



**HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE  
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**INTERVENTION MODEL FOR HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN  
GAZA STRIP: A CASE STUDY OF HUMANITARIAN WORK**

Doctoral (Ph.D.) dissertation

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father, whose strength, resilience, and unwavering support continue to inspire me. His guidance and love have been a steadfast foundation throughout my life and remain a light on my journey, even in his absence.

To my family, who have endured immeasurable hardship and sacrifice, I am forever grateful. Your courage and perseverance, especially through the challenges of recent months, have been my greatest motivation.

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And to my friends, UNHCR colleagues, and the community who have shown boundless support, thank you for standing by me and believing in the power of knowledge and action to foster change.

This dissertation is for all who dare to dream of a better world, even in the face of adversity.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ALNAP | Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance         |
| CaLP  | Cash Learning Partnership  |
| CFM   | Complaint and Feedback Mechanism                                   |
| CFW   | Cash for Work  |
| CHS   | Core Humanitarian Standard   |
| CMB   | Common Method Bias   |
| CSI   | Coping Strategy Index  |
| CVA   | Cash and voucher assistance  |
| CWG   | Cash Working Group   |
| DAC   | Development Assistance Committee                                   |
| FAO   | Food and Agriculture Organization                                  |
| FCS   | Food Consumption Score   |
| FFW   | Food for Work  |
| FSC   | Food Security Cluster  |
| FSS   | Food Security Sector   |
| FV    | Food Voucher   |
| GAD   | Gender Age Disability  |
| GBV   | Gender Based Violence  |
| GDP   | Gross Domestic Product   |
| GEWE  | Gender Equality Women's Empowerment                                |
| GHO   | Global Humanitarian Overview                                       |
| HCT   | Humanitarian Country Team  |
| HH    | Household  |
| HHS   | Household Hunger Scale   |
| HRP   | Humanitarian Response Plan   |
| IFAD  | International Fund for Agricultural Development                    |
| IGAs  | Incomes Generating Activities                                      |
| IHL   | International Humanitarian Law                                     |
| KIIs  | Key Informant Interviews   |
| M&E   | Monitoring and evaluation  |
| MEAL  | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning               |
| MENA  | The Middle East and North Africa                                   |
| MoL   | Ministry of Labor  |
| MoSD  | Ministry of Social Development                                     |
| MPCA  | Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance                                      |
| MSNA  | Multisectoral Needs Assessment                                     |
| NFIs  | Non-Food Items   |
| NGOs  | Non-Governmental Organizations                                     |
| OCHA  | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| OECD  | The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development         |
| oPt   | Occupied Palestinian Territory                                     |
| OTC   | Over The Counter   |



|        |   |
|--------|---|
| PCBS   | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics                      |
| PDM    | Post-Distribution Monitoring                                  |
| PIN    | People In Need  |
| PSEAH  | Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment      |
| PwDs   | People with Disabilities                                      |
| rCSI   | reduced Coping Strategy Index                                 |
| RII    | Relative Importance Index                                     |
| SADDD  | Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data                   |
| SD     | Standard Deviation  |
| SDGs   | Sustainable Development Goals                                 |
| SIDA   | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency          |
| SIF    | Secours Islamique France                                      |
| SPSS   | Statistical Package for Social Scientists                     |
| UN     | United Nations  |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development            |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                          |
| UNEG   | United Nations Evaluation Group                               |
| UNFPA  | United Nations Fund for Population Activities                 |
| UNHCR  | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                 |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund                                |
| UNRWA  | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development            |
| WASH   | Water Sanitation and Hygiene                                  |
| WB     | World Bank  |
| WBG    | West Bank and Gaza Strip                                      |
| WFP    | World Food Programme  |
| WHO    | World Health Organization                                     |

# ABSTRACT

The Gaza Strip has long faced severe challenges including trade restrictions, economic recession, high unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity. These issues are aggravated by ongoing regional conflicts, internal political divides, and recurrent violence. Humanitarian assistance has become a critical intervention to address these challenges, aiming to enhance food security and strengthen the social safety net for Gaza's vulnerable populations. This research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions in improving household food security through the development and validation of a targeted intervention model. This model is assessed based on four key criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, following the DAC evaluation framework. Gender equality and women's empowerment principles are integrated throughout the evaluation process.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines qualitative and quantitative data collection, including a comprehensive desk review and cross-sectional empirical data gathering. The study's exploratory phase offered foundational insights, followed by a conclusive phase that quantitatively tested hypotheses related to intervention relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. Data collection revealed that while food security interventions were effective in meeting immediate needs, key indicators such as Food Consumption Score (FCS) and Coping Strategy Index (CSI) showed regression three months post-intervention, suggesting the temporary nature of the interventions without sustained economic support.

Results indicate high relevance and efficiency of interventions in addressing immediate needs, aligning with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and community priorities. Effective use of technology and collaboration with local entities enhanced resource utilization, facilitated delivery mechanisms, and ensured rapid, efficient intervention processes. Additionally, the interventions demonstrated significant social impacts, notably in promoting nutrition, health, and women's empowerment. Women's participation and empowerment were prioritized, with programs implementing equal pay, financial inclusion, and support for women-led enterprises, contributing to improved economic and social resilience.

Overall, this research underscores the importance of humanitarian interventions in enhancing food security, resilience, and gender equity in Gaza. Findings highlight the need for continuous, long-term support to address systemic challenges sustainably. The study suggests that community involvement in intervention planning fosters ownership, resilience, and harmony, while cautioning against over-reliance on local authorities to mitigate biases. This model provides a framework for evaluating food security interventions in conflict-affected areas, offering valuable insights for policymakers, donors, and humanitarian agencies committed to fostering sustainable development and resilience in the Gaza Strip.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

During times of crisis and conflict, prevalent food insecurity has become a global humanitarian concern. To address this issue, humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies, have mobilized to meet the food security needs of affected populations, thereby increasing their reliance on humanitarian assistance. This chapter provides the study's background, outlines the research problem, presents the research questions and hypotheses, highlights the significance of the research, and details the assumptions and structure of the study.

## 1.1 Study background

The world population is projected to reach 8 billion by 2023 and 10 billion by 2056, driven by rising birth rates in developing countries and increased life expectancy due to medical advancements (Sweileh, 2020). With this population growth, food demand in 2050 is expected to rise by 59–98% compared to 2016 levels (Shin, Kwak, Jo, Kim, & Huh, 2022), necessitating a 70–110% increase in food production (Pavlova et al., 2021). Agricultural productivity faces significant challenges due to climate change, soil degradation, and water scarcity, all of which impact production efficiency. As these challenges intensify, it becomes increasingly difficult to produce enough food to meet global demand, necessitating compensatory increases in output to offset productivity losses. The FAO (2024) report highlights that around 30% of food produced globally is lost or wasted throughout the supply chain, from post-harvest stages to consumer use. Consequently, to meet the anticipated 98% rise in effective food requirements, total production may need to increase by 110%. This projection, however, assumes that current levels of food waste will remain unchanged, a point that could be critiqued as overly static.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is characterized by prolonged conflicts and recurrent natural and human-induced disasters, including pandemic outbreaks and severe climate impacts. The persistent conflict, compounded by economic challenges such as hyperinflation, unemployment, and the residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the economic repercussions of the Ukraine crisis, has heightened insecurity and instability across the region. Additionally, increasing living costs, economic decline, restricted political and democratic freedoms, and the spread of extremism have intensified social and political unrest. The MENA region is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with ongoing environmental crises exacerbating regional instability. In 2023, persistent conflict, a severe climate crisis, and public health challenges—such as cholera and COVID-19—contributed to unprecedented levels of hunger, displacement, and poverty, further hindering progress on gender equality. Currently, one in 23 individuals in the region requires humanitarian assistance, a rate that has more than doubled in just four years (OCHA, 2021a).

The Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) serves as an annual assessment of worldwide humanitarian needs and responses, underscoring the severity of the current global food crisis. This crisis, primarily driven by conflict, climate shocks, and the risk of a global recession, is

unprecedented in scale and impact, with acute food insecurity increasing at an alarming rate. By late 2022, it is anticipated that at least 222 million individuals across 53 countries will face acute food insecurity and require urgent assistance (FAO & WFP, 2022).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprise 17 ambitious targets focused on eradicating poverty and hunger while addressing climate change's detrimental effects over a 15-year period. SDGs aim to eradicate global poverty and achieve zero hunger by 2030, addressing some of humanity's most pressing challenges. Despite notable agricultural production and substantial foreign aid, poverty and food insecurity continue to impact developing countries significantly (Dhahri & Omri, 2020). Approximately two billion people—constituting 25% of the global population—experience moderate to severe food insecurity, despite advancements in some nations ((FAO et al., 2021). According to UNICEF, WHO, & WB (2021), 47 million children under five are acutely malnourished, 144 million are stunted, and about two billion people suffer from essential micronutrient deficiencies. Projections indicate that without substantial interventions to address food inequality, hunger will likely persist beyond 2030.

Ending poverty and hunger is central to the SDGs, with the first two goals—SDG 1 ("No Poverty") and SDG 2 ("Zero Hunger")—specifically targeting these issues (UNDP, 2015). SDG 1 aims to eliminate global poverty, while SDG 2 seeks to eradicate hunger by promoting food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agricultural practices. The SDGs are interdependent, with hunger reduction and poverty alleviation forming key pillars of sustainability. Hunger, commonly understood as the distress associated with insufficient food intake, arises largely from poverty, yet inadequate nutrition can also perpetuate poverty. Although hunger and food security are conceptually distinct, they are closely linked; sustained food insecurity often culminates in acute hunger (Hasnain et al., 2021).

The global objective to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 is now considered unattainable, with an additional 90 million individuals affected beyond prior estimates. Job availability remains below pre-pandemic levels, and inflation rates in emerging markets and developing economies are projected to approach 10%. Rising global fuel and food prices disproportionately affect low-income countries, with most nations implementing HRPs predicting slower economic growth in 2023 due to compounded effects of climate change, conflict, and escalating food and fuel costs (OCHA, 2021a). In 2020, approximately one-third of the global population, or 2.37 billion people, faced insufficient food availability, marking an increase of nearly 320 million people within a single year. Without substantial intervention, around 660 million individuals could continue to face hunger by 2030 (FAO et al., 2021).

Achieving food security worldwide presents significant challenges, both in meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and improving the welfare of impoverished populations. Despite ongoing efforts, food security remains a persistent issue for many countries (Schleifer & Sun, 2020). According to Aliyu et al. (2021), reaching the SDG goals for hunger and poverty reduction, which include promoting sustainable food security and collaborating with local producers by 2030,

will likely prove challenging, given that less than a decade remains to address these complex issues. A proactive, value-added strategy emphasizing long-term food security and strategic humanitarian interventions is essential. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of strategies for anticipating, mitigating, and effectively responding to food security crises is needed. Early action to minimize the impact of future crises is crucial not only for reducing suffering but also for improving efficiencies in humanitarian aid delivery (Westerveld et al., 2021).

Humanitarian assistance is designed to support highly vulnerable populations by facilitating access to essential services, assisting them in managing sustained stress, and preventing further deterioration of humanitarian conditions (OCHA, 2021c). This assistance can range from direct food distribution to a broader set of resources, including essential commodities, inputs, vouchers, cash transfers, and the provision of knowledge and skills (Savage et al., 2019). Despite these diverse approaches, humanitarian interventions are frequently informed more by precedent and experience than by robust evidence. A critical challenge facing the contemporary humanitarian system lies in systematically collecting, analysing, and acting upon data across all phases of crisis response, whether responding to natural disasters or conflict-driven emergencies (O'Reilly et al., 2021).

Globally, approximately 828 million people experience insufficient food access, with this number continuing to rise. Climate change, escalating global inequalities, and increasing violent conflicts are key drivers of worsening hunger and malnutrition levels. Notably, 27 of the 35 countries most severely affected by climate change also face acute food insecurity, highlighting a critical intersection of environmental vulnerability and food scarcity. Projections indicate that a 2-degree Celsius increase in global temperatures could result in an additional 80 million people experiencing hunger by 2050 (Fadda & Farelo, 2022). Malnutrition remains a pervasive global challenge; in 2020, approximately 22 percent (149.2 million) of children under five were stunted, 5.7 percent (38.9 million) were overweight, and 6.7 percent (45.4 million) experienced wasting. While data limitations hinder a complete assessment of the impacts of conflict on nutrition, these figures underscore the enduring and complex nature of global malnutrition.

By 2030, the global trajectory suggests that none of the nutrition targets will be met. In 2020, hunger levels increased significantly, with the prevalence of undernourishment rising from 8.4 percent in 2019 to approximately 9.9 percent in 2020, complicating progress towards achieving the Zero Hunger target by 2030. Depending on varying assumptions to address assessment uncertainties, the 2020 estimates range between 9.2 and 10.4 percent. High malnutrition rates are strongly associated with food insecurity, inadequate dietary practices, and poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges, disrupting food security and increasing malnutrition. Following five years of relative stability, the undernourishment rate spiked by 1.5 percentage points in a single year, reaching approximately 9.9 percent globally—a development that complicates efforts toward the Zero Hunger goal (FAO et al., 2021). The pandemic amplified vulnerabilities, with the Gaza Strip reporting that 53 percent of households experienced a reduction

in monthly income. Many families also faced temporary or permanent job losses due to the pandemic's economic fallout (OCHA, 2021c).

Increasing food insecurity at the household level has critically undermined food access, contributing to a notable rise in undernourished populations. In 2020, economic downturns affected nearly all low- and middle-income populations, resulting in the most pronounced rise in undernourishment in over two decades. This trend has been further intensified by climate-related conflicts and disasters, with the Gaza Strip experiencing some of the most severe increases in undernourishment (FAO et al., 2021). Addressing household food security in developing contexts highlights the fundamental purpose of humanitarian interventions: to protect lives and contribute to planetary balance, particularly within conflict-impacted communities. Advancements in the timeliness and specificity of humanitarian efforts are achievable through the integration of early warning analysis, enabling practitioners to respond more effectively to emerging food security crises (Brown et al., 2021).

Preventive measures to counter food security degradation encompass both structural and non-structural interventions, targeting household and national levels. Early estimates can significantly benefit humanitarian organizations by enabling more strategic allocation of limited funding towards anticipatory actions. These actions, particularly in high-risk areas, may focus on strengthening water resource management, food distribution systems, and nutritional screening. Despite this, funding for emergency response has not kept pace with growing needs, particularly in the short term. Frequently, available assistance is insufficient to fully address humanitarian needs, with gaps widening over the last decade (Hossain et al., 2022). Given the disparity between humanitarian demands and available resources, it is essential to optimize resource use by not only tracking but also forecasting food security conditions. Reliable food security estimates require a comprehensive information system that can rapidly capture and interpret the complexity of food-related crises (Brimoh et al., 2018).

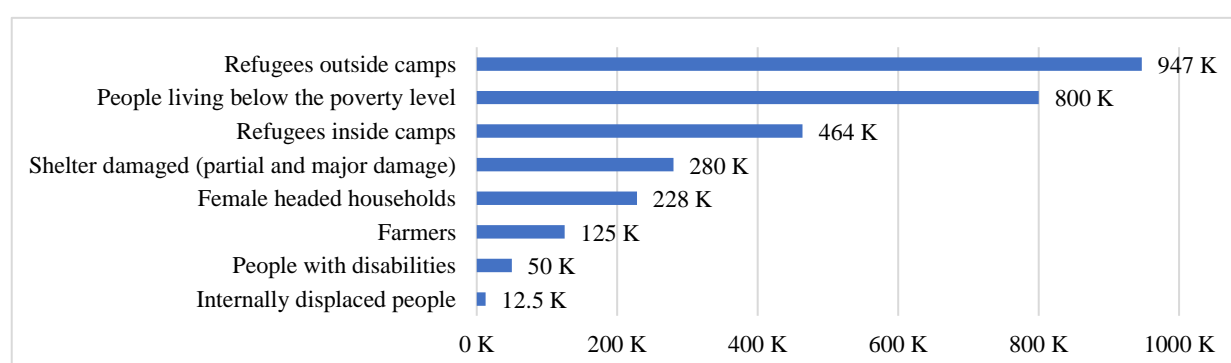
Food insecurity is becoming an increasingly urgent issue, driven by climate change, conflicts, and economic downturns. Accurate estimates of food insecurity are crucial to triggering timely interventions by humanitarian organizations. However, current assessment methods largely depend on expert opinion, consensus approaches, and survey data, each demanding substantial time, resources, and workforce (Westerveld et al., 2021). Although early warning systems indicate food security risks, responses are often delayed. Conflict and climate change are primary drivers of global food system disruptions and hunger crises (Brown et al., 2021). Climate change has inflicted severe economic losses and impacted lives, livelihoods, crops, and infrastructure, particularly within vulnerable communities. These communities, despite contributing minimally to global emissions, face the most severe consequences and often lack adequate resources to cope. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that a global temperature increase of 2°C above pre-industrial levels could result in an additional 189 million people experiencing hunger (WFP, 2022a). Climate-induced disasters are no longer distant threats; their effects are already manifesting, exacerbating human rights concerns, creating new humanitarian needs, and

intensifying existing ones. Individuals in humanitarian crisis settings are especially vulnerable to climate impacts, and the failure to meet the 1.5°C and 2°C global targets is expected to further escalate these consequences, amplifying humanitarian challenges on a global scale (OCHA, 2021a).

A humanitarian crisis is defined as an event or series of events that threaten the health, security, or well-being of large populations, often across extensive geographic regions. When such crises affect vulnerable populations who lack the resources to manage the resulting impacts, a coordinated humanitarian response becomes essential (Dowd, 2022). In cases where food insecurity reaches critical levels, humanitarian actions are mobilized to provide immediate relief, aimed at alleviating suffering rather than addressing root causes or conflicts. The objective of humanitarian action is to provide necessary resources that bolster resilience in affected populations, serving as a civilian-driven response to political failures, and ultimately focusing on the preservation of human rights and lives (Nassar et al., 2024).

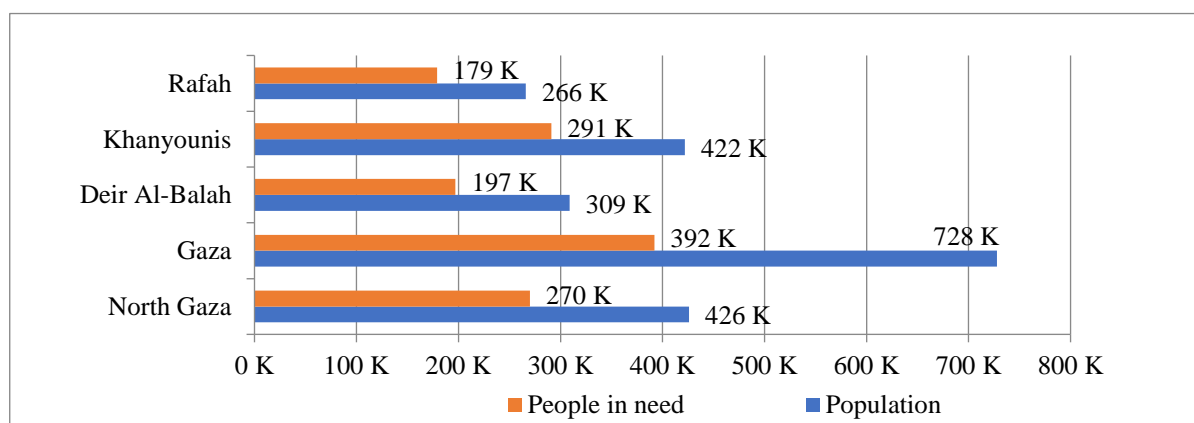
Vulnerability, often linked to poverty, describes a reduced capacity to recover from life-threatening events. Populations in poverty are thus disproportionately affected by both natural and human-made crises, with vulnerable groups including children, pregnant and nursing mothers, migrants, and displaced individuals. Consequently, humanitarian interventions prioritize assistance to these populations, focusing on helping them afford essentials, improve nutrition, and protect health (Jiang et al., 2021). Food security interventions aim to guarantee the availability of safe, sufficient, and nutritious food before, during, and after crises, particularly where food access is critically low. These interventions include ensuring food availability, access to nutrient-rich options, nutrition education, and encouraging appropriate feeding practices (Nisbet et al., 2022).

The Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), comprising the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, has been a focal point of conflict with Israel since 1948. Located in the Near East, the oPt is a small, fragmented region with a population of approximately 5.3 million—2.2 million in the Gaza Strip and 3.1 million in the West Bank. Projections indicate that the Gaza Strip's population will reach 3.1 million by 2030, an increase from 2.2 million in 2022 (PCBS, 2021). The Gaza Strip includes five governorates: North Gaza, Gaza, the Middle Area, Khan Younis, and Rafah. Data from 2022 indicates that 125,000 farmers were among those in need of humanitarian assistance, representing the sixth largest group requiring aid in the oPt, as shown in Figure (1-1) (OCHA, 2021b).



**Figure 1-1 People in need humanitarian assistance per population groups**

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) provides a detailed overview of humanitarian needs, identifying the most pressing sectors and estimating the number of individuals in need of assistance. OCHA’s assessment covers six essential sectors: protection, food security, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), shelter and non-food items (NFI), and education. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), food security is identified as the second-most critical need following protection, but it also represents the sector with the highest funding requirements. According to the 2022 HRP, the total funding needed for all humanitarian sectors in oPt is estimated at \$510 million, of which 75% (or \$380 million) is designated for the Gaza Strip. Within this allocation, food security requires the largest portion—approximately \$271.1 million. Data from the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), presented in Figure 1-2, illustrate that the July 2021 Multisectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) found that over 2.1 million Palestinians across oPt require humanitarian assistance. Of this group, the Gaza Strip alone accounts for 63%, or around 1.32 million people, underscoring the critical need for resources and support within this region (OCHA, 2021b).



**Figure 1-2 People in need humanitarian assistance per Governorate**

The Gaza Strip’s economy has traditionally depended on small-scale industries and agriculture; however, the past decade has seen a significant economic decline, marked by stagnating real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and consistently rising unemployment rates. This downturn has impaired essential infrastructure, basic services, and the private sector, resulting in a weakened economic state. In 2020, the region's GDP was projected to decrease by 11.5 percent amid a severe recession, with real GDP per capita growth estimated at a modest 0.6 to 1.5 percent annually. Although recent economic growth has been observed, driven primarily by foreign assistance, unsustainable coping strategies have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. This has intensified high unemployment, poverty, and food insecurity rates, while socioeconomic conditions continue to worsen, with declining GDP per capita and persistent poverty (UNCTAD, 2020). Factors such as high unemployment, inflation, soaring commodity prices, and frozen foreign assets have created a new poverty demographic, particularly in urban areas and regions not traditionally prioritized for humanitarian assistance (WFP, 2022a).



In 2020, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in collaboration with the Food Security Sector (FSS), published a comprehensive report classifying households into four categories: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure. Food-secure households consistently maintain adequate access to nutritious food and meet essential non-food needs without negative coping mechanisms. Marginally food-secure households, though currently stable, face future risks of food insecurity despite having financial means, and may forgo balanced diets. Moderately food-insecure households struggle to maintain adequate food intake due to financial limitations, often relying on negative coping strategies. Severely food-insecure households experience substantial food access gaps that cannot be resolved through economic means or coping mechanisms, highlighting the critical need for intervention (FSS & PCBS, 2020).

The humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip has reached alarming levels, placing immense pressure on healthcare resources, exacerbating economic conditions, and resulting in a significant rise in unemployment. As of now, nearly two out of every five individuals lack reliable access to food, a substantial increase from one in five in 2018. This decline in living standards has heightened the vulnerability of the Strip's 2.2 million residents, fostering a cyclical dependency on humanitarian assistance (OCHA, 2021b).. According to the World Food Programme WFP (2021c), 76% of those requiring humanitarian support in the Gaza Strip are grappling with food insecurity. The World Bank further reports that the poverty rate has surged to 59.3%. In 2022, out of 1.6 million individuals identified as needing assistance, approximately 1.2 million received some form of support, regardless of the sector; however, the duration and effectiveness of this aid remain unclear. This indicates that 72% of the targeted population received assistance (OCHA, 2021a). Additionally, the unemployment rate in the region stands at 44.7%. Estimates indicate that between 1.3 million and 2 million Palestinians—approximately 26.3% to 36.7% of the population—lack reliable access to food (FAO et al., 2021). In response, the World Bank allocated \$4.6 billion for 23 operations in fiscal year 2021, with \$114 million specifically designated for projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBG, 2021).

Globally, food insecurity represents a significant nutritional challenge, particularly in countries with low to moderate incomes (Bilbeisi et al., 2022). This complex issue is linked to deficiencies in both macro and micronutrients, as well as a lack of dietary diversity (Cafiero et al., 2018). Food insecurity arises when individuals do not have adequate social, physical, or economic access to safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences for a healthy and active life (Bilbeisi et al., 2022). Although it affects individuals of all ages, children under five are especially vulnerable (Lawson et al., 2020). In the Gaza Strip, food insecurity is predominantly driven by financial constraints that impede access to food, which is further aggravated by widespread poverty, high unemployment rates, and environmental challenges such as global warming. Additionally, limited access to local resources—including water and arable land—as well as trade barriers, further complicate the situation (Al-Hamdallah, 2018, WFP, 2021b). The loss of employment and the subsequent inability to afford food are primary contributors to the recent

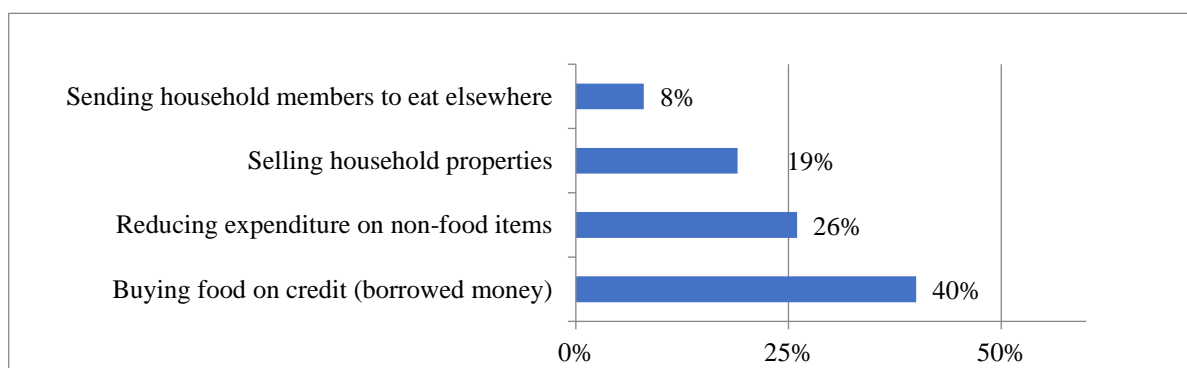
escalation of food insecurity. Many households are compelled to opt for cheaper, less nutritious food options, adversely affecting meal frequency and quality. Basic staples such as bread and tea have become predominant dietary items, with cereals, potatoes, legumes, and inexpensive vegetables making up the bulk of the diet (FAO et al., 2021).

The Palestinian territory grapples with substantial challenges stemming from its limited natural resources, characterized by the rapid depletion of water sources and a heavy reliance on imported energy. The economy is heavily influenced by various external factors, including the Israeli economy, foreign assistance, remittances from Palestinians abroad, and government grants (Nassar, Naárné Tóth, et al., 2022). However, the economy has faced significant struggles, particularly due to unfavorable conditions and prolonged closures, especially in the Gaza Strip. As a result, over 80% of the population relies heavily on international assistance, which has proven insufficient in preventing severe crises related to poverty, food insecurity, sanitation, electricity shortages, and a lack of clean drinking water. The World Bank indicates that Palestinian exports could potentially double if not for the restrictions imposed by Israel, given the geographic proximity of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) to substantial regional markets (UNCTAD, 2020).

The Gaza Strip has been in a prolonged economic downturn, exacerbated by over 15 years of blockade and ongoing obstacles to potential economic revival. Continuous natural and man-made crises have further undermined the resilience of vulnerable households, intensifying the ongoing humanitarian crisis (Samia et al., 2021). The primary driver of food insecurity is insufficient economic access to food, which is fueled by widespread poverty and high unemployment rates. Restrictions on land, sea, and market access for exports and agricultural inputs have severely hindered farming activities, rendering agricultural livelihoods increasingly precarious (FAO, 2020). Since September 2000, stringent limitations on movement, job and income losses, and property destruction have significantly affected food security (UNRWA, 2021). Despite continuous efforts by the UN and its partners to deliver humanitarian assistance and facilitate long-term projects, operational constraints in Gaza, compounded by the lack of legitimate Palestinian Authority control, have led to a predominant focus on short-term humanitarian and reconstruction initiatives. Progress toward sustainable economic recovery remains challenging given these circumstances (UN, 2017).

Interventions aimed at ensuring food security in humanitarian contexts are essential to support and protect the livelihoods of crisis-affected individuals while preventing the adoption of harmful coping strategies that could adversely affect their nutrition, food security, and overall well-being (Samia et al., 2021). Globally, households have adopted various short-term coping mechanisms to sustain their livelihoods. Many have initially reduced spending on food, healthcare, social activities, and utilities. Another common strategy involves living with extended family members and pooling resources to minimize rental expenses, along with selling assets, although these measures often fail to meet all household food requirements (FAO et al., 2021). According to OCHA (2021c), recurrent natural and human-induced crises in the oPt are eroding the resilience

of vulnerable households, necessitating the adoption of negative coping mechanisms, particularly among women. These measures include purchasing food on credit, cutting back on non-food expenditures, liquidating household assets, and sending family members elsewhere for meals, as depicted in Figure 1-3.



**Figure 1-3 Coping strategies for food security in Gaza Strip**

The primary purpose of the government is to safeguard the rights and welfare of its citizens. Ideally, sovereignty is expected to act as a protector of citizens' rights and interests. However, if a sovereign authority pursues policies that undermine this essential purpose, it can be argued that it violates the sovereignty of its state and people. In such cases, sovereignty is no longer seen as a right that can be legitimately exercised by the violator. Thus, international actors may have grounds to intervene for humanitarian reasons to uphold the sovereignty of that state by preventing further abuse by the ruling authority (Gulati & Hkosa, 2013). In the context of the Gaza Strip, this theoretical framework has particular relevance due to the complex political, humanitarian, and security challenges faced by its population. The notion of sovereignty here is complicated by factors such as external blockades, internal governance struggles, and frequent military confrontations, all of which impact the capacity of any ruling authority to adequately protect and promote the welfare of Gazans. When the governing body's actions—or the broader geopolitical restrictions imposed on Gaza—result in diminished living standards, restricted access to resources, and limited healthcare and security, this can be interpreted as a failure to fulfil the core mandate of sovereignty. Consequently, the legitimacy of that authority's sovereignty is questioned, especially when the humanitarian implications are severe, and the well-being of the population is at risk. This situation often attracts international attention and sometimes intervention, aiming to uphold the population's rights and welfare despite the challenges posed by the complex political landscape. This perspective on sovereignty aligns with the need for international actors to protect human rights when national authorities are unable or unwilling to do so. In Gaza's case, sovereignty becomes a multi-layered concept, where the distinction between governance, authority, and the protection of citizens becomes critically nuanced due to ongoing conflict, occupation, and humanitarian crises.

The researcher highlighted a significant gap in the existing literature regarding the concurrent examination of household food security and humanitarian actions. This study seeks to address this

gap by presenting a comprehensive logical framework that integrates intervention and evaluation concepts specific to food security within humanitarian contexts. It introduces a theoretical model aimed at enhancing food security interventions, accompanied by a structured process for empirical validation.

Logical frameworks are essential tools that facilitate thorough coverage of crucial aspects in intervention strategies. The study reviews relevant case studies, analysing the effectiveness of various strategies and identifying gaps in interventions while also anticipating their potential impacts. It evaluates the success of these interventions concerning resource dissemination, recommends anticipated benefits, assesses their impacts on household food security, and measures the efficiency of these interventions.

By providing a tailored intervention model focused on household food security in the Gaza Strip, this study not only contributes to the body of knowledge but also encourages further exploration into effective approaches. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the beneficiaries, implementation methods, and contextual factors that influence the outcomes of such interventions. This holistic approach aims to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian actions in addressing food security challenges, particularly in vulnerable communities like those in Gaza.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

The Gaza Strip continues to face a dire humanitarian situation characterized by ongoing conflict, economic stagnation, widespread unemployment, gender inequalities, and high levels of poverty and food insecurity. Currently, 63 percent of families in the region are food insecure, with 2 percent classified as severely food insecure (FSS, 2023). This food insecurity primarily arises from insufficient economic resources, exacerbated by high poverty and unemployment rates among Palestinian households. Families experience fluctuating access to food—some days facing scarcity while others may have sufficient food due to activities like fishing, agriculture, or temporary employment opportunities.

The local population links their food security to the broader political landscape, believing that with political stability and freedom from Israeli restrictions, they could sustain themselves through their own livelihood activities, such as farming and fishing (Nassar, Naárné Tóth, et al., 2022). In essence, the struggle for food security is deeply intertwined with the pursuit of political autonomy and economic freedom.

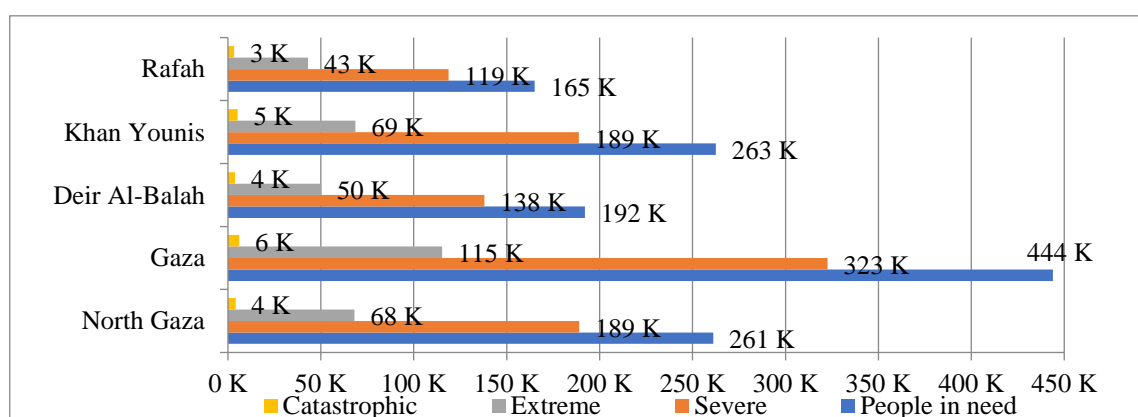
The humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) reflect a persistent crisis in protection, driven by over 55 years of Israeli military control, a 15-year blockade of the Gaza Strip, and internal divisions among Palestinian factions. The lack of adherence to international humanitarian and human rights laws, coupled with frequent violence between Israeli security forces and Palestinian armed groups, perpetuates the humanitarian crisis, particularly in Gaza, where the blockade further exacerbates the situation (OCHA, 2021a).

Economic growth in the oPt has been significantly stifled by military occupation, which has increased reliance on Israel, raised prices for imported goods, and created barriers to establishing trade relations with neighbouring countries. This deterioration can be traced back to the 1994 Paris Protocol, which institutionalized unequal trade relations between the oPt and Israel, further entrenching economic vulnerabilities (Rosenthal, 2021). Addressing these interconnected issues requires a comprehensive approach that prioritizes both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term political solutions.

The prolonged humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip imposes numerous challenges on the livelihoods of Palestinians, severely limiting their access to job opportunities and leading to the destruction of productive assets. Over two million Palestinians in the region are grappling with significant unemployment and food insecurity, alongside disrupted access to essential services. This situation is particularly dire for the most vulnerable households, which face compounded challenges due to their limited capacity to cope with the ongoing humanitarian crisis and recurring man-made shocks. As a result, high levels of poverty, disrupted livelihoods, and inadequate access to essential services have become prevalent, underscoring the continued necessity for humanitarian assistance in 2022 (OCHA, 2021b).

