

HOW TO DO POST-DISTRIBUTION MONITORING?

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) / February 2018

This guidance note presents the lessons learned from a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) exercise that took place from 14 to 18 February 2018 in Aweil East, South Sudan. It includes practical tips intended for National Societies that are interested in designing and implementing PDMs with a strong focus on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA). If you have questions or comments, please contact the IFRC CEA Delegate for the food crisis operations in Africa: lotte.ruppert@ifrc.org

OBJECTIVES

In November and December 2017, the South Sudan Red Cross (SSRC) with the support of IFRC distributed 5.000 emergency household kits with non-food items to 30.000 people in Aweil East. SSRC and IFRC conducted a PDM with four objectives:

- **To improve programming.** SSRC aims to deliver assistance that is responsive to the preferences of vulnerable people. The PDM assessed whether the items were the most appropriate type of assistance or whether alternative aid should have been given. We asked recipients about the quality of the items and we verified the actual use of the items.
- **To improve SSRC selection and distribution processes.** SSRC aims to assess whether people feel that the selection was fair and that the distribution was well organized. We checked, for instance, whether people received appropriate information, and how long they had to wait.
- **To strengthen Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA).** SSRC aims to check whether the agreed number and type of kits were distributed to the right households, whether any diversion of aid has taken place and whether people received enough information.
- **To identify and prevent protection risks.** SSRC aims to assess whether the distributions created any protection risks for community members, for example related to stolen items or security incidents during or after the selection and distribution process.

METHODS

The PDM consisted of **door-to-door surveys** with households who received items. The target was to reach 5% of the total 5000 households (250 households). The interviews were carried out by twenty SSRC volunteers, who were trained to use mobile phone data collection tools (Kobo Toolbox). They worked in teams of two: one volunteer with strong skills was paired with a less experienced volunteer. One volunteer was responsible for asking the questions while the other registered the answers on the phone. Local village leaders supported SSRC with mobilizing and tracing those community members who had received the items. In three days, the volunteers managed to reach 334 households.

To complement the surveys, the team also held **focus group discussions** with 19 people who received items, as well as with 24 people who were not included to get a more complete understanding of the selection process. Each discussion included 8 to 12 people.

What resources do you need to do Post-Distribution Monitoring?

- ✓ *at least 2 days for the training*
- ✓ *around 20 volunteers*
- ✓ *the survey questionnaire printed for each volunteer to practice*
- ✓ *2 to 5 days for data collection, depending on your target*
- ✓ *around 10 mobile phones (1 per team) with Kobo installed + some back-up phones*
- ✓ *electricity to charge your phones*
- ✓ *internet access to upload the results on Kobo at the end*
- ✓ *2 experienced field coordinators who can guide the teams*
- ✓ *enough funds to cover the training costs, volunteer per diems, transportation, accommodation and other potential costs*

TIME PLAN

DAY 1	<p>Training for SSRC volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Post-Distribution Monitoring and why do we do it? • Introduction to Community Engagement & Accountability (CEA) • Role-play exercise on how to communicate with communities during the PDM • Discussion of the survey, question by question. Collectively decide on the best possible translation of the question and the answer options into the local language.
DAY 2	<p>Training for SSRC volunteers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice with using smartphones • Practice with KoBo Toolbox data collection, using a sample survey • Role-play exercise on how to interpret answers from communities. One volunteer conducts the PDM interview with another volunteer. Meanwhile, all other teams register the answers on their smartphone. Then collectively check whether each team has interpreted the answers the same and discuss potential differences, for example if one has chosen the answer option 'very high' and the other 'high'.
DAY 3	<p>Door-to-door surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five teams visit households in village 1, five teams in village 2. • Collective debriefing session to discuss common findings and to address challenges that came up during data collection.
DAY 4	<p>Door-to-door surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five teams visit households in village 3, five teams in village 4. • Collective debriefing session to discuss common findings and to address challenges that came up during data collection. <p>Focus group discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with female aid recipients, focused on their satisfaction with the distributed items and whether any potential security problems that occurred. • Discussion with non-beneficiaries, focused on the selection process, their satisfaction with SSRC and their information needs.
DAY 5	<p>Door-to-door surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five teams visit households in village 5, five teams in village 6. • Collective debriefing session to discuss lessons learned. <p>Focus group discussions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with elderly aid recipients, focused on their satisfaction with the distributed items and the registration and distribution process. • Discussion with non-beneficiaries, focused on the selection process, their satisfaction with SSRC and their information needs.

