age (e.g. older persons).	4 th quarter 2024

Owner: The Executive Office in collaboration with the fields and DIOS. Recommendation 4: Incorporate processes for using feedback from beneficiaries of EA interventions and frontline staff (e.g., adapting existing tools and/ or designing a unified tool) to systematically feed into EA planning, design and implementation, and ensuring that the voices of all refugees are included by introducing gender- and age-sensitive processes to EAs design, monitoring and evaluation.	Agree	The Agency's action on AAP was reviewed and discussed at a workshop in September 2022, drawing also on the lessons learnt from a pilot project carried out in Lebanon Field Office (LFO). UNRWA is currently reviewing its approach to AAP, including the scope in its unique operating context (and the possible need for a policy on AAP, for coherence across Agency), the institutional home and resources available / required. A decision is planned on this matter by Q3 2023. In parallel, Fields continue to implement AAP actions (consultation, participatory approach, complaints process) as part of their normal course of operations. The ongoing process is expected to underscore the Agency's commitment to refugee inclusion and participation, which are also linked to UN System-wide processes, such as the SG's Our Common Agenda and the refugee inclusion component (insofar as applicable to UNRWA) of the Global Compact on Refugees. Central to the current and any updated AAP approach is the inclusion of all refugee voices, and their representativeness in related mechanisms and processes, which in turn entails the proper disaggregation by sex, age and other relevant criteria. The updated AAP approach will apply across the Agency's programmes and fields, including EAs.	Q3 2023 for the updated AAP approach 2024 EA planning cycle
Owner: All fields of operation. Recommendation 5: Streamline all feedback and community complaint mechanisms in each FO and assign dedicated resources to address and respond to feedback and complaints received at frequent intervals, with clear communication on response times conveyed to beneficiaries.	Agree, subject to availability of funds	A number of initiatives are currently on-going/planned in UNRWA fields to enhance AAP and enhance the Agency's ability to incorporate and respond to refugees' feedback. These initiatives include the recruitment of a consultant in Jordan to lead the design, implementation of an AAP strategy and support capacity building, developing an action plan for community engagement and participation	December 2024

		in Gaza, rolling out a field-level AAP plan in Syria, and recruiting specialized personnel in the West Bank, dedicated to AAP. In Lebanon, UNRWA has just concluded an AAP project and will continue to build on the identified good practices and enhanced ways of communication established with communities. However, the above actions are subject to the availability of funds. Some project-based resources have been identified and UNRWA will continue to strive to enhance AAP capacities. Additional actions will be designed and implemented once the Agency-wide AAP approach (mentioned in the answer to recommendation four) is approved.	
Owner: RSSD, in collaboration with the Programme Departments and IMTD. Recommendation 6: Ensure the process underway to integrate the Agency's registration and programme management information systems unifies databases so case management and registration data are harmonised and held both comprehensively at both FO level (for field-level beneficiary data) and HQ level (for Agency-wide beneficiary data) to strengthen the design and delivery of tailored EA interventions. This process should be considered a priority in the Agency including for resource mobilisation.	Agree, subject to availability of funds	RSSD and IMTD are currently reviewing barriers to the integration of data systems to ensure better sharing and utilization of relevant data. It is expected that a significant proportion of this work will be completed within the next 12 months. Any remaining gaps in data integration will be built into future projects (including EA where relevant). Please note that the Primero case management system is intentionally not part of any integration process.	Within 12 months.

Owner: Department of Planning and all fields. Recommendation 7: Each EA planning cycle should systematically draw on the refined vulnerability assessments to ensure intervention areas covered by the EAs are focused on the most pressing humanitarian needs.	Agree	As mentioned in response to recommendations 1 and 2, several initiatives have already been undertaken at HQ and field level to harmonize vulnerability approaches across fields, based on Agency-wide instructions, and to collect vulnerability data at field level through household surveys. DoP will continue to liaise with RSSD and field offices to ensure that the latest vulnerability analysis is the basis for EA planning and that most vulnerable groups are targeted through dedicated assistance. This includes the findings of bi-annual High-Frequency Crisis Monitoring Surveys currently undertaken in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. Data from assessments implemented by other humanitarian partners (e.g. OCHA Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment -MSNA) and national statistical offices (e.g. the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) will also be used more systematically to further describe the context in which Palestine refugees live and their vulnerability. UNRWA will liaise with partners to ensure that Palestine refugees are represented in surveys implemented by other Agencies.	EA 2024 planning cycle
Owner: External Relations and Communication Department. Recommendation 8: Develop and implement a plan to strengthen UNRWA's EA donor engagement approach, including FOs more actively in communication and discussions about the importance of the EAs for refugee populations.	Agree	ERCD, in coordination with relevant departments and fields, is already taking action to deliver on this recommendation. This involves the following: - Take stock of previous EA fundraising campaigns, identify lessons learned and draft guidelines for future public and private fundraising campaigns; - Ensure yearly country plans for engagement with the top 20 donors are drafted in consultation with relevant fundraising focal points (including in focal points in UNRWA field offices)	Ongoing

		- After the launch of the Emergency Appeal, consult with fields and DoP to draft a joint fundraising strategy on EA priorities; - Submit proposals for field directors' engagement with donor capitals on a quarterly basis.	
Owner: All fields of operation. Recommendation 9: Further strengthen participation in interagency humanitarian coordination channels to ensure that UNRWA's work is communicated so that others can capitalise on the Agency's presence and reach in refugee communities and vice-versa.	Agree	In all its fields of operation, UNRWA will continue to coordinate with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), relevant clusters and working groups by participating in country-level coordination mechanisms. Bilateral coordination with relevant agencies will also be strengthened around key issues identified in each field, e.g. the situation of Palestine refugees in King Abdullah Park (KAP) in Jordan, and enhanced participation in the different emergency frameworks in Lebanon (Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, Emergency Response Plan, and United Nations strategic Framework), amongst other efforts. In the oPt, UNRWA will work closely with OCHA to ensure the MSNA/Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)/Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) documents capture and clearly reflect UNRWA as a major factor for stability and a foundation for the HRP. (This was partially achieved in 2022 and the 2023 HNO and HRP that explicitly mention UNRWA as a stabilizing factor). Additional resources are currently being mobilized through earmarked funding to deploy a consultant, based in Gaza, to review UNRWA's participation in humanitarian coordination structures in the oPt and provide recommendations for a more strategic engagement in this area. In the West Bank, UNRWA is seeking additional resources to fund a Humanitarian Specialist dedicated to inter-agency coordination. At regional level, DoP will continue to represent	Ongoing/by end of 2024

		UNRWA in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) and related working groups.	
Owner: Department of Planning. Recommendation 10: Complete a review of how other agencies combine multi-year and yearly planning processes in their budgeting and planning system to strengthen resource mobilisation.	Agree	DoP is conducting a desk review of other Agencies' practice and approaches, including HCTs' multi-year strategies and plans. Field offices are also being consulted to collect their inputs on country-level programming and implications/benefits of introducing multi-year appeals. The review is focussed on UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross.	Within 6 months
Owner: Department of Planning and all fields. Recommendation 11: Explore introducing Agency-wide multi-year planning for EAs which incorporate yearly review processes to re-assess needs and requirements (as already being done in Syria under the two-year HRP, and in the oPt and Lebanon).	Agree	Following the completion of the review referred to above, DoP will prepare a decision note on the introduction of multi-year appeals to be submitted to UNRWA Executive Advisory Group with the possibility of reflecting the decision in the 2024 EA planning cycle.	Within 6 months

Annex 2: Evaluation TOR

EVALUATION OF THE UNRWA EMERGENCY APPEALS FOR THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES AND SYRIA REGIONAL CRISIS 2016 - 2021

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This preliminary Terms of Reference (ToR) outlines the objectives, scope, key questions and process requirements for an evaluation of the UNRWA Emergency Appeal, considering the Agency's use of the mechanism across its fields of operation and activities between 2016 and 2021. This ToR presents a timeline for the completion of the evaluation and expected deliverables.

The Evaluation Division of the Agency's Department of Internal Oversight Services is seeking to retain an evaluation team with expertise in evaluation of emergency and humanitarian response mechanisms. This package includes requirements for proposals, and the criteria that will guide the technical and financial analysis of responses.

1. Emergency Appeals: Purpose

- 1.1 Over 5.7 million Palestine refugees are registered with UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. UNRWA's services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.⁷³ The Agency is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions to its three funding streams, namely, the programme budget, the emergency appeals and projects.⁷⁴
- 1.2 In principle, EAs are meant to cover abnormal circumstances i.e. additional humanitarian needs or caseloads not covered by the programme budget due to emergency situations emanating from a protracted or sudden onset crisis or conflict that include (among others) blockades, armed conflict, pandemics, economic crisis and natural disasters. As the emergency is understood as a circumstance that has a beginning and an end, the EAs are annual and have their own dedicated planning cycle and funding stream as they are expected to be finite. However, if the emergency situation persists into the following year, a new EA can be issued following the conduct of a situational analysis of the changes on the ground regarding the emergency situation, including necessary adjustments to the design of interventions.
- 1.3 The EAs are either fully or partially reflected in the Humanitarian Country Team's Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) for the oPt and Syria, as well as in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which covers Jordan and Lebanon. UNRWA participates in the humanitarian coordination mechanisms established at country level under the leadership of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator with the support of OCHA. It also participates in regional structures linked to the 3RP. As a member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) UNRWA takes part in the humanitarian programme cycle, providing inputs to the Humanitarian Needs Overview and HRP developed at country level. As such, the priorities and interventions set by UNRWA in the Agency-specific EAs, are aligned with the priorities agreed upon by the HCT for the country HRP.
- 1.4 In the case of the oPt there is not always 100 per cent alignment between the financial requirements in UNRWA appeals and the HRP, whose parameters are set by the HCT and the clusters, often with a ceiling on the budget. In past years, for example, clusters have approved a percentage of some of UNRWA's interventions. However, UNRWA includes the full intervention in its appeal because this is the only vehicle to fundraise for the totality of needs. Where there are discrepancies, this is documented in the appeal. For Syria and Lebanon, to date, UNRWA EA interventions have been fully reflected in the inter-agency appeals

⁷³ UNRWA services are delivered in accordance with the United Nations humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence. It is the largest United Nations operation in the Middle East, employing approximately 29,000 staff.

⁷⁴ The programme (core) budget is allocated to achieve the goals set out in the UNRWA Mid-Term Strategy (MTS) (currently from 2016 to 2022); the EA budget is allocated to address the circumstances of emergencies and changes resulting from them; the projects budget fund initiatives that are neither related directly to an emergency, nor are reflected in the MTS plan, but are complementary to them.

(Syria HRP and Lebanon Crisis Response Plan). In Jordan, UNRWA EA requirements are not in the Jordan Response Plan (at the request of the Government of Jordan), however they are reflected in the regional line of the inter-agency 3RP.

- 1.5 Emergency appeals may be complemented by flash appeals which are one-off appeals related to a specific sudden onset emergency that occur after an EA for a specific year is already issued (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, 11 day conflict in Gaza in May 2021). In situations where the emergency context related to the flash appeal continues into the following year, the residual elements of the flash appeal are incorporated into the EA, or original appeals are updated.