According to projections from the HCT for 2022, approximately 1.75 million Palestinians across the oPt will require humanitarian assistance to ensure food security, with 1.3 million (76%) of those individuals residing in the Gaza Strip. Households were evaluated using a severity scale ranging from "none" to "catastrophic," with the "People In Need" (PIN) in figure (1-4) comprising those classified as severe, extreme, and catastrophic. Data from the assessment shows that Gaza is the most severely affected governorate in terms of food security severity (OCHA, 2021b).

The Food Security Sector (FSS) aims to assist 1.63 million of the identified 1.75 million Palestinians requiring food security assistance (OCHA, 2021c). The food security sector has requested \$271.1 million for its initiatives in 2022, which constitutes 53 percent of the total funds needed across all humanitarian clusters and sectors. This highlights the pressing need for targeted support and resources to address the escalating food insecurity crisis in the Gaza Strip and improve the living conditions of its residents.



**Figure 1-4 People in need by geography and severity of food security**

The food security crisis in the Gaza Strip is evidenced by two primary national-level trends. Firstly, Growing Dependence on Humanitarian Assistance. There is a marked increase in the reliance on humanitarian assistance as the predominant solution to address food insecurity. Humanitarian interventions in the Gaza Strip are primarily focused on ensuring food security, driven by ongoing conflict and insecurity, which are the main factors contributing to severe hunger in the region. As a result, the population has become heavily dependent on external aid. The prolonged crisis has severely compromised the food security of many households, diminishing their capacity to cope and deteriorating their living conditions. Increasingly, Palestinians in the region rely on humanitarian assistance to fulfill their basic needs, particularly as the number of vulnerable and food-insecure households continues to grow. Humanitarian aid is essential for those experiencing food insecurity or at risk of it, aiming to prevent the adoption of detrimental coping mechanisms that may exacerbate the crisis. Such negative strategies include inadequate dietary intake, asset liquidation, debt accumulation, withdrawal of children from educational institutions, unsafe migration, over-exploitation of natural resources, and participation in illegal or exploitative activities (UNRWA, 2021).

Secondly, Marginalization of Government and Private Sector. The marginalization of both the government and private sector has allowed international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to emerge as the primary sources of assistance. Humanitarian intervention strategies have evolved to meet the specific needs of the Gaza Strip, playing a critical role in both government-led initiatives and international responses, thereby reinforcing the social safety net. Initiatives such as general food distribution, food voucher programs for school snacks, and food-for-work or food-for-training programs have been lauded by humanitarian organizations for their effectiveness in mitigating food insecurity (Samia et al., 2021).

In 2021, various United Nations development agencies, international humanitarian networks, national and international NGOs, and donor agencies intensified efforts to enhance participation and support for ongoing humanitarian assistance needs (OCHA, 2021a). However, despite these initiatives, many individuals at the household level continue to face challenges in accessing adequate food, resulting in a significant prevalence of food-insecure households. While donor fatigue is frequently cited as a contributing factor to insufficient support, it is also significantly influenced by political considerations and strategic objectives. This cycle of underdevelopment further undermines community resilience and escalates the human and financial costs associated with recovery efforts (Nassar et al., 2023).

### **1.3 Research questions and hypotheses**

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the potential for developing an intervention model aimed at enhancing household food security through humanitarian interventions in the Gaza Strip. This study seeks to validate the proposed model using an evaluative approach. Additionally, it aims to summarize and extract lessons regarding both the quality of services provided and the

impacts of food security responses within the region, with particular emphasis on the strategies and implementation support offered by the organization and its partners.

To inform this inquiry, the study draws on recommendations from exploratory research, which includes a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding food security interventions and related studies. The research will systematically address the problem statement by formulating specific research questions and hypotheses, as detailed in Table 1-1. This structured approach will facilitate the collection of the necessary data to effectively address the key issues identified in the study.

**Table 1-1: Research questions and hypotheses**

| # | Research Question  | Hypotheses   |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | To what extent did food security interventions meet the immediate needs of households?                                       | H1: Humanitarian Interventions for food security are relevant interventions.   |
| 2 | To what extent did food security interventions achieve their objectives including the timely delivery of relief assistance?  | H2: Humanitarian Interventions for food security are effective in achieving their objectives.                              |
| 3 | To what extent did adequate access to resources have a significant effect on the efficiency of food security's intervention? | H3: Adequate access to resources has a significant effect on the efficiency of humanitarian intervention for food security |
| 4 | What intended and unintended impact has the food security interventions made on the household?                               | H4: Humanitarian Interventions for food security have a significant impact on household food security.                     |

#### **1.4 Significance of the research**

This research endeavours to develop a comprehensive household food security model for the Gaza Strip through humanitarian interventions, which are essential for enhancing economic empowerment and resilience among vulnerable populations. These interventions encompass a variety of assistance mechanisms currently employed in the region. The theoretical significance of this study lies in its focus on addressing a critical issue that is pivotal for achieving improved food security through such interventions. Practically, it aims to identify existing gaps in household food security and propose actionable solutions through humanitarian efforts. By emphasizing best practices, this research seeks to elevate the effectiveness and performance of these interventions. Moreover, as decision-making is central to effective management, this study aims to support policymakers in shaping future humanitarian interventions. Given the dire state of the Palestinian economy, which is heavily reliant on external funding, the insights gained from this research are particularly crucial for advancing progress towards the SDGs within the country.

Many humanitarian organizations maintain a Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) department that oversees project assessments and provides guidance on evaluation methodologies to their partners. Within these organizations, evaluation plays a significant role in fostering results-driven management and organizational advancement (Nassar,

2017). The evaluation process examines both the processes and outcomes of projects, elucidating the factors contributing to their success or failure while assessing their relevance and sustainability. Additionally, evaluations explore unintended consequences and the cost-effectiveness of implemented initiatives.

Consequently, the findings of this study will enhance humanitarian endeavours through rigorous evaluation, informing the planning and execution of Palestinian cooperation strategies, and fostering organizational growth. This research is intended for use by humanitarian organizations, donors, and both governmental and non-governmental entities within Palestine, guiding the development of future food security initiatives and informing the adoption of interventions in contexts of food insecurity. The evaluation process serves a dual purpose: ensuring accountability, particularly to donors and partners, while also facilitating learning within humanitarian organizations to enhance future program effectiveness.

### **1.5 Research assumptions**

This study is grounded in the analysis of food security interventions implemented and completed during the year 2022, with a specific focus on those conducted by humanitarian organizations. Notably, interventions carried out by government entities were not included in this investigation. The development of a theoretical food security intervention model is predicated on the following assumptions:

1. The political security situation is expected to remain stable.
2. Despite past criticisms, certain interventions have positively influenced household food security.
3. Given the significant similarities in socioeconomic and natural conditions across all governorates in the Gaza Strip, any observed effects could be applied broadly to these governorates.
4. Funds are efficiently managed to ensure timely support to households.
5. The survey questions will be posed uniformly to each interviewee.

### **1.6 Research structure**

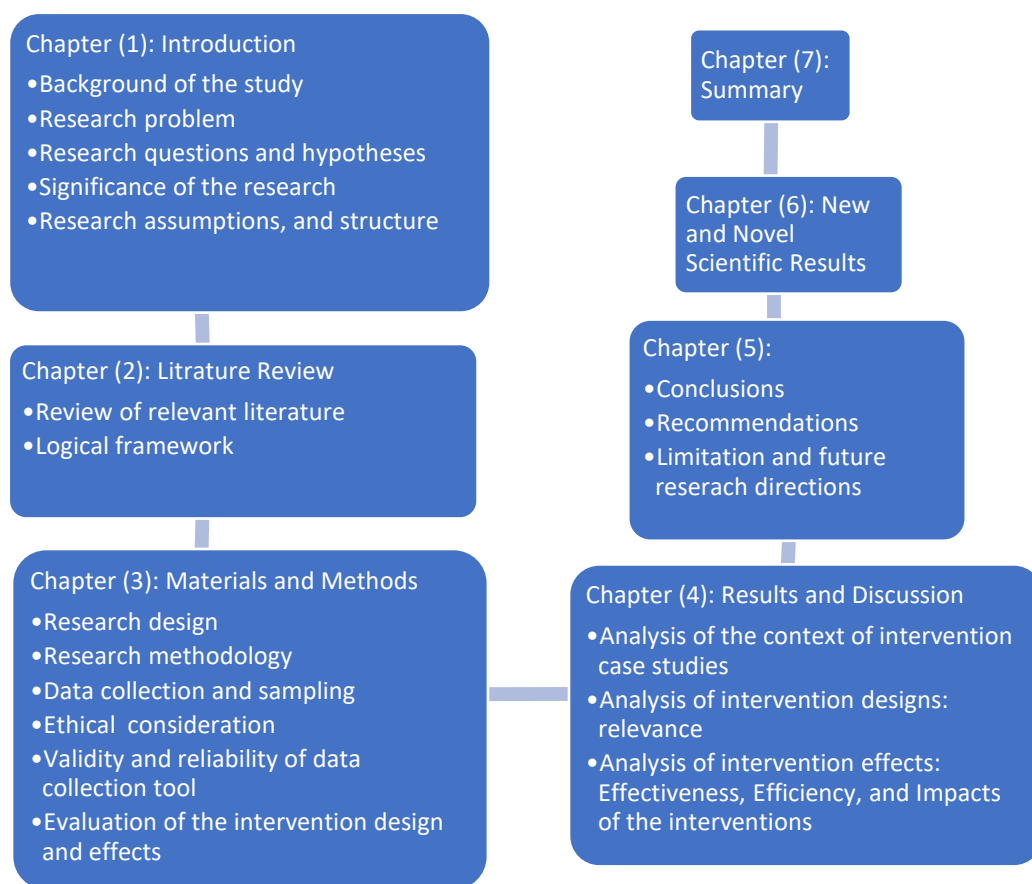
This study is organized into seven chapters, as illustrated in Figure 1-5, and includes references and annexes. Chapter One provides a comprehensive overview of the study, including the background context, identification of the research problem, and formulation of research questions and hypotheses. It also highlights the significance of the research, outlines the underlying assumptions, and describes the organizational structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two focuses on a literature review relevant to the logical framework of the study. It explores essential topics such as the evolution of food security, humanitarian responses to food insecurity, and various interventions designed to enhance food security. Additionally, this chapter introduces a theoretical model for food security interventions and discusses its validation process. Chapter Three details the research methodology, outlining the research design and process. It



describes the data collection methods, sampling procedures, and ethical considerations, as well as addressing the validity and reliability of the data collection tools. Furthermore, this chapter evaluates the design of the interventions and their effects.

Chapter Four presents the research findings, analyzing the context and relevance of the intervention case studies. It assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of these interventions and examines their impact on household food security. Chapter Five summarizes the study's conclusions, offers recommendations, and discusses the limitations of the research, as well as potential directions for future research. Chapters Six and Seven will respectively present new and novel scientific findings, followed by a comprehensive summary of the study's contributions to the field.



**Figure 1-5: Research Structure**

Household food insecurity is pervasive and persistent in the Gaza Strip. In response to the prolonged humanitarian crisis, affected households are striving to enhance their resilience, promote peace and stability, bolster the local economy, and improve their capacity to meet immediate basic food needs. Consequently, identifying effective solutions to this pressing issue has become essential. The research presented in this dissertation aims to develop a model of effective food security interventions tailored to these households, focusing specifically on humanitarian interventions.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip have significantly deteriorated, leading to heightened concerns that a reduction in assistance may render hunger the primary threat faced by the most vulnerable populations. In response to evolving global circumstances, strategies for addressing food security have undergone considerable adaptation. Donor organizations funding intervention programs are increasingly required to substantiate the necessity for context-specific approaches.

This chapter critically examines the evolution of the concept of food security, the contextual framework for household food security interventions, and the associated humanitarian actions. It also explores the dynamics of food security interventions and their role in promoting economic empowerment within humanitarian contexts. Subsequently, a logical model for humanitarian intervention is proposed and validated through an evaluation framework, providing a robust foundation for understanding the effectiveness of such interventions in the Gaza Strip.

### **2.1 Food security and the Evolution of the Concept**

The concept of food security emerged approximately 50 years ago, during the mid-1970s (Maxwell & Smith, 1992), and gained formal recognition and a widely accepted definition at the World Food Summit in 1996. According to this definition, food security exists when individuals at various levels—individual, household, national, regional, and global—have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs for a healthy life, consistently over time (Shaw, 2007). This understanding has evolved significantly from an earlier focus on ensuring the availability of a stable global food supply to accommodate consumption growth and counter fluctuations in production and pricing (Hansen et al., 2022). Conversely, food insecurity can result from multiple factors, including food scarcity, inadequate purchasing power, inefficient distribution systems, and suboptimal food utilization at the household level. It may manifest as long-term, seasonal, or temporary deprivation (Tripathy et al., 2007).

The World Summit delineated four fundamental dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization, and stability (FAO, 2009, Schleifer & Sun, 2020, Nicholson et al., 2021). The first dimension, availability, pertains to the quantity of food accessible, regardless of its source, emphasizing both an adequate supply and quality of food (Hansen et al., 2022). As the concept has matured, the focus has shifted from ensuring global and national food supplies to ensuring access for all individuals, thereby underscoring the interconnectedness of food security within the broader framework of human security (Clay & Stokke, 2000). Consequently, food insecurity is often characterized by uncertainty regarding the sourcing of the next meal (Wyngaard et al., 2017). The Food Security Cluster (FSC) indicates that food availability is influenced by various factors, including local production, existing stocks held by traders and government reserves, trade dynamics, and bulk transfers facilitated by government agencies and humanitarian organizations (Food security cluster, 2023).

The second dimension of food security, food access, addresses whether households and individuals possess the means to obtain appropriate food for a nutritious diet (Tandon & Vishwanath, 2020). This dimension encompasses not only purchasing power and affordability but also factors such as land rights and access to resources for food production (Schleifer & Sun, 2020). It emphasizes both the economic capacity of households to procure food from the market and their social entitlement to access food through dignified means, rather than resorting to desperate measures such as theft or scavenging (Nicholson et al., 2019). Humanitarian interventions designed to assist low-income families, temporary workers, and vulnerable households aim to protect their purchasing power while enhancing their nutritional status and overall health (Nassar, Hossain, Naárné, & Vasa, 2022, Jablonski et al., 2021). According to the FSC, food access can be achieved through various means, including personal food production, hunting or gathering wild foods, market purchases, barter exchanges, and assistance from government or aid agencies via relief or safety net programs (Food security cluster, 2023).

The third dimension, food utilization, is crucial for achieving nutritional security and encompasses the effective biological utilization of food. This includes factors such as food safety, quality, intra-household distribution, and overall health (Moramarco, 2018). It focuses on the quantity of food consumed and the efficiency with which the body converts food into energy, both of which significantly impact nutritional status and growth. Effective food utilization requires a diet rich in essential nutrients, access to safe drinking water and sanitation, availability of healthcare services, appropriate feeding practices, and disease management (Hansen et al., 2022). At the household level, food utilization involves how food is distributed, prepared, and consumed, serving as an indicator of a population's capacity to sustain adequate nutrition over time and optimize the intake of essential nutrients and energy (FAO et al., 2021). Ensuring sufficient energy and nutrient intake necessitates appropriate food handling, preparation methods, dietary choices, and equitable food distribution within households, all of which directly influence individual nutritional status (FSIN, 2021). The FSC indicates that food utilization is determined by several factors, including food storage, processing, and preparation methods, feeding practices—especially for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly—*intra-household* food sharing, and the health status of household members (Food security cluster, 2023).

The final dimension of food security, stability, refers to the continuous state of being food secure for populations, households, or individuals (FSIN, 2021). Achieving food security necessitates that individuals consistently have access to sufficient food and are not deprived of this access due to unforeseen disruptions, such as economic crises or climate events, or recurring issues like seasonal food insecurity. Stability, therefore, encompasses ensuring both the availability and accessibility of safe food sources at all times (García-Díez et al., 2021). The FSC defines food stability as the maintenance of consistent and reliable food supplies and access, ensuring that households do not face the risk of losing access to food due to sudden shocks or cyclical events (Food security cluster, 2023).

As the discourse surrounding food security has evolved, it has expanded from a primary focus on food availability to encompass food access and utilization, reflecting a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Over time, food security has become increasingly integrated with economic and social development considerations. Recent decades have witnessed a shift from a 'food first' approach to a more holistic 'livelihood' perspective, prioritizing households and individuals over global and national frameworks. Additionally, there is growing recognition of the subjective dimensions of market mechanisms, food security or insecurity, motivations, nutrition, and food safety. An appreciation for local dietary habits, food sovereignty, and the pivotal role of smallholder agriculture has also emerged in the contemporary understanding of food security (Sweileh, 2020).

The intervention has been described by Barrett et al. (2021) as any action undertaken by administrative agencies, including policies, programs, or projects. In the context of food security, an intervention encompasses a range of initiatives designed to achieve specific food security outcomes (Dodd et al., 2021). Identifying effective solutions to address diverse local humanitarian needs poses a significant challenge in the formulation of food security interventions, which often need to satisfy multiple requirements rather than a singular objective. The efficacy of various strategies in meeting these challenges may differ (Webb et al., 2017). It is increasingly recognized that merely providing humanitarian assistance is insufficient to address global crises; instead, fundamental changes are required as crises evolve (Fadda & Farelo, 2022).

Many humanitarian organizations are actively engaged in addressing food insecurity, with essential considerations in intervention design including recipient selection, the quantity and frequency of assistance, the duration of activities, the type and mode of assistance delivery, eligibility criteria, alignment with desired program outcomes, and cost-effectiveness. These topics have been extensively studied in the literature (Tandon & Vishwanath, 2020). Collaboration among humanitarian partners is critical to advancing projects aimed at enhancing community resilience to environmental shocks and hazards. For example, supporting local livelihoods can improve overall food security and positively impact nutrition and health outcomes (OCHA, 2021c).

Basic needs encompass the essential goods, services, and resources that households require consistently or seasonally to maintain their long-term livelihoods without resorting to detrimental coping strategies or compromising their health, dignity, or critical resources. Assistance to meet these basic needs can be delivered through various channels. Modality refers to the form of support provided, such as in-kind food assistance, cash and vouchers, food-for-work programs, cash-for-work initiatives, agricultural rehabilitation, and income-generating activities. Often, assistance involves a combination of these modalities, including direct payments to households and community-level support like healthcare and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure (Ghadbian, 2021).

While there is a significant demand for food assistance, particularly evident in large-scale distribution efforts (Muhialdin et al., 2021), the receipt of food assistance does not always correlate with improved household economics or food security. Food security interventions are vital for addressing both short-term insecurity and long-term developmental needs, especially given that approximately one billion people worldwide suffer from chronic hunger (Doocy et al., 2013). These interventions manifest in various forms, and their strategic implementation must account for international economic and security considerations. The following section will explore interventions within the food security sector in greater detail.

Food security interventions consist of diverse strategies aimed at supporting vulnerable populations who face challenges in accessing sufficient food. These approaches range from immediate assistance, such as In-Kind Food Aid, where food is provided directly to cover urgent nutritional needs, to more flexible options like Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), enabling recipients to purchase food and essentials according to their priorities. Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) offers adaptable cash support that beneficiaries can allocate to various needs, including food. Additionally, sustainable initiatives like Food for Work (FFW) and Cash for Work (CFW) connect food or cash assistance to community-based projects, generating employment and improving local infrastructure. Other interventions include Agricultural Rehabilitation and Livestock Support programs, aimed at restoring agricultural productivity, and Income Generating Activities (IGAs), which empower individuals to establish stable sources of income, enhancing household food security and resilience. Collectively, these modalities provide a comprehensive framework for addressing food insecurity by not only meeting immediate needs but also fostering sustainable self-reliance.

In the 1960s, in-kind food assistance emerged as a significant tool in aid efforts, accounting for over 20% of all development aid. This approach involves directly supplying food items to recipients and has historically played a crucial role in long-term development initiatives, serving as a primary intervention to support communities (Freudenreich et al., 2020). A substantial portion of international humanitarian assistance comes in the form of food commodities, traditionally sourced from donor countries but increasingly procured locally within affected areas or from neighbouring countries (Doocy et al., 2017). Political factors heavily influence decision-making regarding whether to purchase food locally, regionally, or to import food aid, particularly within donor nation markets (Webb et al., 2017). Among various forms of humanitarian assistance, in-kind food aid has received the most attention and research, generally enhancing food availability and temporarily mitigating significant rises in food prices (Maystadt et al., 2019).

Since the late 2000s, the World Food Programme (WFP) has undergone a strategic shift, moving from solely providing in-kind food aid toward offering a broader array of food assistance. This shift arose from the recognition that merely addressing hunger with food aid has limitations. Instead, it requires a more comprehensive understanding of individuals' long-term nutritional needs and the diverse strategies necessary to fulfill them. Hunger is now viewed as intertwined with various social and economic factors, emphasizing the importance of not addressing it in

isolation. The WFP's current focus is on directing resources toward the most vulnerable individuals in society, which includes not only immediate emergency interventions but also the implementation of specialized, multi-year assistance programs aimed at improving a country's overall nutritional indicators. The WFP strives to balance the urgent need to alleviate hunger with the broader objective of eradicating hunger altogether. Consequently, in-kind food assistance becomes part of a framework that promotes social well-being, aligning with the SDGs, particularly the second goal of ending hunger (Debela et al., 2021).

In-kind food assistance refers to providing specific amounts of food, either sent to or purchased within a country using funds from a donor agency or international NGO. It's crucial to evaluate whether this assistance is sourced locally, regionally, or internationally, as importing food may undermine long-term agricultural development and hinder the community's transition from relief to development. Such assistance is often deployed during severe national or economic crises that threaten lives, livelihoods, and stability. While it can be lifesaving, there is ongoing debate regarding how to create more effective food assistance strategies that balance economic, humanitarian, and developmental goals (Maystadt et al., 2019).

During crises caused by conflicts or natural disasters, food assistance plays a vital role in saving lives and alleviating nutritional stress. However, numerous instances exist where food assistance has fallen short during emergencies. Shortcomings include rigid organizational structures, a limited selection of food items that may not meet social and nutritional standards due to restrictions, and delays in the delivery of assistance, which can hinder agricultural recovery post-crisis. In the Gaza Strip, where food constitutes a significant portion of household spending, in-kind assistance has been the primary form of social support, providing regular provisions of essential items to refugees. This consistent assistance has had a stabilizing effect in an environment constrained by movement restrictions, although it now faces challenges from global price fluctuations (OCHA, 2021c).

Cash-based distributions encompass both electronic vouchers and direct cash assistance, providing flexible support for food-insecure households. A voucher, whether paper or electronic, can be exchanged for a specific amount of money, goods, or services, such as a monetary value (e.g., \$15), specific commodities (e.g., 5 kg of corn), or services (e.g., maize milling). The extent of restrictions on these vouchers varies based on program design, and they can typically be redeemed at selected vendors or events organized by the implementing agency (Doocy et al., 2017). CVA aims to address food security by enhancing access to food and is recognized for promoting dignity, flexibility, and choice among users, while also being cost-effective and efficient for humanitarian and development organizations. This method has been recommended since the early 1900s for assisting vulnerable populations, particularly in post-war or conflict situations, gaining prominence in the humanitarian sector over the past decade. According to the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), 77% of Palestinians prefer cash assistance, although cash distribution in the Gaza Strip faces specific risks and challenges due to sanctions from UN, donor countries, and banks (OCHA, 2021c).

CVA is a market-based solution applied in various contexts. It helps beneficiaries maintain dignity by allowing them to prioritize their needs and empowers them by giving control over their responses to disasters and conflicts. Cash-based assistance has proven to be more acceptable, efficient, and effective for recipients compared to in-kind food assistance. It addresses a wide range of needs in humanitarian contexts, either independently or alongside in-kind distribution (Doocy et al., 2017). Cash transfers offer beneficiaries greater flexibility and higher satisfaction levels compared to food or in-kind transfers. Additionally, they can enhance agricultural productivity and stimulate non-agricultural industries by increasing food demand. Notably, cash distribution tends to be less costly than distributing food or commodities, with administrative costs for in-kind transfers estimated to be 20-25% higher than for cash payments (Margolies & Hoddinott, 2012).

Over the past decade, the WFP has emerged as the largest provider of humanitarian cash transfers. The number of countries utilizing CVA has increased from 10 in 2009 to 69 by 2021, with the number of recipients growing from 1 million in 2009 to an estimated 38 million by 2021 (WFP, 2022a). WFP manages CVA through an online platform that allows participants to track their redemption, helping to monitor for fraud and ensure compliance with operational principles, laws, and regulations (WFP, 2022b). Cash assistance is often justified due to the significant welfare improvements it provides, allowing beneficiaries to spend the money as they see fit (Awojobi, 2021).

Cash interventions can be either conditional or unconditional. Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programs provide cash to poor families contingent upon meeting specific requirements, helping food-insecure households protect their assets crucial for income generation and community resilience (OCHA, 2021c). In contrast, Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) programs provide cash to families living below the national poverty line without any conditions (Sibson et al., 2018).

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) involves regular or one-time cash transfers to meet a family's diverse needs for food, shelter, education, health, water, sanitation, and livelihood. This flexible financial assistance allows recipients to address their most urgent needs, whether for food, shelter, medical care, or education. MPCA promotes dignity and empowerment, boosts local economies by allowing beneficiaries to spend within their communities, and is efficient to administer, reducing overhead costs associated with in-kind assistance. Consequently, MPCA has become a preferred method in humanitarian response and social protection programs, effectively addressing both short-term emergencies and long-term developmental needs (Battistin, 2016).

While cash transfers are advantageous in scenarios of falling prices, in-kind transfers can protect recipients from price increases. In poorly connected food markets, cash transfers might negatively impact non-beneficiaries by causing food prices to rise due to the influx of cash (Awojobi, 2021). A study by Mary & Mishra (2020) highlights the relative costs of in-kind versus cash donations and analyzes the costs associated with tying food assistance. The study concluded that cash assistance is generally more beneficial than in-kind food assistance, not only for project support

but also for food distribution. Some individuals prefer vouchers over cash, believing they offer better protection against inflation (Boulinaud & Ossandon, 2023).

Food-for-Work (FFW) programs provide beneficiaries with food in exchange for their labor and have long been a key mechanism for distributing food assistance by humanitarian organizations (Essex, 2009). These programs aim to protect households from the loss of purchasing power caused by climate-induced famine, seasonal unemployment, or other disruptions by offering job opportunities to affected individuals (Gedamu, 2006). FFW programs primarily focus on three goals: feeding hungry people, constructing essential public works, and ensuring quick project implementation (Gebremedhin & Swinton, 2001).

In many developing countries, large-scale public works initiatives increasingly aim to reduce poverty and vulnerability among the poor while also creating jobs and investing in local infrastructure (Kahsay et al., 2022). FFW programs thus serve both immediate relief and long-term development purposes. Historical data from the early 1990s suggests that villages with better economic conditions and larger populations were favored for FFW projects. For instance, investing in infrastructure in sparsely populated areas may not yield the most cost-effective poverty-reduction outcomes. By the mid-1990s, FFW projects began to target more rural areas, though evaluations of these efforts remain incomplete (Gedamu, 2006). Conservation measures, primarily physical ones, were also promoted through FFW campaigns, encouraging farmers to build conservation structures on both common and private lands (Gonde & Kitila, 2022).

FFW programs are praised for their capacity to effectively target vulnerable communities, providing a reliable safety net that minimizes risks from adverse conditions while simultaneously investing in productivity enhancements and public goods that contribute to overall income growth. However, the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of FFW is mixed. Critics point out shortcomings in the programs, while proponents highlight successful implementations. Therefore, the development community must critically assess both supportive and critical claims regarding FFW, striving for a comprehensive understanding of when, how, and why these programs can reduce vulnerability (C. B. Barrett et al., 2002).

Contemporary FFW initiatives, as noted by USAID (2015), have been instrumental in building community infrastructure such as drainage canals, roads, and irrigation systems. Participants typically engage in work rotations lasting around 22 days, with teams composed of community group members overseeing FFW activities. Others in the vicinity who are physically able and willing to work can also join. However, some FFW initiatives have faced obstacles due to ethnic land conflicts prevalent in several implementation areas. Many ongoing development projects using FFW aim to enhance farmers' market access and expand production areas for crops like cassava, rice, and maize through improvements to drainage and irrigation systems. Practitioners emphasize the continuous need for coordinated community efforts to enhance shared resources for the benefit of specific communities (Debela et al., 2021).



FFW is most applicable in contexts characterized by market failures or food shortages, often seen during crisis recovery scenarios. Providing food as part of wages can be crucial for maintaining household consumption, but effective targeting of recipients is essential. Furthermore, it is important to transition promptly to cash-based assistance or other non-labor programs in areas requiring ongoing poverty relief. Beyond food support and asset-building, FFW can help rural households overcome financial challenges. The recognition of market flaws affecting rural economies in developing countries is widespread, with limited access to insurance and credit hindering agricultural investments. FFW opportunities can alleviate liquidity constraints for participants, enabling them to consume and produce more effectively (Bezu & Holden, 2008).

Cash for Work (CFW) is a cash transfer program designed to provide individuals affected by crises or disasters with compensation for their labor, thereby facilitating recovery and fostering community development. Payments in CFW initiatives typically align with the prevailing regional minimum wage, offering short-term employment opportunities in public works projects, with wages generally matching the national daily wage rate (Lassa et al., 2022). Participants receive cash payments in exchange for completing designated tasks, which can be quantified based on the time spent (e.g., the number of days worked at a daily rate) or by productivity (e.g., the quantity of items produced). CFW programs are primarily implemented in community or public works schemes but can also extend to home-based and other types of labor (CaLP, 2019). NGO managers overseeing CFW initiatives often prioritize impoverished communities, recognizing their role in enhancing household incomes (Nugroho et al., 2022).

The popularity of CFW programs has surged recently, serving dual purposes as a social transfer initiative and a tool for passive labor market policy. They play a crucial role in alleviating multidimensional poverty through various means. Data indicate several positive outcomes in developing nations: well-implemented CFW programs can yield multiple benefits, such as providing wage employment (income, work, and social protection) for vulnerable individuals; creating essential infrastructure, including roads, irrigation systems, and sanitation facilities; and, in some cases, fostering skills development among participants through thoughtful program design (Loewe et al., 2020). Additionally, these programs offer households greater flexibility in allocating funds between food and non-food expenses, allowing them to spend according to their preferences and needs while facilitating investment in human capital, such as education and health (Asefa, 1991).

However, potential drawbacks must also be recognized. CFW interventions may increase food demand, leading to higher prices and greater availability of food for those receiving compensation. Consequently, individuals excluded from the program may experience worsened well-being. Vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and infirm, may be particularly affected, as individuals previously above the poverty threshold might find themselves pushed below it due to price increases (BASU, 1996). Therefore, when integrated with other forms of humanitarian assistance, the cash-for-work model can be particularly effective in providing additional food and livelihood options to targeted households. Evidence suggests that such interventions enhance the food

security status of beneficiary households, as reflected in indicators like daily meal consumption and the Food Consumption Score (Salah & Al-thawr, 2018).

Rehabilitation often acts as a bridge between relief and sustainable development, but the transition from emergency relief to food security, and ultimately to development, presents both conceptual and practical challenges. This underlines the need for a clear understanding of the objectives of rehabilitation efforts. Relief agencies are gradually shifting from food assistance to seed assistance, recognizing it as a critical step towards more sustainable food security programs (Marcella et al., 2022). "Rehabilitation" itself encompasses a wide range of interventions and methods, and the boundaries between activities that enable rehabilitation and those occurring during the recovery phase can sometimes blur (Christoplos et al., 2004).

Seed assistance is generally seen as a more cost-effective option than food assistance, as it requires fewer inputs and reduces dependency, fostering a foundation for sustainability and long-term rehabilitation. This shift towards providing seeds and tools has become increasingly common, to the point where it's been described as a "treadmill" approach over the last decade. Agricultural rehabilitation efforts, often focusing on input supply, need to be contextualized within historical frameworks and future goals, particularly regarding the role of the state in funding input supply programs. Both implementing agencies and funders have expressed concerns about the effectiveness of relief-based seed inputs and the sustainability of continual seed distribution in disaster-prone regions. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, emergency food and material assistance are often provided, but sustaining food assistance long-term is costly. Once stability returns, the assistance shifts toward seeds and tools, aiming to promote longer-term food security in rural communities (Longley et al., 2003).

In conflict situations, humanitarian organizations commonly provide seeds and tools, which have both symbolic and practical significance. However, distributional inequalities can sometimes exacerbate local tensions. More equitable and transparent distribution sends a strong message of social inclusion and shared humanity. Seed distribution is viewed as a step towards reinforcing human rights and contributing to agricultural rehabilitation (Bahru & Zeller, 2022). Agricultural interventions may also prioritize institutional support, bolstering markets or institutions that help farmers sell produce and acquire seeds while managing market prices. This often requires collaboration between public and private sectors. In emergencies, efforts may include repairing infrastructure and supporting market mechanisms, like offering loans to small-scale sellers, as well as training and extension services, particularly in prolonged crises. Initiatives such as farming near refugee camps can support food production and encourage self-sufficiency, resembling non-emergency gardening programs (Ahn et al., 2020).

In a global context marked by economic, political, and environmental challenges, agriculture plays a critical role in combating malnutrition, reducing hunger, and alleviating poverty. In Gaza, the Israeli occupation's restrictions on access to natural resources, inputs, and markets pose significant constraints on agricultural development (FAO, 2018). Traditionally, agricultural interventions

have focused on providing inputs like seeds and tools, which range from hoes and machetes to fishing nets, with seed distribution being a primary approach.

Livestock interventions also play a crucial role, aiming to support both agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods. This can involve efforts to improve crop storage, provide veterinary services, and support vulnerable livestock herds as valid emergency responses in certain humanitarian contexts. For example, livestock interventions may include herd management, animal nutrition programs, and animal health efforts (Asante et al., 2021). The agri-food sector significantly contributes to the Palestinian economy, employing around 11% of the population, with women representing 30% of this workforce. Agriculture is a vital income source for the poor and women, forming a critical component of Palestinian society (FAO, 2018).

To address disruptions in agricultural output, livelihood support options can help preserve or enhance self-sufficiency in crisis-affected regions. This support includes training, distributing agricultural inputs, and providing veterinary care, assisting households in restoring and improving their livelihoods, especially through livestock production. Training sessions on best practices, milk quality management, and fodder production are among the support mechanisms. Additionally, capacity-building efforts target households involved in the safe milk trade, with fodder distribution extended to peri-urban households during dry periods, and animal health services ensuring livestock well-being (Hossain et al., 2022).

Income-generating activities (IGAs) encompass diverse initiatives, including training programs, women's cooperatives, microfinance services, credit and savings groups, job creation schemes, awareness campaigns, resource mobilization, and market linkages. These activities aim to strengthen families' financial stability and improve their livelihoods (Abebe & Kasa, 2020). Implementing IGAs has shown benefits across various dimensions of household socioeconomic stability, such as food security, asset building, sanitation, and nutritional outcomes for mothers and children in extremely impoverished households. IGAs are often tailored collaboratively between project design partners, NGOs, and participating households, frequently involving the transfer of assets and technology (training), facilitating market connections, supporting small business development (through skills training and seed capital), providing access to government-owned land, and broadening access to social and legal entitlements (Goto et al., 2019).

Rural areas, often perceived as lacking job opportunities, reveal a different picture upon closer examination. Despite previous misconceptions, informal rural enterprises — such as crop cultivation for sale, food preparation, equipment manufacturing, trading, retailing, and transport services — have been ample. Collectively, these activities are considered IGAs and have generally yielded more success than traditional agricultural interventions, despite certain ongoing challenges. Studies on IGAs often emphasize the need for cash over skill-based training, with interventions frequently focusing on loans or grants rather than vocational training. Particularly for young people, skill development has taken precedence over formal education (Hajdu et al., 2011).