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Keep your survey as short as possible.** Only include the most necessary questions to ensure that you reach the target number of households and to be respectful of participants' time. Try to keep the interview under 20 minutes, but do not cut off people's answers when they have a lot of information to share. It will also save you time during data collection and during analysis to design a survey with limited answer options (for example: yes or no) instead of open answers.
- 2. Only include simple and specific questions.** Since you will be working with a large group of volunteers, you need to ensure that each volunteer interprets and asks the questions in the exact same way and that respondents truly understand each question.
- 3. Work with an independent set of volunteers.** To identify protection risks and irregularities, the volunteers responsible for this PDM exercise should not be the same as the volunteers who were involved in the registration and distribution process.
- 4. Use role-plays to practice the interview.** The best way to see whether volunteers are ready to go door to door is to simulate the PDM exercise during the training, focusing on their communication skills. Check whether all volunteers interpret and enter the answers that are given during the role play in the same way on the smartphone.
- 5. Explain, explain, explain.** At the start of each interview, volunteers need to tell people who they are, what the purpose of the interview is, and how long the interview will take. They should also ensure that people know that participation is voluntary, that their information will be handled with full confidentiality and that they will not gain any material benefit from agreeing to participate in the interview.
- 6. Include time for observation and verification.** The data collected through the interview is only one source of information. Teach your volunteers to also use their observation skills, for example by checking whether all the items are present in the household, whether they are being used and/or whether they notice any unusual things in the villages they visit.
- 7. Also speak with non-beneficiaries.** During post-distribution monitoring, we often only reach out to the households that were included in our program. This is useful to assess the quality of the items, but it can create a positive bias when discussing, for example, whether the selection process was transparent and fair. Focus group discussions or key informant interviews with community members who were not selected are good methods to complement and triangulate the information received from aid recipients.
- 8. Use the PDM results for strategic decision-making.** Humanitarian agencies are much better at collecting data from communities than at analyzing and using the information. When you are designing and planning the PDM exercise, include a plan on who is responsible for the analysis of the results and specify how the analysis will be used to improve the way that your operation or program is designed.

PDM SURVEY

Below is the full questionnaire used in the PDM in South Sudan. It was adapted from the PDM guidelines for non-food items from the shelter cluster (UNHCR). This survey serves as an example for National Societies interested in conducting PDMs, and can be further adapted and shortened to fit the specific objectives of your PDM.

1. PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION / INTRODUCTION

<p>NOTE: Before starting this survey, please verify through observation and conversation that this household was included in the distribution of essential household items by SSRC in November and December 2017. Only conduct the survey if the household was included.</p> <p>Standard statement to interviewee at beginning of every survey: Our names are _____ and we are volunteers with SSRC. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information about the distribution program. It helps us understand whether we are implementing our program properly and whether we are addressing the needs of vulnerable people. The survey is voluntary and you can choose not to take part. The information that you give will be confidential. The information will be used to prepare reports, but will not include any specific names. There will be no way to identify that you gave this information. You will gain no material benefit from agreeing to conduct this interview. You will not receive any extra assistance, than you would otherwise have received. Please provide the most accurate answer that you can.</p>			
1.1	Day <input type="text"/>	Month <input type="text"/>	Year <input type="text"/>
1.2	Phone ID		
1.3	Data entered by		
1.4	County		
1.5	Village		
1.6	Is the respondent the head of the household?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
1.7	1.7.1 Age (min. age = 18)	<input type="text"/>	
	1.7.2 Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	

2. SELECTION/REGISTRATION PROCESS

<p>NOTE: Explain that the following set of questions is about the registration process in late October / early November, not about the actual distribution.</p>			
2.1	Who selected you to be included in this distribution?	<p>A = Village leader B = SSRC volunteer/staff C = Friends / relatives D = Other</p>	
2.2	Did you have to pay to be put onto the distribution list?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	<p>2.2.1 If yes, to whom? (Select all that apply)</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <p>A = Village leader B = SSRC volunteer/staff C = Friends / relatives D = Other</p>
2.3	Can you name the main reasons for why you were selected? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A = My household has recently been forced to move to Aweil East B = I am hosting people who have been forced to move to Aweil East C = My household has recently returned to Aweil East D = My household has highly vulnerable people E = We have a large family size F = The village elder is my friend/relative G = I paid the village leader H = One of the SSRC volunteers is my friend/relative I = Other reason: _____</p>

2.4	Are you satisfied with the selection procedure for this distribution?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	2.4.1 If no, why? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/>	A = The selection criteria were not clear B = The community was not allowed to participate in the selection process C = People with high needs were left out D = People with low needs were included on the list E = The registration process took very long F = The registration process was rushed G = Other reason: _____
2.5	Were you informed in advance about the date of the registration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	2.5.1 If yes, who informed you? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/>	A = Village leader B = SSRC volunteer/staff C = Friends / relatives D = Other
2.6	Was the registration well organised? (1 = Very Bad, 2 = Bad, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, 5 = Very good)	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.7 Time waiting from start of registration until registration card received?	____ hours	
2.8	Were there any security problems during and/or after the registration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	If yes, select all that took place: A = People were pushing during the day of registration B = People were fighting during and/or after the day of registration C = People stole registration cards during and/or after the day of registration D = People threatened me or my family during and/or after the day of the registration E = Other security problems: _____		

3. DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

3.1	When were you informed about the date of the distribution?	<input type="checkbox"/> On the day of the distribution <input type="checkbox"/> 1 day before the distribution <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 days before the distribution <input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 days before the distribution <input type="checkbox"/> >7 days before the distribution	3.1.1 Who informed you? (Select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/>	A = Village leader B = Community members C = SSRC volunteer/staff D = Friends / relatives E = Other
3.2	Were you given enough information on how to use the products you received?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
3.3	Was the distribution well organised? (1 = Very Bad, 2 = Bad, 3 = Average, 4 = Good, 5 = Very good)	<input type="checkbox"/>	3.4 Time waiting from arrival at distribution site until items received?	____ hours	
3.5	How did you transport the items back to your house?	<input type="checkbox"/> I transported the items myself or with my family <input type="checkbox"/> SSRC volunteers/staff helped me transport the items <input type="checkbox"/> Community members / the village elder helped me transport the items <input type="checkbox"/> I paid someone to transport the items for me <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			
3.6	Were there any security problems during and/or after the distribution?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	If yes, select all that took place: A = People were pushing during and/or after the day of distribution B = People were fighting during and/or after the day of distribution C = People stole items during and/or after the day of distribution D = People threatened me or my family during and/or after the day of the distribution E = Other security problems: _____		

4. NFI ITEMS		
Article	4.1.1 What do you think of the quality of each item you received? (1= Poor, 2 = Average, 3 = Good)	4.1.2 How much did your household need this item? (1 = Not necessary, 2 = Necessary, 3 = Very necessary)
01 – Blankets	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
02 – Bucket	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
03 – Jerry can	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
04 – Tarpaulin (heavy waterproof sheet)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
05 – Kitchen set (cooking pots, cups, spoons, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
06 – Sleeping mats	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
07 – Body soap	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
08 – Laundry soap	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
09 – Mosquito nets	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10 – Oral rehydration salts	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11 – Water purification sachet	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 Would you have preferred to receive a different type of assistance instead? (Please select all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Medical items <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene support <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation support <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
4.3 Did you sell or exchange any of the items you received?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	4.3.1 If yes, what did you sell or exchange it for? A = Food B = Rent C = Medical items D = Shelter E = Clothes F = Other household items G = Other: _____
4.4 Did any items get stolen?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	

5. GENERAL SATISFACTION

5.1	How satisfied are you with all the services that SSRC provides in Aweil East? (1 = Not satisfied, 2 = satisfied, 3 = very satisfied)	_	
5.2	Are you able to give feedback or complaints to SSRC?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	5.2.1 If yes, how? A = Through our village leader B = Through our local committee C = At the complaints desk on the day of registration and on the day of distribution D = Through face-to-face contact with SSRC branch staff E = Through face-to-face contact with SSRC volunteers living in my community F = Other reason: _____
5.3	Do you feel SSRC listens and responds to your feedback?	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	
5.4	How satisfied are you with the overall behaviour and support of SSRC volunteers and staff? (1 = Not satisfied, 2 = average, 3 = very satisfied)	_	
5.5	Do you have any comments, ideas for improvement or anything else you would like to mention to SSRC?	_____	

GUIDANCE ON FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

What is a focus group?

6 to 10 people are invited to discuss specific topics in detail. The focus group can bring together people who have something in common. They may share a particular problem, or be unable to speak up at larger meetings (for example, IDPs, women, or minority groups), or are people only peripherally involved in the community, such as nomads. It is best not to have leaders or people in authority present – interview them separately.

Why only six to twelve people? Because in a larger group:

- Speaking time will be restricted and dominant people will speak most
- The facilitator will have to play more of a controlling role
- Some members of the group will become frustrated if they cannot speak
- Participants will start talking to one other rather than to the group as a whole
- The group may stop focusing and start talking about something else

What do you need?

- An experienced facilitator: a native speaker who can lead, draw out the people who are not talking, and stop others from talking too much
- Time to prepare open-ended questions and select focus-group members
- One, sometimes two, people to note in writing what is said
- A common language
- A quiet place where the group will not be overheard or interrupted
- To sit in a circle and be comfortable
- Ground rules: everyone has a right to speak; no one has the right answer; please don't interrupt
- Permission from the group to take notes
- About one to one-and-a-half hours and some refreshments

What happens?

- The facilitator makes sure everyone has a chance to speak and that the discussion stays focused
- The note-taker writes notes
- At the end of the session, the facilitator gives a brief summing up of what has been said in case someone has something to add
- The facilitator checks that the written record has captured the main points and reflected

Which topics to discuss?

- Introduce the theme & purpose of this discussion (why does SSRC want to hear the opinion from communities and what will happen with this information?)
- Before asking specific questions, ask about the background of the participants to understand whether they represent all community members or only a specific group (such as only male community leaders)

Rules for facilitator

- Ask open questions, such as how, what, where, why as much as possible, especially to clarify or to check understanding. Do not judge people who speak; accept what they say;
- Avoid leading statements and questions; questions should guide the discussion rather than solicit direct answers from each of the participants;
- Avoid dominating the discussion; ask simple questions and only one question at a time;
- Steer the group towards analyzing the causes of the identified issues/problems/ risks, the skills they have at their disposal to resolve them, and the role of the community in developing solutions;
- Ensure time for participants to raise their own questions and concerns;
- Ask the participants which of the issues raised they consider to be the most important.