2. Emergency Appeals: Context

- 2.1 UNRWA currently has two annual EAs: one for the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and one for the Syria Regional Crisis. The EA for the oPt was initially launched in November 2000 following the second Intifada in September 2000 and has been subsequently issued each year. In Gaza, the ongoing emergency can also be attributed to the land, air, and sea blockade imposed since 2007, after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip. Combined with sporadic armed conflict, these have cumulatively contributed to chronic poverty and unemployment in the Gaza Strip, with 1.2 million out of 1.4 million registered Palestine refugees deemed to be in need of assistance.
- 2.2 In the West Bank, the emergency can be characterized as a protection crisis linked to the occupation and associated coercive practices. These include restrictions on movement and access, a discriminatory planning regime for Palestinians, settler violence and demolitions and evictions due to expansion of settlements. It is contextualized by the ongoing occupation of the West Bank by the Israeli forces – this has created very isolated communities that need assistance and face a number of protection risks.
- 2.3 Following the outbreak of armed conflict in Syria in 2011, UNRWA launched a dedicated EA for the Syria Regional Crisis in 2013,⁷⁵ with its response to the emergency in earlier years subsumed under a broader United Nations system humanitarian response plan. The armed conflict has significantly impacted upon Palestine Refugees in Syria, with 95% in need of sustained humanitarian assistance. While some 438,000 Palestine refugees are estimated to remain inside Syria, many have fled the country since the beginning of the conflict, including 17,800 Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) in Jordan and 27,700 PRS in Lebanon. In Lebanon, the poverty rate among PRS is estimated at 89% and almost 95% are food insecure, whilst in Jordan, 93% of PRS have been categorized as vulnerable or extremely vulnerable. The ongoing conflict, aggravated by deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Syria and Lebanon and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, provides the context for the ongoing emergency in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

3. Emergency Appeals: Planning, Monitoring And Reporting Processes

- 3.1 The Department of Planning issues internal guidance to field offices and departments for the development of the EAs for the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis in late August and early September of each year, working towards a launch in January of the following year. Guidance includes timelines, templates and an overview of the process. As part of the process, the Department of Planning convenes meetings with fields and HQ departments to discuss priorities, including appeal objectives and indicators, and to identify issues requiring follow up. Identified issues are discussed during workshops (organized by the Department of Planning with all relevant programme departments and fields) and/or through bilateral follow up with field offices and relevant headquarters departments.
- 3.2 In parallel with the development of its Agency-specific appeals, UNRWA participates in the inter-agency discussions and prioritization process led by OCHA for the issuance of country-level Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP). The clusters / sectors are aware of UNRWA-proposed emergency appeal interventions, which are reviewed and validated for inclusion in HRPs. At the regional level, UNRWA participates in the 3RP coordinated by UNHCR and UNDP. UNRWA ensures that Palestine

⁷⁵ Prior to 2013, the UNRWA response was part of the Syrian Arab Republic's Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan, which was prepared in coordination with the United Nations System, with the Lebanon content reflected in the United Nations Regional Response Plan.

refugee needs are reflected in the regional overview (for Jordan and the regional EA ask) and in the Lebanon chapter (Lebanon Crisis Response Plan-LCRP, with inputs provided by Lebanon Field Office).

- 3.3 In preparing their submissions, the field offices also consult UNRWA programme departments and the Protection Division for technical guidance in relation to the different interventions included in the EA. Draft EA submissions shared by the fields are first reviewed by the Department of Planning, and then shared with HQ programmes, the Protection Division and the Neutrality Coordinator for further comments and incorporation of guidance as appropriate. Appeal budgets are also reviewed and cleared by the Finance Department. Comments are integrated by the Department of Planning and the EA documents are shared with the Department of Legal Affairs (DLA) and the External Relations Department (ERD) before they are submitted to the Executive Office for final review and clearance.
- 3.4 The Department of Planning maintains oversight of monitoring and reporting on interventions included in the EAs through the Agency-wide results-based monitoring (RBM) framework. Field offices covered under the EAs collect data against the EA indicators and report to the RBM system on a quarterly basis. Progress on EA anticipated results is reviewed at the field and Agency levels on a quarterly and semi-annual basis, respectively. External reporting is provided twice a year through a Mid-Year Progress Report and an Annual Report (the latter forms part of the Agency's Annual Operational Report-AOR). Bi-weekly operational meetings are also held with field offices, chaired by the Department of Planning and involving HQ departments, and provide an opportunity for ongoing reflection of emergency needs and response.
- 3.5 The Department of Planning, in coordination with the Department of Finance, the External Relations Department and relevant field offices, also monitors the allocation of funds to EA interventions, to ensure that prioritized activities are funded and that critical gaps are identified in a timely manner to avoid a disruption in essential assistance.

4. oPt Emergency Appeal Experience Between 2016-2020

- 4.1 Over the past five years (2016-2020), UNRWA has raised USD 566 million⁷⁶ from humanitarian donors to fund a range of emergency programmes in the oPt which can broadly be categorized under the following three strategic priorities: i) Palestine refugee households facing acute shocks have increased economic access to food; ii) Palestine refugees maintain access to critical services and are protected from the most severe impacts of the crisis; this includes through protection interventions, which in the case of the West Bank, focuses on protecting refugees from the immediate and most serious effects of occupation related policies, practices and hostilities, and on promoting respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL); and iii) Effective management and coordination of the emergency response is ensured. Ninety (90) per cent of the funds received have been allocated to Gaza and the remainder to the West Bank, due to much higher caseload and levels of need in the former. Data on the total funding received in 2021 is not yet available and is thus not reflected in Tables 1-2 below.

A. Gaza

- 4.2 As can be seen in Table 1, between 2016 and 2018, the annual EA budget request for Gaza hovered around USD 355 million, and donations varied between 30% and 50% of the request. Following cuts in funding by the United States to the Agency and the EA in January 2018, the annual budget requests for the EA were revised downward by about 40%. Due to funding shortfalls, UNRWA had to make adjustments to its emergency interventions in particular in the oPt, to ensure the continuity of vital activities (e.g. food assistance to one million refugees in Gaza) with limited funds, while other interventions were scaled down or completely discontinued. Funding in 2019 and 2020 constituted about 60% of the total required. Details on the funding required and received for each intervention through the EA for Gaza from 2016 to 2020 can be found in Annex I.
- 4.3 Two interventions - emergency food assistance and emergency cash for work - constituted 89% or more of total EA allocation for Gaza from 2018 to 2020. Five other interventions receiving small proportions (0.1% to 4.5%) of total funding for most or all years from 2016 to 2020 include: mental health & psycho-

⁷⁶ Of the USD 566,239,918 raised, 90.1% (USD 509,959,771) has been allocated to the Gaza and 9.7% (USD 54,866,958) to the West Bank. The remaining 0.2% (USD 1,413,189) had not been allocated at the time of issuance of the Annual Operational Reports. Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

social support / community mental health (1.9 to 4.5%); emergency health (0.2 to 1.7%); education in emergencies (0.4 to 3.1%); coordination and management (0.1 to 3.5%); and safety and security (0.2 to 0.9%). For a breakdown of interventions receiving the highest proportion of EA funding for Gaza for each year, see Annex III.

- 4.4 As illustrated in Table 1, only emergency food assistance received the majority of the required funding in all five years. Six other interventions (mental health & psycho-social support, education in emergencies, coordination and management, safety and security, environmental health and Gaza summer fun weeks) received the majority of the required funding in at least two of the three years until 2018. However, protection was not funded in three of the five years for which funding was required, while three interventions (neutrality, emergency environmental health and emergency preparedness) were not funded in 2019 and 2020. Six additional interventions have not been included in the EAs after 2018,⁷⁷ with some of these being suspended following the funding crisis in 2018.

Table 1. Funding received: total and % of requirement per intervention (Gaza, 2016 – 2020)								
TOTAL FOR GAZA	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016			
Total funding requirement for Gaza through oPt EA (US\$)	145.4 mil.	127.6 mil.	354.2 mil.	355.0 mil.	356.0 mil.			
% change in total funding req. compared to previous year	+ 14.0%	- 64%	- 0.2%	- 0.3%				
Total funding received for Gaza through oPt EA (US\$)	85.7 mil.	79.8 mil	93.2 mil.	128.1 mil	123.2 mil			
Total funding received (as a % of total req. year)	59.0%	62.5%	26.3%	36.1%				
% change in total received compared to previous year	+ 7.4%	- 14.4%	- 27.2%	+ 4.0%				
% OF REQUIREMENT PER INTERVENTION IN GAZA	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016			
Emergency food assistance	80.0%	58.8%	79.6%	83.0%	60.5%			
Emergency cash-for-work	21.0%	131.8%	8.9%	13.2%	22.0%			
(Community) Mental health & psycho-social support	23.5%	93.4%	32.7%	64.1%	64.7%			
Emergency health	29.5%	13.2%	3.6%	29.1%	32.7%			
Education in emergencies	11.0%	8.9%	58.7%	38.8%	93.0%			
Coordination and management	4.2%	0%	3.7%	59.9%	69.5%			
Protection	0%	116.2%	0%	0%	186.0%			
Safety and security	0%	10.8%	28.5%	100%	100%			
Neutrality	0%	0%	0.4%	84.0%	(NR)			
Emergency preparedness	(NR)	0%	0%	(NR)	(NR)			
(Emergency) Environmental health	(NR)	0%	19.2%	150.8%	90.9%			
Transitional shelter cash assistance	(NR)	(NR)	15.4%	56.3%	(NR)			
Gaza summer fun weeks	(NR)	(NR)	17.4%	50.8%	77.5%			
Non-food items and emergency shelter repair / Emergency shelter repair / Emergency shelter and shelter repair	(NR)	(NR)	0.2%	6.5%	15.6%			
Livelihoods	(NR)	(NR)	0%	0%	0%			
Emergency preparedness	(NR)	0%	0%	(NR)	(NR)			
Explosive remnants of war education	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	0%	0%			
Operations support officers	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	90.1%			
Emergency cash assistance	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	0%			
Interventions receiving 50% + of required funding	1/9 (11%)	4/11 (36%)	2/15 (13%)	8/15 (53%)	9/15 (75%)			
KEY	NR: NOT REQUESTED	90% - 100% +	70% - < 90%	50% - < 70%	30% - < 50%	10% - < 30%	> 0% - < 10%	0%

Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

B. West Bank

- 4.5 The West Bank funding experience is laid out in Table 2. When the field's total EA requirement hovered around USD 45 million between 2016 and 2018, the funding received varied significantly from year to year, ranging from 52% of total requirement in 2017 to 19% of total requirement in 2018. Following the loss of United States funding in January 2018, while funding requirements for 2019 and 2020 had to be reduced by more than 75%, the funding received was only 13% and 19% respectively of the total required. Consequently, since 2018 and until mid-2020, some activities under the oPt EA could only continue

⁷⁷ 1) Livelihoods; 2) Non-food items / emergency shelter repair / Emergency shelter; 3) Transitional shelter cash assistance; 4) Gaza summer fun weeks (SFWs); 5) Explosive remnants of war education; and 6) Operations support officers.

through an advance from the UNRWA programme budget. Details on the funding required and received for each intervention through the EA for the West Bank from 2016 to 2020 can be found in Annex II.

- 4.6 Emergency cash assistance and protection constituted 100% of the total EA allocation for the West Bank for 2019 and 2020. Six other interventions receiving significant proportions of total funding until 2018 included emergency cash-for-work (42-52%), emergency food assistance (22-33%), protection (5-14%), neutrality (5-11%), emergency health / mobile health clinics (4-7%) and coordination and management (4-6%). For a breakdown of interventions receiving the highest proportion of EA funding for the West Bank for each year, see Annex III.
- 4.7 As shown in Table 2, five interventions (protection, coordination and management, emergency cash-for-work, emergency health / mobile health clinics and community mental health) received nearly half or more of the required funding in at least two of the three years until 2018. However, since 2019, not a single intervention has received even 40% of what was required. Emergency food assistance⁷⁸ as well as coordination and management have not been funded since 2018, while emergency preparedness did not receive any funding for either of the two years (2018-2019) in which funding was required. Six additional interventions for which funding was required at different points between 2016 and 2018, have not been included in the EAs in 2019 and 2020.⁷⁹ Some of these interventions were suspended following the funding crisis in 2018.