Preferences for specific IGAs show a trend toward sustainability and economic resilience, with activities like event management and farming among the most favoured (Lusambili et al., 2021). In conflict-affected regions, unemployment and poverty contribute significantly to mental health challenges and diminished civilian well-being. Consequently, restoring livelihoods has a direct positive impact on happiness and overall welfare. In the Gaza Strip, poverty alleviation efforts have predominantly included food assistance, monetary support, and short-term employment programs. However, these measures have not effectively addressed the deep-seated issues of chronic poverty and long-term unemployment. Gaza's population expresses a need for IGAs that provide sustainable income, decreasing reliance on external aid. Broadly, income-generating initiatives have proven effective in alleviating poverty, encouraging self-employment, reducing social vulnerability, enhancing food security, improving living conditions, expanding access to transportation, healthcare, leisure, human development, and fostering social engagement (Hammad & Tribe, 2020).

## **2.2 Humanitarian action in responding to food insecurity**

The intricate relationship between food security, humanitarian intervention, and the role of the international community in conflict-affected regions has garnered increased scholarly attention; however, significant conceptual gaps remain. Scholars such as Brück & D'Errico (2019) argue that food security extends beyond the simplistic metric of caloric intake, serving as a broader indicator of socio-political stability, particularly in regions experiencing protracted conflicts. Similarly, DuBois et al. (2021) suggest that humanitarian intervention should be viewed as a complex, multifaceted approach aimed at addressing immediate needs while simultaneously fostering resilience and sustainable outcomes over the long term.

Despite these insights, as noted by Frennesson et al. (2022), the ambiguity surrounding the definitions of these concepts often results in policy inconsistencies and challenges in program implementation. In the context of Gaza, these complexities are exacerbated by ongoing political unrest, limited access to resources, and a high dependency on international assistance, which disrupt traditional interpretations of food security and sovereignty. According to the recent evaluation of the World Food Programme (WFP) Country Strategic Plan for Palestine (2018-2022), food insecurity in Gaza has reached critical levels, further compounded by severe restrictions on trade and mobility WFP (2021a). This situation underscores the essential role of the international community, which must not only provide immediate aid but also address the systemic issues that perpetuate dependency and undermine local agency.

However, the terms "food security," "humanitarian intervention," and "international community involvement" are frequently used interchangeably or imprecisely, resulting in a body of research that often fails to adequately capture their operational significance in complex contexts such as Gaza. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a more nuanced, context-sensitive framework to clarify how these concepts intersect and shape household food security within Gaza's unique socio-political environment.

The ongoing food insecurity crisis is resulting in loss of life, destruction of livelihoods, and a degradation of human dignity, with far-reaching impacts on populations in conflict-affected regions. Humanitarian actors are increasingly challenged to address this deteriorating situation (Fadda & Farelo, 2022). Humanitarian action encompasses initiatives aimed at saving lives, alleviating suffering, and upholding human dignity during and after crises, whether they are caused by human actions or natural disasters. This includes proactive measures to prevent and prepare for such events. These efforts should be guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, ensuring that harm is avoided (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016).

Humanitarian operations face significant impediments due to conflict, insecurity, attacks on infrastructure, and violence directed at aid workers. Furthermore, access to humanitarian assistance is often restricted by bureaucratic hurdles, counter-terrorism measures, and sanctions (OCHA, 2022). Individuals in conflict zones not only confront direct threats to their lives but also jeopardize their means of survival. Armed conflicts disrupt essential services by limiting movement and access to markets, agricultural lands, and employment opportunities. This disruption frequently results in the cessation of services, destruction of infrastructure, and turmoil within banking systems. Ben Hassen et al. (2022) highlight that countries affected by conflict encounter severe challenges related to economic stability and food security. These regions often experience significant disruptions in agricultural production, trade, and market access, leading to soaring food prices and a scarcity of essential goods. Consequently, vulnerable populations in these areas face heightened rates of food insecurity and malnutrition. Moreover, armed conflicts obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance and deliberately prevent humanitarian workers from reaching those in need (Nassar, Hossain, et al., 2022). A deeper understanding of the political economy in post-state Somalia could have illuminated potential negative outcomes related to food security. Nevertheless, this awareness should not diminish the importance of aligning food security interventions with conflict management or resolution objectives. Ignoring this aspect risks inadvertently empowering combatants, who may exploit relief efforts for their own military or political agendas (Ssendagire et al., 2023).

Despite substantial efforts from donors in 2022, funding for humanitarian operations in the region has failed to keep pace with the rapidly growing needs. The humanitarian system is under significant strain, highlighting an urgent requirement for investment in resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and programming that integrates the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus to effectively address increasing demands driven by climate change, economic decline, and political instability (OCHA, 2022). The primary objective of the humanitarian sector is to save lives and alleviate suffering during crises, independent of corporate or political agendas. Additionally, it adheres to the principle of "do no harm" (Rességuier, 2018). Addressing global hunger is viewed as a profound moral imperative, prompting the international community to prioritize reducing the percentage of individuals experiencing hunger. Strategies aimed at combating hunger and malnutrition are recognized as some of the most effective means to enhance global well-being, particularly in developing countries (Nisbet et al., 2022).

In response to the escalating global hunger crisis, humanitarian actors have initiated measures to address food insecurity, protect lives and livelihoods, and diminish reliance on detrimental coping strategies. Individuals facing severe food insecurity have received timely food and cash assistance, while families have been provided with emergency agricultural and livelihood support to enable them to grow their own food. This approach has not only improved nutrition but also enhanced resilience (OCHA, 2022).

Humanitarian assistance has proven essential for marginalized individuals and communities to bolster their resilience and livelihoods while diversifying local food resources for improved nutrition. Frequently, humanitarian actions serve as preventive measures aimed at mitigating the impact of emergency disasters (Lima, 2021). In Palestine, the strategy for food security has heavily relied on humanitarian assistance donations, integrating national food security initiatives for family farmers with humanitarian needs. In the Gaza Strip, the humanitarian situation is marked by long-standing restrictions on access to natural resources, as well as constraints on the movement of goods and people, all of which severely limit economic activity. Frequent conflicts and restricted market access for both inputs and exports have exacerbated vulnerabilities, resulting in increased poverty, unemployment, and food insecurity. This observation aligns with findings by Mabli et al. (2023), which indicate that job loss and reduced earnings are associated with an elevated risk of food insecurity among participants in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training programs. Providing additional support to those experiencing such financial setbacks could mitigate their risk of food insecurity. Palestine remains ensnared in a cycle of profound challenges, primarily driven by the ongoing Israeli occupation, which shows little sign of resolution (FAO, 2020).

The occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) have long been significant recipients of foreign assistance, consistently ranking among the top 20 recipients of official development assistance (ODA). Despite a recent decline in such assistance, the oPt remains one of the world's largest per-capita recipients of international aid, with the Palestinian Authority increasingly dependent on donor funds to maintain basic operations. International assistance constitutes a vital element of official development assistance, accounting for 20–40% of total contributions (WFP, 2022b). Within the Gaza Strip, humanitarian responses classify the population into "refugee" and "non-refugee" categories. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is tasked with addressing the needs of Palestinian refugees who lost their homes and livelihoods following Israel's declaration of Palestine as an autonomous nation under British colonial rule. In contrast, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the Palestinian Authority provide support to the non-refugee population, which includes those who remained in their original residences after the 1948 conflict (UN, 2020, WFP, 2021a).

Established by the General Assembly in 1949, UNRWA aims to assist and protect 5.7 million registered Palestine refugees (UNRWA, 2021). Its mission is to facilitate the full human development potential of Palestine refugees by providing essential services in education, health, and sanitation (OCHA, 2021c). Primarily funded through voluntary contributions, UNRWA's

emergency food assistance program serves as a critical lifeline for Palestine refugees, helping to meet their basic food security needs. This program includes the quarterly distribution of essential food commodities, referred to as the common food basket. UNRWA remains a crucial support system for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, as access to essential services—such as health care and education—helps prevent individuals from feeling entirely abandoned and desperate (UNRWA, 2021).

In 1954, the United States enacted the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, establishing the legal framework for its hunger relief operations. Subsequently, in 1963, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations (UN) launched the World Food Programme (WFP) as a short-term initiative to explore the potential of utilizing multilateral food aid in impoverished economies. This initiative aimed to support social and economic development, improve nutritional intake, and address immediate needs (Caiafa & Wrabel, 2018). Initially, WFP was created to provide food assistance primarily through its Regular Programme, which focused on development projects, along with a limited amount of emergency aid (WFP, 2020). Since 1991, WFP has been active in the Gaza Strip, concentrating on addressing food needs and facilitating early recovery among the most vulnerable non-refugee communities. As the primary global channel for food assistance, WFP offers support in various forms, prioritizing the fulfillment of basic community needs and ensuring food security. Supported by the Food Aid Convention, numerous donors have committed to providing food aid for both WFP's humanitarian and regular development efforts. In response to increased and varied relief demands alongside a reduction in development resources, WFP has initiated a reorientation effort. Some country programs, particularly in middle-income nations with lower levels of food insecurity, have been phased down (WFP, 2021a).

Smith (2011) and White (2011) identified several factors that contribute to the World Food Programme's (WFP) popularity among donors and its global significance in combating food insecurity, which is exacerbated by recurring environmental, economic, and humanitarian crises. The organization's commitment to adhering to legal and operational domestic restrictions, combined with its positive reputation, has encouraged regions to adopt WFP's methods for global cooperation. The increased focus on WFP is attributable not only to its strong reputation but also to the rising concern regarding food security, particularly driven by humanitarian crises intensified by severe weather events that adversely affect agricultural production (White, 2011).

The strategic plan for the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) aims to bolster funding to enable WFP to sustain its humanitarian assistance efforts for vulnerable communities in the Gaza Strip through various intervention modalities (WFP, 2018). WFP's initiatives extend beyond merely addressing immediate food needs; they also promote community resilience against recurring shocks, contribute to peace and stability, and stimulate the local economy. Additionally, WFP collaborates with national agencies to enhance the capacity of existing social safety nets, thereby supporting the poor and vulnerable populations (WFP, 2021b).

In parallel, the FAO partners with various stakeholders within the Food Security Sector (FSS) to restore and maintain resilience among vulnerable households. FAO's efforts focus on safeguarding livelihoods, ensuring food security, and enhancing economic productivity. Furthermore, the FAO provides assistance to households facing limited food access and economic opportunities, helping them to meet their essential food requirements (FAO, 2020).

### **2.3 Humanitarian action and economic empowerment**

Economic empowerment and poverty alleviation are closely intertwined, with economic empowerment acting as a catalyst for poverty reduction by providing individuals, communities, and nations with the resources to improve their financial status (Nassar et al., 2023). This approach involves equipping marginalized populations with essential resources and knowledge to interact with, influence, and manage systems that impact their lives, ensuring accountability for their well-being (Sarkar et al., 2021). Targeting agricultural growth, especially by increasing incomes for small farmers and landless workers, has proven effective in poverty reduction. Agricultural development not only enhances farm incomes and food availability but also mitigates malnutrition, emphasizing the importance of sustainable regional changes for economic empowerment and food security (Brück, d'Errico, & Pietrelli, 2019). To achieve global development goals, strengthening agriculture with a focus on poverty reduction and food security is essential. Adequate food supplies and addressing underlying causes of hunger and poverty, such as chronic food insecurity driven by poverty and unemployment, are critical for sustainable progress.

Global challenges related to food security, food insecurity, and poverty are complex and evolving, with the poorest populations being most vulnerable to climate change, poverty, violence, and other disasters (Guha-Khasnobis et al., 2007). Increased trade openness can improve food availability, thus supporting food security, but research often places poverty alleviation above sustainable food security as a policy priority (Wichern et al., 2018). Conflict-affected countries like Yemen and Syria illustrate how prolonged violence disrupts food supply, healthcare, and essential services, leading to acute food insecurity and a humanitarian crisis affecting millions (Bultrini, 2019).

Humanitarian responses aim to ensure safe, dignified, and meaningful access to resources, supported by improved monitoring, data collection, and analysis. Integrating an ethical, needs-based approach within feedback processes is critical, achieved by strengthening shared feedback mechanisms, incorporating effective referral processes, and ensuring regular reviews. This enables affected communities to access information on humanitarian assistance and provide feedback on their needs, preferences, and the conduct of organizations (OCHA, 2021c).

Humanitarian assistance, inherently short-term, seeks to relieve suffering, save lives, and protect dignity in disaster contexts. However, the unpredictable nature of food assistance can severely impact developing countries, as fluctuating assistance levels are often influenced by external factors like weather-related production changes (Edward et al., 2006). For example, consistent annual humanitarian aid for Gaza reflects a commitment to the humanitarian principles of humanity, fairness, impartiality, and autonomy (Maystadt et al., 2019).



Monitoring and evaluation data from 2021 to 2023 in Gaza indicate progress in food security, with beneficiaries showing improved Food Consumption Scores (FCS), reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) scores, and better Household Hunger Scale (HHS) ratings. Yet, despite positive trends, seasonal variations and the gravity of food insecurity sometimes counter these gains, as seen in the varying outcomes in Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) reports (Romano et al., 2019). This variability underscores the ongoing need for adaptive strategies in humanitarian and development responses to effectively address and support resilience in volatile contexts.

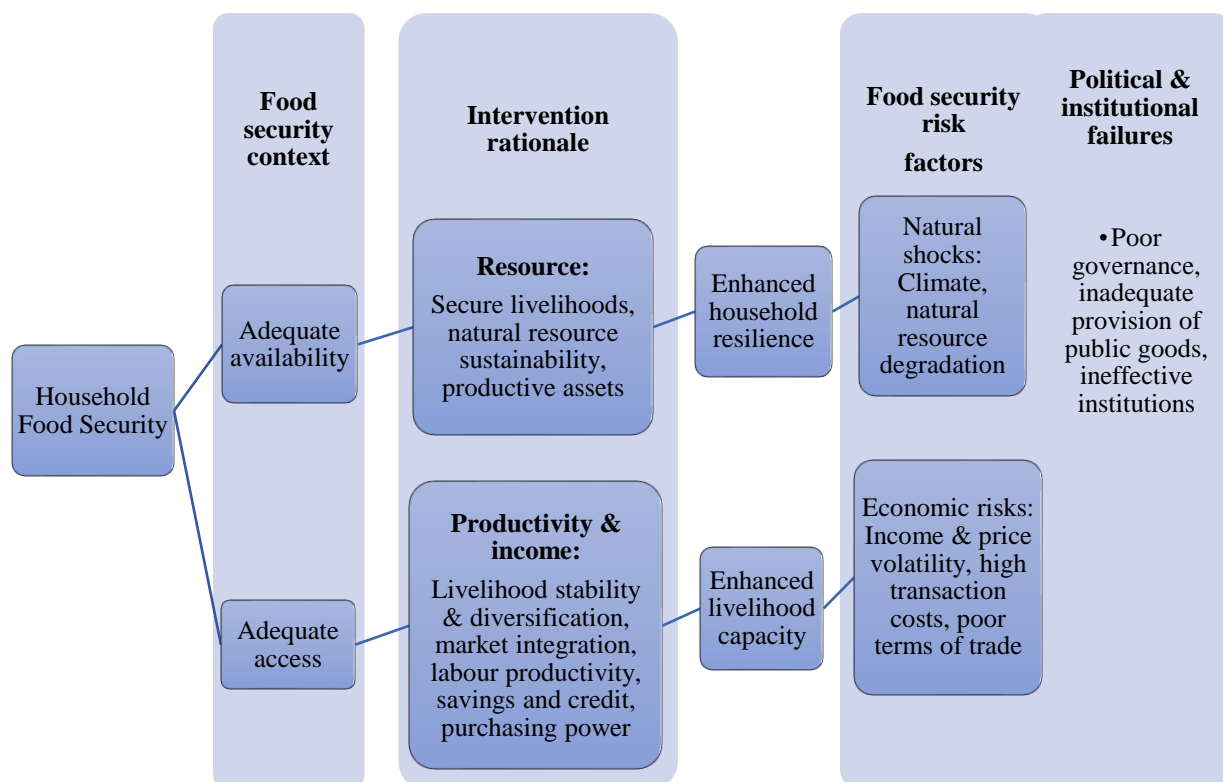
## **2.4 Logical framework for intervention and Evaluation**

A logical framework (logframe) is a valuable tool for structuring and understanding the components of a research project, particularly in the context of humanitarian interventions aimed at addressing food insecurity. This framework provides a clear outline that connects activities to specific outputs, ensuring that each element is systematically linked to the overall goals of the intervention.

Given the urgency of humanitarian assistance, particularly for those facing immediate food insecurity, the focus of this research will be on enhancing food availability and access. However, it will intentionally exclude aspects related to food utilization and stability, which are critical yet outside the scope of this specific intervention.

In this context, humanitarian intervention is defined as the deployment of force across national borders by an international governmental organization, a coalition of states, or a single state, with the objective of preventing or halting widespread violations of fundamental human rights. This definition emphasizes that such interventions occur without the full consent of the state in which they take place, distinguishing them from other forms of international engagement. The proposed knowledge synthesis strategy integrates quantitative data with qualitative analysis, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand (Meditati et al., 2018). Figure 2-1 illustrates the logical framework for understanding household food security within the humanitarian intervention context. This framework encompasses the rationale for intervention, identifies risk factors, and acknowledges the impact of political and institutional failures.

The underlying concept suggests a hierarchical relationship: sufficient food availability and access are prerequisites for achieving food security. This highlights the importance of addressing both the immediate needs of affected populations and the broader systemic issues that contribute to food insecurity. By clarifying these connections, the framework can guide the design and implementation of effective humanitarian interventions, ensuring that efforts are targeted and impactful in alleviating food insecurity.



**Figure 2-1: Framework for addressing household food security**

Source: adapted from (Béné et al., 2015)

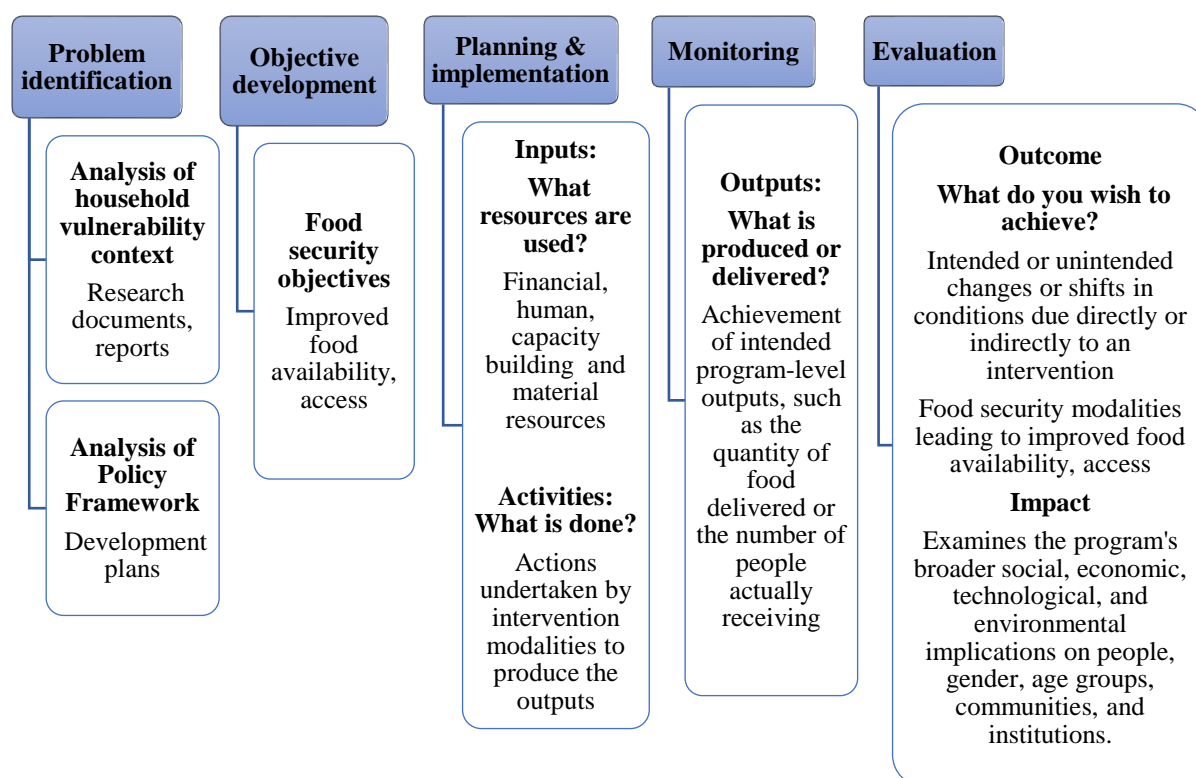
### 2.4.1 The intervention model

A policy proposal aimed at transforming the status quo must be anchored in a robust theory of intervention. Upon identifying a specific problem and the desired outcome, alongside recognizing the actors whose behaviours can influence this outcome, policymakers must consider strategies to engage stakeholders in effecting behavioural change. This strategic approach is referred to as the theory of intervention, which encompasses several critical elements: the agent (the entity responsible for the intervention), the target (the individual or group whose actions need modification), the mechanism (the methods employed for the intervention), and the time and place (the timing and location of the intervention) (Eley, 1972). The theory of intervention elucidates how specific actions can drive behaviors that result in intended outcomes (Weiss, 2000). The proposed model is firmly rooted in this theoretical framework, outlining the hypothesized objectives and processes necessary for achieving food security, as contextualized in the food security framework presented in Figure 2-1.

The intervention model delineates the sequential steps involved in implementing an intervention: problem identification, establishment of objectives, planning and implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Problem identification is achieved through a thorough analysis of existing plans and studies, complemented by extensive stakeholder engagement to enhance understanding of the context and accurately pinpoint the issues at hand. The objectives of the intervention are the specific goals that the initiative aims to achieve. Implementation encompasses the operational

activities, procedures, or strategies devised to fulfill these objectives (Nisbet et al., 2022). Furthermore, effective planning for evaluation necessitates the establishment of monitoring mechanisms from the outset. Inputs refer to the resources mobilized for the intervention; outputs represent the measurable products derived from these inputs, such as developed technologies; and outcomes denote the ultimate results achieved as a consequence of these outputs (Schwab, 2019). Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) serve as complementary approaches to assess the effectiveness of the intervention.

Models function as valuable tools for encapsulating complex realities. Their inherent simplicity is a significant strength, enabling the effective management of intricate ideas and situations. However, this same simplicity may pose a vulnerability, potentially obscuring critical components (Eryarsoy et al., 2023). During the design phase of an intervention, it is imperative that planned activities are informed by a theory that clearly articulates how the desired outcomes will be achieved. These explicit theories are frequently represented as logic models. The primary objective of food security interventions is to enhance food security outcomes by reducing vulnerability to shocks or hazards and fortifying families' resilience to such disruptions. Figure 2-2 illustrates the logical framework for food security interventions, drawing from various intervention planning frameworks established by authors such as Muhialdin et al. (2021); Sseguya et al. (2017); Buchanan-Smith et al. (2016); Carletto et al., (2013); Maxwell & Smith, (1992). This logical framework facilitates systematic intervention and comprehensive evaluation, ensuring a strategic and evidence-based approach to enhancing food security.



**Figure 2-2 Logical framework for food security intervention**

Source: Developed by the Author

#### **2.4.1.1 Problem identification**

A problem is recognized as such within a community when it substantially impacts individuals, groups, or the entire population and necessitates a change for resolution (Oyediran, 2019). Identifying research topics serves as the foundational step in any research endeavor, akin to laying the groundwork for future construction. Awareness of the problem is crucial for effective intervention. Thus, prior to conducting research, the investigator must identify and frame the problem—a task often regarded as one of the most challenging aspects of the research process (Pardede, 2018). Previous studies indicate a link between problem identification and creativity, suggesting that creative individuals and experts are more inclined to engage in this critical process (Yalçın, Bektaş, Öztekin, & Karadağ, 2016). Allocating adequate time for problem identification, knowledge transfer, assessment, and active questioning is essential. Issues related to food security can be discerned through a comprehensive review of research and policy materials, alongside an evaluation of the community's vulnerability context.

#### **2.4.1.2 Objective development**

The objectives of humanitarian action focus on alleviating suffering, saving lives, and maintaining human dignity during crises and their aftermath, while also emphasizing the prevention of such events and the enhancement of preparedness (Sharma et al., 2022). In the context of food security, the goal of food availability concentrates on the supply side, assessed through food output, stock levels, and net trade. However, even with sufficient food production, households may encounter challenges due to a lack of cash crops and non-farm employment opportunities. This situation often forces them to exchange food for immediate cash needs, rendering them net buyers of food (Marivoet et al., 2019). It is crucial to recognize that global food sufficiency does not guarantee food security at the household level. Consequently, concerns regarding inadequate food access have led to an increased policy focus on incomes, expenditures, markets, and prices as essential components in achieving food security objectives (Aliyu et al., 2021).

#### **2.4.1.3 Planning and implementation**

A thorough understanding of the significance of food security within a specific sector or policy domain, as well as the potential implications and objectives of a planned intervention, is crucial for identifying entry points for action to enhance attention to food security throughout all stages of planning and implementation. Inputs—comprising human, financial, and material resources—are fundamental to executing actions aimed at achieving the intervention's ultimate goal (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016). These inputs are designed to fulfill the overarching objectives of the intervention. However, challenges persist. Donors are increasingly pressured to fund short-term interventions, while long-term assistance during protracted crises and initiatives aimed at prevention and preparedness often remain underfunded. Additionally, resources for long-term development assistance have declined, complicating the allocation of resources within politically charged and resource-constrained environments, which are often influenced by the dynamics of ongoing conflicts (EC/FAO, 2003).

The success of humanitarian interventions relies heavily on accurate and timely information regarding available resources. One of the primary challenges faced is the scarcity of these resources, which limits both the quantity and quality of food security information accessible to humanitarian responders. The actions taken to produce desired outcomes are termed activities, and it is essential to incorporate activities that span the entire duration of the intervention (Dodd et al., 2021). Ideally, these planned activities should be grounded in a theoretical framework that elucidates how they will lead to the intended results, often represented through logic models. However, determining the optimal mix of actions for a particular context presents significant challenges. With numerous intervention options available and constant trade-offs to consider, ongoing negotiation and debate are vital throughout the intervention process. Therefore, planning and implementing a food security strategy must be both iterative and dynamic (Scoones, 1998).

#### **2.4.1.4 Monitoring of the framework**

The implementation of an intervention is complemented by monitoring, which ensures that planned program-level outputs—such as the quantity of food supplied or the number of individuals receiving assistance—are achieved. Monitoring involves the continuous collection of systematic data on specified indicators to provide management and relevant stakeholders with updates on progress, evidence of objective attainment, and utilization of allocated funding within the ongoing humanitarian intervention (Albusaidi, 2018). Outputs refer to the goods, products, and services resulting from an intervention; they represent the direct results of inputs and activities conducted by the implementing actor(s) and must be clearly attributed to specific individuals or groups. Typically, those responsible for implementing a program also monitor its progress to ensure adherence to objectives. For instance, monitoring food security intervention programs would likely focus on inputs, such as the amount of food assistance provided, and outputs, such as the number of individuals receiving that assistance (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016).

Monitoring and evaluation serve as complementary strategies for assessing the effectiveness of an intervention (Mbava & Dahler-Larsen, 2019). According to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), effective monitoring is essential for facilitating evaluation; without it, subsequent assessments may become infeasible. Monitoring provides the necessary data for evaluation, while evaluation offers deeper insights into program effectiveness (L'Espérance et al., 2021). Humanitarian practitioners rely on M&E to track progress, analyse performance, and assess results. However, the unique circumstances and nature of humanitarian work can present challenges for M&E professionals in the field. In this model, the evaluation process follows the logic of the intervention, which will be elaborated further in the next section. This alignment ensures that the evaluation is consistent with the intervention's objectives and activities, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of its effectiveness.

#### **2.4.1.5 Evaluation of the framework: Validation of the logical framework**

The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) defines evaluation as a systematic and objective assessment of an

ongoing or completed project, program, or policy. This assessment encompasses design, implementation, and results to determine relevance, fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Evaluation focuses on outcomes and effects; for instance, in a cash-transfer program, it may examine the implications of delivering transfers to women and their broader repercussions on market and trade activities (Albusaidi, 2018). However, the monitoring and evaluation requirements of humanitarian organizations vary significantly at different stages of a humanitarian response. In the immediate aftermath of a crisis, M&E may primarily focus on ensuring the supply of goods and services, gathering feedback from affected populations, and analysing the external environment. Over time, the emphasis may shift towards assessing medium to long-term changes in community lives (Simister, 2021).

Evaluation is crucial for demonstrating how humanitarian interventions can assist individuals in surviving and recovering from crises, making it one of the most effective methods for addressing critical needs. Through evaluation, organizations aim to make informed decisions about the value of their actions and outcomes. Essential questions include whether impacts were achieved, if lives were saved, and whether interventions were optimally implemented. Rigorous evaluations play a vital role in enabling informed, evidence-based decisions regarding program effectiveness and success. They allow stakeholders to address the critical question of "So what?" In certain cases, commissioning an evaluation may be a contractual obligation to a donor, while in other contexts, it can be evaluated against alternative possibilities (L'Espérance et al., 2021).

In the evaluation context, outcomes refer to the intentional or unforeseen changes brought about by an action, whether directly or indirectly. These changes can be desired (positive) or undesirable (negative) and encompass behavioural shifts at various levels, including individuals, groups, communities, organizations, and institutions. Evaluations delve into these outcomes to comprehensively understand the impact and effectiveness of interventions. For example, the utilization of water from newly built NGO water points may serve multiple purposes, such as animal consumption or household needs, illustrating the complexity of attributing outcomes solely to the intervention (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016). Evaluation, as defined, is the organized and objective assessment of a project, program, or policy, including its design, implementation, and outcomes. Its purpose is to evaluate relevance, achievement of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and long-term viability (Grigg et al., 2016). This comprehensive evaluation process aids stakeholders in understanding the multifaceted impacts and effectiveness of interventions.

Well-planned and conducted evaluations serve as invaluable tools for learning and accountability across various levels. In the fast-paced environments of humanitarian and development activities, evaluations provide an opportunity to pause and objectively assess what is working well, what has been successful, and what areas require improvement. They offer structured insights into the overall success of a project, program, or response, contributing to the body of knowledge on effective practices in challenging circumstances. Evaluations help decision-makers address the difficult question of "how are we actually doing?" and facilitate necessary adjustments (Mbava &

Dahler-Larsen, 2019). As concerns regarding the accountability and effectiveness of international development and humanitarian efforts continue to grow, there is an increasing interest in and investment in evaluations (Doocy et al., 2017). This reflects a broader recognition of the importance of evidence-based decision-making and rigorous assessment in improving the impact and efficiency of interventions.

The evaluation of humanitarian actions incurs costs that could otherwise be allocated to preventing fatalities or alleviating suffering. However, this expenditure is justified if it enhances humanitarian efforts, contingent upon the quality and application of the evaluation findings (Hallam & Bonino, 2013). Evaluations are often perceived—and sometimes dreaded—as a form of criticism or merely a donor requirement. Nevertheless, they hold the potential to serve a more constructive purpose. They present invaluable opportunities for learning and refining programming by tailoring assessments to meet the needs of primary users (Kelly et al., 2021). The primary objective of humanitarian action is to ascertain the value of an initiative, policy, or program, aiming to derive lessons for enhancing policies and practices while fostering accountability (Grigg et al., 2016).

High-value evaluation results from collaboration between a knowledgeable client and a responsive, suitably skilled evaluation team. Once the primary users, their information needs, and the overarching objectives regarding accountability and/or learning have been identified, the next step is to determine the type of evaluation. Learning-focused evaluations aim to promote learning at the group, individual, and organizational levels. These evaluations provide valuable opportunities to learn from real-world cases, enabling thorough examination of successes, failures, and strategies for improvement (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016).

In validating the logical intervention framework, this study aimed to assess several hypotheses: first, that humanitarian interventions for food security are relevant; second, that these interventions are effective in achieving their objectives; third, that adequate access to resources significantly affects the efficiency of humanitarian intervention for food security; and finally, that *humanitarian interventions for food security have a significant impact on household food security*.

#### **2.4.2 Evaluation criteria of intervention framework**

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) serves as a global network that includes NGOs, UN agencies, members of the Red Cross/Crescent Movement, donors, academics, and consultants, all committed to enhancing humanitarian response through collective learning. They believe that shared learning can significantly impact the communities they serve and support the essential work of humanitarians worldwide. To address gaps in understanding, ALNAP facilitates the production of new research in relevant areas.

Beck (2006) authored the "Evaluating Humanitarian Action Guide Using the OECD/DAC Criteria," developed under the guidance of the ALNAP Secretariat. This comprehensive resource provides practical assistance for evaluating humanitarian actions according to OECD/DAC standards, drawing on extensive research and consultation. Recognizing the need for continuous improvement, ALNAP launched an initiative in June 2023 to establish updated guidelines for

evaluating humanitarian work, following over 15 years of active use of the previous framework. This consultation process begins with an overview of how to apply the OECD/DAC criteria to assess humanitarian action, seeking input from a diverse range of stakeholders, including evaluators, humanitarians, and practitioners from both large organizations and small frontline actors, as well as community groups and first responders operating in various humanitarian contexts.

In this study, the researcher utilized the guides authored by Beck (2006) and Margie Buchanan-Smith et al. (2016), which were the first two resources downloaded by ALNAP for their 15,000 evaluations in the Humanitarian Action Manual. ALNAP collaborated with more than 40 organizations to gather feedback and tested the content in practical settings through experimental operations. The comments collected during this process were compiled to create the final version of the Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide. This comprehensive guide addresses a wide array of topics related to humanitarian evaluation, all situated within the complex operational landscape of humanitarian work. The guide has been enriched by extensive engagement, with over 40 organizations participating in the pilot phase and providing invaluable feedback. The clarity, relevance, and authority of the instructions in the guide are a testament to these contributions, which have already proven immensely beneficial to evaluators.

The evaluation in this research builds upon established principles and quality standards developed by the Evaluation Network of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) within the OECD. The evaluation process adheres to the OECD/DAC criteria—Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Impact—as the analytical framework (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016). This approach suggests an ex-post evaluation conducted after the conclusion of an intervention, taking a formative stance that emphasizes program evaluation of a series of interventions sharing a common humanitarian objective. This involves assessing the implementation of the program, describing its operational procedures, the services it provides, and the current benefits derived from these services (UNICEF, 2015).

Furthermore, the evaluation is both sectoral and thematic, focusing on a group of interventions within a specific sector, namely the food security sector in this research. These interventions collectively contribute to achieving a particular humanitarian goal. The evaluation addresses a selection of interventions that collectively aim to fulfil this goal.

In this study, the evaluation criteria will be applied within the framework to validate the intervention model outlined in subsequent subsections. These criteria serve as a normative framework for assessing the benefit or value of a policy, plan, program, project, or activity, forming the basis for evaluative judgments. Additionally, the evaluation adopts a formative approach, which is particularly suitable for bridging the gap between development practice and theory. Consequently, it examines the design of the intervention, tests the relevance of the intervention objectives, and evaluates effects including effectiveness, impacts, and efficiency of the interventions.



The evaluation criteria for intervention modalities in achieving food security outcomes will be assessed within the given context and against the planned intervention objectives. It is important to note that this study does not constitute a systematic review comparing the effectiveness of different modalities in addressing food security needs. Such an analysis would require a distinct methodology, involving treatment groups receiving various modalities of support under the same conditions and timeframe.

#### **2.4.2.1 Relevance**

Relevance in humanitarian efforts pertains to the degree to which these initiatives align with local needs, thereby promoting ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness. This involves evaluating how well intervention objectives and design address the needs, policies, and priorities of beneficiaries, and whether these will remain pertinent in the face of changing circumstances (SIDA, 2021). Additionally, relevance encompasses the alignment of projects with local priorities, including those articulated by donors. The concept of "need," along with the criteria for qualifying for humanitarian assistance, is often culturally contextualized. While certain interventions may appear critical on a macro scale, they may not necessarily represent the most appropriate course of action at the local level. For instance, although improving nutritional status may be a relevant goal, distributing large quantities of food assistance may not be the most suitable approach. Alternatives could involve providing food or cash in exchange for work or implementing measures to enhance the functionality of local markets (Gonzalez-Canas et al., 2023).

This criterion assesses the degree to which an intervention meets the actual needs of the targeted population, taking into account the unique socio-economic and environmental challenges that households in Gaza face. Effective interventions should go beyond addressing immediate food shortages by adapting to local market conditions, cultural food preferences, and logistical barriers that impact food access and availability. In Gaza, relevant interventions may emphasize local food sources and integrate community-driven solutions, enhancing availability through increased production and improving access by supporting income generation or cash assistance. By prioritizing relevance, humanitarian programs ensure that resources are effectively directed toward strategies that genuinely address beneficiaries' needs, contributing to a more resilient and food-secure population.

In the context of the log frame results chain, relevance can be utilized to assess broader aspects of the intervention, such as overall aims or outcomes, and can also inform evaluations of inputs and activities (Bene et al., 2017). The examination of the evaluation criterion of relevance leads to the first hypothesized statement (H1): Humanitarian interventions for food security are relevant.

#### **2.4.2.2 Effectiveness**

The effectiveness of a development intervention is assessed based on its ability to achieve stated objectives and produce desired results (Simister, 2021). While an evaluation may confirm that specific objectives were met, this does not automatically indicate that these objectives were appropriate for the entire affected community, achieved efficiently, sustainable, or impactful

(Beck, 2006). Effectiveness encompasses the evaluation of how well an intervention has accomplished its goals and generated outcomes, serving as a key performance indicator. However, success in one area may occur at the expense of progress in another, complicating overall assessments of performance. Additionally, the timing and focus of the evaluation can restrict evaluators to measuring only the level of effectiveness achieved up to that point, often analysing outputs or intermediate outcomes rather than ultimate impacts (SIDA, 2021).

This criterion determines if interventions effectively meet objectives, such as lowering food insecurity, enhancing household dietary diversity, and ensuring reliable access to nutritious food. An intervention is considered effective if it not only provides immediate relief but also strengthens community capacity to maintain improved food access over time. For instance,

CVA or MPCA programs are evaluated based on their success in allowing beneficiaries to purchase food from local markets, which enhances availability and supports the local economy. Similarly, agricultural support initiatives are assessed for their effectiveness in reviving food production, securing a stable supply, and reducing reliance on external food aid. By focusing on effectiveness, the evaluation sheds light on strategies that genuinely bolster food security, guiding the development of interventions that deliver meaningful and enduring improvements in food access and availability in Gaza.

From a food security perspective, the effectiveness of food-based interventions in enhancing food security and alleviating poverty, alongside the use of food assistance as a transfer mechanism, remains a multifaceted issue (Edward et al., 2006). However, findings by Margie Buchanan-Smith et al. (2016) indicate that reports generally portray food assistance operations positively, suggesting that these initiatives successfully fulfill their primary objective of providing nourishment to those in need across many countries. Food assistance is widely recognized for its role in saving lives and often in maintaining or improving nutritional status. Humanitarian organizations are increasingly committed to enhancing accountability to affected populations, aligning with the UN's Transformative Agenda for Humanitarian Intervention, which aims to boost the effectiveness of humanitarian action. This leads to the second hypothesized statement (H2): *Humanitarian interventions for food security are effective in achieving their objectives.*

#### **2.4.2.3 Efficiency**

Efficiency, in the context of development interventions, refers to the optimal use of cost-effective resources to achieve specific goals. It involves evaluating both qualitative and quantitative outcomes in relation to the inputs invested (Simister, 2021). Assessing efficiency includes analysing the various methods employed to achieve desired results and determining whether the most effective approach was utilized. It measures how well economic inputs—such as financial, human, technical, and material resources—are transformed into outputs. Typically, evaluations of efficiency begin with an analysis of financial data while also considering the urgency of addressing the needs of the affected population (Margie Buchanan Smith & Cosgrave, 2019). Key factors addressed in efficiency evaluations include staffing, monitoring and evaluation practices, delivery

timelines, disbursement rates, budget management, administration, governance concerning anti-corruption strategies, and coordination efforts (SIDA, 2021).

This criterion assesses whether interventions achieve the maximum impact per unit of input—such as funds, time, and labor—without unnecessary delays or waste. For instance, an efficient intervention would deliver CVA swiftly and at minimal administrative cost, enabling beneficiaries quick access to food and essential goods. Similarly, In-Kind Food Assistance programs are evaluated based on logistical expenses and delivery times, ensuring food reaches households before critical shortages worsen. Efficiently executed Agricultural Rehabilitation initiatives, such as those supporting local agriculture, can enhance availability while reducing dependency on costly imports. By prioritizing efficiency, humanitarian organizations can allocate resources more effectively, maximizing improvements in food security and ensuring that aid benefits the greatest number of people in the most impactful way.

The ninth commitment of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) emphasizes that communities and individuals affected by crises should expect organizations to manage resources effectively, efficiently, and ethically. This commitment involves monitoring and reporting on organizational responsibilities, ensuring the implementation of policies and processes related to resource usage and management. This includes conducting audits, ensuring compliance, and maintaining transparency in reporting. Continuous analysis and risk management are also critical aspects of this commitment. The quality criterion asserts that resources should be managed and utilized responsibly for their intended purposes (Simister, 2021). This leads to the third hypothesized statement (H3): *Adequate access to resources has a significant effect on the efficiency of humanitarian interventions for food security.*

#### **2.4.2.4 Impact**

The term "impact" in the context of an intervention refers to the extent to which it has produced, or is expected to produce, significant positive or negative effects—both intended and unintended—at higher levels (SIDA, 2021). Impact encompasses various outcomes experienced by beneficiaries that can be directly attributed to program activities rather than external factors. One of the primary challenges in impact evaluation is attribution, which involves distinguishing the specific effects of an intervention from other influencing factors (Kaul et al., 2018). Impacts can include interim changes in beneficiaries' abilities to influence their own lives, such as increased access to resources or knowledge gained through training programs. Ultimately, these impacts may lead to improvements in economic and personal well-being for those utilizing the program's services.

This criterion looks beyond immediate outcomes to evaluate how interventions affect the overall well-being of communities, including shifts in dietary habits, nutritional health, and resilience against future food insecurity. For example, programs that offer training in agricultural techniques or nutrition education can significantly strengthen households' abilities to maintain consistent food supplies and make informed dietary choices. Furthermore, the impact of CVA can be measured not only by its immediate effects on food purchases but also by its contribution to stimulating local

markets, enhancing economic stability, and empowering beneficiaries to effectively manage their food resources. By examining impact, this evaluation sheds light on the enduring benefits of interventions, showcasing their potential to reshape the food security landscape in Gaza and bolster the resilience of affected populations against future challenges.

The results of impact evaluations are crucial for managing current activities, guiding resource allocation, and informing the design or redesign of future interventions to maximize benefits (Maystadt et al., 2019). Fenn et al. (2017) and Bogáth, Gáspár, Thalmeiner, & Bárczi (2021) affirm that impact includes both positive and negative changes arising from a development intervention, whether direct or indirect, intended or unintended. This broader examination of consequences—social, economic, environmental, and technological—highlights the complexities of assessing program effects on individuals, groups, and communities. Establishing causal relationships regarding impact poses significant challenges, particularly in determining the appropriate timeframe for assessment and ensuring that the intervention can be reasonably assumed to have contributed to the observed impacts ((Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016).

As interest in humanitarian impact evaluation grows, driven by both donors seeking accountability and operational agencies aiming for effective interventions, understanding these impacts becomes increasingly vital (Kaul et al., 2018). Many humanitarian evaluations primarily focus on outcomes descriptively, often falling short in establishing causal links between those outcomes and the intervention. The increasing demand for understanding the broader effects of humanitarian action leads to the fourth hypothesis (H4): *Humanitarian Interventions for food security have a significant impact on household food security.*

This chapter aimed to develop a theoretical intervention model tailored for Palestinians and establish evaluation criteria to assess its validity. A review of the literature on household food security, particularly within the context of humanitarian interventions, revealed two primary factors affecting food security: availability and access. These insights formed the foundation for the hypotheses and research questions guiding the intervention model for households in the Gaza Strip. The objective was to validate this theoretical model through an ex-post review of relevant case studies. The following chapter will detail the selection of study cases and the research design employed in this evaluation.

### **3 MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study aims to create an intervention model for household food security in the Gaza Strip, focusing on humanitarian interventions. The model's effectiveness is evaluated using specific criteria. To address the research questions and hypotheses, a mixed-method approach has been employed. This chapter will provide a comprehensive overview of the materials and methods utilized in the research.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study's design consists of two main components. Firstly, exploratory research serves as the theoretical foundation, utilizing secondary data and qualitative research to shed light on household food insecurity in Gaza and the reasoning behind various assistance approaches. This phase lays the groundwork for the study's objectives, hypotheses, and intervention framework outlined in earlier chapters, grounded in intervention theory.

Secondly, the empirical phase aims to validate this framework through descriptive research, employing a non-experimental approach. This means that the interventions were not directly implemented but were assessed based on past interventions through ex-post evaluation. In humanitarian contexts, where direct comparisons can be challenging, non-experimental designs are commonly used for evaluation. These designs do not compare supported groups with non-assisted groups or track individual assistance over time (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016).

Descriptive research, primarily conducted through survey methods, can be categorized into cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. The most prevalent form is the cross-sectional study, which involves gathering data from a population sample at a single point in time. This may include Single Cross-Sectional Design, where data is collected once from one sample, or Multiple Cross-Sectional Design, where data is collected once from two or more samples, often across different time periods. Longitudinal designs involve measuring the same sample repeatedly over time, which allows for consistency but is often limited by logistical constraints. Due to budgetary and technological limitations, this study opted for a single cross-sectional design, gathering two sets of data at one time.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

The present study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to validate the intervention framework and rigorously test the hypotheses. This multifaceted methodology included a comprehensive review of relevant documents, in-depth interviews with project managers, quantitative surveys conducted with households, and a systematic analysis of secondary data. By actively engaging beneficiaries as key stakeholders throughout the research process, the study prioritized principles of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) while ensuring adherence to Humanitarian Principles.

A mixed-method evaluation approach is particularly well-suited for humanitarian evaluations, as it allows for the effective complementarity of the two methodologies. This is crucial in addressing

the numerous potentially confounding factors that are often present in humanitarian interventions (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016). The success of development projects hinges not solely on the transfer of resources and expertise but also on the intricate social and economic dynamics that unfold within households, communities, and institutions. Relying exclusively on surveys may fail to capture these complexities (Bamberger et al., 2010). Therefore, employing multiple designs in sequence is often necessary to comprehensively address evaluation questions. Mixed-method designs facilitate this by alternating between quantitative and qualitative methods, allowing researchers to leverage various frameworks and gain a more nuanced understanding of the data.

For analysis, the study utilized both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques alongside a secondary document review. This approach was triangulated with key informant interviews (KIIs) and participant surveys, enhancing the validity of findings, and ensuring robust testing of the hypotheses. The detailed procedures for analysis are elucidated in section 3.7, where the integration of these methodologies is further explored. By employing this rigorous mixed-method approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention, drawing on diverse sources of data to ensure that the findings are both credible and contextually relevant.

### **3.3 Data Collection and the sampling procedure**

#### **3.3.1 Data collection**

The data collection process for this study was conducted in two distinct phases. The first phase involved a desk review, executed by the evaluation team (refer to Annex 1), to assess food security in the Gaza Strip. This phase aimed to gather preliminary data on food security interventions in the region. Information was sourced from reports provided by the Food Security Cluster Office in Gaza, which guided the selection of intervention case studies. The desk review encompassed a comprehensive range of documents, including project proposals, budgets, progress reports, donor agreements, and monitoring and evaluation reports. Additionally, corporate policies and strategies related to food security and gender from various humanitarian organizations, as well as strategic and annual plans, were included in the review.

The second phase focused on the collection of empirical data to test the hypotheses outlined in section 1.4. Employing a single cross-sectional design, two sets of data were gathered. The first data set aimed to evaluate the intervention design (Relevance) and to test the first hypothesis. This data set primarily consisted of qualitative information derived from project documentation and was supplemented by KIIs with project managers. The qualitative data was instrumental in understanding the project's implementation process and in gauging managers' perceptions of the support provided. Furthermore, it facilitated the identification of insights that complemented the quantitative data, aiding in the evaluation of well-implemented aspects and areas needing improvement.

The KIIs, conducted by the researcher, utilized semi-structured questionnaires—an established method in humanitarian evaluation that allows interviewers to prompt interviewees for elaboration on data and meanings. These interviews typically lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and provided

qualitative insights critical for understanding the underlying reasons for observed events. Interviewees were strategically selected based on their ability to address key evaluation questions, particularly project managers. Judgmental sampling was employed for the case studies in this research, wherein elements were chosen based on the researcher's assessment of their representativeness or relevance. Following the review of reports from the Food Security Cluster Office in Gaza, KIIs were conducted with the project managers of the selected case studies.

The second dataset was utilized to evaluate the effects of the interventions in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, thereby addressing the second, third, and fourth hypotheses. This primarily quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to selected households benefiting from the projects under investigation. To ensure that all indicators were suitable for measuring the research variables, the study consulted relevant literature and conducted interviews with academics, project managers, community committee members, and local authority representatives in Gaza. Content validity of the questionnaire was established by simplifying the items for clarity and ensuring ease of understanding for the respondents.

Participants were selected using a random sampling technique, which provided every element in the population with an equal probability of selection. This approach ensured that each possible sample of a given size ( $n$ ) had an equal chance of being chosen, thus maintaining independence in the selection process. Recognizing that beneficiaries may have been approached multiple times by monitoring and evaluation teams, which could lead to fatigue, the evaluation team was careful to respect their circumstances. They clarified the purpose of the inquiries and minimized the time commitment required from participants.

Data collection from the same source within a close timeframe poses a risk of Common Method Bias (CMB), which can affect the consistency of the research findings. While CMB may influence the relationships among the examined variables, it is crucial to prioritize obtaining data from the most reliable sources. As Cruz (2022) noted, researchers should not feel obligated to gather data from multiple sources solely to counter the potential effects of CMB. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff (2012) suggested several strategies to mitigate CMB, including ensuring clarity in measurement items, maintaining respondent confidentiality, and surveying only those who are familiar with the variables being measured. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to targeted respondents who benefited from food security interventions. To identify CMB, Harman's One Factor test was employed, using a criterion where the total variance must exceed 50%.

Interviewees were randomly selected to ensure that the survey findings could be generalized to the entire population. A subset of this sampled population participated in a pre-test of the questionnaire, which was subsequently refined based on their feedback before being administered to the respondents. Household interviews, often integrated into quantitative surveys, typically lasted between 20 to 60 minutes, depending on the complexity of the questions. These interviews offer a versatile method for capturing both qualitative and quantitative insights, particularly useful for assessing the impact of assistance at the household level.

The involvement of skilled interviewers, who are well-versed in the local context, is crucial. They can discern nuances and corroborate information effectively. Household interviews frequently yield compelling illustrative cases that highlight specific issues, enriching evaluation reports with a human perspective. Formal face-to-face surveys are powerful tools for gauging the extent of various issues, including the impacts of interventions. Surveys conducted with the affected population are particularly effective in revealing perceptions of aid effectiveness, coverage limitations, and timeliness of assistance. If resources allow and other methods have not been fully utilized, conducting a survey of the affected population is highly advisable.

To ensure data validity, triangulation was employed, incorporating document reviews along with qualitative and quantitative approaches as detailed in Chapter 4. This triangulation facilitated data validation, analysis, and the formulation of appropriate conclusions and recommendations. Primary data was compared with baseline and secondary data, with any discrepancies addressed through discussions with the researcher and other informants. In cases where discrepancies could not be resolved, ambiguities were explicitly noted in the results.

The study emphasized inclusivity across the program, ensuring equitable participation and support for vulnerable and marginalized groups, including widows, women, adolescents, people with disabilities (PwDs), the elderly, and children. A two-stage sampling procedure was implemented, initially selecting intervention cases and their managers, followed by the respondent households, as outlined in sections 3.5.2 and 3.5.3.

### 3.3.2 The sampling procedure for intervention projects

To capture a diverse range of intervention designs, it would have been ideal to assess the intervention modalities implemented in 2022 as part of the HRP projects. Two essential conditions were required: the availability of suitable intervention projects for selection and a logical distribution of the survey among their beneficiaries. The selection of intervention cases was informed by data obtained from the desk review conducted during the exploratory research phase. This review, particularly from reports issued by the Food Security Cluster Office in the Gaza Strip, identified eight active intervention projects under the HRP framework in 2022. To ensure a representative evaluation, these projects were categorized according to their response modalities. The distribution of these interventions is illustrated in Figure 3-1, providing a visual overview of the various modalities employed within the selected projects.

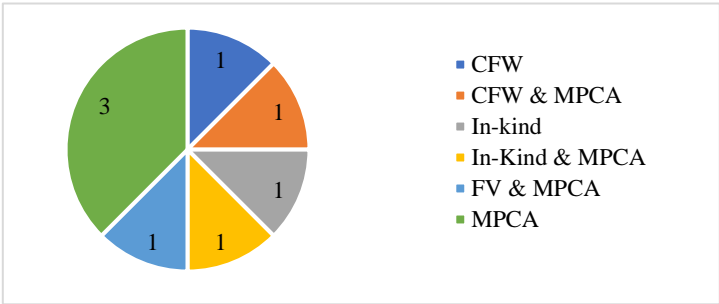


Figure 3-1: Response modalities in HRP 2022



In the HRP 2022, the distribution of intervention projects revealed that four were designed exclusively with cash modalities (such as Cash for Work (CFW) or Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)), three projects combined cash modalities with other modalities (including CFW & MPCA, In-Kind & MPCA, and Food Vouchers (FV) & MPCA), while one project utilized only an in-kind modality. To ensure a diverse representation of intervention designs, projects were selected using judgmental sampling based on the following criteria:

1. Placement: The project needed to cover a broad range of Gaza Strip governorates.
2. Comprehensiveness: The project should integrate multiple modalities within its activities.
3. Evaluability: The intervention had to be evaluable, indicating that all relevant documents and project managers were available to facilitate data collection.

Each of these criteria was assigned scores to assess the projects. A ranking system was implemented, where each project was evaluated on a scale from 1 to 3 points, reflecting 'low,' 'moderate,' and 'high' levels of fulfillment, as outlined in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Ranking criteria for selection of Cash modality**

| Scoring Criteria | Low (1)   | Moderate (2)   | High (3)   |
|------------------|---|--|--|
| Placement        | One Governorate   | 2-3 Governorates   | 4-5 Governorates   |
| Comprehensive    | One Modality  | Two Modalities   | More than two Modalities   |
| Evaluability     | No documents are available, or project managers can't be approached | Some documents are available, or the project manager can't be approached | All documents are available, and project manager can be approached |

The scores for each project were aggregated, and the selection process prioritized the highest-ranking interventions. For instance, intervention Xi, which had a placement in one governorate, received a score of 1; if it included two modalities, it scored 2; and if all relevant documents were available and the project manager was accessible, it earned a score of 3. Consequently, intervention Xi could achieve a minimum total score of 3 and a maximum of 9, as illustrated in the penultimate column of Table 3-2. Ultimately, three interventions were selected for evaluation: X2, X4, and X5, incorporating the modalities CFW & MPCA, In-Kind & MPCA, and FV & MPCA, respectively.

**Table 3-2: Ranking of interventions by the scoring criteria**

| Intervention Project | Modality       | Placement | Comprehensive | Evaluability | Total Score | Ranking |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| X1                   | CFW            | 3         | 1             | 2            | 6           | 3       |
| X2                   | CFW & MPCA     | 3         | 2             | 3            | 8           | 1       |
| X3                   | In-kind        | 3         | 1             | 2            | 6           | 3       |
| X4                   | In-Kind & MPCA | 3         | 2             | 3            | 8           | 1       |
| X5                   | FV & MPCA      | 2         | 2             | 3            | 7           | 2       |
| X6                   | MPCA           | 3         | 1             | 2            | 6           | 3       |
| X7                   | MPCA           | 3         | 1             | 2            | 6           | 3       |
| X8                   | MPCA           | 3         | 1             | 2            | 6           | 3       |

### 3.3.3 The sampling procedure for selection respondents

Following the selection of interventions, the next step involved sampling participants for the primary data collection. Households, rather than individuals, were designated as the unit of analysis, as targeting interventions, resource allocation, and food access are predominantly managed at the household level. Therefore, information was collected from the head of the household or their partner. Households were randomly selected from the list of participants for each intervention case. As detailed in Table 3-3, the sample size of 348 households was determined using the Sample Size Calculator from Creative Research Systems, which provides this tool as a public service. This calculation was based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% confidence interval (Creative Research System, 1982).

**Table 3-3: Planned sample size per modality**

| Projects     | Modalities | Number of HHs (Population) | Number of HHs (Sample) |
|--------------|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| X2           | CFW        | 248                        | 18                     |
|              | MPCA       | 310                        | 23                     |
| X4           | In-Kind    | 3114                       | 231                    |
|              | MPCA       | 670                        | 50                     |
| X5           | FV         | 300                        | 22                     |
|              | MPCA       | 50                         | 4                      |
| <b>Total</b> |            | <b>4692</b>                | <b>348</b>             |

The estimated sample sizes for the different modalities were as follows: 18 households for Cash for Work (CFW), 231 for In-Kind assistance, 22 for Food Vouchers (FV), and 77 for Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA). Consequently, the sample sizes varied between projects based on the availability of households for interviews. Communication was challenging due to the wide dispersion of participants. In instances where a selected household was unavailable, another household was randomly chosen, resulting in a time-consuming process and variations in sample sizes across project areas. Data management and analysis were primarily conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Key quantitative data analysis methods included descriptive, exploratory, and inferential statistics. Means were calculated for responses to Likert scale questions, frequencies were used for "select more than one option" questions, percentages were calculated for other quantitative inquiries, and averages were computed to determine mean values for larger groups.

### 3.4 Ethical Consideration

Addressing ethical issues during crises is inherently challenging but remains crucial for ensuring the integrity of research. Key ethical considerations include the commitment to "do no harm," the protection of data, the maintenance of confidentiality, and the necessity of obtaining prior consent. These considerations are particularly vital when dealing with protection and safeguarding matters. The evaluation team adhered to humanitarian principles—such as Humanity, Impartiality,

Independence, and Neutrality—to uphold objectivity, honesty, and high ethical standards throughout their work. Compliance with the Ethical Guidelines on Evaluation established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in 2020 ensured that findings would be relevant and actionable for the organization and its partners. These principles guided the evaluation process, enabling the production of valid and reliable information and recommendations based on field data and thorough analysis.

The study strictly followed ethical guidelines, including the UNEG standards from 2020, and was conducted by individuals who were not involved in the program's implementation, thereby enhancing credibility. During the data collection process, several key ethical principles and practices were rigorously implemented:

1. **Informed Consent:** Households participating in the study provided their consent prior to any engagement. All interviews and surveys were conducted only after securing the respondents' approval.
2. **Privacy During Interviews:** To ensure privacy and comfort for the respondents, interviews were held in their homes.
3. **Training and Protocols:** Enumerators underwent extensive training and piloting to ensure consistent and contextually appropriate questioning. Given limited access, local enumerators conducted interviews with the affected population, as researchers often have little to no access to individuals receiving humanitarian assistance or the regions where they reside.
4. **Ethical Oversight:** Continuous monitoring and management of ethical issues were maintained throughout the study, with additional concerns addressed according to established guidelines.
5. **Confidentiality:** Collected data was treated with the utmost confidentiality to safeguard participants' privacy and rights. Research findings will be presented in a manner that minimizes the potential to identify individual participants.
6. **Data Sensitivity:** To protect informants' data, direct references to any organization were avoided, as this could compromise the privacy of the informants.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability of data collection tool**

To enhance data quality, reliability, and validity, this study employed a triangulation strategy to rigorously assess the accuracy and comprehensiveness of findings across multiple data sources. Triangulation was applied both internally and externally. Internally, critical items were cross-verified by addressing each item through various questions within the same instrument. Externally, triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing key items using distinct data collection tools. Employing a mixed-method approach in data collection further facilitated triangulation both across and within methods, reinforcing the robustness of the results and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

#### **3.5.1 Pilot study**

To ensure the questionnaire's appropriateness, validity, and reliability before deploying it to the full sample population, a pilot study was conducted. This pilot phase served as a preliminary test of the questionnaire, allowing assessment of question wording, detection of any ambiguous items,

and evaluation of the data collection method (Bujang et al., 2024). Insights from the pilot study facilitated necessary adjustments to optimize the questionnaire's design. The pilot study consisted of three primary stages:

1. Expert Review: Specialists in food security interventions, with backgrounds in questionnaire evaluation and statistical expertise, critically reviewed the questionnaire.
2. Targeted Distribution: The questionnaire was administered to a small group from the target population, consisting of 20 randomly selected respondents, to gather preliminary feedback.
3. Statistical Analysis: Statistical tests were conducted on the pilot data to assess the questionnaire's validity and reliability, ensuring its readiness for the main study.

### **3.5.2 Validity of data collection tool**

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument accurately measures the intended variables (Aamer et al., 2024). This study assessed validity through multiple approaches, ensuring that both external and criterion-related (internal) validity was addressed to enhance the questionnaire's reliability and applicability.

#### **A. External Validity**

To maximize external validity, the questionnaire underwent rigorous review by experts specializing in food security interventions, who also possess academic expertise in questionnaire assessment and statistical analysis. These reviewers evaluated the questionnaire's content, item clarity, and overall relevance to the study's objectives. Their feedback led to specific modifications to improve wording and prevent potential misunderstandings. Finalized questionnaire was refined based on these expert recommendations, as shown in Annex 2.

#### **B. Criterion-related/Internal Validity**

Criterion-related (internal) validity was examined as an initial statistical test to confirm the questionnaire's internal consistency. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to measure the correlation between each item within a field and the entire field. At a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the probability values for each item were found to be below 0.05, as detailed in Table 8-1 in Annex 3. This outcome confirms the internal consistency and validity of the questionnaire items, affirming their suitability for accurately measuring the intended constructs.

### **3.5.3 Reliability of data collection tool**

Reliability concerns the consistency and stability of an instrument in measuring what it aims to measure across repeated applications. Jimenez-olmedo, Tortosa-mart, Cortell-tormo, & Pueo (2024) describe reliability as the uniformity of measurement for a specific attribute; the more consistently an instrument reproduces similar results under equivalent conditions, the more reliable it is. Terms such as stability, dependability, and predictability are often used interchangeably with reliability. A reliable instrument is thus one that yields dependable results over time. In this study, two primary methods were applied to assess reliability: the Split-Half Method and Cronbach's Alpha.

### **A. Split-Half Method**

To assess reliability through the Split-Half Method, the questionnaire items were divided into two groups: odd-numbered and even-numbered questions. The correlation between these two sets of responses was then calculated and corrected using the Spearman-Brown formula to obtain the average correlation coefficient. This coefficient typically falls within the range of 0.0 to +1.0, with a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) set at less than 0.05 (Zhang et al., 2024). In this study, all corrected correlation coefficients were significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , thereby confirming the reliability of the questionnaire based on the Split-Half Method.

### **B. Cronbach's Alpha Method**

Widely recognized in reliability analysis, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha provides an index of internal consistency. Here, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each section of the questionnaire and for the entire instrument as a whole. Ranging between 0.0 and +1.0, higher values indicate stronger internal consistency (Zhang et al., 2024). The analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.95 for the entire questionnaire, signifying a high level of reliability. This robust reliability measure instills confidence in the instrument's consistency and dependability for data collection, supporting its suitability for this study.

## **3.6 Evaluation of intervention design and effects**

This evaluation framework employs a mixed-method approach to assess two main components: the intervention design and its effects, as elaborated below and summarized in the evaluation matrix presented in Table 8-2 in Annex 4.

### **3.6.1 Evaluation of intervention design: the context of intervention case studies and relevance**

The objective of evaluating intervention design is to analyse essential components, including the background of the intervention, objectives, anticipated outcomes, tangible outputs, required inputs, involved stakeholders, targeting strategies, and causality. This analysis encompasses the following aspects:

#### **✓ Analysis the context of intervention case studies**

As outlined by S. Barrett et al. (2021), an intervention represents a targeted, purposeful action intended to eliminate or mitigate an undesired event within a system. In the realm of food security, an intervention is a systematic initiative designed to improve food availability and accessibility. A comprehensive analysis of the intervention process, per García-Herrero, Brenes-Peralta, Leschi, & Vittuari (2022) aimed to clarify its objectives and outline the actions taken, by whom, and with what specific purpose and timing.

The context analysis helps assess whether the intervention's objectives align with the current food security landscape, as informed by research and policy documents. This analysis typically uses the logical framework (logframe) technique, which is well-regarded for articulating the intervention's logic, including its objectives, purpose, outcomes, activities, assumptions, indicators, and

verification sources ((Santarsiero, 2023). While effective in defining intervention logic, the logframe may be limited when applied to complex, multi-faceted projects. In such instances, the Theoretical Impact Model, a graphical representation that highlights the connections between intervention measures and their intended impacts, offers greater value by supporting causal inference (Lam, 2020). Data for this analysis is drawn from the intervention documentation, as described in section 4.2.

#### ✓ **Analysis of the intervention relevance**

The relevance assessment evaluates whether the intervention meets priority needs, including the specific needs of different population groups—women, men, girls, and boys—within an enduring humanitarian context. Data for this assessment will be gathered from intervention documents, supplemented by KIIs with project managers and surveys of beneficiaries. The analysis will integrate qualitative data and secondary document review, triangulated with KIIs, to ensure depth and accuracy. This relevance assessment corresponds to the first hypothesis (H1): *Humanitarian interventions for food security are relevant interventions.*

### **3.6.2 Evaluation of the intervention effects: effectiveness, efficiency, and impact**

#### ✓ **Analysis of effectiveness**

Effectiveness is assessed by examining the degree to which the intervention achieves its goals and produces intended outcomes. This analysis includes three main aspects: accomplishment of planned outputs and outcomes, factors influencing effectiveness, and indicators of effectiveness. Data will be collected through surveys, interviews with project managers, and project document reviews. For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics (including t-tests) and pre-post evaluations will be applied.

The Paired Sample t-test compares measurements from the same source before and after the intervention. Statistical significance is indicated by a p-value below 0.05, with a t-value range between 2 and 3 suggesting strong evidence of learning, and values above 3 reflecting very strong evidence (Malhotra, 2019). Larger t-values imply stronger evidence against the null hypothesis, emphasizing the intervention's impact on measured variables.

The pre-post evaluation method offers a comparison of outcomes before and after the intervention within the same participant group, providing insights into the direction and magnitude of change over time. Effectiveness indicators for this study focus on tangible outcomes, specifically the Coping Strategies Index (CSI) and Food Consumption Score (FCS), widely recognized proxies for household food security within food security intervention designs.

The CSI is a rapid assessment tool that serves as an indicator of household food security by evaluating coping strategies employed in response to food shortages. It gauges the extent to which households are food insecure, based on the frequency and severity of specific coping behaviors observed over a seven-day period. The CSI score is calculated by summing the frequencies of

twelve identified coping behaviors, each weighted according to severity as outlined in Table 3-4. A higher CSI score reflects a greater degree of food insecurity, enabling the evaluation to capture shifts in household food security (Daniel Maxwell & Caldwell, 2008, USAID, 2020).

**Table 3-4: Coping Strategies Index components**

| #  | Coping Strategies  | Severity Weight |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1  | Skip entire days without eating?                                   | 8               |
| 2  | Restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat? | 6               |
| 3  | Children skipped meals/or eaten smaller portions                   | 6               |
| 4  | Send children members to eat elsewhere?                            | 6               |
| 5  | Purchase food on credit?   | 6               |
| 6  | Borrow food, or rely on help from a friend or relative?            | 6               |
| 7  | Reduce number of meals eaten in a day?                             | 3               |
| 8  | Reduced amount eaten in meals by all household members             | 3               |
| 9  | Rely on less preferred and less expensive foods?                   | 3               |
| 10 | Purchased low quality market “leftovers”                           | 3               |
| 11 | Consume seed stock held for next season?                           | 1               |
| 12 | Gather wild food, hunt, or harvest immature crops?                 | 1               |

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) serves as a key indicator of household caloric availability and dietary diversity, capturing data on the frequency and variety of food groups consumed over the prior week. This data is weighted according to the nutritional density of each food group, with nutritionally dense foods—such as animal-based products—assigned higher weights than less dense groups, like tubers.

To facilitate categorical analysis, the FCS is segmented by established thresholds, classifying households into three groups based on their scores: "poor" ( $FCS < 45$ ), "borderline" ( $45 \leq FCS < 61$ ), and "acceptable" ( $FCS \geq 61$ ). These thresholds are tailored to reflect the Palestinian context, where households with "acceptable" FCS levels are considered food secure, whereas those within the "borderline" or "poor" ranges are classified as moderately or severely food insecure, respectively.

The FCS calculation involves recording the frequency of consumption across twelve food groups over a seven-day period, assigning a weight to each group based on its nutritional significance (as shown in Table 3-5). This approach allows for a composite measure that reflects both dietary quality and food security levels at the household level, aiding in understanding the intervention's impact on household food security (WFP, 2008).

**Table 3-5: Food consumption components**

| # | Food category   | Questions And Filters   | Weight |
|---|-----------------|---|--------|
| 1 | Cereals         | Any bread, rice noodles, biscuits, or any other foods made from millet, sorghum, maize, rice, wheat, .... etc.? | 2      |
| 2 | Root and tubers | Any potatoes, yams, manioc, cassava or any other foods made from roots or tubers?                               |        |
| 3 | Vegetables      | Any vegetables?   | 1      |

| #  | Food category          | Questions And Filters  | Weight |
|----|------------------------|--|--------|
| 4  | Fruits                 | Any fruits?  | 1      |
| 5  | Meat, poultry, offal   | Any beef, lamb, rabbit wild game, chicken, duck, or other birds, liver, kidney, heart, or other organ meats? | 4      |
| 6  | Eggs                   | Any eggs?  |        |
| 7  | Fish and seafood       | Any fresh or dried fish or shellfish?  |        |
| 8  | Pulses/legumes/nuts    | Any foods made from beans, peas, lentils, or nuts?   | 3      |
| 9  | Milk and milk products | Any cheese, yoghurt, milk or other milk products?  | 4      |
| 10 | Oil/fats               | Any foods made with oil, fat, or butter?   | 0.5    |
| 11 | Sugar/honey            | Any sugar or honey?  | 0.5    |
| 12 | Miscellaneous          | Any other foods, such as condiments, coffee, or tea?   | 0      |

The analysis for evaluating intervention effectiveness will focus on data relevant to the second hypothesis (H2): *Humanitarian Interventions for food security are effective in achieving their objectives.*

#### ✓ Analysis of intervention efficiency

Evaluating intervention efficiency focuses on whether resources are optimally utilized to achieve the intended objectives. Efficiency underscores the role of resource availability in humanitarian interventions and how adequate resources contribute to improved efficiency. This analysis examines how effectively intervention resources, organizational structures, and systems are mobilized and utilized throughout implementation. Data for assessing efficiency will be collected through participant surveys, KIIs with project managers, and a review of project documents to evaluate the resource utilization feasibility. Descriptive statistical methods will be primarily employed to analyse this data. The data collected in this exercise will contribute to testing the third hypothesis (H3): *Adequate access to resources has a significant effect on the efficiency of humanitarian interventions for food security.*

#### ✓ Analysis of intervention impacts

Impact analysis assesses the extent of significant positive or negative effects, intended and unintended, at a higher, systemic level. The analysis utilizes the Relative Importance Index (RII) method to rank factors by their relative importance, following the calculation shown in Equation 3-1 (Noaman & Rezoqi, 2024).

$$\text{Relative importance index method (RII)} = \frac{\sum w}{AN} = \frac{5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1}{5N} \quad \text{Equation 3-1}$$

In this formula, W represents the weighting assigned by respondents (1 to 5), with n1, n2, n3, n4, and n5 representing the count of respondents at each level of weighting (strongly disagree to strongly agree, respectively), and N representing the total sample size. The RII ranges from 0 to 1 (excluding 0), with higher values indicating greater impact. RII analysis is accompanied by measures such as mean and standard deviation (SD) to provide further insight; however, RII alone does not establish relationships among attributes.