Table 2. Funding received: total and % of requirement per intervention (West Bank, 2016 – 2020)								
TOTAL FOR WEST BANK		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Total funding requirement for WB through oPt EA (US\$)		9.3 mil.	10.5 mil.	44.0 mil	46.7 mil.	46.5 mil.		
% change in total funding req. compared to previous year		- 11.0%	- 76.1%	- 5.9%	0.4%			
Total funding received for WB through oPt EA (US\$)		1.8 mil.	1.4 mil.	8.5 mil.	24.5 mil.	18.7 mil.		
Total funding received (as a % of total req. year)		19.5%	13.1%	19.3%	52.4%	40.1%		
% change in total received compared to previous year		32.6%	- 83.8%	- 65.3%	31.1%			
% OF REQUIREMENT PER INTERVENTION IN WEST BANK		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Emergency cash assistance		22.5%	6.5%	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)		
Protection		32.8%	39.0%	63.1%	49.9%	96.8%		
Emergency food assistance		0%	0%	8.6%	21.8%	26.1%		
Coordination and management		0%	0%	78.0%	53.9%	49.4%		
Emergency preparedness		(NR)	0%	0%	(NR)	(NR)		
Emergency cash-for-work		(NR)	(NR)	28.4%	97.8%	48.7%		
Emergency health / mobile health clinics		(NR)	(NR)	44.2%	123.8%	62.1%		
Neutrality		(NR)	(NR)	10.2%	79.2%	(NR)		
Community mental health		(NR)	(NR)	24.7%	98.8%	109.3%		
Resilience (children and youth)		(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	0%	(NR)		
Operations support officers		(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	53.6%		
Interventions receiving 50% + of required funding		0/4 (0%)	0/5 (0%)	2/8 (25%)	5/8 (63%)	4/7 (57%)		
KEY	NR: NOT REQUESTED	90% - 100% +	70% - < 90%	50% - < 70%	30% - < 50%	10% - < 30%	> 0% - < 10%	0%

Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

5. Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal Experience Between 2016-2020

- 5.1 Over the past five years (2016-2020), UNRWA has raised USD 763.7 million from humanitarian donors to fund a range of emergency programmes in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan which can broadly be categorized under the following three strategic priorities: i) Preserve resilience through the provision of humanitarian assistance; ii) Provide a protective framework for Palestine refugees and help mitigate their vulnerability; and iii) Strengthen humanitarian capacity, coordination and management. 70.6 per cent of the funds received have been allocated to Syria, 22 per cent to Lebanon, 7.1 per cent to Jordan and 0.3 per cent to

⁷⁸ This intervention is implemented in partnership with WFP, which provides most of the funding as it is responsible for food assistance, while UNRWA complements with logistic costs. The logistic costs were covered through a PB advance which is not reported in the financial table, but is mentioned in the EA reporting narrative.

⁷⁹ 1) Emergency cash-for-work; 2) Emergency health / mobile health clinics; 3) Neutrality; 4) Community mental health; 5) Resilience (children and youth); and 6) Operations support officers.

the regional level.⁸⁰ Data on the total funding received in 2021 is not yet available and is thus not reflected in Tables 3-6 below.

A. Syria (2016-2020)

- 5.2 The Syria funding experience is detailed in Table 3. When the total requirement for the EA was USD 329 million for each year between 2016 and 2018, the funding received declined progressively from 53% of requirement in 2016 to 46% in 2017 to 25% in 2018. Following the loss of United States funding in January 2018, while the funding requirements for 2019 and 2020 had to be reduced by one-third to 221 million in 2019 and 213 million in 2020, the funding received was only 30% of the total required. Details on funding required and received for each intervention through the EA for Syria from 2016 to 2020 can be found in Annex IV.
- 5.3 Cash assistance constituted the majority of the total EA allocation for Syria for all five years, progressively increasing upwards from 52% in 2016 to 80% in 2020. Three other interventions receiving significant proportions of total funding include food assistance (5.3 to 18%), education in emergencies (5.5 to 9.7%) and capacity and management support (1.1 to 9.3%). Seven other interventions received lesser levels of funding support, typically ranging between 0.1% to 3% of total funding. For a breakdown of interventions receiving the highest proportion of EA funding for Syria for each year, see Annex VIII.
- 5.4 As demonstrated in Table 3, of the 11 interventions funded between 2016-2020, five interventions (cash assistance, food assistance, protection, safety and security and capacity and management support) received a quarter or more of the total required for at least four of the five years. However, apart from safety and security, none of the other interventions attained 50% or more of required funding for more than two years. Two interventions (livelihoods, emergency repair) went largely unfunded or received below 10% of the total required.

Table 3. Funding received: total and % of requirement per intervention (Syria, 2016 – 2020)								
TOTAL FOR SYRIA		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Total funding req. for Syria through SRC EA (US\$)		212.8 mil.	220.8 mil	329.2 mil.	329.0 mil.	329.0 mil		
% change in total funding req. compared to previous year		-3.6%	-32.9%	0.1%	-0.0001%			
Total funding received for Syria through SRC EA (US\$)		63.4 mil.	69.7 mil.	80.6 mil.	149.9 mil.	175.6 mil.		
Total funding received (as a % of total req. year)		29.8%	31.6%	24.5%	45.6%	53.4%		
% change in total received compared to previous year		-9.1%	-13.5%	-46.2%	-14.6%			
% OF REQUIREMENT PER INTERVENTION IN SYRIA		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Cash assistance		47.4%	44.3%	31.0%	48.9%	45.4%		
Non-food items (NFIs)		9.7%	1.8%	28.6%	27.5%	84.5%		
Food assistance		36.9%	77.7%	9.2%	24.7%	54.2%		
Livelihoods		0.8%	3.2%	0%	0%	0%		
Emergency health		6.7%	10.5%	17.4%	48.8%	56.0%		
Education in emergencies		16.4%	18.8%	27.9%	83.0%	106.2%		
Protection		45.8%	30.2%	37.3%	169.1%	13.4%		
Environmental Health		20.3%	41.5%	194.8%	1.9%	24.9%		
Safety and security		19.6%	54.2%	240.2%	162.3%	29.0%		
Capacity and management support		9.2%	36.9%	33.1%	79.5%	116.9%		
Emergency repair / maintenance of installations		0%	0.5%	2.0%	13.5%	0.8%		
Interventions receiving 50% + of required funding		0/11 (0%)	2/11 (18%)	2/11 (18%)	4/11 (36%)	5/11 (45%)		
KEY	NR: NOT REQUESTED	90% - 100% +	70% - < 90%	50% - < 70%	30% - < 50%	10% - < 30%	> 0% - < 10%	0%

Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

B. Lebanon (2016-2020)

- 5.5 EA requirements for Lebanon are reflected in Table 4. Their total requirement for the EA was between USD 61 to 63 million for each year between 2016 and 2018, and the funding received fluctuated from 47% of requirement in 2016 to 62% in 2017 to 58% in 2018. Following the loss of United States funding in January 2018, the funding requirements for 2019 and 2020 had to be reduced by a quarter to 45-46 million in 2019 and 2020; the funding received was 78% and 64% of the total requirement in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

⁸⁰ Of the USD 763,705,996 raised, USD 539,216,976 has been allocated to Syria, USD 167,856,326 to Lebanon, USD 54,035,967 to Jordan and USD 2,596,726 to the Regional level. Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

Details on funding required and received for each intervention through the EA for Lebanon from 2016 to 2020 can be found in Annex V.

- 5.6 Cash assistance constituted the majority (58 to 70%) of the total EA allocation for Lebanon for all five years. Two other interventions receiving significant proportions of total funding for all five years include education in emergencies (14.5 to 23.3%) and emergency health (5.7 to 16.7%). Five other interventions received lesser levels of funding support, typically ranging between 0.05% to 3% of total funding. For a breakdown of interventions receiving the highest proportion of EA funding for Lebanon for each year, see Annex VIII.
- 5.7 As illuminated in Table 4, half of the eight interventions funded between 2016-2020 (cash assistance, emergency health, education in emergencies and capacity and management support) received the majority of the total required for at least three of the five years. However, two interventions (environmental health, safety and security) were minimally funded compared to requirements, emergency repair was not funded and funding for livelihoods fluctuated erratically from year to year.

Table 4. Funding received: total and % of requirement per intervention (Lebanon, 2016 – 2020)								
TOTAL FOR LEBANON		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Total funding req. for Lebanon through SRC EA (US\$)		45.4 mil.	46.2 mil.	61.1 mil.	60.5 mil.	63.1 mil.		
% change in total funding req. compared to previous year		-1.7%	-24.4%	1.1%	-4.2%			
Total funding received for Lebanon through SRC EA (US\$)		29.1 mil.	36.2 mil.	35.3 mil.	37.6 mil.	29.7 mil.		
Total funding received (as a % of total req. year)		64.0%	78.4%	57.7%	62.1%	47.1%		
% change in total received compared to previous year		-19.8%	2.8%	-6.1%	26.5%			
% OF REQUIREMENT PER INTERVENTION IN LEBANON		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Cash assistance		77.7%	81.5%	70.3%	80.7%	44.8%		
Livelihoods		0%	130.9%	15.7%	40.5%	0%		
Emergency health		25.6%	82.2%	40.4%	56.9%	65.8%		
Education in emergencies		95.5%	91.0%	76.5%	50.3%	86.2%		
Protection		11.5%	29.2%	24.6%	15.5%	6.0%		
Environmental Health		0%	44.6%	0.6%	14.4%	8.6%		
Safety and security		0%	0.6%	0.6%	3.1%	6.2%		
Capacity and management support		21.6%	64.4%	48.3%	79.5%	89.4%		
Emergency repair / maintenance of installations		0%	0%	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)		
Interventions receiving 50% + of required funding		2/9 (22%)	5/9 (56%)	2/8 (25%)	4/8 (50%)	3/8 (38%)		
KEY	NR: NOT REQUESTED	90% - 100% +	70% - < 90%	50% - < 70%	30% - < 50%	10% - < 30%	> 0% - < 10%	0%

Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

C. Jordan (2016-2020)

- 5.8 As detailed in Table 5, in Jordan, when the total requirement for the EA was between USD 15 to 17 million for each year between 2016 and 2018, the funding received declined progressively from 77% in 2016 to 60% in 2018. Following the loss of United States funding in January 2018, the funding requirement for 2019 had to be reduced by more than a third to 9.7 million in 2019, of which 73% was received. Following an increase in the requirement in 2020 to USD 11.5 million, the full requirement (103%) was received. Details on funding required and received for each intervention through the EA for Jordan from 2016 to 2020 can be found in Annex VI.