Determining whether observed changes result directly from project activities requires strategies to enhance confidence in causation, including:

1. **Counterfactuals and Control Groups:** This approach compares outcomes between project participants and a control group unaffected by the project. By analyzing differences, causative inferences can be drawn. Although valuable, this method requires rigorous planning and a robust sampling design, which can be constrained by limited resources.
2. **Mixed-Methods Approaches:** Triangulating data from quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and document reviews strengthens causative analysis. This approach is particularly useful when using control groups is impractical, as it combines multiple evidence sources for comprehensive insight into impacts.

Data for impact analysis will involve surveys with participants to capture impacts and outcomes from beneficiaries' perspectives, complemented by KIIs with project managers and a review of project documentation. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods will guide the analysis. This data will be relevant to testing the fourth hypothesis, (H4): *Humanitarian interventions for food security have a significant impact on household food security.*

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the materials and methods used in this research, including the research process, methodology, design, data collection, and sampling procedures. The choice and rationale behind these methods were informed by the study's research questions and objectives, aiming to strengthen the reliability and validity of the findings. Ethical considerations were meticulously addressed to uphold research integrity, with measures in place to protect participants and ensure data confidentiality. In the following chapters, the results and analyses from these methods will be examined in detail, offering insights into the outcomes and their implications for theory, practical application, and future research directions.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the evaluation of interventions based on the OECD/DAC criteria and is organized into four distinct sections for clarity. The first section provides a detailed description of the interventions being evaluated. The second section focuses on the research findings, offering an in-depth analysis of the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. Finally, the third section includes concluding remarks for the chapter. All data presented in tables and figures are sourced from surveys, KIIs, and project documents, unless otherwise noted.

### 4.1 Description of the intervention

As part of its HRP, the OCHA initiated a series of projects in the Gaza Strip in January 2022, with a planned duration of one year. These projects, implemented across various governorates in the region, aim to support the achievement of SDGs 1 (End Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger) by addressing food security in impoverished and vulnerable communities.

A comprehensive understanding of each intervention's description is essential for analysing its design and interpreting its effects. These descriptions are grounded in the theoretical impact model, which illustrates the logical relationships between intervention measures and their intended impacts. Each intervention description encompasses the following key components: background, overall goal, outcomes, outputs, inputs, stakeholders, targeting strategies, and causal assumptions. Below are the detailed descriptions of each case study derived from desk reviews:

#### 1. The first project intervention (X2)

##### • Background

The project name is “Responding to the Multi-Sectoral Needs of crisis-affected population in the Gaza Strip”. The project contributes to the strategic objectives of the HRP 2022 by enhancing food security for highly vulnerable population affected by protracted crisis through improving access to diversified, sufficient and nutritious food. The context of the intervention is to provide CFW opportunities for 6 months; 939 ILS/month for laborers and 1127 ILS/month for graduates (in total 248HHs benefited from CFW interventions) and MPCA for a period of 6 months (1046 ILS/month) for 310 HHs.

##### • Overall goal

To contribute to reduced social and economic risks and vulnerabilities among crises affected populations of all gender, age, and abilities in the Gaza Strip.

##### • Outcomes

Outcome Result 1: Improved food security levels and access to livelihood opportunities for conflict affected households through Cash for Work. Outcome Result 2: Increased ability of most vulnerable households to meet their basic needs through equitable and safe access to multi-purpose cash.

- **Outputs**

Output results (1.1): Access to cash for temporary employment provided for agricultural laborers and graduates through Cash for Work. Output result (2.1): Access to multipurpose cash provided for participants. Output result (1.2) and (2.2): Awareness-raising activities on gender equality, Gender based Violence (GBV), protection and inclusion designed and implemented on targeted HHs with a focus on HHs that include persons from at-risk groups (pregnant women, widows, PwDs, elderly, chronic patients).

- **Inputs**

The inputs were financial support and training.

- **Stakeholders**

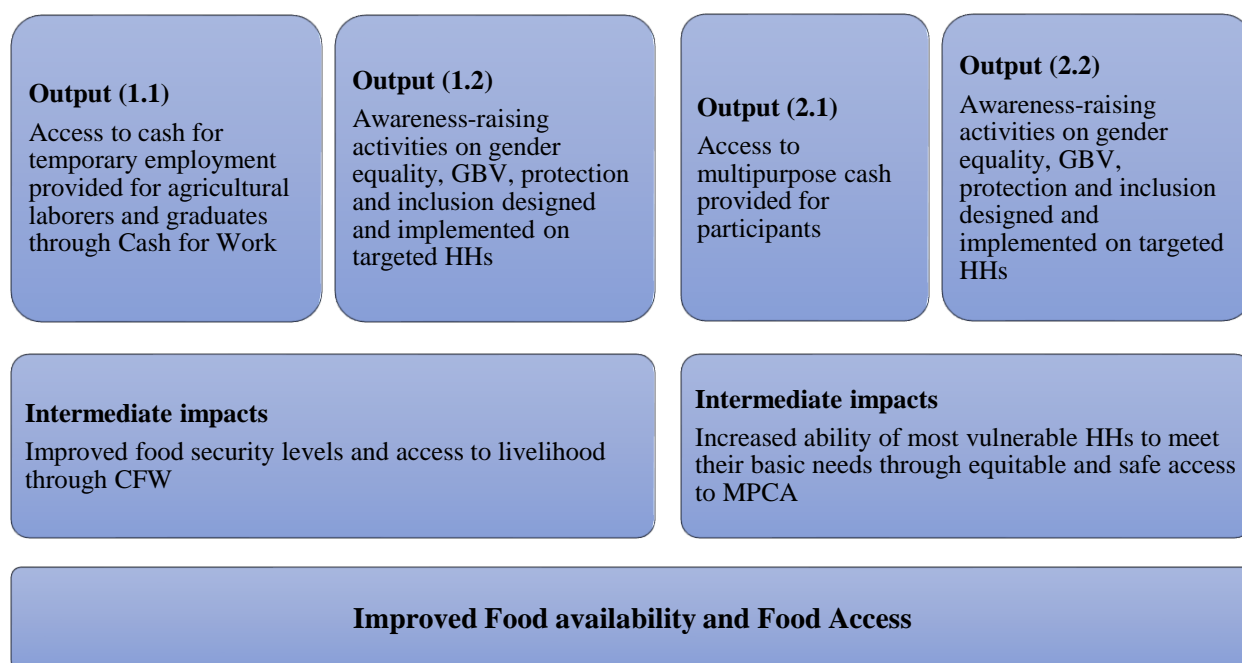
Project staff, partners, hosts and other stakeholders such as financial service providers and markets. In addition, the implementing organization has strong and effective communication and coordination with a wide range of stakeholders such as UNRWA, Ministry of Labor (MoL) and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to avoid duplication between beneficiaries.

- **Targeting**

The project targeted the most vulnerable and food-insecure people. The project's focus was targeted farmers and agricultural laborers/graduates for cash for work modality and vulnerable households for MPCA modality.

- **Causality assumptions**

The hypothetical linkages of the intervention outputs to food security outcomes are indicated in figure 4-1



**Figure 4-1 Food security objective linkages of X2 intervention**

## **2. The second project intervention (X4)**

- **Background**

The project name is “Country Strategic Plan for food assistance to the poor and severely food insecure population in the Gaza Strip”. The project contributes to the strategic objectives of the HRP 2022 by meeting the basic food needs of severely vulnerable Palestinians and by improving their dietary diversity. The context of the intervention is to provide \$10.3 per person as in-kind food voucher (which includes wheat flour, vegetable oil, lentils, chickpeas, and salt) for 3114 HHs and provide MPCA to selected beneficiaries with 878 ILS for 670 HHs.

- **Overall goal**

To Support countries to achieve zero hunger.

- **Outcomes**

Outcome Result 1: Poor and severely food-insecure have improved dietary diversity.

- **Outputs**

Output results (1.1): Provision of unconditional food assistance – through MPCA and in-kind modalities – and nutrition information to poor and food-insecure households. Output Result (1.2): Targeted populations – men, women, boys and girls – receive information to raise nutrition awareness.

- **Inputs**

The inputs were financial support, food items, and training.

- **Stakeholders**

Project staff, partners, hosts and other stakeholders such as financial service providers and markets. In addition, the implementing organization has strong and effective communication and coordination with a wide range of stakeholders such as UNRWA and MoSD to avoid duplication between beneficiaries.

- **Targeting**

The project targeted poor and severely food-insecure households in the Gaza Strip. The project’s focus was targeted families in rural areas for in-kind assistance and families are in urban and semi-urban areas with good internet connectivity and functioning markets for MPCA modality.

- **Causality assumptions**

The hypothetical linkages of the intervention outputs to food security outcomes are indicted in figure 4-2.

**Output (1.1):** Provision of unconditional food assistance – through MPCA and in-kind modalities – and nutrition information to poor and food-insecure households

**Output Result (1.2):** Targeted populations – men, women, boys and girls – receive information to raise nutrition awareness.

**Intermediate impacts**

Poor and severely food-insecure have improved dietary diversity.

**Improved Food availability and Food Access**

**Figure 4-2 Food security objective linkages of X4 intervention**

**3. The third project intervention (X5)**

• **Background**

The project name is “Enhance the capacity of vulnerable communities and essential service providers in the Gaza Strip to protect themselves against public health and protection threats”. The project contributes to the strategic objectives of the HRP 2022 by improving the access of vulnerable and food-insecure households to diversified food and support their basic livelihoods from further deterioration as a result of the protracted crisis, socio-economic conditions, and the impact of the COVID19 crisis. The context of the intervention is to provide food voucher as the value disbursed to each HH is 325 NIS for two rounds for 300 HHs and to provide MPCA for four months to cover HHs basic needs (food, NFI, health, hygiene, rent subsidies, etc.) as the value disbursed to each HH is 1000 NIS for one round for 50 HHs.

• **Overall goal**

People living in the context of a protracted crisis in the Gaza Strip are better able to absorb and recover from shocks associated with the public health crisis.

• **Outcomes**

Reduced vulnerability of households to protection threats in the Gaza Strip

• **Outputs**

Output results (1.1): Vulnerable households have access to sufficient and dignified fresh food through food voucher modality. Output results (1.2): Vulnerable households receive unconditional multi-purpose cash and facilitated support to meet their immediate survival/protection need.

• **Inputs**

The inputs were financial support.

- **Stakeholders**

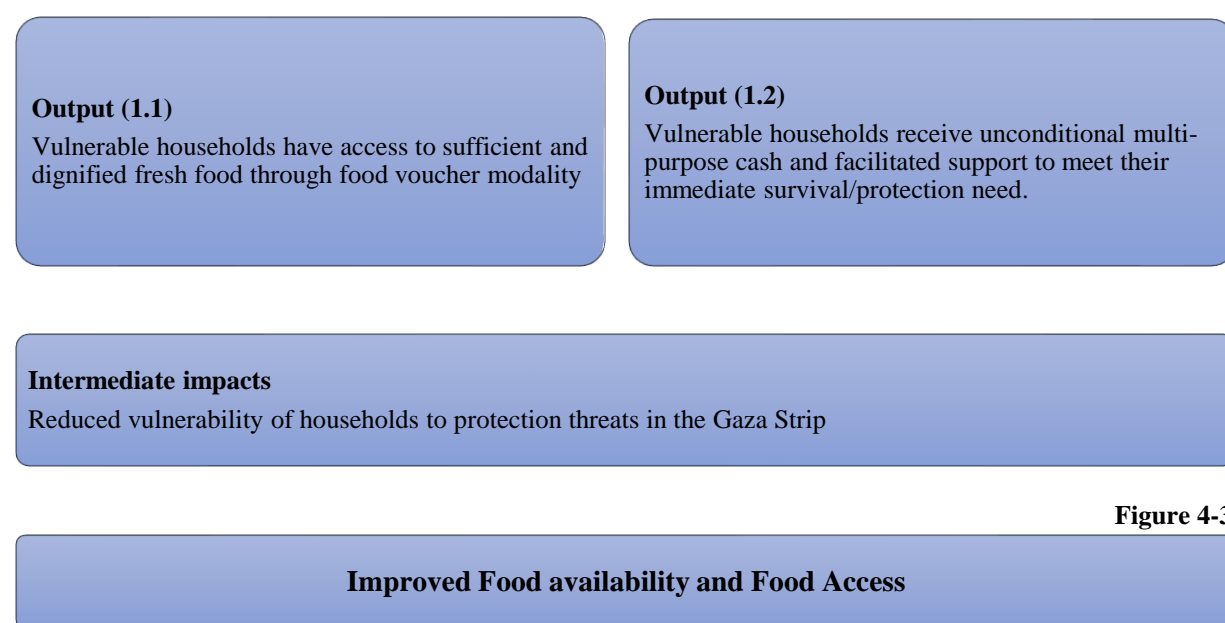
Project staff, partners, hosts and other stakeholders such as financial service providers and markets. In addition, the implementing organization has strong and effective communication and coordination with a wide range of stakeholders such as UNRWA and MoSD to avoid duplication between beneficiaries.

- **Targeting**

The project targeted the most vulnerable and food insecure. The project's focus was targeted for HHs with at least one protection threat for FV and MPCA modalities.

- **Causality assumptions**

The hypothetical linkages of the intervention outputs to food security outcomes are indicated in figure 4-3



**Figure 4-3**

**Food security objective linkages of X5 intervention**

## 4.2 Research result

This section presents an examination of the four evaluation criteria established by the OECD/DAC. The analysis incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research outcomes. It is important to note that the baseline data was not comprehensively disaggregated among various respondent groups, which limited the ability to draw comparisons with the research findings.

### 4.2.1 Demographic characteristics

A total of 362 households across all modalities were surveyed in the three case studies. Throughout the 12-month duration of receiving assistance from the HRP food security intervention, none of the participating households reported receiving income or support from other humanitarian organizations. Table 4-1 details the actual number of households from each modality that participated in the study.

Additionally, Table 4-2 presents the demographic characteristics of the surveyed households, including information on gender, age, household headship, disabilities, chronic illnesses, and pregnancy or lactation status. Notably, 58.6% of the households were headed by females, while 41.4% were headed by males. This significant representation of female-headed households aligns with the HRP 2022 report, which identifies this demographic as a priority group in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip.

The average age of respondents was 37.8 years, and the average household size was 7.2 members. This figure is considerably higher than the expected average household size in Gaza, which stands at 5.6 members according to the latest data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2022.

**Table 4-1: Actual sample size per modality**

| Projects     | Modalities | Number of HHs<br>(Planned Sample) | Number of HHs<br>(Actual Sample) |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| X2           | CFW        | 18                                | 20                               |
|              | MPCA       | 23                                | 25                               |
| X4           | In-Kind    | 231                               | 233                              |
|              | MPCA       | 50                                | 52                               |
| X5           | FV         | 22                                | 24                               |
|              | MPCA       | 4                                 | 8                                |
| <b>Total</b> |            | <b>348</b>                        | <b>362</b>                       |

**Table 4-2: Beneficiaries' demographic characteristics**

| #  | Demographic characteristics          | Total |        |
|----|--------------------------------------|-------|--------|
|    |                                      | NO.   | %      |
| 1  | Number of families                   | 362   | 100%   |
| 2  | Female-headed households             | 212   | 58.60% |
| 3  | Male-headed households               | 150   | 41.40% |
| 4  | Total individuals                    | 2607  | 100%   |
| 5  | Total number of males                | 1283  | 49.21% |
| 6  | Total number of females              | 1324  | 50.79% |
| 7  | Boys (<=5 years of age)              | 182   | 6.98%  |
| 8  | Girls (<=5 years of age)             | 188   | 7.21%  |
| 9  | Children (<=5 years of age)          | 370   | 14.19% |
| 10 | Boys (6-17 years of age)             | 503   | 19.29% |
| 11 | Girls (6-17 years of age)            | 519   | 19.91% |
| 12 | Children (6-17 years of age)         | 1022  | 39.20% |
| 13 | Men (18-59 years of age)             | 562   | 21.56% |
| 14 | Women (18-59 years of age)           | 580   | 22.25% |
| 15 | Total (18-59 years of age)           | 1142  | 43.81% |
| 16 | Elderlies-Male (>=60 years of age)   | 36    | 1.38%  |
| 17 | Elderlies-Female (>=60 years of age) | 37    | 1.42%  |
| 18 | Elderlies-Total (>=60 years of age)  | 73    | 2.80%  |
| 19 | Total number of PWDs                 | 247   | 9.47%  |

| #  | Demographic characteristics                   | Total |        |
|----|---|-------|--------|
|    |   | NO.   | %      |
| 20 | Total number of persons with chronic diseases | 409   | 15.69% |
| 21 | Pregnant or Lactating women                   | 73    | 2.80%  |

Source: Author's own work based on respondents' survey

#### 4.2.2 Research Question 1: Relevance of the interventions

Assessing the relevance of the food security interventions involves determining their alignment with local needs and priorities. This process entails tailoring humanitarian activities to address these needs, thereby enhancing community ownership, accountability, and cost-effectiveness. Accordingly, this section addresses the primary research question: To what extent did food security interventions meet the immediate needs of households?

The relevance of the projects is illustrated by their alignment with the SDGs, particularly in reducing poverty (SDG 1) and ending hunger (SDG 2) through the promotion of food security, improved nutrition, and sustainable agriculture. Additionally, these projects contribute to SDG 5 on gender equality by directly empowering women in productive activities and decision-making at the community level.

Consistent with baseline findings, the interventions remain highly relevant to the needs of the Palestinian people, contributing to the second and third strategic objectives of the HRP 2022. Strategic Objective 2 (SO2) aims to meet the basic needs of vulnerable Palestinians living under occupation by providing quality basic services and improving access to resources, in line with the rights of protected persons under International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Strategic Outcome 3 (SO3) focuses on enhancing the capacity of vulnerable Palestinians to cope with ongoing crises and environmental threats while addressing the root causes of such threats.

However, humanitarian interventions often face challenges, including violence, conflict, poor security, damaged infrastructure, restricted access, and inadequate communications, which can hinder community engagement and information dissemination. In line with governmental policies and local traditions, project managers confirmed that the objectives and design of the projects were consistent with local customs and respectful of community culture across both governorates. For instance, to honor cultural norms, women were separated from men during distribution events, with female staff distributing assistance to women beneficiaries. Similarly, during the registration phase, female teams were designated to interact with women in the targeted areas. This alignment with local customs facilitated the project's acceptance and effectiveness within the communities.

A review of project documents revealed that the intervention projects effectively contributed to the goals of the Food Security Sector and the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022. These goals include alleviating poverty, enhancing social protection, and meeting the essential food needs of vulnerable Palestinian households. The projects achieved this by assisting households in improving their food security and strengthening national institutions to implement food security



strategies and social protection programs, targeting food-insecure and vulnerable populations accurately.

The food security interventions closely align with the priorities established by the Food Cluster for the 2022 HRP programming period. The food cluster emphasized four main priorities to address food and nutrition security challenges and promote sustainable agriculture:

1. Enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable to food crises to build sustainable and resilient communities.
2. Promoting specific nutrition outcomes to ensure health and well-being for current and future generations.
3. Increasing responsible investments in agriculture and food systems to drive inclusive economic growth and job creation, especially for youth.
4. Encouraging innovations in sustainable agri-food systems to produce more and better food in the face of climate change while preserving natural resources and biodiversity.

Key concepts throughout these efforts include strengthening sector governance, addressing climate change, and promoting gender equality. Focus group discussions conducted during the implementation of the projects revealed that beneficiaries and stakeholders, regardless of gender, generally agreed that the food security interventions and their intended outcomes were relevant to their needs.

During the KIIs, project managers emphasized the relevance of their interventions through several critical considerations:

1. **Contextual Understanding:** Projects were designed with a deep understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by the communities they served. During the design phase, considerable attention was devoted to comprehending local food systems, cultural practices, and socio-economic dynamics. This contextual understanding ensured that interventions were not only relevant but also culturally sensitive and aligned with community priorities.
2. **Sustainability:** The projects aimed to promote long-term food security by addressing underlying issues such as poverty, lack of access to resources, and climate-related challenges. By focusing on sustainable practices, the projects sought to create lasting impacts that would support community resilience beyond the immediate intervention period.
3. **Accessibility:** Ensuring accessibility for the target population was a fundamental goal, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and PwDs. The design of the projects included strategies to eliminate barriers that might prevent these groups from benefiting from food security interventions.
4. **Empowerment:** A critical aspect of the projects was the empowerment of individuals and communities to actively participate in decision-making processes related to food security. This was achieved through capacity-building training aimed at enhancing local food production and distribution systems, thus fostering a sense of ownership among beneficiaries.
5. **Resilience:** The projects aimed to strengthen the resilience of beneficiaries against future food security threats, including natural disasters, economic shocks, and conflict. By enhancing coping strategies and adaptive capacities, the interventions sought to prepare communities for potential future challenges.

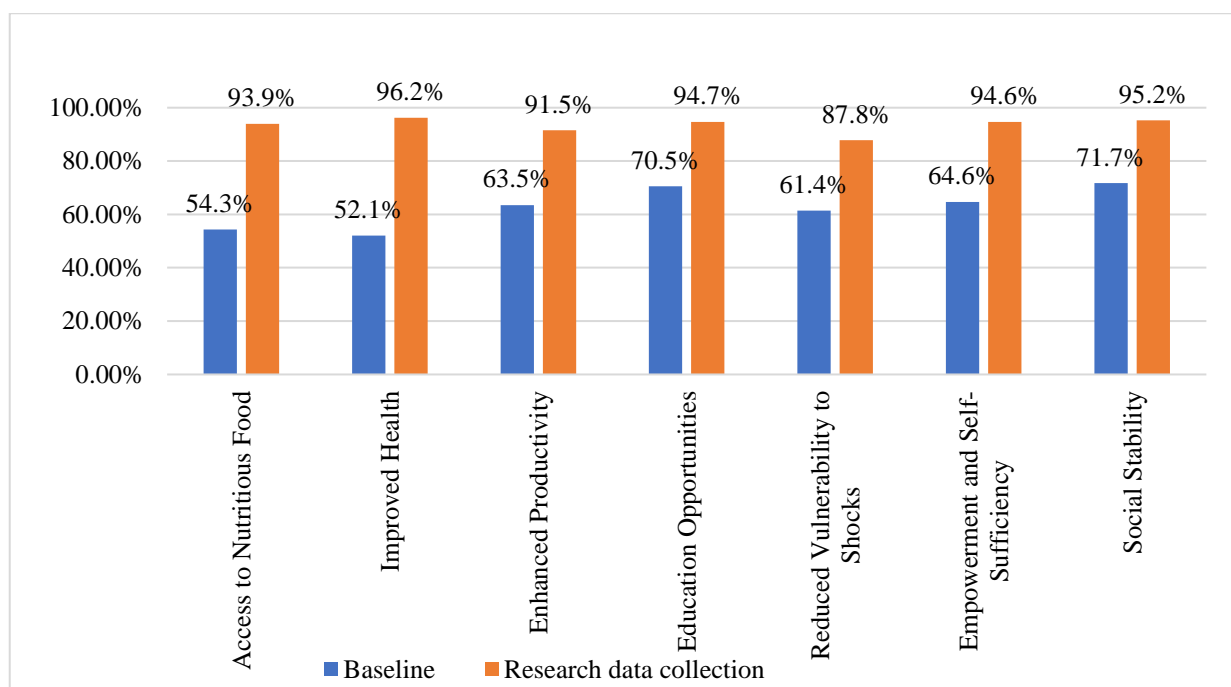
6. Collaboration: Successful implementation of the projects relied on collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, community-based organizations, and the private sector. This multi-stakeholder approach facilitated resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and the establishment of a supportive environment for food security initiatives.

These considerations reflect a comprehensive approach to designing food security interventions that not only address immediate needs but also lay the groundwork for sustainable development and long-term resilience in the communities served.

The implementation of food security modalities was driven by the identified food needs of beneficiaries, as noted by project managers and supporting documentation. A notable strategy employed was the use of multi-round distributions rather than one-off distributions. This approach was particularly effective in enhancing the resilience of program participants residing in violence-affected communities, ultimately improving the food security status of their households. However, project managers acknowledged a potential downside to this strategy, suggesting that it could inadvertently foster dependency on ongoing assistance among participants.

Beneficiaries, primarily female heads of households, consistently reported substantial reductions in household burdens attributed to the intervention. Specifically, 93.9% of respondents indicated improved access to nutritious food, while 96.2% noted enhancements in the health of their family members. These figures represent a marked increase from baseline measures, where only 54.3% and 52.1% reported similar improvements, respectively (as illustrated in Figure 4-4). Furthermore, the food security intervention positively influenced the physical and mental well-being of family members, resulting in heightened productivity in both work and educational settings. A significant 94.7% of respondents highlighted that the fulfillment of basic nutritional needs led to increased school attendance and improved academic performance among children, thereby creating pathways for future higher education and enhanced employment prospects.

The awareness of caregivers regarding the benefits provided by the intervention showed significant improvement compared to baseline levels. The modalities were tailored to align with the specific needs and contexts of beneficiaries, enabling participants to exercise agency in determining how to allocate assistance toward their priorities, such as food, water, transportation, cooking gas, and medical needs. A participant in a focus group discussion remarked, “Before the project, some people were starving and only had one or two meals a day, mostly bread and water. When the project came, they could have up to three good meals a day.” This feedback underscores the project's relevance and effectiveness, as all respondents expressed gratitude and acknowledged the substantial benefits it provided in addressing their needs.

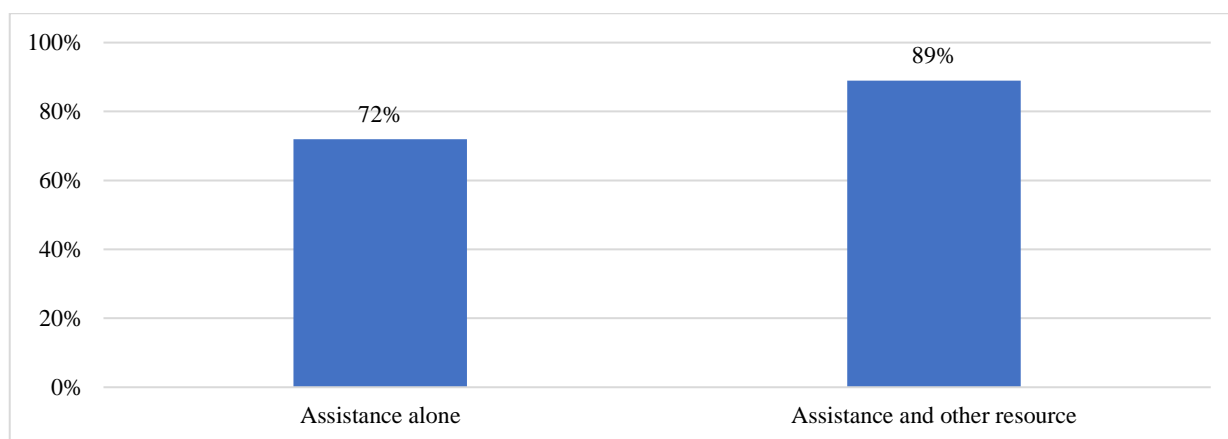


**Figure 4-4 The needs met by the projects**

To gain insights into the extent of food needs coverage provided by the assistance, participants were prompted to distinguish between the coverage afforded by the assistance alone and the coverage achieved when this assistance was supplemented by other household resources. The findings indicated that the assistance alone addressed approximately 72% of the households' food needs. However, when combined with additional household resources, this coverage significantly increased to 89% of perceived needs, as depicted in Figure 4-5.

In terms of addressing other essential needs, several households reported that prior to receiving assistance, they were unable to consume meat or fruit. The intervention directly benefited these households by enabling them to fulfil these previously unmet nutritional needs. For households that could afford these items to varying extents, the assistance allowed them to reallocate their financial resources to cover other necessary expenditures. In the context of the Gaza Strip, participant households indicated that they primarily utilized the additional resources for educational expenses, medications, university tuition, rent, energy costs (particularly electricity bills), and cooking gas.

Overall, the assessment revealed that 86% of the surveyed households were able to meet all their basic needs, while 14% reported only partial fulfilment of their essential requirements. This data underscores the significant impact of the assistance on enhancing the overall well-being of the households involved.



**Figure 4-5 Coverage of monthly needs**

Project managers asserted that the food security interventions were designed to enhance families' resilience against environmental, economic, and other shocks, thereby mitigating their vulnerability. These initiatives were strategically aligned with Palestinian priorities, ensuring a consistent and adequate supply of food. As a result, families gained improved access to a variety of nutritious foods, promoting better health and overall development. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) supported this initiative by advocating for increased funding for food security interventions and encouraging implementing organizations to create projects that empower individuals and communities in managing their food production and consumption. This empowerment fostered a sense of self-sufficiency, increased confidence, and enhanced well-being. Furthermore, a stable food supply contributed to social stability by minimizing potential conflicts over scarce resources, as meeting basic needs is fundamental to peaceful coexistence within communities. Thus, the food security projects not only ensured a reliable food supply but also contributed to holistic development by addressing health, education, economic, and environmental factors, ultimately improving the overall well-being of family members and communities.

The alignment of project activities with humanitarian response priorities was emphasized by project managers. These priorities were established through a multisectoral needs assessment conducted by the HCT and relevant partners, which provided a strategic framework aimed at strengthening institutional capacity. The targeted activities were directly relevant to beneficiaries' needs for capacity building, thereby clarifying the benefits, roles, responsibilities, and overall project management. Food availability and access initiatives were developed and implemented in collaboration with community bodies, with intervention modalities supported by the Cash Working Group (CWG). These modalities were selected based on community preferences and recommendations, ensuring they effectively met the needs of the target population. Community engagement underscored the importance of the intervention modalities, allowing target groups to meet their basic needs with dignity while alleviating their financial burden.

The projects tackled food insecurity through a variety of modalities, including Multi-Purpose Cash (MPC), Cash-for-Work (CFW), in-kind assistance, and food vouchers (FV), specifically targeting

vulnerable households while supporting community resilience through diverse community assets and livelihood support activities. The selection of beneficiaries and the prioritization of community asset project types and locations were guided by community committees and local authorities. This collaborative involvement not only increased the projects' relevance but also fostered a sense of ownership within the community. The projects were initiated through both formal and informal consultations with targeted communities, including baseline needs assessments, community workshops, and discussions with local authorities, related clusters, and active stakeholders. This comprehensive consultation process informed the adaptation of project objectives and designs to better align with the needs and preferences of the target population. For instance, community members indicated that temporary employment opportunities for unemployed youth provided relevant knowledge and practical experience, enhancing their employability. Consequently, the CFW modality targeted households with members capable of engaging in economic activities, while vulnerable households without able-bodied members received support through alternative modalities such as MPC.

Regarding the relevance of the project objectives and designs to beneficiaries, approximately 92.4% of respondents deemed the projects to be highly relevant. They indicated a significant need for external support to address food shortages, which the assistance modalities effectively met. Furthermore, 94.3% of survey participants found the distribution of assistance to be highly suitable. During the survey, the assessment team sought suggestions from beneficiaries to improve future projects. Nearly all respondents underscored the importance of continued involvement of community committees as part of a participatory approach, emphasizing the need for beneficiaries to engage directly in the design, implementation, and evaluation of food security interventions through community consultations, focus group discussions, and participatory workshops. This active engagement ensures that interventions are contextually relevant and responsive to the needs of beneficiaries.

Respondents also advocated for increased opportunities for skills development, training, and capacity building, suggesting workshops focused on sustainable agricultural practices, nutrition education, income-generating activities, and food processing techniques. By equipping beneficiaries with these skills, they would be better positioned to achieve self-reliance and resilience in securing their food needs. Furthermore, beneficiaries recommended designing interventions with an emphasis on sustainability and long-term impact, including investments in initiatives that build community resilience, strengthen local food systems, and promote income-generating activities. They also suggested fostering partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and private sector stakeholders to leverage resources and support sustainability efforts beyond the intervention's duration. Lastly, many respondents expressed a desire to expand both the duration of assistance and the number of households reached, which would further enhance the impact and reach of the food security interventions.

The review of project documents indicated that households facing multiple vulnerability factors were prioritized for selection, provided they were not receiving assistance from other

organizations. This approach ensured that the most vulnerable households benefited from the assistance, with the selected modalities allowing participants the flexibility and dignity to prioritize their needs. During implementation, the collection of Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) informed the household selection process. At-risk individuals, including orphans, pregnant women, the elderly, and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), were identified in each household, and assistance was tailored to meet their specific needs. Additionally, a Gender-Age-Disability (GAD) analysis was conducted for all household members. During household visits, social workers engaged with women, men, boys, girls, PwDs, and the elderly, discussing their varying gender roles and needs while assessing gender balance and tensions. Based on the GAD analysis results, tailored awareness sessions were delivered by specialists to the targeted households. Cases requiring further intervention were referred to specialized actors, particularly within the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and disability sectors. The project adhered to the humanitarian framework by collecting SADDD and applying GAD analysis to inform assistance, adapting support to address the specific needs and circumstances of households, ensuring adequate participation through sensitization and consultation, and maintaining accountability via an inclusive feedback system and referral mechanisms. This comprehensive approach ensured that the assistance provided was contextually relevant, met the specific needs of the most vulnerable, and promoted a balanced and sensitive response to gender, age, and disability-related issues.

The review of project documents revealed that gender considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation processes. Using available data and findings from interviews, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the project identified and targeted gender-specific issues within the beneficiary groups, aligning with the gender policy aimed at ensuring equitable access to and control over food security and nutrition. Outcomes of the projects were complemented by awareness-raising activities serving as a protection component to address issues related to gender equality, GBV, protection, and inclusion for all participants. These activities aimed to enhance protection measures and reduce risks associated with GBV and other protection challenges. Consequently, protection considerations were mainstreamed throughout all project phases, ensuring that gender-specific issues were effectively identified and targeted within the beneficiary groups, adherence to gender policy objectives by promoting equitable access to and control over food security and nutrition, and enhancing protection measures through awareness-raising activities.

All project interventions were aligned with and supported the 2022 HRP, contributing to its Strategic Objectives (SO) 2 and 3. These priorities were also highlighted in the Country Response Plan. The project modalities adhered to the related humanitarian plan and standards, aligning with the strategic objectives of the HRP. The projects were highly relevant to the population, considering the socio-economic context of the Gaza Strip and identifying factors undermining household livelihoods and food security while proposing long-term solutions to address these issues. Overall, the researcher concludes that the projects were well framed within the local context, effectively addressing the population's general priorities.

The interventions implemented within the projects were consistently relevant, with no observed shortcomings in this area during the evaluation. As a result, the relevance of the projects is rated as "Highly Satisfactory." The interventions were logically structured, demonstrating coherence from objectives through to specific activities, which led to the validation of the first hypothesis: H1: *Humanitarian interventions for food security are relevant interventions.*

#### **4.2.3 Research Question 2: Effectiveness of the interventions**

Effectiveness is typically described as the degree to which an assistance activity meets its goals. Additionally, when evaluating a humanitarian intervention, it is essential to consider how well it aligns with established humanitarian principles. Consequently, this section addresses the second research question: To what extent did food security interventions achieve their objectives, including the timely delivery of relief assistance? The following key factors, identified from the evaluation findings, contributed to the project's effectiveness.

##### **4.2.3.1 Effectiveness in achieving the planned outputs and outcomes.**

The assessment of the projects' performance against the targets based on outputs revealed satisfactory results, with end-of-project targets being met for both output and outcome targets.

##### **1. The first project intervention (X2)**

##### **➤ Outcome Result 1: Improved food security levels and access to livelihood opportunities for conflict affected households through Cash for Work.**

The document review at endline revealed that all respondents reported improved food accessibility in both quantity and quality, noting that the project enabled them to regularly consume nutritious and tasty food items over an extended period. Many participants mentioned that the project allowed them to access foods that were previously unavailable to them, such as fresh fruits like figs and mangos and chicken meat. Throughout the project, the food security status of the targeted vulnerable households improved by 61 points. A total of 248 targeted households (comprising 2068 individuals: 612 women, 613 men, 395 girls, 448 boys, including 231 PwDs) showed increased access to cash through CFW opportunities, particularly in the agriculture sector. Two laborers secured sustainable job opportunities with one of the selected private sector hosting organizations. Despite not reaching the planned target number of households (291) due to budget losses from currency exchange, the project met the expected number of individual targets.

The work opportunities were accompanied by awareness activities. As a result, 100% of participants reported increased knowledge of their rights and entitlements, roles and duties, gender equality, and complaints and feedback mechanisms. Additionally, the CFW intervention addressed one of the most pressing needs in the agriculture sector. By providing support to agricultural organizations and small farmers through securing manpower via CFW programs, the project helped reduce seasonal variable costs and boost productivity. During the project, CFW participants worked across different seasons, including the highly celebrated olive season in Palestine, the strawberry season, and Ramadan, which involves agriculture activities related to food parcels.

Table 4-3 below highlights figures showing the contribution of CFW participants in enhancing productivity in the agriculture sector. Thus, the project successfully achieved this outcome.

**Table 4-3: Contribution of CFW participants in enhancing productivity.**

| Planting and reclaiming |                    | Food Production     |                         | Livestock Chicken |                |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Open land               | Green Houses       | Production for sale | Meals for NGOs projects | Chicken care      | Cow's milk     |
| 3,039<br>Donums         | 785<br>Green house | 87,506<br>Kilogram  | 965<br>Meals            | 30,000<br>Chicken | 7,610<br>Liter |

➤ **Output results (1.1): Access to cash for temporary employment provided for agricultural laborers and graduates through Cash for Work.**

A total of 248 participants (35 agronomists and 213 laborers; 127 males, 86 females) accessed cash through short-term opportunities for five months in 17 hosting organizations working in the agriculture sector across Gaza governorates. Although the project did not meet the planned target of 291 households, achieving 85.2% of the target, this deviation was due to budget losses from currency exchange and prioritizing vulnerability over family size in the selection process. Consequently, fewer households were selected, but they had more family members than anticipated. Despite this, the project met the expected number of individual targets and thus achieved its intended result.

➤ **Output results (1.2): Awareness-raising activities on gender equality, GBV, protection and inclusion designed and implemented on targeted HHs with a focus on HHs that include persons from at-risk groups (pregnant women, widows, PwDs, elderly, chronic patients).**

- **Awareness-Raising Activities at the Household Level:** These activities occurred in multiple stages. During the participant targeting phase, verification and targeting visits were conducted to finalize the selection of appropriate participants from targeted households. The project team used these visits to carefully assess the social atmosphere and gender dynamics within the households. Sensitive messages on gender equality, inclusion, and protection were shared with all household members, including the elderly and PwDs, to raise awareness and encourage participation. By the end of the project, 90% of targeted households reported increased participation in reproductive activities within the household, and 90% reported increased involvement in decision-making regarding household priorities.
- **Orientation and Awareness Sessions at the Household Level:** Targeted participants received six orientation sessions before starting work. These sessions reintroduced the scope of the intervention, detailed the monthly assistance amount and mechanism, and explained the use of the e-wallet delivery system for the first time, with a representative from Pal Pay providing instructions on using the ATM card, cash-out points, and addressing technical issues or password loss. The project team also reinforced previously delivered messages on gender



equality, inclusion, and participation. By the end of the project, 84% of participants reported increased awareness and knowledge about protection concepts and services.

- **Orientation and Awareness at Hosting Organizations Level:** Selected hosting organizations received one orientation session where they were briefed on the details of the intervention, participants' rights and entitlements, and the expectations from hosts regarding supervision and capacity building for participants. The project team also emphasized the importance of considering gender equality and appropriateness among hosted participants. As a result, the project successfully achieved its intended outcomes.
- **Outcome Result 2: Increased ability of most vulnerable HHs to meet their basic needs through equitable and safe access to multi-purpose cash.**

The project successfully provided adapted assistance to 310 vulnerable households (comprising 2367 individuals: 664 men, 736 women, 487 girls, 480 boys, and 448 PwDs). A significant 99% of targeted households reported being able to meet their basic needs during the period the MPCA was provided, and 95% reported accessing the assistance in a safe, participatory, and accountable manner. Endline results indicated that health was the top priority for the targeted households, with 99% of participants reporting access to health services from qualified providers. Additionally, 39% of participants reported living in safe and dignified shelters, which is an improvement from the baseline of 0%, though it remains a significant need that MPCA did not substantially address. Thus, the project achieved its intended result.

- **Output result (2.1): Access to multipurpose cash provided for participants.**

Despite budget reallocation and currency exchange losses, the project was able to deliver adapted MPCA to 112 households for 7 months, 153 households for 6 months, and 45 households for 3 months. In total, 310 vulnerable households received MPCA. Therefore, the project successfully achieved this result.

- **Output result (2.2): Awareness-raising activities on gender equality, GBV, protection and inclusion designed and implemented on targeted HHs with a focus on HHs that include persons from at-risk groups (pregnant women, widows, PwDs, elderly, chronic patients).**
- **Consultation and Targeting Phase:** During household field visits, the project team ensured that all household members, including children, understood the need for a participatory approach in deciding household disbursement priorities. They also emphasized the importance of using the adapted assistance to meet the special needs of at-risk individuals. During these visits, the team carefully assessed the social atmosphere and gender dynamics within the households. They shared sensitive messages on gender equality, inclusion, and protection with all household members, including the elderly and PwDs, to raise awareness and encourage participation.
- **Orientation and Awareness Sessions:** Targeted participants received five orientation sessions before the first MPCA transfer. These sessions reintroduced the details of the assistance, the

adapted amount, and the delivery mechanism. As with the CFW program, it was the first time using the e-wallet delivery mechanism. A representative from Pal Pay attended all sessions to provide detailed instructions on using the ATM card, cash-out points, and handling technical issues or password loss. During monitoring visits, the project team also reinforced previously delivered messages on gender equality, inclusion, and participation. By the end of the project, 100% of targeted participants reported increased participation in decision-making and meaningful access to their entitlements and information. Therefore, the project achieved its intended result.

## **2. The second project intervention (X4)**

### **➤ Outcome Result 1: Poor and severely food-insecure have improved dietary diversity.**

Recent data reviewed, including logframes, Annual Country Reports, beneficiary datasheets, and KIIs and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), revealed an improvement in dietary diversity among the poor and severely food-insecure demographics. This outcome represents a significant step forward in addressing nutritional deficiencies and enhancing food security among vulnerable beneficiaries. Through coordinated efforts in policy implementation, community initiatives, and targeted interventions, individuals facing substantial economic hardships now have access to a wider variety of nutrient-rich foods, reducing the risks associated with malnutrition. This positive change highlights the effectiveness of comprehensive strategies aimed at tackling food insecurity, emphasizing the importance of equitable access to diverse and nutritious food options for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic status. Therefore, the project successfully achieved this outcome.

### **➤ Output results (1.1): Poor and severely food-insecure receive diverse and nutritious food to improve their dietary diversity.**

During the project, 670 households were provided with unconditional food assistance, targeting poor and severely food-insecure households in the Gaza Strip. Additionally, 3114 households received in-kind assistance. Following a recommendation from the previous year's Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in the State of Palestine, there was a gradual transition from in-kind food assistance to MPCA. This transition aimed to economically empower both men and women, granting them autonomy in deciding how to utilize the assistance. As part of the project's design, the implementing organization aimed to introduce immediate cash transfers for 65% of beneficiaries while decreasing the proportion receiving in-kind assistance to 35%.

To ensure the integrity of transfers to the intended beneficiaries, the organization contracted shops capable of providing quality and diverse foods at market prices while implementing additional layers of controls. Whenever possible, shops owned by women were included to promote women's economic empowerment. Therefore, the project successfully achieved this result by transitioning a significant portion of beneficiaries to MPCA, thereby empowering them economically and granting greater autonomy in their decision-making regarding the use of assistance.

➤ **Output Result (1.2): Targeted populations – men, women, boys and girls – receive information to raise nutrition awareness.**

In addition to providing unconditional food assistance, tailored nutrition-sensitive awareness activities were implemented to engage diverse groups, including men, women, girls, and boys, with the aim of raising awareness about nutrition. These activities included delivering nutrition messages to improve awareness among beneficiaries and enhance dietary diversity at the household level. By empowering women, men, girls, and boys to make informed decisions that improve food security and nutrition, these efforts contributed to achieving the Gender Policy objectives.

In response to recommendations from the strategic review, the implementing organization utilized available nutrition data to design and implement interventions based on the nutritional needs, rather than just caloric requirements, of the beneficiary population. This involved developing and delivering basic awareness-raising sessions on healthy eating habits and nutrition. Throughout these activities, the implementing organization prioritized the safety of beneficiaries and emphasized protection and accountability towards affected populations. All women and men beneficiaries retained access to beneficiary feedback mechanisms through the project's channels. This commitment to accountability ensured that the input and feedback from affected populations were considered in program design, reinforcing accountability to the communities being served.

Empowering women plays a crucial role in enhancing the dietary diversity of assisted households. Therefore, the primary objective of the nutrition awareness sessions, which involve both men and women but place a significant emphasis on the latter, is to contribute to improved family nutrition by promoting diet diversification and behavioral change. These sessions aimed to impart knowledge on optimal nutritional practices through regular training sessions attended by both women and their spouses.

When selecting participants for these sessions, the implementing organization prioritized those with poor food consumption and dietary diversity scores. While all women heads of households receive assistance, the implementing partner also enables all men listed as beneficiaries to nominate an alternate family member, typically their spouses, to collect the household's food entitlements from participating shops. This approach ensures that both men and women are actively engaged in improving family nutrition and accessing food assistance, ultimately contributing to the project's success in achieving this outcome.

### **3. The third project intervention (X5)**

➤ **Outcome Result 1: Reduced vulnerability of households to protection threats in the Gaza Strip**

The project has significantly advanced the safety and security of households in the Gaza Strip by reducing their vulnerability to protection threats. This outcome reflects a collaborative effort to address long-standing challenges related to conflict and instability. By implementing strategic measures and joint interventions, households are now better equipped to withstand and respond to

various protection threats, fostering resilience and stability within the community. Specifically, the project facilitated increased access to basic social protection needs and services for 350 households (comprising 2,450 individuals) in the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, 100% of targeted households demonstrated an improved FCS, indicating enhanced access to nutritious food and improved food security. Therefore, the project successfully achieved this result, contributing to the overall well-being and resilience of the community.

➤ **Output results (1.1): Vulnerable households have access to sufficient and dignified fresh food through food voucher modality.**

The project effectively addressed food insecurity by providing vulnerable households with sufficient and dignified access to fresh food through a food voucher modality. This approach empowers those in need to make choices that align with their dietary preferences and cultural needs, fostering a sense of autonomy and respect. Specifically, 300 households received quarterly fresh food vouchers along with information on referral services. The endline evaluation revealed that the average FCS of the target population exceeded the baseline, indicating improved food security. Additionally, 95% of men and women who utilized food vouchers expressed satisfaction with the access to food e-voucher services, although 5% cited transportation difficulties. Overall, the project successfully enhanced food security and promoted the well-being of vulnerable households through dignified access to fresh food options.

➤ **Output results (1.2): Vulnerable households receive unconditional multi-purpose cash and facilitated support to meet their immediate survival/protection need.**

The provision of unconditional multi-purpose cash and facilitated support was crucial in ensuring the well-being and resilience of vulnerable households. This assistance allows families to address their most pressing concerns, such as securing shelter or accessing healthcare. The project directly benefited 50 households (334 individuals, including 173 females and 161 males) through this cash assistance and support. The endline evaluation indicated that the average FCS of the target population exceeded the baseline, demonstrating improved food security. Furthermore, 98% of recipients expressed satisfaction with the safety, quality, and accessibility of the assistance, underscoring the project's effectiveness in addressing the needs of vulnerable households.

The evaluation revealed that all objective-level targets (12 out of 12), 100% of outcome-level targets (4 out of 4), and all output-level targets were fully achieved. Upon review of project proposals, reports, and discussions with project managers and beneficiaries, the following reasons for success were identified:

1. **Validation of Project Assumptions:** The project's assumptions, at both the objective and outcome levels, were confirmed as accurate. This validation ensures that the project's fundamental principles, hypotheses, and expectations are sound, facilitating informed decision-making and efficient resource allocation.
2. **Local-Level Concentration:** Concentrating project activities at the local level allowed for a deeper understanding of community dynamics and needs, enabling tailored interventions and

promoting long-term sustainability. Engaging local stakeholders fostered ownership and empowerment.

3. **Clearly Defined Objectives:** Well-defined objectives provided guidance and purpose, ensuring clarity in what needed to be accomplished.
4. **Well-Considered Strategies and Plans:** Effective strategies assisted in resource allocation and identifying potential obstacles in advance.
5. **Adequate Resource Allocation:** Sufficient financial, personnel, and technological resources were crucial for achieving objectives within the desired timeframe.

#### **4.2.3.2 Effectiveness Factors**

Effectiveness factors denote the fundamental components that contributed to the project's success:

##### **A. Flexibility and responsive**

The findings of this project underscore the critical role of flexibility in effectively responding to the needs of beneficiaries. Evidence from project reports and independent KIIs with project managers demonstrated that the project team was able to promptly adapt to changing circumstances by relocating distribution points to areas preferred by beneficiaries. Additionally, adjustments to the design and locations of community assets were made based on requests from the community committee, in consultation with local authorities.

Data analysis revealed remarkably high levels of beneficiary satisfaction, with 93.2% reporting ease of project registration, 94.1% indicating satisfactory access to assistance support, and 98.6% expressing appreciation for the helpfulness of the project team. Importantly, no significant differences in satisfaction rates were observed when disaggregating data by gender or location, suggesting that the project effectively met the diverse needs of all beneficiaries.

The success of these outcomes can be attributed to several key factors: the establishment of clear and shared registration criteria facilitated by the community committee, the strategic proximity of distribution points to beneficiaries' residences, and a dedicated program team that maintained flexibility and responsiveness to emerging beneficiary needs. These elements were corroborated through desk reviews and supported by the findings from all conducted KIIs, highlighting the importance of adaptive management in humanitarian interventions.

##### **B. Clear well Communicated Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM)**

The Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system implemented a robust Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) from the project's inception, with dedicated personnel assigned to manage complaints and responses. All implementing organizations prioritize the right of beneficiaries to provide feedback and raise complaints by conducting tailored introductory meetings. These sessions are designed based on the collection and analysis of SADDD, ensuring that communication channels are inclusive and accessible to all demographic groups. Participants in these meetings are educated about the CFM, informed of their entitlements within the project, and made aware of their fundamental rights to be respected and upheld.

The CFM is structured to offer proactive and inclusive channels that are accessible to individuals of all ages and abilities, facilitating direct communication between beneficiaries and the organization. This system emphasizes providing opportunities for marginalized groups to express their needs and contribute to project decision-making and evaluation processes. Each implementing organization upholds an accountable complaint mechanism that is inclusive, gender-sensitive, and accessible to various vulnerable groups. The system provides multiple avenues for beneficiaries to submit feedback or complaints, including written submissions, verbal communication via hotlines, suggestion and complaint boxes, monitoring visits, direct visits to the organization's office, and interaction with responsible personnel. As a result, individuals with diverse abilities are informed about and can access secure and reliable channels for lodging complaints.

Feedback gathered from interviewed beneficiaries indicated that 100% were aware of and satisfied with the CFMs communicated to them from the project's inception. None of the respondents reported encountering obstacles or feeling inhibited from filing complaints throughout the project duration. However, only 11.6% of surveyed beneficiaries reported utilizing the CFM, while 85.4% rated the effectiveness of the response to their concerns. Overall satisfaction with the implemented CFM was reported by 93.6% of respondents, though 4.4% expressed only moderate satisfaction. Dissatisfaction primarily arose from delays in responses to complaints submitted via the suggestion box. These findings were corroborated by KIIs with project managers, revealing that suggestions for process adjustments, such as modifying distribution points or relocating community assets, were typically raised directly by community committees rather than through the CFM. Individuals who voiced concerns through this informal route reported complete satisfaction with the promptness of the responses received. According to the project's final report, five complaints were managed during the implementation phase, all of which were received via the hotline, and these were addressed in line with the findings from the KIIs with project managers.

Project managers emphasized that all implementing organizations adhered to the Core Humanitarian Standards, particularly Commitment 5, which states that complaints must be welcomed and addressed. This commitment was evident through several key components: First, the establishment of a dedicated Quality Assurance Unit that managed the comprehensive complaint management system, serving as the Complaints Focal Point. This unit was responsible for receiving, registering, and managing complaints, ensuring they were appropriately communicated to relevant departments or stakeholders. Second, multiple channels were made available for beneficiaries to submit complaints and feedback, including hotlines, emails, social networks, and verbal communication, thereby providing various avenues for beneficiaries to voice their concerns. Third, the procedures for receiving and treating feedback and complaints were handled with sensitivity and confidentiality, with established protocols for addressing them based on their sensitivity level.

### **C. Forming and engaging the Community Committees**

Project staff played a pivotal role in facilitating the formation and active participation of community committees across each targeted area. These committees were comprised of members chosen by the community and were actively engaged in all phases of the project. Their involvement was integral to the design phase, beneficiary selection processes, distribution methodologies, and the identification, planning, and execution of community asset projects. The establishment and engagement of these community committees were crucial actions that significantly enhanced the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and overall impact.

Firstly, the community committees provided valuable insights into local priorities and preferences, enabling the project to tailor interventions effectively and adapt procedures to align with community traditions and cultural practices. Secondly, their participation frequently resulted in increased operational efficiency by streamlining processes and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Thirdly, the committees contributed to the effectiveness of beneficiary selection and the identification of community assets by ensuring that these efforts were closely aligned with community needs, thereby facilitating safe and equitable distribution methods. Finally, the engagement of community committees fostered a sense of ownership among community members regarding the project's assets, which is likely to enhance their long-term sustainability and maintenance.

All projects adopted a participatory approach, ensuring the active involvement of vulnerable groups throughout the planning and implementation processes. Diverse segments of society were included in decision-making, with each project establishing community engagement committees in targeted areas to facilitate effective and accountable participation. This approach embraced a NEXUS framework, linking humanitarian, development, community resilience, and stabilization efforts.

For instance, in Project X5, three committees were formed, comprising a total of 30 members, including 14 females. Committee members were selected based on their interest in and commitment to social issues, ensuring representation from various community groups. Terms of reference outlining roles and responsibilities were developed collaboratively with committee members. Community members were empowered to participate in designing and assessing needs throughout the project lifecycle, with interventions tailored to address their unique needs, cultural norms, and socioeconomic contexts. Partnerships with local committees enabled affected individuals to take an active role in designing community initiatives and participating in implementation and supervision processes.

In Project X2, the selection of intervention modalities was carefully aligned with the Humanitarian Plan 2022, recommendations from the CWG, and community preference analyses conducted by the organization. This strategic approach ensured that interventions were responsive to the actual needs and preferences of the community, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness and impact of the projects.

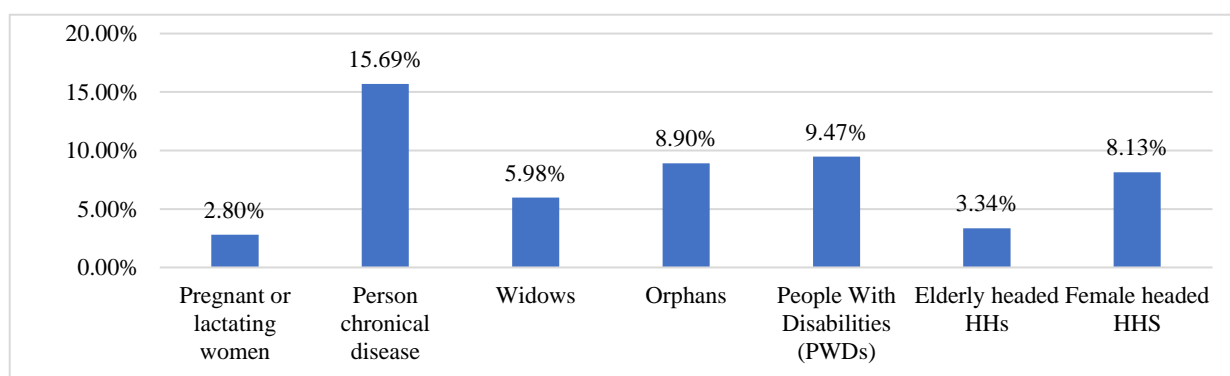
## D. Addressing the Cross-cutting issues

Tackling cross-cutting issues in humanitarian projects is essential for delivering comprehensive and effective aid to vulnerable populations. These issues intersect various domains of humanitarian work and significantly influence overall outcomes. By integrating strategies to address these challenges into project planning, implementation, and evaluation, humanitarian organizations can enhance the impact of their interventions. This approach fosters a holistic understanding of the diverse needs and vulnerabilities within affected communities, ultimately promoting more resilient and equitable outcomes in humanitarian responses. Despite facing challenging circumstances, the projects have made concerted efforts to address several key cross-cutting issues, including:

### a. Vulnerabilities coverage

Vulnerability is often more pervasive than commonly perceived, encompassing four critical factors: poor health, exposure to negative life events, low financial resilience, and limited capacity. These dimensions were integral in identifying impoverished and food-insecure households, as reflected in the data collection tools employed for this purpose. In light of one of the most severe humanitarian crises globally, as documented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), comprehensively addressing all vulnerabilities in the affected region appears daunting. However, organizations have made significant efforts to tackle a broad spectrum of vulnerabilities through predetermined criteria developed in collaboration with community committees and local authorities. This collaborative approach ensured that households with vulnerable individuals received prioritized assistance.

By focusing on comprehensive vulnerability coverage, humanitarian projects aim to reach the most disadvantaged populations, including marginalized and frequently overlooked groups. This process involves conducting rigorous vulnerability assessments, implementing targeted interventions tailored to specific needs, and promoting inclusive decision-making processes that empower affected communities. By addressing vulnerabilities in a holistic manner, humanitarian organizations can enhance the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of their interventions, ultimately leading to more dignified and resilient outcomes for individuals impacted by crises. Figure 4-6 illustrates the diversity and percentages of vulnerable individuals within the targeted households.



**Figure 4-6 Key vulnerability criteria.**



## **b. Protection**

Implementing organizations view safeguarding as a fundamental aspect of their culture, values, and operational frameworks. All staff and participants receive comprehensive orientation on the organizations' safeguarding policies, which encompass child protection, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH), gender issues, whistleblowing, and mechanisms for complaints and feedback. Protection measures are embedded in all activities and monitoring tools to ensure a consistent approach across programs.

To facilitate the integration of safeguarding principles throughout project delivery, organizations continuously develop internal guidance and resources that assist colleagues and partners. This includes strategies aimed at preventing and mitigating any unintended negative consequences of food assistance activities that could jeopardize the safety and security of beneficiaries. For instance, various assistance modalities are customized to address the specific needs of vulnerable households while minimizing the potential for increased household tensions, domestic violence, or physical and psychosocial risks.

Furthermore, efforts are made to ensure that assistance and services are accessible to all, effectively removing barriers, preventing discrimination, and accommodating individuals facing challenges in accessing aid. Multiple feedback mechanisms are actively promoted to empower affected populations to express their concerns and complaints, foster the development of self-protection capacities among both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, and enable individuals to assert their rights. This holistic approach ultimately supports the empowerment of marginalized groups and individuals, ensuring that safeguarding remains a core priority within humanitarian interventions.

The projects systematically integrated protection principles through the following mechanisms:

1. **Prioritizing Safety and Dignity:** The selected delivery mechanism, utilizing PalPay ATM cards, significantly enhanced participants' dignity and autonomy. This approach enabled beneficiaries to access assistance at their convenience from the nearest cash-out points, thereby avoiding long wait times. Additionally, the participant contracts incorporated minimum labor law standards, ensuring compliance with national regulations and safeguarding against potential violations.
2. **Avoiding Harm:** To prevent any potential harm during project implementation, consultation visits were conducted with all household members. An Age-Gender-Disability analysis was also performed, ensuring that the interventions were sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of diverse groups.
3. **Ensuring Meaningful Access:** Assistance modalities were tailored based on data disaggregated by SADDD. This approach facilitated the provision of appropriate and customized support to households. Regular monitoring calls and Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) were conducted to assess whether the assistance effectively met households' basic needs, including any necessary adaptations.
4. **Participation:** Active participation was a core component of all project activities. Hosting organizations, partners, and community committees were deeply involved in the nomination

and supervision of participants. Beneficiaries and community members played a crucial role in identifying needs and understanding the underlying causes of food insecurity, ensuring that assistance was equitably accessed. Special emphasis was placed on the inclusion of women and girls, enhancing accountability to affected individuals and communities, and empowering them through an inclusive decision-making approach.

5. Empowerment: The intervention modalities were specifically designed to empower participants by promoting market engagement and enhancing their capacities and experiences within the agriculture sector. This empowerment strategy aimed to equip beneficiaries with the skills and resources necessary for sustainable livelihoods and resilience-building in the face of ongoing challenges.

All projects adopted a comprehensive safeguarding framework encompassing various policies, including child safeguarding, gender justice, PSEAH, whistleblowing, dignity-at-work, and protection for people-at-risk. These elements were integral to the projects' protection implementation methodology. Documentation from the projects indicated that a risk assessment was conducted at the outset of each initiative, and staff interactions with beneficiaries were systematically monitored to uphold safeguarding standards. However, specific details regarding these assessments were not accessible during the desk review phase of this study.

The projects referenced a code of conduct established for all staff members, which aimed to protect both project personnel and beneficiaries. Notably, no serious incidents of abuse, harassment, or other misconduct were reported across evaluation consultations, desk reviews, or the current data collected for this research. Feedback from evaluation inquiries with various respondent groups indicated that participants did not experience negative repercussions related to their involvement in the projects.

Particular attention was directed toward the protection of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and individuals with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Survey results reinforced this commitment, with an overwhelming majority of respondents (96.4%) expressing the belief that these groups had access to safe and equitable opportunities within the projects. Those who disagreed highlighted resource constraints as a significant barrier, citing limited financial, human, or technical resources as obstacles to ensuring equitable opportunities for all demographic groups.

### **c. Gender Equality**

During KIIs with project managers, it was emphasized that individuals across different gender and age groups, including women, girls, boys, and men, received targeted assistance and actively participated in decision-making throughout the project lifecycle. The interventions were designed in alignment with the implementing organization's intersectionality framework on inclusion, enhancing the understanding of how gender inequalities, responsibilities, and roles influence vulnerabilities in humanitarian emergencies. It was observed that higher household vulnerability correlates with increased risks, particularly in Gaza, where multidimensional vulnerabilities arise from factors such as poverty and limited access to income sources.

The consequences of these vulnerabilities are evident in various forms, including poor health due to an inability to afford specialized healthcare, school dropouts leading to child labor, and domestic violence exacerbated by unmet needs and debts. In the context of humanitarian response (HR) projects, households exhibiting multiple vulnerability factors were prioritized for assistance. Given the complexities of these vulnerabilities, the selected assistance modalities offered participants greater flexibility and dignity, enabling them to prioritize their specific needs.

To ensure cultural sensitivity and promote gender equality during household visits, the project implementation team comprised members from each gender. The project proposal was informed by the Gender-Age Marker at the design stage, and the collection of SADDD guided the selection of households, identifying at-risk individuals such as orphans, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, a comprehensive Gender-Age-Disability analysis was conducted for all members of selected households. Social workers engaged in dialogues with all household members—women, men, boys, girls, persons with disabilities, and the elderly—discussing their differing gender roles, needs, and potential tensions. This inclusive approach ensured that assistance was tailored to address the unique requirements of each group, promoting a more equitable and effective intervention.

Project managers also highlighted the implementation of a gender mainstreaming policy aimed at ensuring gender equality throughout all project stages. Although the specific policy document was not accessible to the researcher, it was confirmed that the projects provided dedicated spaces and opportunities for women to engage in various activities, including participation in community committees, beneficiary registration, and modality distributions. Participants in the survey underscored the active involvement of women in different phases of the projects. A review of CFMs indicated no reported cases of discrimination.

In the study sample, support modalities addressed 362 households, encompassing a total of 2,607 individuals (1,283 males and 1,324 females), resulting in a nearly equal gender distribution among beneficiaries. Additionally, there was no significant disparity between male-headed (41.4%) and female-headed households (58.6%), with the project specifically targeting female-headed households to ensure their active inclusion in the registration process.

#### **d. Do No Harm**

To mitigate potential unintended negative consequences associated with project implementation, project managers reported several key strategies. These strategies included conducting coordination meetings with authorities at both central and local levels from the outset, actively involving the community through the establishment of community committees, and maintaining a system of continuous monitoring and consultation. Collectively, these efforts minimized deviations from project objectives, enhanced community satisfaction and ownership, and ultimately reduced the likelihood of conflict.

The diverse range of activities introduced by the projects, along with the broader community's involvement in the selection, distribution, and feedback processes, significantly contributed to

reducing conflict sensitivity in the targeted areas. Evaluation findings and documentation reviewed during desk research, as well as KIIs with project managers, confirmed that almost no serious conflicts were reported throughout the project's duration.

All implementing organizations demonstrated a commitment to mainstreaming protection throughout all aspects of their activities, both within the food security sector and across other intervention areas, thereby ensuring that protection outcomes are comprehensively integrated. This commitment is reflected in their intervention designs, which adhere to the principle of Do No Harm, prioritizing the safety and dignity of individuals.

Organizations ensure meaningful access to programs by incorporating participation and empowerment approaches while also establishing robust accountability mechanisms. Key protective measures, including safeguarding and accountability to affected populations, are woven into the program design. Implementing organizations specifically target assistance toward the most marginalized and vulnerable food-insecure populations based exclusively on assessed needs, ensuring that their interventions are free from discrimination.

By providing aid at no cost and in locations that are easily accessible to beneficiaries, these organizations enhance the safety, dignity, and integrity of the populations they serve. Furthermore, they prioritize ensuring that beneficiaries have a voice in decisions affecting their lives, dietary choices, and food needs, thereby fostering an environment of respect, agency, and active participation within the framework of their interventions.

#### **e. Satisfaction of the beneficiaries**

Ensuring beneficiary satisfaction is not merely a desirable outcome; it is a fundamental metric for assessing the success of any humanitarian project. In the realm of humanitarian assistance, making a positive impact on the lives of affected individuals is essential. Therefore, understanding and prioritizing the satisfaction of beneficiaries is critical, as it serves as a key indicator of the project's overall effectiveness and value.

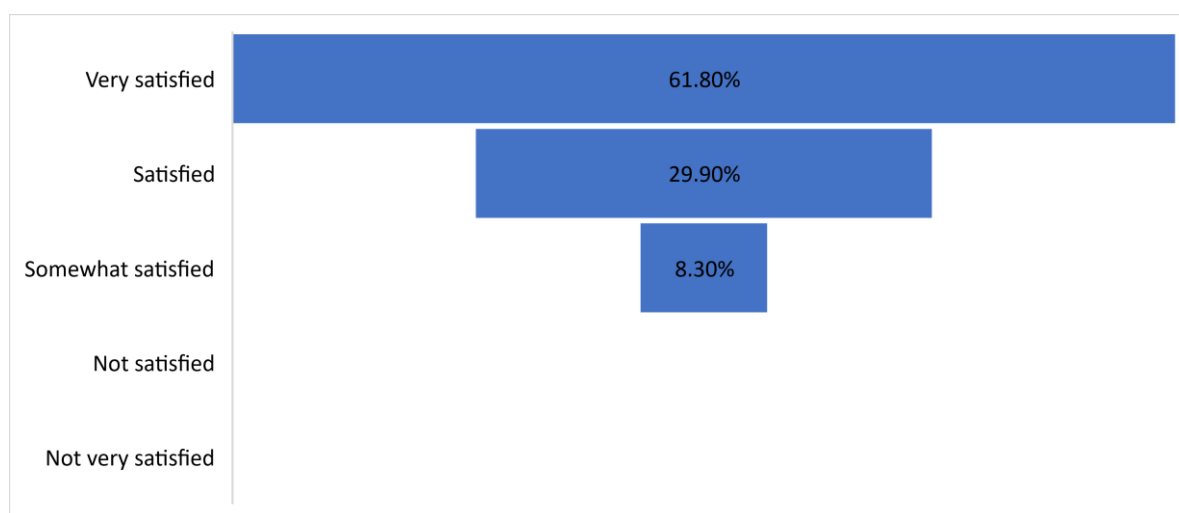
By centering the voices and experiences of beneficiaries, organizations can enhance accountability and transparency, fostering meaningful partnerships built on trust and mutual respect. This approach underscores the multifaceted dimensions of beneficiary satisfaction across diverse project contexts, highlighting its significance as both a guiding principle and an indispensable metric of success.

As a result, the projects implemented adaptive and flexible strategies, responding to insights and feedback gathered through their Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems. This responsiveness not only demonstrates a commitment to beneficiary satisfaction but also ensures that interventions remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of the communities served.

## 1. Satisfaction with the value of the assistance

In the context of humanitarian assistance, beneficiary satisfaction with the perceived value of the assistance provided serves as a critical indicator of project effectiveness. The intrinsic value of assistance transcends mere provision; it encompasses tangible benefits received, the empowerment experienced, and the lasting improvements in the lives of those served. Understanding and measuring satisfaction regarding the value of assistance is vital not only for ensuring accountability and optimizing resource allocation but also for fostering a sense of dignity, respect, and agency among beneficiaries.

Respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the value of the assistance received, as illustrated in Figure 4-7. Overall, 91.70% of beneficiaries reported complete satisfaction with the assistance's value. However, 8.30% indicated being somewhat satisfied, noting that the assistance provided was insufficient to procure adequate or nutritious food, particularly in regions characterized by high food prices or inflation. Notably, none of the respondents in the Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) reported dissatisfaction with the value of the assistance. This data underscores the importance of continuously assessing and addressing the evolving needs of beneficiaries to enhance the effectiveness and impact of humanitarian interventions.



**Figure 4-7: Satisfaction with the assistance's value**

## 2. Satisfaction with the coverage period

In social welfare programs and humanitarian assistance initiatives, beneficiary satisfaction with the coverage period serves as a crucial determinant of their overall experience and well-being. The duration and continuity of assistance significantly influence beneficiaries' capacity to stabilize their circumstances, recover from crises, and forge sustainable pathways toward progress.

Concerning the project coverage period, a significant majority, 89.5% of respondents, indicated that it was too short, suggesting that a minimum coverage duration of 14 to 18 months would be more appropriate. Furthermore, when given the option to choose between an increase in the monthly value of assistance or an extended coverage period, an overwhelming 95% of participants preferred the latter. Respondents expressed that extended coverage would provide greater certainty

in meeting their needs, thereby facilitating improved household financial planning. This feedback underscores the importance of considering the duration of assistance in designing effective social welfare programs, as it directly affects beneficiaries' stability and ability to achieve long-term improvements in their circumstances.

### **3. Satisfaction with reaching the distribution points**

Distribution points serve as a critical link between assistance providers and recipients, facilitating the delivery of essential goods and services to communities in need. The efficiency and convenience with which beneficiaries access these distribution points significantly influence their overall experience and perception of the assistance process. Satisfaction with accessing distribution points encompasses various factors, including proximity, availability of transportation, and logistical arrangements, all of which impact the ease and effectiveness of receiving assistance.