Table 5. Funding received: total and % of requirement per intervention (Jordan, 2016 – 2020)									
TOTAL FOR JORDAN		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016			
Total funding req. for Jordan through SRC EA (US\$)		11.2 mil.	9.7 mil.	15.2 mil.	17.6 mil.	17.2 mil.			
% change in total funding req. compared to previous year		16.2%	-36.5%	-13.3%	2.3%				
Total funding received for Jordan through SRC EA (US\$)		11.6 mil.	7.0 mil.	9.1 mil.	13.1 mil.	13.2 mil.			
Total funding received (as a % of total req. year)		102.8%	72.5%	59.9%	74.8%	77.0%			
% change in total received compared to previous year		64.6%	-23.0%	-30.6%	-0.5%				
% OF REQUIREMENT PER INTERVENTION IN JORDAN		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016			
Cash assistance		105.3%	74.6%	66.9%	67.4%	50.1%			
Emergency health		208.7%	26.2%	58.9%	295.8%	81.4%			
Education in emergencies		70.9%	82.7%	49.2%	35.8%	214.8%			
Protection		95.9%	0.4%	1.9%	23.9%	29.7%			
Environmental Health		(NR)	0%	2.8%	(NR)	(NR)			
Safety and security		(NR)	(NR)	16%	0%	0%			
Capacity and management support		53.2%	262.8%	24.8%	198.7%	914.3%			
Interventions receiving 50% + of required funding		5/5 (100%)	3/6 (50%)	2/7 (29%)	3/6 (50%)	4/6 (67%)			
KEY	NR: NOT REQUESTED	90% - 100% +	70% - < 90%	50% - < 70%	30% - < 50%	10% - < 30%	> 0% - < 10%	0%	

Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

5.9 Cash assistance constituted the majority (55 to 80%) of the total EA allocation for Jordan for all five years. Three other interventions receiving limited to significant proportions of total funding over the five years include education in emergencies (4.5 to 27%), emergency health (2 to 9.3%) and capacity and management support (2.7 to 14.4%). Three other interventions received lesser levels of funding support ranging between 0.01% to 1.5% of total funding. For a breakdown of interventions receiving the highest proportion of EA funding for Jordan for each year, see Annex VIII.

5.10 As outlined in Table 5, four of the seven interventions funded between 2016-2020 (cash assistance, emergency health, education in emergencies and capacity and management support) received the majority of the total required for at least three of the five years. However, two interventions (environmental health, safety and security) were minimally funded or unfunded, while funding for protection fluctuated erratically.

D. REGIONAL (2016-2020)

5.11 Regional refers to costs associated with the planning and coordination of emergency response activities, including the regional component of the Agency's Syria regional crisis response. As elaborated in Table 6, for the regional level, when the total requirement for the EA ranged between USD 3.4 to 4.7 million between 2016 and 2018, the funding received declined from 23% of requirement in 2016-17 to 6% in 2018. Following the loss of United States funding in January 2018, the funding requirement had to be reduced by nearly 90% or more to 0.22 million in 2019 and 0.35 million in 2020; the funding received was 60% and 73% of the total requirement in 2019 and 2020 respectively. Details on funding required and received for each intervention through the EA for the regional level from 2016 to 2020 can be found in Annex VII.

5.12 Emergency health (63 to 100%, 2018-20) and capacity and management support (57 to 64%, 2016-17) constituted the majority of the total EA allocation for the regional level. The only other intervention receiving funding was cash assistance. Four interventions were not funded. As can be seen from Table 6, proportional support (relative to needs) for capacity and management support and cash assistance declined progressively since 2017 and 2016 respectively. While no funding was requested for emergency health in 2019-20, funding was received.

Table 6. Funding received: total and % of requirement per intervention (Regional, 2016 – 2020)								
TOTAL FOR REGIONAL		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Total funding req. for regional through SRC EA (US\$)		0.35 mil.	0.22 mil.	3.5 mil.	4.0 mil.	4.7 mil.		
% <u>change</u> in total funding req. compared to previous year		61.9%	-93.7%	-14.5%	- 14%			
Total funding received for regional through SRC EA (US\$)		0.26 mil.	0.13 mil.	0.20 mil.	0.93 mil.	1.1 mil.		
Total funding received (as a % of total req. year)		72.6%	59.9%	5.7%	23.1%	23.0%		
% <u>change</u> in total received compared to previous year		96.3%	-34.1%	-78.9%	-13.5%			
% <u>of</u> REQUIREMENT PER INTERVENTION AT REGIONAL		2020	2019	2018	2017	2016		
Cash assistance		(NR)	(NR)	0%	17.1%	40.5%		
Emergency health		∞	∞	31.3%	40.8%	14.6%		
Education in emergencies		(NR)	(NR)	0%	0%	0%		
Protection		(NR)	(NR)	0%	0%	0%		
Shelter		(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	(NR)	0%		
Safety and security		(NR)	(NR)	0%	0%	0%		
Capacity and management support		0%	4.6%	13.0%	57.6%	41.1%		
Interventions receiving 50% + of required funding		1/1	1/1	0/6	1/6	1/7		
KEY	NR: NOT REQUESTED	90% - 100% +	70% - < 90%	50% - < 70%	30% - < 50%	10% - < 30%	> 0% - < 10%	0%

Source: UNRWA Annual Operational Reports 2016 to 2020.

6. EVALUATIONS COMPLETED, ONGOING OR PLANNED ON EMERGENCY APPEALS

- 6.1 No central, DIOS-led evaluation has been conducted on either of the two EAs. For the oPt an external review of EAs from 2000-2005 was commissioned and conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Although DIOS started an evaluation of the EA in the oPt in 2017, it was not completed as staff resources were very limited and reassigned to complete a prioritized assessment of the Agency's transition to the e-card modality in the Jordan, Lebanon and West Bank fields.
- 6.2 However, field offices have managed multiple decentralized evaluations concerning some interventions of the EA on the Syria Regional Crisis. Many interventions in Jordan and Lebanon have already been or will be evaluated through evaluations of projects funded through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (MADAD Fund).⁸¹ These include completed decentralized evaluations of MADAD I (August 2016 to August 2018)⁸² and MADAD II (October 2018 to December 2019)⁸³, and an ongoing mid-term evaluation and upcoming final evaluation of MADAD III (January 2020 to December 2021).⁸⁴ Hospitalization in Lebanon was also evaluated in 2020 through an external evaluator paid for by the European Union (EU) in 2020.

⁸¹ UNRWA has been receiving funding for its support of PRS in Lebanon and Jordan from the EU MADAD Fund since 2016 through a multi-phased project entitled "Strengthening the Resilience of Palestine refugees from Syria in Jordan and Lebanon". The overall objective of the EU MADAD funded projects has been to strengthen the resilience of PRS affected by the crisis in Jordan and Lebanon.

⁸² The MADAD I evaluation (April 2019) focused on the Agency's performance and results in implementing interventions funded by the EU MADAD I project in Lebanon, with a strong focus on education; protection and cash assistance were also included.

Link: https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/resource_98656_39516_1579085995.pdf

⁸³ The MADAD II evaluation (July 2020) focused on the Agency's performance and results in implementing interventions funded by the EU MADAD II project in Lebanon and Jordan. For PRS in Lebanon, the focus was on the provision of basic services in education and health, and multi-purpose cash assistance. For PRS in Jordan, the focus was on relief services to ensure PRS meet their basic needs of food, non-food items, and shelter. Link:

https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/unrwa_madad_ii_evaluation_final_report.pdf

⁸⁴ The MADAD III mid-term evaluation (ongoing) and final evaluation (expected completion: May 2022) will focus on the Agency's performance and results in implementing interventions funded by the EU MADAD III project in Lebanon and Jordan. The MADAD III iteration is a continuation of the MADAD II project focus.

- 6.3 Additionally, a decentralized evaluation is presently being undertaken by the Syria field office of EA interventions (education, health, vocational training) supported through Phase II of a project (2020 to June 2021) funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG-NEAR). In addition to the aforementioned evaluations, UNRWA field offices in Jordan and Syria conduct post-distribution monitoring and reporting on cash and food distribution which account for most of EA funding for the Syria Regional Crisis. There is also third-party monitoring of cash distribution and education through the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom.

7. RATIONALE, PURPOSE, OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

A. RATIONALE

- 7.1 Members of the UNRWA Advisory Commission, through the Harmonized Reporting Working Group, made a request to DIOS to undertake an evaluation of the EA. An evaluation of the EA in the oPt is also included in the evaluation plan of the current UNRWA Medium-Term Strategy, as well as a lessons learned for the Syria response. This evaluation will cover both emergency appeals.

B. PURPOSE

- 7.2 In accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016), the evaluation will serve a dual purpose of accountability and learning. It should support accountability towards the Agency's beneficiaries and its Advisory Commission for more than 1.3 billion USD spent on emergency responses in the oPt (US\$ 566 million) and the Syria Regional Crisis (US\$ 764 million) from 2016 to 2020, consequently necessitating an evaluation that covers all five fields of operation.
- 7.3 The evaluation should also identify good practices, challenges and lessons learnt to assist UNRWA in improving its response to the on-going emergencies, inform future emergency programming including the approach underlying the development of the EAs and, where appropriate, harmonize the emergency work of the Agency. It should aim to confirm what outcomes the EA funded interventions have contributed to, and how the interventions contribute to those outcomes.

C. OBJECTIVE

- 7.4 As per standard DIOS practice, the evaluation should be guided by the OECD-DAC85 evaluation criteria, and determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, coherence, coverage, effectiveness and impact, efficiency and sustainability of the UNRWA emergency response.

D. SCOPE

- 7.5 The scope will cover all aspects of UNRWA interventions funded by EA contributions over the period 2016 to 2021, with a particular focus on those that received the highest amounts of funding. The evaluation is expected to build on the findings of the decentralized evaluations undertaken in relation to the Syria Regional Crisis and seek to avoid duplication.
- 7.6 The timeframe of 2016 to 2021 will allow the evaluation to assess how the EAs have evolved in the years immediately following and preceding the significant decline in EA funding from 2018 onwards. Going further back before 2016 would potentially pose challenges on how to accurately capture beneficiary perspectives of support received more than six years ago.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS

- 8.1 The line of inquiry should be guided by the standard Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria for evaluation in the UN system, as well as guidance on the use of criteria in the evaluation of humanitarian assistance developed by

⁸⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee.

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

ALNAP.⁸⁶ In addition, the evaluation is expected to fully integrate dimensions of youth, gender, human rights⁸⁷ and disability inclusion into its analysis while giving due attention to humanitarian principles, protection and accountability to affected populations. The evaluation should explore how the different needs and vulnerabilities of women, men, boys and girls, the disabled, and elderly were considered in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Agency's work.

8.2 Within this context, the evaluation should focus on the following key questions:

A. RELEVANCE

- How adequate are the Agency's EA planning mechanisms in ensuring that priorities align to the Agency's overall strategy, key stakeholder needs, and relevant humanitarian response plans at country and regional levels?
- To what extent have EA interventions remained relevant to the emergency context and been informed through evidence and consultation to ensure alignment to beneficiary needs?
- Are protection,⁸⁸ gender⁸⁹ and human rights⁹⁰ considerations in line with UN guidelines and procedures?

B. COHERENCE

- To what extent are the Agency's EA interventions providing internal coherence (internally harmonized, synergies across programmes promoted, transition opportunities identified for incorporating EA interventions into UNRWA's regular programmes, thereby promoting a nexus approach)?
- To what extent is the funding and implementation of the Agency's EA aligned to Grand Bargain commitments?⁹¹

⁸⁶ <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/alnap-evaluation-humanitarian-action-2016.pdf>

⁸⁷ See UNEG guidance: 'Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations'.

<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>

⁸⁸ UNRWA Protection Policy (2012); UNRWA Tool for Incorporating Minimum Standards on Protection into UNRWA Programmes and Service Delivery (2010); IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action. IASC.

https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/assets/files/tools_and_guidance/IASC%20Guidance%20and%20Tools/iasc-policy-on-protection-in-humanitarian-action.pdf

⁸⁹ UNRWA Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2016-2021

https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/2019_gender_implementation_report_final.pdf

The Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action. IASC. <https://www.gihahandbook.org/#en>

⁹⁰ Human Rights Guidance Note for Humanitarian Coordinators. IASC.