Understanding and addressing the determinants of beneficiary satisfaction in reaching distribution points are essential for optimizing assistance delivery, minimizing access barriers, and enhancing overall program effectiveness. Feedback from beneficiaries revealed that an impressive 96.4% did not encounter any difficulties, obstacles, or risks in reaching the distribution points. In contrast, only 3.6% reported facing transportation challenges, with some resorting to walking partway or seeking assistance from friends to reach the distribution location. This data underscores the importance of strategically locating distribution points and ensuring adequate transportation options to enhance beneficiary access and satisfaction.

### **4. Satisfaction of helpfulness of project team members**

The overall experience and outcomes for beneficiaries are profoundly influenced by their perceptions of the responsiveness and competence of project team members. Satisfaction with the helpfulness of the project team serves as an important indicator of the quality of interpersonal interactions and support provided throughout the assistance process. Understanding and addressing the factors that contribute to beneficiary satisfaction in these areas is essential for building trust, enhancing accountability, and improving the overall delivery of assistance.

Feedback from beneficiaries indicates a high level of satisfaction, with approximately 95% expressing contentment with the ease of registration, access to support, and the helpfulness of project team members. This positive perception highlights the effectiveness of the project team's engagement strategies and underscores the importance of fostering strong, supportive relationships with beneficiaries to achieve successful project outcomes.

#### **4.2.3.3 Effectiveness Indicators**

This section quantitatively assesses the impact of food security interventions on the targeted population's food security status. Using a pre-post evaluation method, this analysis examines shifts in food security indicators by comparing conditions before and after intervention for the same households. This approach allows for measuring both the direction and magnitude of changes over

time, offering insight into adjustments in food availability and access across intervention communities.

To evaluate intervention effectiveness, two standard indicators—the Food Consumption Score (FCS) and the Coping Strategies Index (CSI)—were employed. These indicators are widely applied in food security assessments and have been consistently featured in monitoring and evaluation reports, providing reliable data trends that support the findings in this study. This section presents the results of these evaluations, focusing on changes in key food security indicators within the targeted households and drawing significant insights and lessons for future program improvements. Findings from baseline and end-line assessments, conducted immediately following the intervention, reveal substantial improvements in food security across all governorates.

### **A. The result of Coping Strategies Index (CSI)**

The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) is an essential tool for assessing household behavior during periods of stress or food insecurity, providing critical insights into adaptation methods and the coping strategies used to fulfill basic needs. This index is especially valuable in identifying and prioritizing vulnerable households, as it evaluates the severity of food insecurity based on households' reliance on specific coping strategies. It also tracks shifts in these strategies over time, generating actionable data to guide program design and evaluation (Daniel Maxwell & Caldwell, 2008).

In this study, baseline analysis identified prevalent coping strategies among surveyed households, including frequent food purchases on credit (averaging 6 days per week), reliance on less preferred and cheaper food (5 days per week), and purchasing low-quality “leftovers” from the market (4 days per week). By the project's end, the frequency of these strategies significantly decreased to an average of 1, 1.8, and 0.5 days per week, respectively, as shown in Table 4-4. Overall, all reported coping strategies declined at project completion, indicating a substantial, positive impact on household food security.

However, three months following project conclusion, the frequency of these strategies began to rise, reaching 5, 3, and 2 days per week, respectively. While still below baseline levels, these increases suggest that while the interventions effectively mitigated food insecurity during the project, they were insufficient to prevent a resurgence of negative coping strategies once support ceased. This trend highlights the need for longer-term or follow-up interventions to promote sustainable food security and reduce the re-adoption of coping strategies that compromise household well-being.

**Table 4-4: Coping Strategies Index in assessments**

| #  | Coping Strategies  | Average Coping strategies Frequency |         |          |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|
|    |  | Baseline                            | Endline | Research |
| 1  | Skip entire days without eating?                         | 0.0                                 | 0.0     | 0.0      |
| 2  | Restrict consumption by adults to small children to eat? | 1.5                                 | 0.5     | 1.1      |
| 3  | Children skipped meals/or eaten smaller portions         | 0.6                                 | 0.2     | 0.3      |
| 4  | Send children members to eat elsewhere?                  | 2.1                                 | 0.5     | 1.3      |
| 5  | Purchase food on credit?                                 | 6.0                                 | 1.0     | 5.0      |
| 6  | Borrow food, or rely on help from a friend or relative?  | 3.0                                 | 0.5     | 2.0      |
| 7  | Reduce number of meals eaten in a day?                   | 1.9                                 | 0.5     | 1.5      |
| 8  | Reduced amount eaten in meals by all household members   | 1.8                                 | 0.9     | 1.5      |
| 9  | Rely on less preferred and less expensive foods?         | 5.0                                 | 1.8     | 3.0      |
| 10 | Purchased low quality market “leftovers”                 | 4.1                                 | 0.5     | 2.0      |
| 11 | Consume seed stock held for next season?                 | 1.2                                 | 0.8     | 1.1      |
| 12 | Gather wild food, hunt, or harvest immature crops?       | 3.2                                 | 1.3     | 2.1      |

Table 4-5 and Figure 4-8 provide a detailed depiction of the Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) outcomes, showcasing shifts in coping mechanisms among beneficiary households. The endline assessment, completed immediately following the intervention, revealed substantial improvements in both female- and male-headed households. However, data gathered three months post-project indicate some degree of regression, underscoring the temporal limitations of the intervention's impact on food security.

At the endline, a notable 90.4% of female-headed households recorded a reduced CSI score, averaging 47.5 points. Three months post-project, this proportion decreased to 76.7%, with a corresponding rise in the average score to 60.14 points, indicating a partial reversion to higher dependency on coping strategies. In comparison, 83.8% of male-headed households demonstrated a reduced CSI score at the endline, with an average score of 43.22 points. This declined to 72.1% three months after the project, with an average score of 57.24 points.

These findings align with the observations in the State of Palestine Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022), which identifies higher food insecurity levels among female-headed households. The unique vulnerabilities of these households stem from several intersecting factors: heightened risk of malnutrition linked to women’s reproductive roles, diminished household resilience due to high female unemployment, and constrained access to resources. Additionally, protection violations impede women’s ability to engage in economic activities, such as herding and harvesting, which are vital for household food security. Consequently, while female-headed households benefited significantly from the interventions, the data indicate that their reliance on coping mechanisms resurfaces more quickly than in male-headed households, highlighting an ongoing need for targeted, long-term support to stabilize food security among these populations.

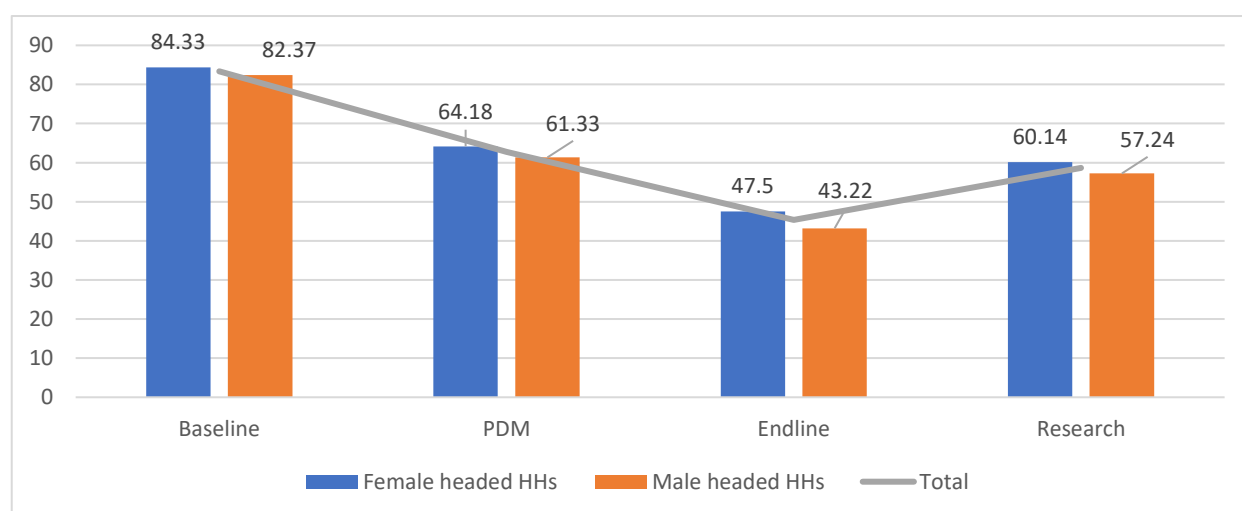


A gender-focused examination of the rCSI data reveals parallel trends in food security outcomes for both female- and male-headed households, indicating no statistically significant gender-based differences in CSI reduction. At the endline, 87.1% of households—regardless of headship—displayed a reduced CSI score, with an average of 45.36 points. However, the follow-up assessment conducted three months post-project reflected a shift, with 74.4% of households maintaining a reduced CSI score but with an increased average score of 58.69 points, indicating some regression.

This change is noteworthy, considering the baseline CSI was markedly high at 83.35 points, improving significantly to 45.36 at the endline. The post-project rise in CSI to 58.69 demonstrates a partial return to higher coping strategy reliance, highlighting the intervention’s temporary efficacy and the beneficiaries' eventual reversion to negative coping strategies without ongoing support. These findings underscore the short-term effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating immediate food security pressures but reveal a gap in sustaining food security resilience over time, suggesting the need for longer-term or recurring support mechanisms to maintain lower coping strategy levels.

**Table 4-5: Reduced Coping Strategies Index in assessments**

| Sex of Hs         | Baseline          | PDM               |                   | Endline          |                   |                   | Research data collection |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                   | Average CSI score | Average CSI score | Average of change | % of respondents | Average CSI score | Average of change | % of respondents         | Average CSI score | Average of change |
| Female headed HHs | 84.33             | 64.18             | -20.15            | 90.40%           | 47.5              | -36.83            | 76.70%                   | 60.14             | -24.19            |
| Male headed HHs   | 82.37             | 61.33             | -21.04            | 83.80%           | 43.22             | -39.15            | 72.10%                   | 57.24             | -25.13            |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>83.35</b>      | <b>62.76</b>      | <b>-20.60</b>     | <b>87.10%</b>    | <b>45.36</b>      | <b>-37.99</b>     | <b>74.40%</b>            | <b>58.69</b>      | <b>-24.66</b>     |



**Figure 4-8 Average rCSI in assessments**

The observed decrease in the CSI demonstrates statistical significance when compared to the baseline CSI of the targeted households. With a P-value below 0.05, this result achieves significance at the 95% confidence level, allowing for the rejection of the null hypothesis. The negative t-value further indicates a reversal in the direction of the effect under study, though it does not affect the significance of the difference between data groups, as detailed in Table 4-6. This statistical outcome confirms that the intervention had a meaningful impact on reducing negative coping strategies among households within the project scope.

**Table 4-6: t-test result for rCSI in assessments**

| Description                                  | Baseline   | PDM   | Baseline   | Endline | Baseline  | Research data collection |
|--|--|-------|--|---------|---|--------------------------|
| CSI scoring                                  | 83.35  | 62.76 | 89.63  | 45.36   | 89.63   | 58.69                    |
| t-test between baseline and other assessment | Statistically significant (t=-13.6 and p= 0.000) positive change in the CSI between baseline and PDM |       | Statistically significant (t=-15.3 and p= 0.000) positive change in the CSI between baseline and endline |         | Statistically significant (t=-14.7 and p= 0.000) positive change in the CSI between baseline and research data collection |                          |

## **B. The result of Food Consumption Score (FCS)**

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a critical measure within food security assessments, offering a quantitative gauge of dietary sufficiency and diversity at the household level. Created by the FAO, the FCS provides a standardized framework for evaluating both the quality and quantity of food consumed over a given period, enabling researchers to identify trends in food security, design targeted interventions, and effectively monitor program outcomes in nutrition and food security.

In this study, the FCS analysis at the endline indicated marked improvements in food security among the targeted households. Specifically, all female-headed households recorded an increased FCS, averaging 73.4 points—reflecting a 31.5% rise from baseline scores. Similarly, male-headed households reported an average FCS of 72.8 points, a 30.1% increase from their baseline. The absence of significant gender differences highlights the uniform impact of the interventions across household types. Aggregate scores showed a substantial increase, rising from a pre-intervention baseline of 50 points to an average of 70.4 points during the project and peaking at 73.1 points by the end. This demonstrates a considerable enhancement in food consumption levels, underscoring the interventions' effectiveness.

However, a follow-up assessment three months post-project revealed a decline in the average FCS to 56.06 points, a decrease from the endline but still above baseline levels, as detailed in Table 4-7. These findings suggest that, while the food security interventions had a significant impact during implementation, their effect on sustaining food security diminished once assistance ceased. The results underscore the interventions' success in bolstering household food security during the project period but highlight the need for sustainable solutions to maintain these gains beyond the intervention's duration.

**Table 4-7: Food Consumption Score in assessments**

| Indicator | Baseline | PDM  | Endline | Research |
|-----------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| FCS       | 50       | 70.4 | 73.1    | 56.06    |

The FCS provides a structured approach for assessing food security by categorizing households based on threshold values. These thresholds, developed to align with the national average in the Gaza Strip, allow for the classification of food security levels into "poor," "borderline," and "acceptable" categories. Specifically, households achieving an FCS of 61 or higher are categorized as "acceptable," indicating adequate food access and diversity. In contrast, households with an FCS below 45 are labeled as "poor," signifying significant limitations in food security. Households with scores between 45 and 60 are categorized as "borderline," reflecting a tenuous food security status. Table 4-8 presents the FCS data according to these thresholds, offering a comparative view of the study sample against the regional food security benchmarks. This threshold-based analysis provides insights into the program's effectiveness in elevating household FCS levels within the target population.

**Table 4-8: FSCs thresholds measurement**

| Category   | Range         |
|------------|---------------|
| Poor       | < 45          |
| Borderline | ≥ 45 and < 61 |
| Acceptable | ≥ 61          |

Table 4-9 provides an in-depth view of the sample households' distribution across the established FCS thresholds, underscoring the varied food security status within the target population. The data reveals that 54.29% of households are categorized as having "acceptable" food security, with an average FCS of 69.22, reflecting a relatively stable food situation among over half of the sampled households. However, concerning trends persist in the "borderline" and "poor" categories, where 32.26% and 13.45% of households are classified, respectively.

The borderline category, despite its higher average score compared to the poor category, includes a significant proportion of households (14.80%) that hover just above inadequacy, indicating that these households remain at risk of regressing to poorer food security if exposed to additional shocks. Households within the "poor" category represent the most urgent cases, with none meeting the basic food security standards, suggesting critical gaps in food access or diversity and an immediate need for focused intervention.

In summary, while a substantial portion of households display acceptable or borderline food security, a significant segment continues to experience vulnerability. This emphasizes the necessity of tailored interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity within these households, ensuring a more stable and resilient food security status across the community.

**Table 4-9: Food Consumption Score categories in assessments**

| FCS Thresholds | Baseline |            | PDM      |      | Endline  |            | Research data collection |            |
|----------------|----------|------------|----------|------|----------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
|                | % of HHs | Avg. Score | % of HHs | Avg. | % of HHs | Avg. Score | % of HHs                 | Avg. Score |
| Acceptable     | 14.20%   | 65.7       | 79.00%   | 74.5 | 85.20%   | 76.1       | 54.29%                   | 69.22      |
| Borderline     | 55.10%   | 51.9       | 21.00%   | 54.9 | 14.80%   | 54.9       | 32.26%                   | 52.83      |
| Poor           | 30.70%   | 39.3       | 0.00%    | 0    | 0.00%    | 0          | 13.45%                   | 40.13      |

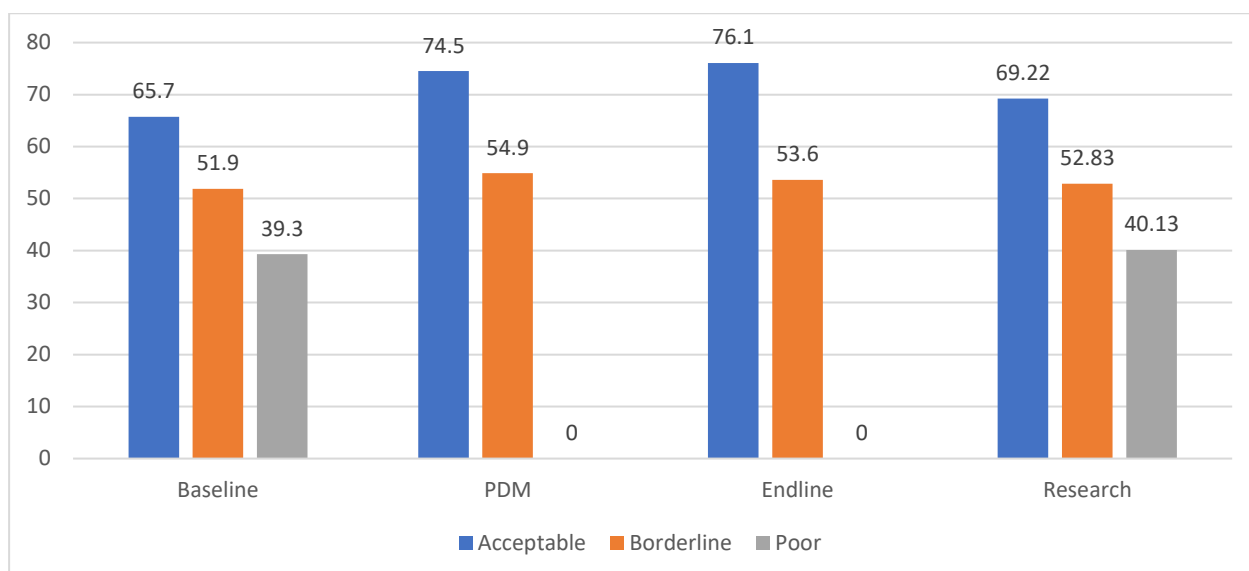
The observed increase in the FCS demonstrated statistical significance when compared with the baseline average FCS of the targeted households. This significance is evidenced by a P-value below 0.05, indicating that the improvement in FCS is statistically meaningful at the 95% confidence level, as shown in Table 4-10. This outcome highlights the positive impact of the intervention on household food security, with measurable improvements in food consumption quality and quantity.

**Table 4-10: t-test result for FCS in assessments**

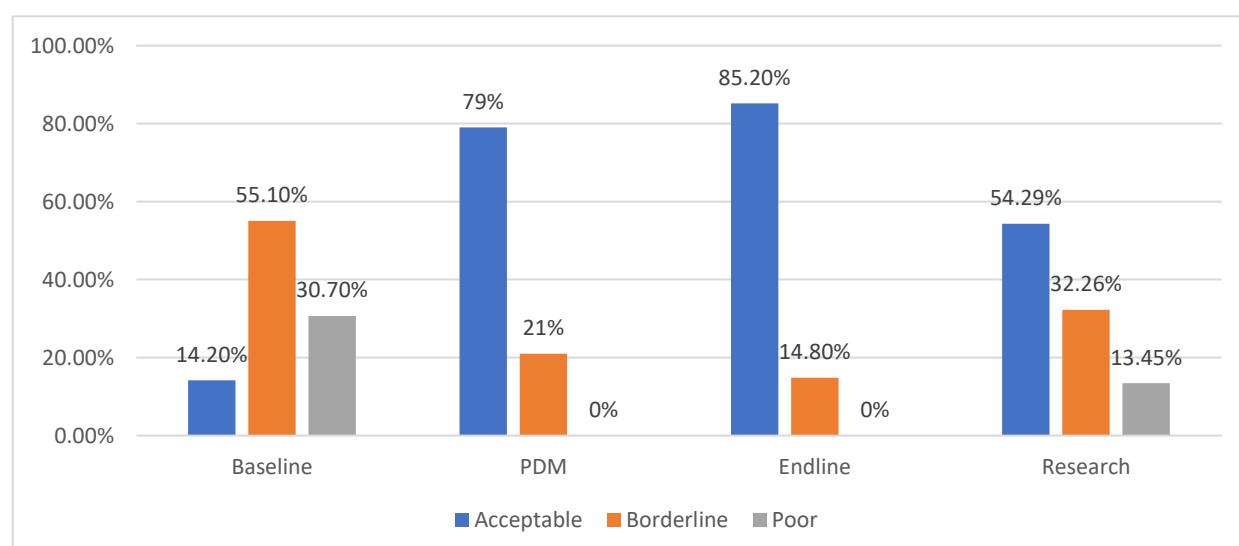
| Description   | Baseline   | PDM         | Baseline   | Endline     | Baseline   | Research data collection |
|---|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>FCS</b>  | <b>50</b>  | <b>70.4</b> | <b>50</b>  | <b>73.1</b> | <b>50</b>  | <b>56.06</b>             |
| <b>One-way t-test between baseline and other assessment</b> | Statistically significant (t=9.9 and p= 0.000) positive change in the FCS between baseline and PDM |             | Statistically significant (t=12.03 and p= 0.000) positive change in the FCS between baseline and endline |             | Statistically significant (t=10.6 and p= 0.000) positive change in the FCS between baseline and research data collection |                          |

As illustrated in Figures 4-9 and 4-10, all households demonstrated significant improvements in food security compared to the baseline, reflected by increases of 0.197 standard deviations in the FCS. However, the research data collected indicated that these short-term enhancements in food security diminished within three months post-project, suggesting that the positive effects of the interventions were temporary and closely tied to their duration. This finding indicates that the benefits of the interventions were only sustained while they were actively implemented.

Insights gathered from KIIs with project managers further corroborated this observation, as they noted that targeted beneficiaries and their households, particularly those lacking substantial income sources, experienced notable deterioration in food security within three to four months following the last distribution. Although some households were able to maintain their CSI and FCS scores, this was typically due to having additional household resources, members engaged in income-generating activities, or access to supplementary support beyond the provided assistance to meet their basic needs. As anticipated, the improvement in food security for vulnerable households corresponded with a decrease in their CSI, indicating a reduction in reliance on negative coping mechanisms. This observation was supported by findings from the quantitative study, where respondents reported reverting to their previous challenging circumstances after the cessation of support, primarily due to a lack of viable alternatives.



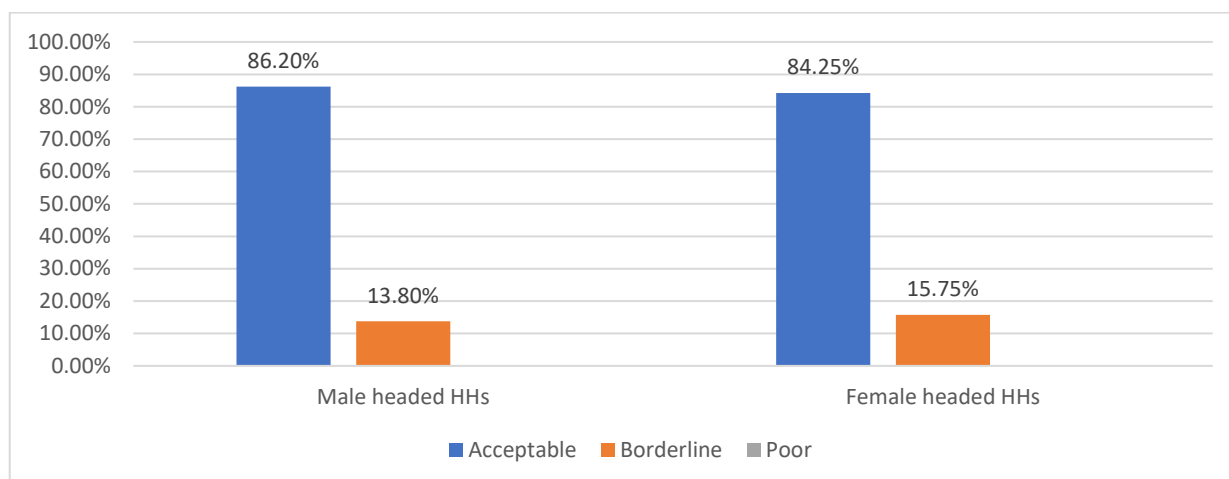
**Figure 4-9 Average FCS in assessments**



**Figure 4-10 Percent of HHs according to FCS categories**

When the FCS category data is disaggregated by household governorate, size, and age, it reveals a relatively balanced distribution of percentages across the different groups. However, a disaggregation by the gender of the household head highlights a notable trend: households led by males exhibit the highest percentage of acceptable food consumption levels at 86.20%, while female-headed households follow closely at 84.25%, as illustrated in Figure 4-11.

This disparity suggests that male-headed households, which may typically have fewer dependents, are more likely to generate income beyond the assistance provided. Consequently, they can allocate more resources toward food consumption. In contrast, female-headed households often experience greater pressure to limit food variety, redirecting available resources to address other pressing needs. This finding underscores the differing challenges faced by households based on the gender of the head, particularly in terms of food security and resource allocation.



**Figure 4-11 Percent of HHs according to FCS categories and gender**

Table 4-11 presents a detailed breakdown of the average consumption frequency of various food groups across the baseline, endline, and follow-up assessments. This table underscores the variations in food group consumption during each assessment period, revealing that the frequency of consumption was notably higher at the endline compared to the baseline. Although the frequency of consumption declined during the follow-up phase, it remained higher than the baseline levels.

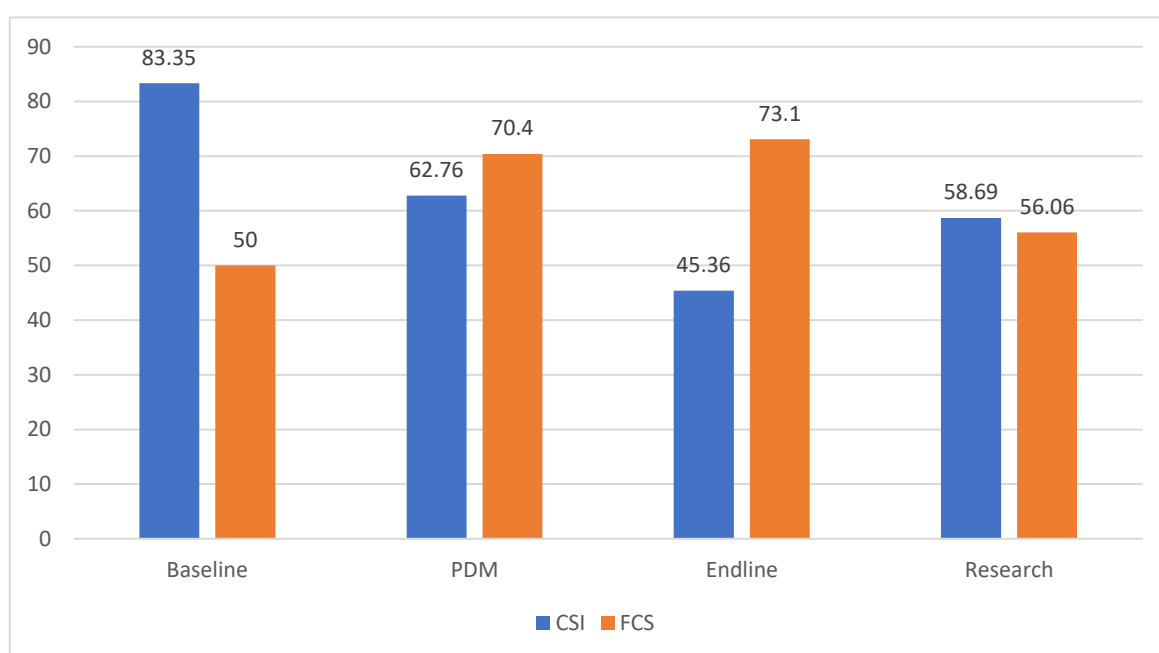
The overall FCS averages for the assessments were 50 for the baseline, 73.1 for the endline, and 56.06 for the follow-up. Notably, 'Cereals, Roots, and Tubers' consistently ranked as the most consumed food group, with nearly all respondents reporting daily consumption. During the endline assessment, cereals were consumed most frequently, averaging 7 days per week, followed by vegetables, which averaged 5.9 days per week. In contrast, fruits had the lowest consumption frequency, averaging only 0.8 days per week. The consumption frequencies of the remaining food groups exhibited significant differences across the assessment periods, indicating shifts in dietary patterns and food availability in the households surveyed.

**Table 4-11: Food groups average consumption frequency in assessments**

| Food Group  | Average Consumption Frequency |         |          |
|---|-------------------------------|---------|----------|
|   | Baseline                      | Endline | Research |
| Cereals, Root, and tubers   | 6.1                           | 7.0     | 6.8      |
| Pulses/legumes/nuts   | 3.7                           | 4.9     | 4.1      |
| Vegetables  | 3.6                           | 5.9     | 4.9      |
| Fruits  | 0.2                           | 0.8     | 0.3      |
| Meat, poultry, offal, Eggs, Fish, and seafood                             | 2.3                           | 3.5     | 2.9      |
| Milk and milk products  | 2.9                           | 3.7     | 3.1      |
| Sugar/honey   | 5.2                           | 5.7     | 5.5      |
| Oil/fats  | 5.9                           | 5.6     | 5        |
| Miscellaneous<br>(Spices (black pepper, salt...) Drinks (coffee, tea...)) | 5.8                           | 5.5     | 5.4      |

Figure 4-12 illustrates the status of key indicators related to food security before and after the intervention. Prior to the intervention, all indicators reflected poor conditions. However, during the implementation of the intervention, significant improvements were observed across all indicators, indicating a positive impact on the food security status of the targeted households.

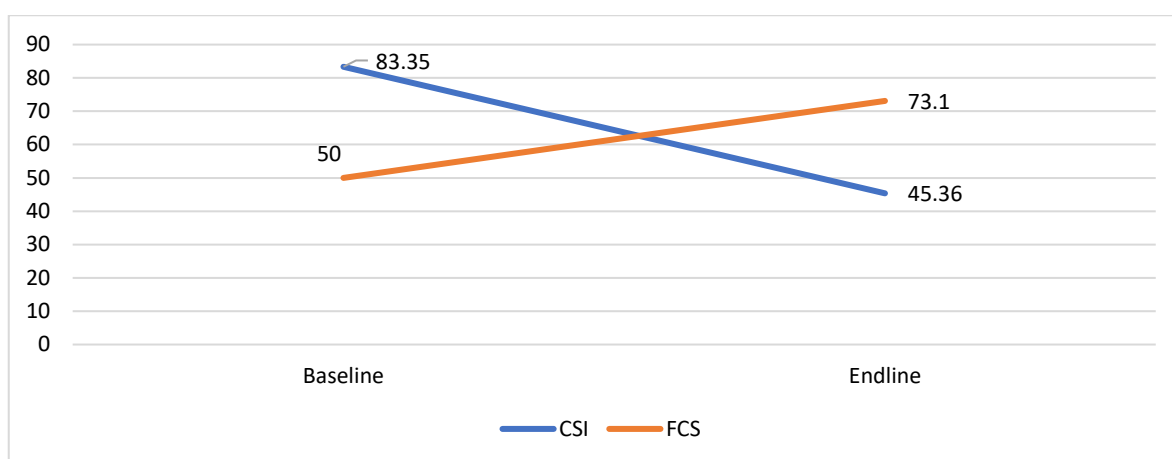
In the follow-up assessment conducted three months after the last round of assistance, there was a dramatic decline in all indicators, suggesting a regression in food security status as the effects of the intervention waned. Despite this decline, the research findings indicated that the levels of the indicators remained better than those recorded before the intervention, highlighting the temporary but meaningful benefits achieved through the food security initiatives.



**Figure 4-12 Indicators average decline after 3 months of the last assistance**

Figure 4-13 illustrates the inverse relationship between the increase in FCS and the decline in CSI. In contexts where households experience difficulty in securing adequate cash to meet their food needs, and in the absence of alternative income sources or external support, they tend to rely more heavily on coping strategies to maintain their food consumption levels. Consequently, as the FCS improves, indicating better food consumption, the CSI decreases, reflecting a reduction in reliance on negative coping mechanisms, and vice versa.

This trend suggests that beneficiaries actively worked to preserve their pre-assistance food consumption patterns, which may explain why the average FCS remained above baseline levels throughout the intervention. However, households without alternative income sources appeared to resort to increased coping strategies, indicating that despite some improvements in food consumption, vulnerabilities persisted, and families were still employing adaptive measures to cover essential expenses.



**Figure 4-13 Relationship between CSI and FCS indicators**

The gains achieved by targeted beneficiaries and their households, particularly those lacking significant income sources to ensure food security, diminished substantially within three months following the conclusion of assistance. While some households managed to sustain their CSI and FCS, these were primarily those with supplementary resources, such as household members generating income through labor or receiving support from other organizations to meet their basic needs. As expected, improvements in food security among vulnerable households were associated with a reduction in their CSI, indicating a decreased reliance on negative coping strategies. This finding is consistent with the quantitative study by Abdullah, Alqadasi, & Almussaabi (2019), which revealed that respondents often reverted to challenging circumstances prior to receiving assistance due to a lack of viable alternatives.

Food security interventions, particularly those providing adequate nutritional quality, can be lifesaving and have far-reaching effects on livelihoods and the preservation or enhancement of vital assets, including education, soil fertility, and infrastructure such as roads. The timely initiation, sustained duration, and reliability of free food security interventions are critical, as they can act as income transfers during food crises. The effectiveness of these projects was particularly evident as they built upon pre-existing structures and methodologies for enhancing food security. The timing of grants provided additional support, helping to safeguard livelihoods during periods when many individuals were unable to work or faced sudden, unprecedented family demands. Consequently, the impact of the project activities, primarily focused on addressing immediate needs, is reflected in household-level food consumption and the coping strategies adopted by these households (UNICEF & WFP, 2022).

This evaluation aimed to derive insights and evidence regarding the project's effectiveness in a holistic manner, assessing the extent to which it met its outputs, outcomes, and objectives. With full attainment of all objectives and the majority of outcome and output targets achieved, the evaluation deemed the project's effectiveness as "Satisfactory." This validation supports the second hypothesis H2: *Humanitarian interventions for food security are effective in achieving their objectives.*



#### **4.2.4 Research Question 3: Efficiency of the interventions**

Efficiency refers to the ability to achieve objectives through optimal utilization of resources, including time, effort, and costs. It assesses how effectively inputs—such as materials, labor, and capital—are transformed into outputs without wastage. Humanitarian actions attract significant attention, often accompanied by considerable media coverage and pressure from donors to demonstrate tangible outcomes. As a result, aid agencies frequently need to justify resource allocation in advance. This section addresses the third research question: To what extent did adequate access to resources significantly affect the efficiency of food security interventions? The evaluation findings identified several key factors that contributed to the project's efficiency.

##### **A. Partnership**

1. The implementing organizations collaborated closely with the Ministry of Social Development to deliver assistance, engage in strategic planning, and enhance capacity. They provided technical support for social safety net reform and management, complementing government-backed food security initiatives for identified families. This collaboration also extended to overall planning, strategic issues, targeting, and partnering with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for food security assessments.
2. Implementing organizations-maintained partnerships with international and local NGOs to develop food intervention strategies and nutrition awareness programs. Additionally, they engaged the private sector to develop supply chains and promote local products, enhancing operational efficiency and outreach. Collaboration also included coordination with the food security sector and United Nations agencies on inter-cluster matters, contingency planning, and emergency readiness.
3. All implementing organizations fostered robust partnerships with a diverse array of stakeholders, including government entities, donors, United Nations organizations, international financial institutions, civil society, and the private sector. They actively participated in key coordination groups, such as the food security sector, which they co-led alongside the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as well as the logistics cluster.
4. In collaboration with local committees, affected individuals contributed to designing community initiatives and were actively involved in the implementation and supervision processes. This participatory approach empowered communities and ensured alignment with local needs and priorities.
5. The project employed partnerships with banks as a delivery mechanism for its modalities. However, the opening of bank accounts for target individuals proved challenging, as banks expressed reluctance due to the short-term nature of the transactions expected during the project period. Consequently, the project opted for Over the Counter (OTC) cash collection as the most suitable alternative. OTC transactions were identified through rapid mapping as the most feasible and accessible option for beneficiaries across various demographics. This method was deemed cost-effective, time-efficient, and safer compared to alternatives such as forming special distribution teams. A project manager emphasized the value of this approach, particularly in reducing transportation costs in hard-to-reach areas.
6. In Project X1, assistance was disbursed through an e-wallet banking mechanism known as PalPay. Each participant received an ATM card and passcode, enabling them to access their

monthly assistance amount at any time and from any PalPay cash-out point. Although the e-wallet mechanism was relatively new in Gaza, it replaced the OTC transfer method and was endorsed by various cash actors and banks for several reasons: it saved time and effort, mitigated crowd-related challenges associated with teller-based mechanisms, enabled accurate tracking of transfers, and provided a user-friendly and dignified experience for participants. Feedback from 100% of targeted participants indicated easy and safe access to assistance through the PalPay e-wallet.