<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/human-rights-guidance-note-humanitarian-coordinators>

⁹¹ Since the signing of the Grand Bargain, UNRWA has successfully rolled out cash-based social protection and emergency programming in Lebanon, the West Bank, Jordan and Syria. As to Gaza, in 2018, a multi-disciplinary study on "Social Transfers in Gaza" was commissioned by UNRWA and conducted by an external consultancy firm. The objective of the study was to review current social transfer options in Gaza, notably UNRWA's extensive food assistance programme, with regards to effectiveness and efficiency in achieving programme objectives compared to other transfer modalities (vouchers, cash) and in light of the social, economic and political realities of the Gaza Strip. The study identified a number of factors that may pose significant risks with regards to any transitioning of UNRWA's food operation to cash based transfer schemes. These related to the state of market (dis)functionalities in Gaza, including the volatility of the market supply chain, taxation on private sector goods, reliability of private

- How has the EA complemented the PB in terms of covering needs not addressed through the PB? What factors have contributed to the successful transition of emergency programmes into the PB when appropriate?

C. COVERAGE

- Has the emergency response ensured inclusion, participation and fair power relations (considering gender, age, disability, socio-economic status etc.)?
- Has support to beneficiaries through the EAs resulted in ensuring a certain level of parity among beneficiary populations in relation to their socio-economic conditions?

D. EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

- To what extent has the emergency response achieved its planned results? What were the major factors contributing to the achievement or non-achievement of results? Have there been any unintended consequences (positive or negative) of the emergency response?
- What have been the effects and lessons learned of dropping interventions from the EA that were deemed as still being relevant to the emergency? Conversely, what has been the effect and lessons learned of adding interventions, if any, that may not be immediately relevant to the emergency?
- To what extent are the Agency's vulnerability assessments effectively contributing to understanding of the socio-economic and protection needs of beneficiaries? Are needs assessments being done based on international best practice?⁹²

E. EFFICIENCY

- To what extent do the EA interventions of UNRWA reflect efficient utilization of the Agency's comparative advantages?
- Is the value of assistance provided through the EA adequate and sufficient to address the needs of beneficiaries?
- How adequate are the internal controls and results-based management processes vis-à-vis the development, management, monitoring and oversight of EAs?

F. SUSTAINABILITY

- What are the chronic challenges facing UNRWA that hinder the EA interventions from being addressed on a longer-term basis in the PB? What factors, if any, make the yearly EAs a necessity for the foreseeable future?
- What are the lessons learnt vis-à-vis the sustainability of interventions through EAs, from the 2018 funding cuts by the United States?

8.3 The above evaluation criteria and their associated lines of inquiry are permeable: individual questions, findings, conclusions and recommendations may turn out to be equally applicable to, for example, relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. As such, the evaluation should seek to identify

sector suppliers, food price instability, monopolistic market structures, and limited local agricultural capacity. The study also identified shortcomings related to the cash economy in Gaza including authorization of cash imports and cash shortages among others. As a Grand Bargain signatory, UNRWA regularly reports to the Grand Bargain Secretariat through the submission of the annual self-reports.

⁹² Guidance and templates on conducting needs assessments and analysis for humanitarian responses:

1. <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space/page/assessments-tools-guidance>
2. <https://www.unocha.org/fr/themes/needs-assessment-and-analysis>
3. <https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/50204/UNHCR+Needs+Assessment+Handbook/3e21b7d7-57c5-4cd4-82df-2a01900ab14f>
4. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-needs-assessment-good-enough-guide-0>

performance against the separate criteria, in addition to the interactions between the criteria. In turn, this will facilitate judgments on the overall changes and results that UNRWA has delivered through the EAs and – crucially – how those changes and results were delivered.

- 8.4 The evaluation service provider is expected to undertake additional stakeholder consultations and a desk review to: (i) finalize the terms of reference, articulating a theory of change; and (ii) develop a final evaluation matrix/framework, summarizing the key evaluation questions, sub-questions, assessment criteria and indicators, and possible data sources. Assessment criteria should be adapted as needed for each field of operation and emergency appeal (oPt and Syria Regional Crisis), while ensuring that evidence useful for synthesis at the Agency level is generated.

9. Methodology, Main Evaluation Tools & Core Stakeholders

A. Methodology

- 9.1 The evaluation should use a rigorous methodology, applying a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to facilitate the triangulation of information and provide credible answers to all research questions. The evaluation approach, methods and tools should be closely informed through a Theory of Change (ToC) underpinning the UNRWA emergency response. The ToC should be developed by the evaluation service provider, based on formal guidance governing EA work and discussions with internal and external stakeholders. The final evaluation questions should be derived from and reflect an initial analysis by the evaluation team and the ToC, inclusive of its assumptions.

B. Main Evaluation Tools

- 9.2 Proposals from evaluation service providers should suggest a methodology, research tools and data sources that will enable them to collect and synthesize relevant information in relation to the evaluation questions. In this regard, the following primary tools are expected to inform the evaluation, noting that a ToC in support of UNRWA interventions should also be produced during the inception phase.

i. Document Reviews

- 9.3 The evaluation service provider will need to undertake structured document review and content analysis of: annual emergency appeals documents and mid-year progress reports for oPt and SRC from 2016 to 2021; UNRWA annual operational reports from 2016 to 2021; UNRWA Medium Term Strategy 2016-2022; policies, procedures, guidance, budget and human resources information related to EAs; monitoring and evaluations undertaken on EA interventions e.g. mid-term and final evaluations of MADAD I, II and III, evaluation of DG NEAR; and any other documentation pertinent to EAs.

ii. Stakeholder Interviews

- 9.4 A significant number of semi-structured interviews and/or focus group discussions will have to be conducted with the internal and external evaluation stakeholders listed below, either virtually and, whenever possible, in person. Given COVID-19 travel restrictions, interviews may need to be conducted through video conferencing. Interview questions should be guided by the final evaluation framework that will be developed by the evaluation service provider. Stakeholders include:

- UNRWA staff at the headquarters level including chiefs of relevant Divisions/Departments: Planning, Finance, External Relations (including Contributions Unit), Protection, Relief and Social Services, Education, Health, Infrastructure and Camp Improvement;
- UNRWA staff in all five field offices: Field Office Directors; Deputy Directors of Programmes; Deputy Director of Operations; Field Support Programme Officers; Emergency Appeal project management officers;
- Local community representatives and beneficiaries of emergency interventions;
- Key members and observers of the Advisory Commission, including major donors to EAs and host country representatives; and
- Other relevant stakeholders e.g. members of UN Country Teams, UN Humanitarian Coordinators and cluster leads/coordinators of the humanitarian system in UNRWA's fields of operation.

iii. III. Process Review

- 9.5 Process reviews should be undertaken to assess the EA development and implementation process. These reviews will involve a detailed analysis of EA development guidance and procedures, closely supported by discussions with staff and the host and donor communities.

iv. Impact Assessment Of Eas 2016-21

- 9.6 Using quantitative and qualitative data, including data housed within UNRWA information management systems and Agency operational / results reporting, the impact assessment should identify outcomes delivered through the EAs from 2016 to 2021. This should include an analysis of the specific outcomes delivered through individual EA funded interventions, as well as an analysis of higher-level outcomes to which more than one intervention aimed to deliver.

v. Online / Enumerator Supported Surveys

- 9.7 Although beneficiary research is best administered through face-to-face interviews, given potential COVID-19 related travel restrictions, research may need to be supported through locally employed enumerators. Additionally, online surveys or mobile applications, e.g. WhatsApp messaging, may be used to reach a broader audience and could be used to gather views of UNRWA staff and/or beneficiaries of emergency response activities.

vi. (Vi) Secondary Data

- 9.8 EAs related to the Syria Regional Crisis, have been assessed through decentralized evaluations during the review period (2016-2021) as outlined in Section 6 "Evaluations completed, ongoing or planned on emergency appeals". Secondary data from these evaluations must be factored in, both to avoid duplication and to potentially assist in informing and/or validating findings from the EA evaluation.

vii. Core Stakeholders

- 9.9 Given the centrality of stakeholder consultation to the evaluation approach, an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established with external membership being determined on a voluntary basis. The ERG will be consulted on: i) the evaluation design in order to enhance its relevance; ii) the preliminary findings to enhance their validity; iii) the recommendations to enhance their feasibility, acceptability and ownership; and iv) at any point during the evaluation process when needed.

- 9.10 The composition of the ERG is expected to include a blend of key stakeholders - both internal and external - to provide a diversity in representation and subject matter expertise. This is expected to include, among others:

- UN system staff with technical expertise on emergencies;
- Directors of UNRWA operations in the field offices;
- Directors of select programmes receiving the greatest share of EA funding;
- The Department of Planning (including Senior Emergency Officer);
- Host country authorities,
- Key donors to emergency appeals; and
- Department of Internal Oversight Services.

10. Implementation Of The Evaluation

- 10.1 The evaluation will be guided by the UNRWA Evaluation Policy, Standards and Procedures for Quality Assurance in Evaluation and conducted in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Guidelines (UNEG), Norms and Standards for Evaluation. It is expected that the evaluation service provider will conduct the evaluation in three broad phases:

(1) PHASE ONE: PLANNING AND INCEPTION

- 10.2 This phase is already underway with an initial output being the development of the present, preliminary terms of reference and the recruitment of an evaluation service provider / team. The selected service provider / team should commence inception activities by February 2022 that will primarily be comprised of background research, both desk-review and through briefings and interviews with key Agency staff; an introductory meeting with the UNRWA Harmonized Reporting Working Group (HRWG), a subcommittee of the Advisory Commission; and a series of interviews with host authorities and key donor interlocutors.

The evaluation service provider should present a draft inception report and final TOR to the ERG and the DIOS Evaluation Division for review. DIOS-ED will quality assure and rate the draft inception report in line with its quality assurance checklist for inception reports. The final inception report, the primary output of this phase, should be issued in April 2022.

(2) Phase Two: Data Collection, Field Work and Analysis

- 10.3 The main evaluation work will be conducted during this phase, including but not limited to: literature review; field work to allow for visits to select camps and relevant UNRWA installations for dialogue with Palestine refugees and staff; and virtual meetings with donors, host country representatives and staff, including from relevant headquarters locations (Amman, Jerusalem, New York, Brussels, Washington, etc.).
- 10.4 It is hoped that appropriate safety precautions can be taken and that operational contexts will allow for core team members to travel to Agency fields of operation including, if possible, Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. In order to gather views of Palestine refugees in Syria, the evaluation team will need to partner with a locally registered Syrian consultancy firm. Further, to comply with host government regulations, a locally registered firm will need to undertake the data collection, and UNRWA will need to share data collection tools with Syria host authorities for clearance.
- 10.5 If the COVID-19 pandemic continues to restrict travel capacity and limits in-person gatherings, national evaluation consultants should be engaged to support field-level research.
- 10.6 If travel is feasible during the evaluation, the Agency will facilitate travel and provide for local security arrangements (as provided to UNRWA staff members).
- 10.7 Following field missions, the evaluation team will be expected to provide an informal end-of-mission briefing with the head of the field office to share key preliminary/emerging findings and to address any informational needs.
- 10.8 The data collection and analysis phase should be completed by 31 August 2022.

(3) Phase Three: Reporting

- 10.9 The reporting phase will take place between September and October 2022 and it is anticipated that there will be between three to four iterations of the draft report. A first draft with an executive summary should be shared for review by UNRWA staff members of the Evaluation Reference Group and DIOS for comments and feedback, to be captured through a comments tracker.
- 10.10 The evaluation team will then address the written comments and prepare a second draft, and preceding its release, present the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the full ERG through a formal briefing. Factoring in the ERG's oral feedback as pertinent, the evaluation team will finalize and release a second draft for formal comments from the full ERG and DIOS, to be captured through a comments matrix. DIOS-ED will quality assure and rate the second draft in the line with its quality assurance checklist for evaluation reports.
- 10.11 The evaluation team will prepare a final report addressing the comments received on the draft report and update the comments matrix to show how each comment was addressed. It will submit the final report in October 2022 to UNRWA management for a management response and action plan. It will also prepare a two-to-four-page evaluation results summary designed to support organizational learning and awareness of key evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation team will be expected to provide two virtual presentations on results, including one to staff members, and a second to the Agency's Advisory Commission or to its Harmonized Results Working Group in a special session.

EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	
Activity / deliverable	Date
Planning and Inception Phase	
i. Issuance of evaluation tender	November 2021
ii. Service provider contract awarded	January 2022
iii. Inception discussions and scoping interviews	February / March 2022
iv. Briefing to the ERG	March 2022
v. Issuance of final ToR and inception report	April 2022
Data Collection and Analysis Phase	
i. Research, data collection and field work	May / June 2022
ii. Data analysis	July / August 2022
Reporting Phase	
i. Development of the draft evaluation report	September 2022
ii. Presentation of preliminary results	September 2022
iii. Issuance of the draft evaluation report	September 2022
iv. Issuance of the final evaluation report and evaluation results summary	October 2022
v. UNRWA issuance of the Agency's management response	October 2022
vi. Virtual briefings / presentations of final results to staff, and the Advisory Commission or HRWG	November 2022

11. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING THE EVALUATION

11.1 The evaluation will be managed by a DIOS evaluation officer, to whom the team leader of the evaluation service provider will report to. The evaluation manager will provide all documents, information and logistical support required by the evaluation service provider and will serve as the first point of review for its outputs. An Evaluation Reference Group will be established to provide technical inputs and guidance to the evaluation service provider at key stages of the evaluation. Endorsement by the ERG will be required on the inception report, and a comment tracker should be provided to reflect consideration to substantive feedback to the draft evaluation report.

11.2 The UNEG norms and standards for evaluation, the UNRWA Evaluation Policy (2016) and the UNRWA Standards and Procedures for Quality Assurance in evaluation (revised August 2016) define the quality standards expected from this evaluation and sets out the processes for quality assurance (including guidance and templates for key deliverables). The Evaluation Division of DIOS will apply these guidelines to quality review the updated TOR, inception report, draft and final evaluation report. The inception report and draft evaluation report will be scored against a quality assurance checklist, the template for which will be provided beforehand to the selected evaluation service provider.

11.3 The final report will be publicly available on the website of the DIOS Evaluation Division.

12. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

12.1 UNRWA is seeking to hire an evaluation service provider / team of experts provided by a consulting company. Evaluation team members should not have been involved in the design or implementation of the Emergency Appeals, including all associated interventions, or have any other conflicts of interest. Further, they will act impartially and in accordance with UNEG ethical standards and norms at all times during the evaluation process.

12.2 The evaluation team should include at least four members, inclusive of the team leader, and provide a balance of gender, expertise and practical knowledge, and collectively possess the following competencies:

Required

- i. Substantial, proven experience in evaluation;
- ii. Expertise in conducting evaluations of programmes and/or projects relating to multi-sectoral emergency and humanitarian response (food assistance, cash assistance, education in emergencies, emergency health, emergency preparedness, environmental health, mental health and psychosocial support, protection and neutrality and shelter repair);
- iii. Skills and experience in mixed methods evaluation and impact assessments, including qualitative evaluation consulting in relation to local communities and governments, preferably in both the humanitarian and development contexts;
- iv. Expertise in the evaluation of strategic planning, and/or organizational processes and systems;
- v. Experience in the use of data from information management systems to analyze programme results;
- vi. Experience in development and humanitarian assistance / interventions and working with UN system agencies;
- vii. Expertise in applying gender, disability and human rights dimensions in evaluation;
- viii. Strong analytical skills coupled with a proven capacity to synthesize data and other information and report writing;
- ix. Fluency in oral and written English, including at least three evaluation reports authored or co-authored in English by evaluation team members;
- x. For the team leader, proven experience in at least five assignments as a team leader; and
- xi. Two team members - one male and one female – should be fluent in Arabic, preferably Levantine Arabic, to undertake data collection and analysis.

Desirable

- i. Evaluation team members residing in one of UNRWA's fields of operations who will be substantively engaged in data collection and reporting is an asset;
- ii. Evaluation team members with prior in-person evaluation experience in one or more of UNRWA's fields of operation is an asset.

12.3 Conditions permitting, the evaluators must be immediately available and able to travel to UNRWA HQ (Amman) and its fields of operation (Jordan, Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon). The evaluation team will need to identify and partner with a registered Syria based consultancy firm to support research with Palestine refugees in the field.

13. THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

13.1 The technical proposal should be no more than 20 pages (Arial 10 font, single spaced, 1 inch margin on all four sides, A4 page format) including:

- i. A cover letter (maximum three pages) that demonstrates the capabilities and past history of the members of the proposed evaluation team in conducting similar assignments, including pertinent experiences, skills and competencies of individual team members;
- ii. A proposed methodology (approx. nine pages) that reflects an understanding of the scope of the assignment and elaborates on the approach and methods the team will use to address the evaluation questions, including strategies to be used in support of developing the results analysis;
- iii. A brief overview (approx. three pages) of how the evaluation team will conduct its work, including the use of distance methods if COVID-19 related travel restrictions limit team member movement, using for example local partners; and
- iv. A high-level timeline and work plan (approx. three pages) that reflects the three broad phases of the evaluation (planning, data collection and analysis and reporting).

14. DELIVERABLES AND PAYMENT CONDITIONS

14.1 Payment shall be made within thirty (30) calendar days following the receipt of each invoice from the Contractor and upon UNRWA end-user certification of satisfactory completion of the deliverables outlined below, as certified by the UNRWA Evaluation Manager.

Deliverables and payment

Deliverables	Payment Percentage
Upon satisfactory submission of final inception report and updated terms of reference by the Contractor and its acceptance by UNRWA.	20% of total value of contract

Upon satisfactory submission of draft report by the Contractor.	40% of total value of contract
Upon satisfactory submission of final report and a 2-to-4-page summary by the Contractor, all accepted by UNRWA, including of satisfactory completion of all project deliverables.	39% of total value of contract
Participation in two final briefings, including one with staff members and a second with the Agency's Advisory Commission or Harmonized Results Working Group.	1% of total value of contract

N.B: As per established terms in place at UNRWA, the Agency does not make any advance payments

15. THE FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

15.1 Respondents are also requested to submit a financial proposal that addresses the following scenarios:

- i. A remote evaluation pricing model which assumes that travel restrictions will prevent evaluation team members living outside the fields of operation from traveling; and
- ii. An unrestricted evaluation pricing model which assumes that the team leader and core evaluation team members can travel to UNRWA Headquarters Amman and four fields of operation (Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan), while utilizing, as needed, consultants/companies registered in Syria to undertake field research in Syria (to comply with requirements by the Government of Syria).

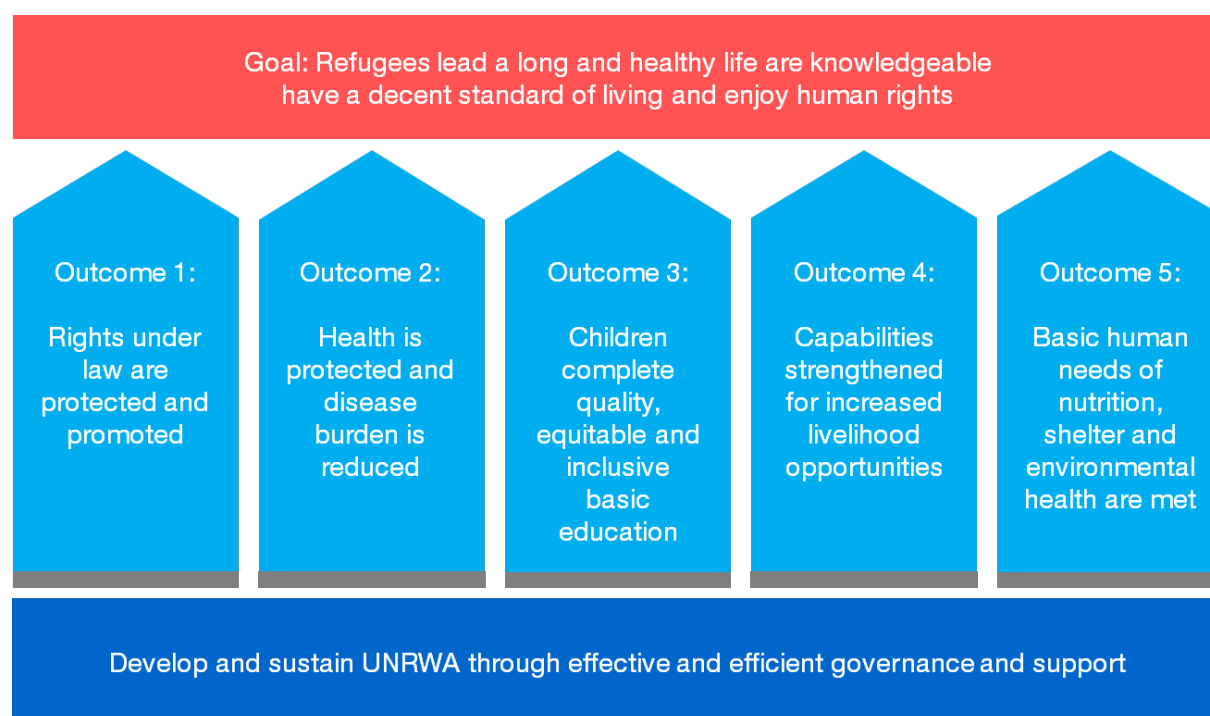
Annex 3: Emergency Appeals Theory of Change

The EAs' Theory of Change

Long-term Strategic Outcomes related to the Mid-Term Strategy

- 11 The EAs contribute to the achievement of the six Strategic Outcomes as outlined in UNRWA's MTS 2016-2021 (extended until 2022). These represent UNRWA's "strategic vision and objectives for programmes and operations and the commitment of advocating and providing for the human development of refugees".⁹³ The five programmatic strategic outcomes, the Agency's 6th outcome objective concerning the effectiveness and efficiency of organizational management and the long-term goal which they contribute to are indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 39: UNRWA Strategic Outcomes 2016-2021 EAs



problem statement

- 12 UNRWA's mandate is to provide services to Palestine refugees whose "normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict".⁹⁴ Generations of refugees, often displaced multiple times, rely heavily on UNRWA services and interventions. Services are offered to Palestine refugees in the oPt, Palestine refugees in Syria and PRS in Lebanon and Jordan, PRL, PRJ and ex-Gazans.⁹⁵

⁹³ UNRWA (2016) Medium Term Strategy 2016-2021, Amman: UNRWA

⁹⁴ See: Frequently asked questions | UNRWA

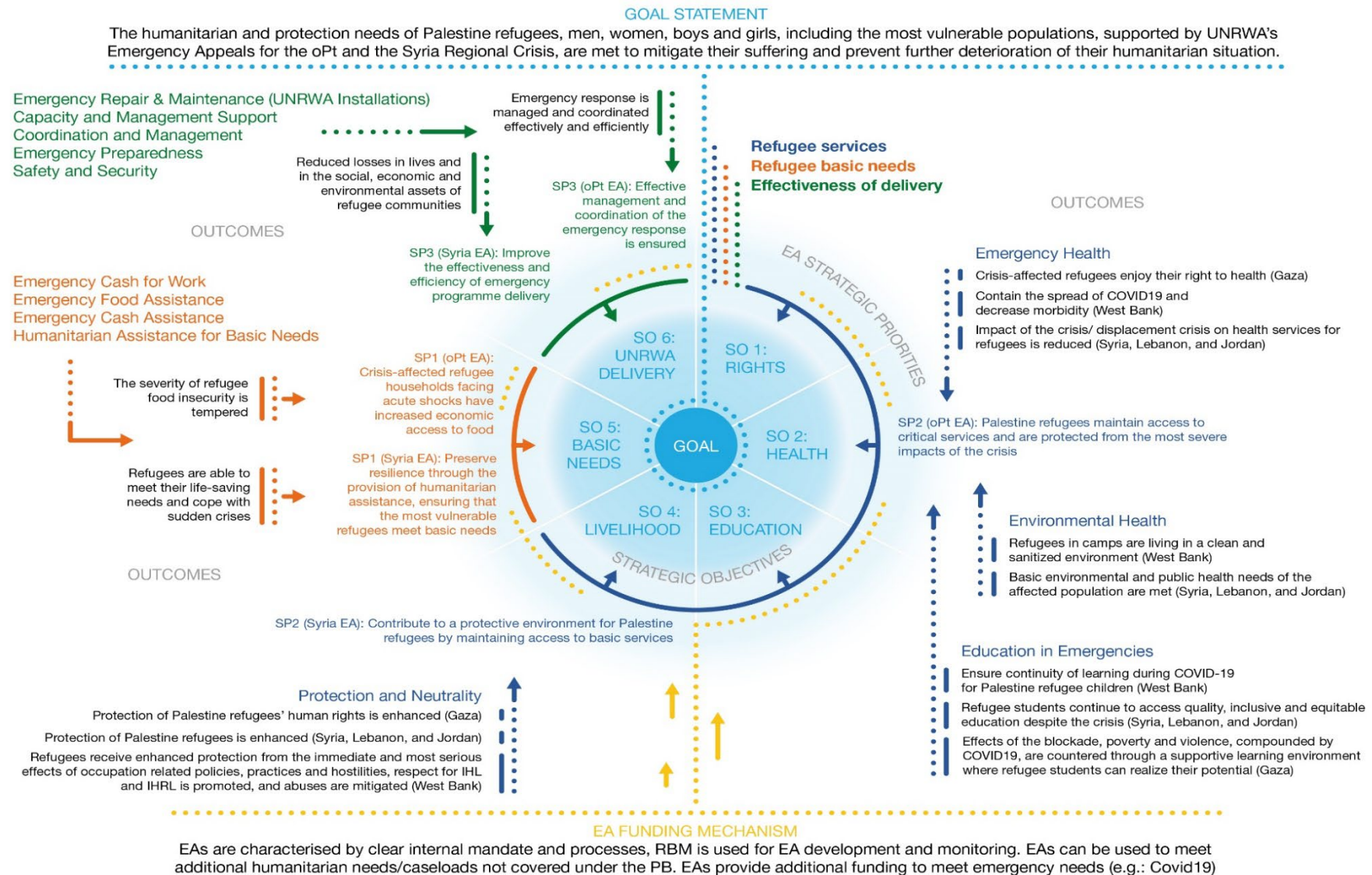
⁹⁵ It is important to note that PRJ and ex-Gazans were not traditional beneficiaries of the EA and have recently been included in the interventions due to increased vulnerabilities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021, the EAs integrated outstanding needs from the Covid-19 Appeals issued in 2020.

Higher level goal statement, strategic priorities and outcomes

- 13 As the ToC is for a yearly funding mechanism, an impact level statement would not be appropriate. However, in reality, numerous yearly EAs have been issued to respond to the longstanding protracted refugee situations in the oPt and because of the Syria refugee crisis. Thus, we proposed the following higher-level goal:
- 14 “The humanitarian and protection needs of Palestine refugees, men, women, boys and girls, including the most vulnerable populations, supported by UNRWA’s Emergency Appeals for the oPt and the Syria Regional Crisis, are met to mitigate their suffering and prevent further deterioration of their humanitarian situation.”
- 15 The higher-level goal and associated principles are in line with the Strategic Outcomes of UNRWA’s MTS. These are reflected in the EAs’ ToC and are supported by work delivered under three Strategic Priorities per each refugee crisis, which are listed below with their related outcomes.⁹⁶
- 16 Strategic priority 1 (SP1) – Emergency food and cash (including cash-for-work) assistance and humanitarian assistance for basic needs (in-kind, NFIs, shelter): UNRWA supports resilience as well as immediate economic access to food through the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance for basic needs for Palestine refugees in Syria and PRS in Lebanon and Jordan, and for crisis affected refugee households in the oPt. Outcomes include ensuring refugees meet basic lifesaving needs (Syria crisis) and tempering of food insecurity (oPt).
- 17 **Strategic priority 2 (SP2) – refugee rights and protection, health, education, livelihoods, WASH/environmental health:** UNRWA continues to provide critical services and access to protection interventions to ensure Palestinian refugees rights are respected and needs are met in the oPt and in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. This SP involves the largest range of interventions and outcomes including emergency health, education in emergencies, and protection and neutrality.
- 18 **Strategic priority 3 (SP3) – coordination, management, safety, security and maintenance of installations:** UNRWA improves its emergency preparedness by maintaining and repairing its installations and strengthening capacity, management and coordination at country and regional level, to ensure an effective delivery of services in safety and security for staff and refugees. Outcomes include reducing loss of life and in the socio-economic and environmental assets of refugees through strong emergency preparedness principles and practices in place and that the response is effectively and efficiently coordinated.

⁹⁶ A specificity of the EAs under SP1 and SP2 is that funding is used to address personnel issues to support delivery of outcomes (e.g., waste management staff) in response to immediate contextual changes and arising emergency needs.

Figure 40: ToC for the UNRWA Emergency Appeals



Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

Criteria	Evaluation Question	Sub-question	Data source/ Data collection tool
RELEVANCE	1) How adequate are the Agency's EA design, planning, and implementation mechanisms in ensuring that priorities align to the Agency's overall strategy, key stakeholder needs (esp. those of the most vulnerable Palestine refugees), and relevant humanitarian response plans at country and regional levels?	1) To what extent are the EAs' design, planning, and implementation mechanisms appropriate, adequate, and conducive for aligning EA interventions to a) Agency overall strategy, b) key stakeholder needs and rights (esp. those of the most vulnerable refugees), and c) relevant humanitarian response plans at country and regional levels? 2) To what extent are EA interventions' planning and implementation mechanisms informed through evidence and stakeholder consultation, esp. in the effort to align interventions to beneficiary needs? ^[OBJ] 3) To what extent have EA interventions remained relevant to the emergency context (oPt EA & Syria EA), esp. given the ever-evolving socio-political and economic situation in EA intervention locations?	Literature (Document Review) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIs) Refugee community representatives (KIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
	2) Are protection, gender, age, disability inclusion, and other human rights considerations in line with relevant UN guidelines and procedures and other humanitarian, protection, and accountability-to-affected-population principles?	4) What is the evidence that protection, gender, age, disability inclusion, and human rights considerations are duly incorporated in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the EA interventions? 5) To what extent are these equity and rights considerations in line with the relevant UN guidelines and procedures, as well as other humanitarian,	Literature (Document Review) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian

		protection, and accountability-to-affected-population principles?	Coordinators, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
COHERENCE	3) [Internal coherence] To what extent are EA interventions coherent and have synergies with one another? And, how coherent are they with the Agency's PB interventions?	6) How coherent EA interventions with one another, and to what extent there is synergy between different emergency interventions within UNRWA? 7) How have EA interventions complemented the PB in covering needs not addressed through the PB? Are there examples of emergency interventions that were successfully transitioned into PB-funded programmes (through coherence, harmonization, and facilitating synergies)? What factors have contributed to the success/ failure of the transition?	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs)
	4) [External coherence] To what extent is the funding and implementation of the Agency's EA aligned to Grand Bargain commitments?	8) To what extent do EA interventions' funding and implementation mechanisms align with the Grand Bargain commitments? 9) To what extent do EA interventions align with and complement other relevant actors' and entities' emergency interventions operating in the Agency's EA geographical locations/ with the same groups? What are the main synergies and gaps?	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs)

			Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
COVERAGE, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY	5) To what extent are the Agency's vulnerability assessments effectively contributing to understanding of the socio-economic and protection needs of beneficiaries, including the poorest, most vulnerable, and crisis-affected refugees?	10) To what extent are the Agency's vulnerability assessment mechanisms and tools appropriate and adequate in attaining valid and accurate identification of refugees' socio-economic and protection needs? 11) To what extent do agency vulnerability assessment and categorization approaches align with those of other relevant actors and entities and international best practices (e.g., WHO, UNHCR, WFP)? What is similar/ different? Why?	Literature (Document Review) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UNICEF, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
	6) Has the emergency response design, planning, and implementation ensured inclusion, participation, and fair power relations (considering gender, age, disability, socio-economic status dimensions, and humanitarian, protection, and accountability-to affected-population considerations)?	12) To what extent are the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of female, men, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, and the elderly equitably considered and addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Agency's EA interventions? 13) To what extent do EA interventions tackle and respond to the specific, intersectional barriers that different female and male refugees (including girls and boys) may experience in seeking support/ accessing services from the Agency through EA interventions?	Literature (Document Review) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UNICEF, UNESCO, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
EFFECTIVENESS	7) To what extent has the emergency response achieved its planned results? What were the major factors	14) To what extent have the EA outcome targets under Strategic Priorities been met? What factors have influenced the	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis)

	contributing to the achievement or non-achievement of results?	achievement/ non-achievement of targets? 15) What observable changes (positive and negative) have taken place in the lives of different refugees due to EA interventions? What factors other than EA interventions might have influenced these changes? 16) What have been the effects and lessons learned of dropping interventions from the EA that were deemed as still being relevant to the emergency? Also, what has been the effect and lessons learned of adding interventions, if any, that may not be immediately relevant to the emergency? 17) To what extent was EA intervention planning, implementation, and overall management sufficiently flexible in responding to emerging risks and opportunities, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict escalations in the Gaza Strip, economic crises in Lebanon, etc.?	UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
	8) Have there been any unintended consequences (positive or negative) of the emergency response?	18) During the period under review, have there been unintended, positive or negative, consequences of the EA interventions?	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian

			Coordinators, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
EFFICIENCY	9) To what extent do the EA interventions reflect efficient utilization of the Agency's comparative advantages?	19) What does the financial analysis of the EA budgets reveal about the choices the Agency has had to take to meet the needs of refugees in a time of severe financial constraints? 20) What are the Agency's comparative advantages concerning meeting Palestine refugees' emergency needs in the different geographical locations covered through the EA interventions?	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators, UNESCO, UNICEF, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
	10) Are the value, modality, and timeliness of assistance provided through the EA interventions adequate and sufficient to address the needs of beneficiaries?	21) Are the value, timeliness, and modality of assistance provided through the EA interventions appropriate and adequate to meet the emergency needs of the affected refugees, particularly in the context of their evolving socio-economic conditions? 22) To what extent are affected refugees' opinions about the value, modality, and timeliness of the emergency assistance considered and acted upon in EA design,	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs) Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators, UNESCO, UNICEF, other relevant partner

		implementation, and overall management?	representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)
SUSTAINABILITY	11) What have been the advantages and disadvantages of the yearly planning cycle and funding modality of the EAs? Would a multi-year planning cycle and funding modality be more appropriate, feasible, and likely to ensure more sustainable funding for EA interventions in the future?	23) What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Agency's choice to pursue the current modality of annual EAs? 24) What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of a multi-year EA modality compared to a yearly EA modality in terms of meeting refugee evolving needs?	Literature (Document Review) Financial data (Financial Analysis) UNRWA staff at the HQ and Gaza, West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan field offices (KIIs + FGDs) Donor representatives (KIIs), Host government/ PLO representatives (KIIs) Relevant UN agency representatives, e.g., from UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UN-OCHA, UN Resident / Humanitarian Coordinators, UNESCO, UNICEF, other relevant partner representatives, and external experts who are members of the ERG (KIIs) Refugee community representatives (KIIs) Refugee beneficiaries of EA interventions (FGDs + Household Survey)

Annex 5: Household survey approach

- 19 The household survey was designed to give statistically significant results for the population, being the list provided to us by UNRWA of households registered as receiving in-scope EAs support. This list was compiled from the five FOs by UNRWA HQ and shared with the evaluation team guided by appropriate protocols to ensure confidentiality of beneficiary data.
- 20 We calculated the required sample size based on a desired precision of population estimates when looking at proportions. Taking into account the resources available and field challenges we arrived at a feasible level of plus/minus 3.5 percentage points when estimating a proportion from the survey where the real value is 50%.⁹⁷
- 21 For practical field considerations we chose a design that stratified by FO and within the FOs adopted a cluster sample design where necessary to make travel and enumeration easier. Because a cluster design does not give the desired variation of a fully random sample this is allowed for by an increase in the sample size.
- 22 Using the standard statistical formula built around a population of 583,526 for a true observed proportion in the population of 50% if a +/-3.5 percentage point precision is required, the sample size for a random sample is 850. Allowing for the cluster sample we took a standard assumption of applying a design effect of 2, hence a resultant sample size of 1,700. Choosing to stratify equally across FOs we have a final sample in each FO of 340 households.
- 23 The cluster structures chosen reflected specific issues in each FO and were designed to increase survey accuracy as far as possible while allowing for resource considerations and practical issues of travel and access in the field. Where possible, the enumerators visited households in person at their place of residence. In cases where that was not possible, we considered that a larger sample by some other means (at a pre-defined community centre or data collection by telephone) was preferable to missing out part of the sample.
- 24 We operated a two-stage sample with clustering. The initial level of the sampling structure was stratification by FO – within each FO there is a sample of 340 per FO.
- 25 The Primary Sampling Unit – nominally the ‘clusters’ – were created within the FOs as shown below. The structure in each FO was selected depending on the geographical layout and feasibility of operations for the survey fieldwork.
 - Gaza: By governorate (five out of five clusters selected – effectively, stratified by governorate)
 - Jordan: Seven clusters (seven clusters selected out of ten)
 - Syria: Totally random sample within FO (one out of one selected)
 - Lebanon: Six clusters (six selected out of 12 clusters)
 - West Bank: Seven clusters (seven selected out of 13 clusters)

An interactive dashboard of the household survey in PowerBI is available [here](#).

⁹⁷ Estimating a 50% proportion from a survey is the worst case and requires the biggest sample.

Annex 6: Bibliography

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Annex 7: List of people interviewed

Interviewee	Role	Organisation	Concerned UNRWA Field Office
Haifa Jammal	ABAAD Project Coordinator for UNRWA Projects	ABAAD	LFO
Azzam Zalloum	Managing Partner – Amman, Andersen Tax and Legal Jordan	Anderson Law Firm	JFO
Rasha Laswi	Managing Director – Amman, Andersen Tax and Legal Jordan	Anderson Law Firm	JFO
Mourad Khawaja	Regional CVA expert - Co-chair the Cash Working Group in Syria	Caritas	SFO
Atta Abu Rizq	Community Supportive & Advisory Committee Member in Khan Younis	Community Supportive & Advisory Committee Member in Khan Younis	GFO
Christopher Gooch	Regional Refugee Coordinator	Consulate General of USA	HQ
Lina Hasan	ECHO CIU Project Manager	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)	HQ
Olivier Rouselle	Head of Jerusalem Office	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) -	HQ
Farid Abu Athra	Chief, Field Education Program	Field Education Programme	GFO
Anas Musallam	Food Security Sector Cluster Coordinator	Food Security Sector Cluster/ FAO Gaza	GFO
Adnan Abualhaija	Deputy Director (Family Institute) + Head of Project Management and Supply Chain,	Noor Hussein Foundation, Institute for Family Health	JFO
Tamara Kamal	Project Manager, Noor Hussein Foundation, Institute for Family Health	Noor Hussein Foundation, Institute for Family Health	JFO
Andrea De Domenico	OCHA Deputy Head	OCHA	WBFO
Rima Ali	Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer/ Head of Coordination OIC	OCHA	SFO
Salah Abu Kush	Chairperson of Parents' Council in Rafah	Parents' Council in Rafah	GFO
Muin Abu Aukal	The Former Head of Popular Refugees Committee in the North Area	Popular Refugees Committee in the North of GS	GFO
Saad Masri	Member of Popular Refugees Committee in Gaza Area	Popular Refugees Committee in the North of GS	GFO

Linnea Wiesslen	Programme Support Officer	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	HQ
Maher Daoudi	National Programme Officer Humanitarian Affairs	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	HQ
Siyuhan He	First Secretary for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance	The Federal Foreign Office, Germany	HQ
Eilliya Costantinides	Regional Policy and Programme Manager, Palestinian Programme	The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office - The British Consulate General-Jerusalem	HQ
Tala Diwani	Regional Policy and Programme Manager, Palestinian Programme	The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office - The British Consulate General-Jerusalem	HQ
*Anonymous	UNHCR	UNHCR	SFO
Bobbie Francis Baker	UNHCR	UNHCR	SFO
Brian Baker	Director, Security and Risk Management, HQ	UNICEF	WBFO
Montaser AlAdwan	Rapid Response Coordinator, UNICEF Jordan Country Office (UNRWA partner)	UNICEF	WBFO
Baha Shatali	Education Cluster Coordinator	UNICEF	GFO
Nazih Yaacoub	Program Manager (Chief Palestinian Program)	UNICEF	LFO
Patrick Sijenyi	WaSH Sector Coordinator, UNICEF Syria	UNICEF	SFO
Tarek Hashhash	Chief RSSP	UNICEF	WBFO
Michael-Ebye Amany	Director, UNRWA Affairs in Syria	UNRWA	SFO
Rasha Osta	Emergency Response Coordinator	UNRWA	JFO
Abdalla Mekhairez	Acting JCP Manager	UNRWA	GFO
Ahmad Hamdan	EA Focal Point, Field Infrastructure & Camp Improvement	UNRWA	LFO
Akram Abu Amira	Acting/Chief, Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program	UNRWA	GFO
Amal Al-Khatib	Deputy Director Program	UNRWA	GFO

Asma Abu Mahfouth	Emergency Health Assistant	UNRWA	JFO
Assad Hussein	South Area Chief	UNRWA	SFO
Chiara Capozio	Senior Emergency Officer, HQ Amman	UNRWA	HQ
Dima Abu Al Saud	Deputy Chief Infrastructure and Camp Improvement	UNRWA	WBFO
Dima Khalidi	M&E Team Leader	UNRWA	WBFO
Dr. Abed	Chief Field Health Program	UNRWA	LFO
Dr. Ghada Al-Jadba	Chief, Field Health Programme	UNRWA	GFO
Dr. Iyad Zaqqut	Head of Education MHPSS Unit	UNRWA	GFO
Dr. Samir El Hajj Moussa	Field Family Health Officer (Child Health Program)	UNRWA	LFO
Emma Wagner	Protection & Neutrality Team Leader	UNRWA	LFO
Fadi Fares	Chief of Relief Programs	UNRWA	LFO
Ghada Shanati	Central Area Chief	UNRWA	SFO
Gulnora Burkhanova	Deputy Director of UNRWA Affairs	UNRWA	LFO
Hala Alasir	Chief, Architecture Division (Officer's in Charge ICIP)	UNRWA	JFO
Hamed Al-Sinjilawi	Project Coordinator	UNRWA	JFO
Hana Uraidl	Chief of RSSP	UNRWA	JFO
Hanan Kanash	Chief Teaching and Learning Division	UNRWA	JFO
Hiam Ibrahim	Assistant Senior Budget Officer, HQ Amman	UNRWA	HQ
Irena Jurado	MADAD Project Manager in Lebanon and Jordan	UNRWA	LFO
Ishtaiwi Abu-Zayed	COVID-19 Coordinator	UNRWA	JFO
Judy Phuong	Gender and GBV Officer	UNRWA	JFO
Kedir Yimam	Senior Protection Officer for Mainstreaming, on behalf of Chief of Protection	UNRWA	HQ
Leni Stenseth	Deputy Commissioner General	UNRWA	HQ
Lina Meri	Area Chief Damascus	UNRWA	SFO
Loris Elqura	PSO Head/Field Programme Support Officer	UNRWA	WBFO
Mark Lain	Protection Mainstreaming Consultant	UNRWA	JFO
Marta Alberici	Protection and Neutrality Team Leader	UNRWA	JFO
Marta Lorenzo	Director, UNRWA Affairs	UNRWA	JFO

Megan Audette	Former Director of WBFO	UNRWA	WBFO
Mehdi Benammar	Senior Humanitarian Response Officer	UNRWA	SFO
Mervat Aburashed	Chief of North Area	UNRWA	SFO
Mira Thompson	Deputy Director of Programs	UNRWA	LFO
Mohammad Riyadi	Consultant and ex-chief Field Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program	UNRWA	GFO
Mohja Shaheen	Emergency Response Coordinator	UNRWA	JFO
Asem Abu-Shawish	Chief, Field Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP)	UNRWA	GFO
Ismail Hasan	Acting/Field Programme Support Officer	UNRWA	GFO
Mohammad Abu Auda	A/ M&E Team Leader	UNRWA	GFO
Miki Yoshida	Projects and Partnerships Support Officer	UNRWA	GFO
Mustafa Ammoura	Chief of Health	UNRWA	JFO
Naoko Nagawuchi	Field Programme Support Officer	UNRWA	SFO
Nicola Harrison	Operations Support Officer	UNRWA	WBFO
Nota Sarafoudi	PSO Consultant	UNRWA	WBFO
Oroba Labadi,	Chief of Education	UNRWA	JFO
Prafulla Mishra	Deputy Director of Programmes	UNRWA	SFO
Ram Trivedi	Deputy Director Operations	UNRWA	SFO
Sam Rose	Director, Department of Planning, HQ	UNRWA	HQ
Sami Hweidi	Project Officer	UNRWA	LFO
Sami Siyam	Deputy Chief of Education	UNRWA	JFO
Sascha Graumann	Deputy Director RSS	UNRWA	WBFO
Seita Akihiro	Director, Health Department	UNRWA	JFO
Shayma Abu-Farha	Associate Protection Officer - Legal	UNRWA	JFO
Simon Onyango	Senior Area Support Officer	UNRWA	SFO
Sonia Preite	Associate Donor Relations & Projects Support Officer	UNRWA	JFO
Sweta Pokharel	Monitoring and Reporting Officer	UNRWA	JFO
Tamara Alrifai	Acting Director of External Relations and Director of Strategic Communications	UNRWA	HQ

Tamara Habu Nafiseh	Protection Mainstreaming Officer	UNRWA	LFO
Vickram Chhetri	Programme Support Officer	UNRWA	JFO
Vijay Neekhara	Head Housing and Camp Improvement	UNRWA	JFO
Vivian Koech	Child Protection Officer	UNRWA	JFO
Wafa Hamad	Budget Officer	UNRWA	JFO
Mirna Chamma	Chief Field Education Program	UNRWA	LFO
Mohey Najjar	Projects Officer (budget) PSO	UNRWA	WBFO
Oliver Bridge	Technical Lead Protection	UNRWA	WBFO
Azret Kalmykov	Health Sector Syria Coordinator	WHO	SFO