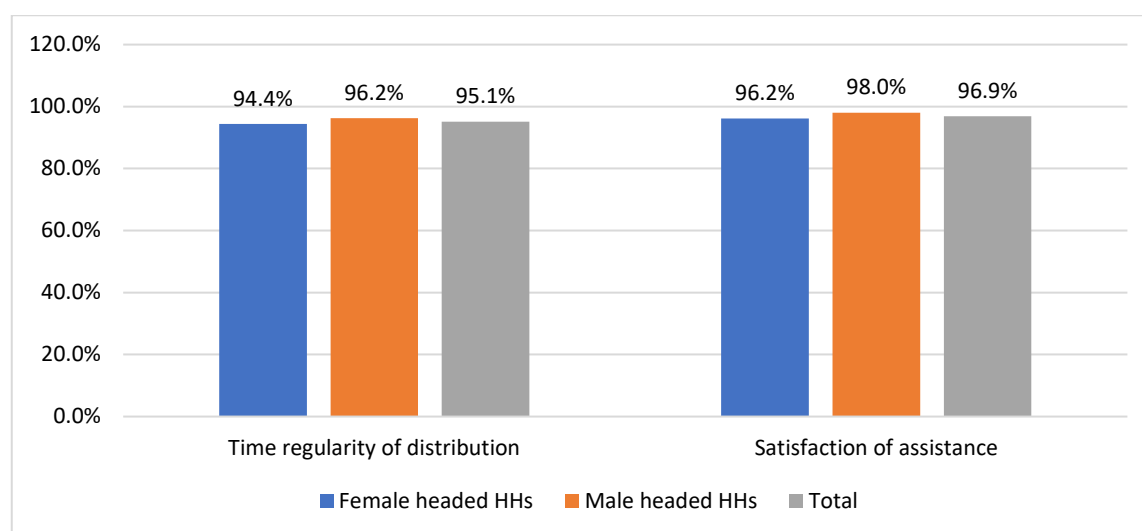
## **B. Making use of the exchange rate increase**

In the dynamic and unpredictable environment typical of humanitarian contexts, various factors, such as fluctuations in exchange rates, can significantly impact the efficiency of interventions. During the implementation of the projects, notable fluctuations in the USD exchange rate presented both challenges and opportunities. For instance, while one project experienced budget losses due to these fluctuations, two other projects benefitted from an increased total sum in USD, allowing for extended project coverage.

Project managers exhibited flexibility and adaptability by leveraging these changes to reach more households than initially planned. Despite the challenges posed by exchange rate volatility, the projects maintained a responsive approach, making multiple adjustments to navigate the evolving circumstances throughout the delivery period. All project managers reported that costs—including transfer fees and cost per beneficiary—and operations, such as logistics, program deliveries, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements, remained consistent with the project design. This adaptability highlights the importance of resilience in humanitarian interventions, ensuring that objectives are met even in the face of external economic pressures.

## **C. Time efficiency**

Regarding time efficiency, beneficiaries consistently reported that the distribution times for all project activities were regular and that distribution points were conveniently accessible and nearby for most participants. This accessibility led to a high level of satisfaction among beneficiaries, with an overall average of 95.1% of survey respondents expressing appreciation for the regularity of the distribution timing. Furthermore, 96.9% indicated satisfaction with the procedures associated with the assistance process, as illustrated in Figure 4-14. Notably, no significant differences were observed based on the gender of the household head, indicating that the efficiency of the assistance distribution was universally appreciated across different demographic groups.



**Figure 4-14 Time efficiency**

In terms of the maximum time required for beneficiaries to reach the distribution points and the waiting times involved, the findings align with international standards, including the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response. On average, 89.3% of all beneficiaries reported travel times ranging from 30 to 60 minutes to reach the distribution points. Notably, 100% of the households surveyed indicated that there were no issues related to overcrowding or obstruction during the assistance collection process. Additionally, 98% of households reported no difficulties, obstacles, or risks encountered while traveling to the distribution points. Only a small fraction (2%) mentioned transportation challenges, with some beneficiaries opting to walk part of the distance to access the distribution site.

#### **D. The redemption processes.**

Ensuring the efficiency of the assistance redemption process is critical for enhancing both beneficiary satisfaction and overall project operational efficiency. One effective strategy for expediting this process involves the implementation of user-friendly interfaces and the integration of digital platforms, which can significantly reduce wait times and minimize errors. Additionally, a well-structured voucher redemption process enables the project to track usage patterns and analyze beneficiary behavior, providing valuable insights for targeted marketing strategies and improving overall project performance.

Feedback from beneficiaries indicates a high level of satisfaction, with 95% reporting that the redemption process was smooth and respectful of their dignity, including the treatment they received at distribution points. Project managers emphasized the importance of intensive field monitoring to ensure compliance with project procedures and the seamless operation of the redemption process. Furthermore, all respondents reported receiving comprehensive clarification about the full redemption process during sensitization meetings held prior to receiving assistance. This proactive approach to informing beneficiaries not only contributes to smoother redemption processes but also enhances their overall experience.

## **E. Cost/benefit of projects' beneficiaries**

The activities of the projects demonstrated clear indicators of cost-efficient delivery, characterized by measures that promoted cost efficiency and value for money, resulting in services being delivered at costs lower than initially anticipated. The transition to electronic vouchers and the utilization of a single platform for service delivery played a significant role in achieving these efficiencies. Collaborating with a commercial platform provider enhanced the reliability, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness of the modalities. This partnership facilitated the development of an electronic transaction system and an online monitoring platform, enabling the implementing organization to reduce implementation costs, provide real-time payments to shopkeepers, and conduct timely monitoring of shop sales, beneficiary voucher redemption rates, and purchasing patterns.

All implementing organizations engaged with various partners to monitor food prices and issued monthly food price monitoring reports. Additionally, they conducted process monitoring at shops, which added an extra layer of oversight and fiscal control. However, project managers highlighted that divisions within the Palestinian civil service have diminished the capacity of local institutions to deliver essential services, exacerbating the challenges faced by the population. The consequences of the ongoing conflict, coupled with a global rise in prices, have led to increases in the costs of essential food items. During the project's implementation in the Gaza Strip, prices of wheat flour, lentils, and potatoes rose, with expectations of further increases driven by escalating shipping costs and the prices of imported goods.

To mitigate these challenges, project managers promoted sustainable practices by encouraging environmentally friendly farming methods and local food production through beneficiary training initiated at the project's outset. They emphasized the importance of collaboration and partnerships in engaging stakeholders across the food supply chain, including producers, retailers, and consumers. Such collaborative efforts can facilitate coordinated actions to collectively address food price inflation and contribute to building a more resilient food system.

The project team conducted careful monitoring visits for price and redemption checks, recommending the selection of multiple vendors in various locations to ensure a variety of goods, better price competition, and more accessible shops across different geographical areas. Project managers noted that their projects collaborated with several partners to monitor food prices and issued monthly food price monitoring reports. They also carried out process monitoring at shops, adding an extra layer of oversight and fiscal control. Whenever possible, selected shops were owned by women and offered local products sourced from women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises, such as honey, olive oil, olives, and fresh produce, thereby promoting women's economic empowerment. Beneficiaries consistently expressed satisfaction with the pricing and value provided by these contracted shops, indicating that the prices were competitive compared to prevailing market rates.

## **F. Cost/benefit ratio for the overall project**

The financial documents for the projects were not accessible to the researcher due to data protection policies. Consequently, the researcher directed inquiries to the project managers, who clarified that the project's cost-benefit analysis was based on the last approved budget. Upon examining the project costs in relation to the specific outputs and planned activities within each component, it was observed that the budget exhibited a balanced cost distribution, with 72% allocated for program-related expenses. It is noteworthy that nearly 24% of these program costs were attributed to the salaries of staff directly engaged in the initiative. An analysis of the financial execution, drawn from the latest financial report, revealed a significant underspend of 21% in one project and 15% in the others. Further investigation indicated that the majority of this underspend was primarily linked to staff salaries.

The evaluation rated the project's efficiency as "Highly Satisfactory," as it demonstrated that the costs associated with achieving results were reasonable and effectively ensured access for the most vulnerable households to the funds allocated for community asset building. Expenditures were managed within budget and disbursed in a timely manner, despite encountering several unexpected external challenges. The project met its objectives while optimizing resource use and minimizing wastage. This finding supports the validity of the third hypothesis, H3: *Adequate access to resources has a significant effect on the efficiency of humanitarian interventions for food security.*

### **4.2.5 Research Question 4: Impact of the interventions**

Impact assessment evaluates how effectively a project achieves its goals and facilitates change. The completion of the projects occurred three months prior to the collection of research data, allowing for the observation of their longer-term effects. In terms of medium- and long-term impacts, the project successfully met its output and immediate impact targets as outlined in the food security objectives associated with the three studied projects, as detailed in section 4.2. Impacts can be both positive and negative. For example, while providing food assistance can prevent households from selling productive assets, such as livestock, to purchase food—an intended positive impact—it may inadvertently reduce local food production, representing an unintended negative impact (Buchanan-Smith et al., 2016). Therefore, this section addresses the fourth research question: What intended and unintended impacts have the food security interventions had on households?

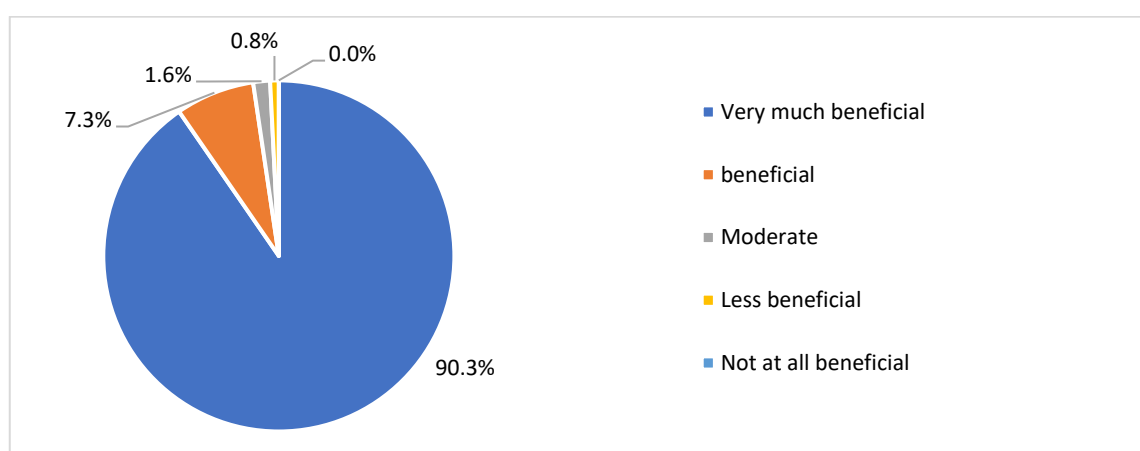
#### **A. Intervention's benefits per beneficiaries' perceptions**

As illustrated in Table 4-12, there were no significant differences in responses based on the gender of the head of household. The pie chart in Figure 4-15 indicates that 97.6% of survey respondents rated the project's benefits as either very beneficial or beneficial, highlighting a positive impact on their lives. Reported benefits included securing family food, repaying debts, improving health and education, avoiding further debts, enhancing the FCS, eliminating the need for negative coping strategies, and facilitating access to markets. Beneficiaries also identified coping mechanisms that

they were able to avoid due to the project's implementation. These mechanisms included purchasing food on credit, relying on less preferred and cheaper food options, buying low-quality goods from the market, and engaging in activities such as gathering wild food, hunting, or harvesting crops.

**Table 4-12: Intervention's benefits per head of HHs**

| Beneficiaries' perceptions | Female headed HHs | Male headed HHs | Total |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Very much beneficial       | 89.6%             | 91.5%           | 90.3% |
| beneficial                 | 7.6%              | 6.8%            | 7.3%  |
| Moderate                   | 1.8%              | 1.2%            | 1.6%  |
| Less beneficial            | 1.0%              | 0.5%            | 0.8%  |
| Not at all beneficial      | 0%                | 0%              | 0.0%  |



**Figure 4-15 Intervention's benefits**

## **B. Empowering woman**

The theory posits that by specifically targeting female-headed households for assistance and actively involving women in work-related activities, programs can initiate a transformative process yielding two potential impacts. The first anticipated impact is a direct "wage effect" stemming from cash transfers received during the project. Household members evaluate their labor supply decisions by weighing household consumption gains against the opportunity costs associated with working outside the home, which include the sacrifice of leisure time and the fulfillment of household chores. As women begin to earn income, this increase in financial resources can lead to significant shifts in their decision-making authority and control over their time use and consumption patterns. This transformation in women's decision-making power may, in turn, influence men's attitudes toward women's authority. Furthermore, the presence of other women working outside the home can contribute to altering social norms regarding women's employment within the community.

Post-project, women may retain enhanced decision-making authority over their time and consumption choices. By demonstrating their earning potential and positively influencing

community norms, women may continue to pursue external employment opportunities, thus potentially increasing their earnings. Consequently, the long-term hypothesis suggests that targeting female-headed households for assistance and engaging women in external work can initiate a "virtuous cycle" of empowerment and economic improvement.

Although the empowerment of women was not a primary focus of the project, it nonetheless resulted in both intended and unintended empowering effects for participants. Approximately 70% of surveyed female-headed households reported an increased responsibility in making financial decisions and expenditures related to family needs, or at least a greater shared role in these decisions compared to the pre-project period. Many women noted that this shift in decision-making authority was not evident prior to the project's implementation. Additionally, women who benefited from multipurpose cash (MPC) modalities indicated that this assistance facilitated their ability to purchase essential items such as medicine, pay rent, and acquire clothing, thereby alleviating the labor-intensive burden of meeting their families' needs. Furthermore, the project actively supported shops owned by women and promoted local products from women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises—such as honey, olive oil, olives, and produce—thereby contributing to the advancement of women's economic empowerment.

### **C. Time use for each gender of the head of HHs**

Beneficiaries, both women and men, reported a range of experiences regarding changes in labor and time use as a result of the project. Notably, a significant 87.6% of women indicated that their time allocation had shifted, while some participants did not observe any such changes. Additionally, 60.2% of beneficiaries stated that their male partners had generally assisted with household chores and childcare prior to the project's implementation, suggesting that the project did not substantially alter the division of childcare responsibilities. However, 39.8% of beneficiaries noted that the project encouraged a more equitable distribution of household tasks.

Quantitatively, women reported dedicating an average of 8.0 hours per day to household chores, in contrast to men, who averaged only 2.8 hours. Furthermore, the average time spent outside the home differed significantly; men spent an average of 7.8 hours per day away from home, while female heads of household averaged only 3.5 hours, reflecting a disparity of over four hours in time allocation between the genders. These findings underscore the existing gendered division of labor and time use within households, even in the context of the interventions provided by the project.

### **D. Reducing pressure, family conflict and strengthening community harmony**

Respondents reported that the project contributed to a reduction in family conflicts and promoted greater harmony within the community. The most commonly cited impact was a notable "reduction in pressure," as the assistance alleviated the anxiety surrounding food insecurity by ensuring access to basic nutritional needs. Furthermore, several beneficiaries were able to pay off debts, spend increased quality time with their families, and secure essential resources, including medicine and

educational support. This multifaceted impact highlights the broader benefits of the project beyond food security, fostering a more stable and cohesive environment for families and communities alike.

#### **E. Enhancing the local market resilience**

Enhancing the local market was a primary objective of the project and served as a critical criterion in selecting the intervention modality. Project managers noted that the food security intervention contributed to market stability and enhancement, particularly during the project's implementation period. The intervention produced several direct impacts, including increased sales for local market actors, which in turn boosted their profits, facilitated the settlement of longstanding debts, and improved cash flow. This positive economic dynamic enabled some market actors to expand their businesses.

Nearly all interviewed project managers confirmed that, based on focus group discussions held at the conclusion of their projects, market actors reported an average sales increase of 60.3%, particularly for consumer goods. Additionally, these actors introduced new products in response to customer demand, recovered outstanding debts from clients who received assistance, and, in some cases, even hired additional staff. Overall, data from project reports indicated that recipients faced no significant challenges in accessing markets and felt secure while receiving assistance. This demonstrates the intervention's effectiveness in not only addressing food security but also in stimulating local economic activity and resilience.

#### **F. Food security and consumption**

An analysis of the FCS revealed a notable increase at the endline, accompanied by a decrease in the CSI. These changes indicate positive outcomes, as households demonstrated higher FCS values, suggesting an improved likelihood of consuming acceptable diets. Additionally, the reduction in CSI reflects a decreased reliance on negative coping strategies for food access. A comprehensive examination of these effectiveness indicators is presented in Section section 4.3.3.3.

#### **G. Achievement of the key impacts in the projects' logframe**

The logframe for each project outlines the following key impact:

- a) **To contribute to reduced social and economic risks and vulnerabilities among crisis-affected populations of all genders, ages, and abilities in the Gaza Strip (X2 Project).** The actual achievements, as reported by the project team during the endline evaluation conducted after project completion, are summarized below:
  1. Improvement in FCS: All respondents reported an improvement in their FCS during the project period, with the endline score reaching 79.
  2. Reduction in Negative Coping Strategies: 100% of targeted households (HHs) indicated a reduction in negative coping strategies, as evidenced by a decrease in the CSI to 8 at the endline.



3. **Basic Needs Fulfillment:** All respondents reported the ability to meet their basic needs throughout the project period.
4. **Safe and Accessible Assistance:** All participants reported receiving assistance in a safe, accessible, accountable, and participatory manner.
5. **Decrease in Domestic Violence:** A significant 98.78% of targeted HHs reported a reduction in domestic violence during the project period.
6. **Increased Participation in Decision-Making:** 91% of targeted HHs reported an increase in the participation of women, girls, men, and boys in decision-making and reproductive roles.
7. **Engagement from At-Risk Groups:** All respondents from at-risk groups reported increased participation in decision-making processes.
8. **Improved Resilience Among Farmers:** 88.5% of targeted farmers indicated improved resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change and environmental challenges.
9. **Fulfillment of Basic Needs:** An impressive 99% of targeted HHs reported their ability to meet basic needs during the project.
10. **Accountable Assistance Delivery:** 95% of participants affirmed that they received assistance in a safe, accessible, accountable, and participatory manner.
11. **Reduction of Gendered Inequalities:** All respondents reported a decrease in gendered inequalities within targeted HHs.
12. **Meaningful Participation:** 89% of participants indicated increased participation in decision-making regarding productive and reproductive roles.
13. **Enhanced Family Relationships:** All respondents reported that the provision of assistance positively enhanced relationships within their households.
14. **Improved Neighborhood Relations:** 94% of respondents noted improved relations with neighbors, attributing this to a decreased need to solicit cash or in-kind support for food needs.
15. **Cooperative Decision-Making on Food Purchases:** Decisions regarding the type of food to be purchased with the assistance were made cooperatively in most households (46-57.5%). In other cases, decisions were made by the mother of the household (35-46%), while only a small percentage (2-5%) indicated that the decision was made by daughters or sons.

#### **b) Achievement of the Key Impact: Support Countries to Achieve Zero Hunger (X4)**

The endline evaluation conducted by the project team following project completion yielded the following results:

1. **Improvement in Dietary Diversity:** All respondents reported an improvement in dietary diversity, ensuring access to a variety of nutritional foods.
2. **Positive Perception of Assistance:** Beneficiaries generally perceived the assistance positively, although there were requests for increased quantities of food aid.
3. **Enhanced FCS:** 86.2% of targeted households (HHs) experienced improvements in their FCS during the project period, with the endline score reaching 56.8.
4. **Reduction in Negative Coping Strategies:** 91.8% of targeted HHs reported a decrease in negative coping strategies, as indicated by a reduction in the Coping Strategies Index (CSI) to 8.1 at the endline.
5. **Enhanced Self-Sufficiency:** All respondents indicated that the assistance positively impacted their ability to feed themselves without incurring debt.

### c) Achievement of the Key Impact: Building Resilience in the Context of Protracted Crisis (X5)

The endline assessment conducted by the project team after project completion revealed the following achievements:

1. Empowerment to Withstand Challenges: All respondents reported feeling empowered to withstand and recover from the challenges presented by the public health crisis.
2. Sustainable Resilience Infrastructure: All respondents affirmed that the project contributed to the development of sustainable resilience infrastructure within the Gaza Strip, establishing a foundation for long-term recovery and development.
3. Improvement in FCS: 88.4% of targeted HHs reported improvements in their FCS during the project period, with the endline score at 50.8.
4. Reduction in Negative Coping Strategies: 93.5% of targeted HHs reported a reduction in negative coping strategies, evidenced by a decrease in the CSI to 10.5 at the endline.

### H. The occurrence of impact of the food security interventions

In this section, the impact of the food security interventions has been systematically analyzed. Responses were categorized and examined to assess this impact through various factors using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation (SD), relative importance index (RII), and ranks. Each factor was sequentially ranked based on criteria such as mean and RII (with higher values indicating greater importance) and SD (with lower values indicating more consistent responses).

When mean and RII values were comparable, the ranking relied on the lowest SD. Additionally, mean values below 3 indicated disagreement among respondents, while those above 3 signified agreement: a mean of exactly 3 suggested neutralities.

Table 4-13 illustrates that the statements "Food security intervention improves the nutritional status of your family, particularly children and pregnant women" and "Food security intervention breaks the cycle of poverty by enabling your family members to focus on education and work rather than survival, thus promoting economic growth and stability" were identified as the most frequently cited impacts. These statements ranked first and second, with RII values of 0.856 and 0.812, respectively, as reported by the overall respondents. These findings are consistent with the SDGs, which aim to alleviate poverty and ensure zero hunger by 2030.

**Table 4-13: Ranks of the occurrence of impact of the food security interventions.**

| The Impact of the food security intervention  | Mean | SD   | RII   | T-test | P-value | Rank |
|---|------|------|-------|--------|---------|------|
| Food security intervention improve the nutritional status of your family, particularly children and pregnant women. | 4.2  | 0.79 | 0.856 | 19.11  | 0.000*  | 1    |

| The Impact of the food security intervention  | Mean | SD   | RII   | T-test | P-value | Rank |
|---|------|------|-------|--------|---------|------|
| Food security intervention break the cycle of poverty by enabling your family members to focus on education and work rather than survival, thus promoting economic growth and stability.    | 4    | 0.78 | 0.812 | 18.86  | 0.000*  | 2    |
| Food security intervention reduced the social tensions and conflicts arising from food scarcity and inequality.   | 3.66 | 0.77 | 0.732 | 12.63  | 0.000*  | 3    |
| Food security intervention improves health outcomes, reducing the incidence of diseases related to malnutrition, such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies for your family. | 3.63 | 0.93 | 0.726 | 10.03  | 0.000*  | 4    |
| Food security intervention enhanced cognitive function and physical capacity, leading to improved productivity and economic output  | 3.58 | 0.81 | 0.715 | 10.57  | 0.000*  | 5    |
| Food security intervention increased the school attendance and improved cognitive abilities, leading to better educational outcomes.  | 3.45 | 0.83 | 0.658 | 4.27   | 0.000*  | 6    |
| Food security intervention promoted gender equality by empowering women through better health and economic opportunities.   | 3.29 | 0.94 | 0.649 | 4.12   | 0.000*  | 7    |

\*Arithmetic mean is statistically significant at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$

Responses from both female-headed and male-headed households were meticulously sorted and analyzed, as presented in Table 4-14. Overall, there is a consensus within each group regarding the ranking of various factors. However, two factors exhibit notable differences in opinion:

- "Food security intervention improves health outcomes, reducing the incidence of diseases related to malnutrition, such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies for your family." This factor ranked fourth with a relative importance index (RII) of 0.748 among female-headed households, while it ranked seventh with an RII of 0.619 among male-headed households. The higher RII for female-headed households suggests that women may recognize or experience the positive effects of food security measures more acutely than men. This could be attributed to several factors:
  - Nutritional Requirements: Women, particularly those of reproductive age, pregnant, or breastfeeding, have specific nutritional needs that are vital for their health and that of their children. Consequently, they may prioritize food security more highly.
  - Caretaker Role: In many cultures, women are primarily responsible for cooking and childcare. This responsibility may heighten their awareness of the effects of malnutrition and the benefits of food security initiatives for their families' well-being.
  - Health Awareness: Women may have a greater awareness of health issues related to malnutrition due to their roles in managing family health.
- "Food security intervention promoted gender equality by empowering women through better health and economic opportunities." This factor was ranked seventh with an RII of 0.633 among female-headed households, while it ranked fourth with an RII of 0.718 among male-headed households. The higher RII for male-headed households indicates that men perceive food security interventions as more vital for promoting gender equality and empowering

women compared to women themselves. This underscores the importance of engaging both genders in discussions and initiatives related to food security and gender equality.

By considering the differing perspectives and priorities of men and women, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective and inclusive interventions. The observation that men assign greater importance to the role of food security interventions in promoting gender equality than women could be interpreted in several ways:

- a. Perception of Impact: Men may be more attuned to the broader societal benefits of gender equality, particularly where food security is linked to economic stability and community development.
- b. Support for Equality: Men might endorse initiatives that advance gender equality, viewing them as beneficial for overall societal progress.
- c. Awareness and Acknowledgment: Men may possess a greater awareness or willingness to recognize the role of food security in empowering women, possibly due to exposure to educational campaigns or information emphasizing these connections.

**Table 4-14: RII according to the gender of head HH**

| The Impact of the food security intervention  | Female headed HH |      | Male headed HH |      |
|---|------------------|------|----------------|------|
|   | RII              | Rank | RII            | Rank |
| Food security intervention improve the nutritional status of your family, particularly children and pregnant women.   | 0.889            | 1    | 0.876          | 1    |
| Food security intervention break the cycle of poverty by enabling your family members to focus on education and work rather than survival, thus promoting economic growth and stability.    | 0.874            | 2    | 0.853          | 2    |
| Food security intervention reduced the social tensions and conflicts arising from food scarcity and inequality.   | 0.778            | 3    | 0.741          | 3    |
| Food security intervention improves health outcomes, reducing the incidence of diseases related to malnutrition, such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies for your family. | 0.748            | 4    | 0.619          | 7    |
| Food security intervention enhanced cognitive function and physical capacity, leading to improved productivity and economic output  | 0.721            | 5    | 0.672          | 5    |
| Food security intervention increased the school attendance and improved cognitive abilities, leading to better educational outcomes.  | 0.685            | 6    | 0.621          | 6    |
| Food security intervention promoted gender equality by empowering women through better health and economic opportunities.   | 0.633            | 7    | 0.718          | 4    |

The correlation between the rankings of the impacts of food security interventions among female-headed and male-headed households is strong, with a correlation coefficient of 0.92, as illustrated in Table 4-15. This finding suggests a high level of consensus across both groups regarding the effects of food security interventions.

**Table 4-15: Correlation coefficient between the gender of head of HH**

| <b>Respondents</b>       | <b>Correlation coefficient</b> | <b>Relation of the Respondents</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Female VS Male headed HH | 0.92                           | Strong                             |

The evaluation rated the impact as "Highly Satisfactory," reflecting the project's successful achievement of its predetermined objectives and targets in addressing hunger within its defined scope. Positive feedback from stakeholders, beneficiaries, and project partners underscores the effectiveness of the interventions and the benefits experienced, indicating that the project has met or exceeded expectations. This validation supports the fourth hypothesis, H4: Humanitarian interventions for food security significantly impact household food security.

This chapter aimed to illuminate the complexities and implications of our research findings. It presented the results and discussions while emphasizing the tangible progress achieved. Through rigorous analysis and evaluation, we have gained valuable insights into the criteria used to assess interventions aimed at combating food insecurity. The satisfactory rating of the project's evaluation criteria reflects not only the successful attainment of objectives and the generation of positive outcomes but also a continued commitment to addressing underlying issues and promoting sustainable solutions.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter summarizes the study and aims to provide recommendations and conclusions for food security interventions. It begins by revisiting the research objectives and key findings to assess the extent to which these objectives were met, offering an overview of the insights gained throughout the research process.

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The global food insecurity crisis is characterized by soaring and volatile food prices, coupled with an increasing number of individuals lacking access to nutritious food. This multifaceted crisis is driven by a range of factors, including acute and protracted conflicts, economic disruptions, and the intensifying impacts of climate change. Within this context, donors' earmarked funds and their specific requirements or preferences continue to shape the selection of assistance modalities, often perpetuating reliance on in-kind assistance. Nonetheless, there has been a discernible trend among donors to endorse the use of cash transfers to achieve food security outcomes in diverse contexts.

To assess the effectiveness of food security interventions, a comprehensive study was conducted three months post-implementation. The study's objectives were supported by an extensive literature review aimed at formulating a model for household food security through humanitarian interventions in the Gaza Strip. This involved a thorough desk study on the state of food security in Gaza, as well as interviews with project managers to capture their insights on evaluation criteria. In addition to qualitative insights, the study analyzed data from 362 questionnaires, with the findings systematically presented.

The research identified four primary objectives that emerged from the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews, each linked to the overarching research questions. These objectives were designed to deepen the understanding of the topic, leading to the following outcomes:

#### **A. Outcomes related to objective one**

The first research question explored to what extent food security interventions met the immediate needs of households in the Gaza Strip. This investigation focused on assessing the relevance of these interventions by examining their contributions to the SDGs, particularly regarding poverty reduction (SDG 1) and the elimination of hunger (SDG 2). The findings indicated that these interventions were highly relevant to the needs of the Palestinian population, effectively addressing the pressing challenges they face.

The food security projects supported the second and third strategic objectives of the HRP 2022, which aimed to meet the basic needs of vulnerable Palestinians living under occupation. This was accomplished by providing quality basic services, enhancing access to resources in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and strengthening the capacity of vulnerable communities to cope with ongoing crises, including environmental threats, while also addressing the root causes of these challenges.

Tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the communities they served, the projects were implemented in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, and the private sector. This collaborative approach was crucial in promoting long-term food security by addressing underlying issues such as poverty, limited access to resources, and climate-related challenges. Furthermore, the emphasis on community participation in decision-making processes related to food security highlighted the interventions' relevance and effectiveness.

The food security interventions proved instrumental in assisting beneficiaries by improving access to nutritious food, enhancing family health, and bolstering both physical and mental capacities. These improvements led to increased productivity in work and educational settings. The interventions were aligned with humanitarian response priorities, as identified by the multisectoral needs assessment conducted by the HCT and its partners, and incorporated elements of strategic framework and institutional capacity strengthening.

Moreover, the targeted activities effectively addressed beneficiaries' capacity-building needs, resulting in greater clarity regarding benefits, roles, responsibilities, and project management. In summary, the interventions demonstrated consistency and validity, showing no significant shortcomings in relevance at the time of evaluation. Consequently, they were rated as 'Highly Satisfactory.' The logical structuring of the interventions and their clear linkages from objectives to specific activities further underscore their effectiveness in meeting the immediate needs of households.

## **B. Outcomes related to objective two**

The second research question examined the extent to which food security interventions achieved their objectives, including the timely delivery of relief assistance. This investigation focused on evaluating the effectiveness of food security interventions in the Gaza Strip by assessing their planned outputs and outcomes, as well as the effectiveness factors and indicators. The findings indicated that the projects were highly effective in meeting their objectives, particularly in ensuring the timely delivery of relief assistance.

Improvements in food accessibility, both in terms of quantity and quality, allowed beneficiaries to regularly consume nutritious and palatable food items over an extended period, thereby enhancing dietary diversity. This increase in food access significantly reduced household vulnerability to protection threats, representing a crucial advancement in the safety and security of Gaza residents. Furthermore, beneficiaries were able to access food items that had previously been unavailable to them, thus improving overall food consumption. All interventions successfully delivered tailored assistance to the targeted beneficiaries, and every household member, including children, recognized the importance of a participatory approach in determining disbursement priorities. The projects were particularly focused on adapting assistance to meet the unique needs of at-risk individuals.

Regarding effectiveness factors, the interventions demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness, adapting to changing conditions to ensure timely assistance delivery and customized solutions. A well-communicated complaint and feedback mechanism was established, ensuring accessibility and security for all beneficiaries while keeping the community informed about the status and resolution of their complaints. The involvement of Community Committees in all project stages fostered a sense of ownership, enhanced relevance and effectiveness, and built trust between the project team and the community. Moreover, all interventions addressed critical cross-cutting issues, including vulnerability coverage, protection, gender equality, and the principle of "do no harm," which contributed to making the interventions more effective, equitable, and ethical, ultimately leading to more sustainable and positive outcomes.

Effectiveness indicators were employed to quantitatively assess the food security status of households, focusing on two key indicators. Monitoring and analyzing these indicators enabled stakeholders to make informed decisions and implement necessary adjustments to improve food security outcomes. The first indicator, the Coping Strategies Index (CSI), measures households' ability to manage food shortages by evaluating the frequency and severity of coping strategies employed. The findings indicated an increase in the CSI three months post-project completion, suggesting a regression to negative coping mechanisms. The second indicator, the FCS, assesses household food access based on the variety of food groups consumed over a specific period. The findings revealed a significant decrease in the FCS three months after the project's conclusion, indicating that while food security interventions were highly effective during the project period, they were insufficient to sustain the same level of food security once the support ended.

In conclusion, the project's effectiveness was rated as 'Satisfactory' based on the extent to which outputs, outcomes, and objectives were achieved. The evaluation highlighted the full attainment of all targets associated with the objectives and the majority of outcome and output targets.

### **C. Outcomes related to objective three**

The third research question focused on assessing the extent to which adequate access to resources significantly impacted the efficiency of food security interventions in the Gaza Strip. This evaluation involved examining how effectively tasks were completed and objectives were met through the optimal use of resources, including time, effort, and financial costs.

The findings identified several key factors contributing to the efficiency of the projects. The implementation of these interventions involved collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, international and local NGOs, and a diverse range of stakeholders, including government agencies, donors, civil society organizations, the private sector, and local committees. These partnerships harnessed various strengths, such as technical expertise, local knowledge, financial resources, and logistical capabilities, thereby enhancing the design and execution of comprehensive food security interventions. The collaborative efforts among stakeholders pooled resources from multiple sources, resulting in more robust and well-funded interventions. This



approach is particularly vital in resource-scarce settings, where no single entity can address food security challenges effectively.

Despite operating within a dynamic and unpredictable humanitarian context—characterized by fluctuations in exchange rates and other external pressures—project managers exhibited flexibility and adaptability. They leveraged increased funding to broaden project coverage, ensuring that interventions remained responsive to the needs of the community.

In terms of time efficiency, the activities associated with the projects demonstrated clear indicators of cost-efficient delivery. Evidence revealed measures implemented to enhance cost efficiency and ensure value for money, with services being delivered at costs lower than initially planned.

In conclusion, the evaluation rated the efficiency of the projects as 'Highly Satisfactory.' The costs associated with achieving results were deemed reasonable, ensuring that the most vulnerable households had access to allocated funds for community asset building. Expenditures were managed within budget and aligned with planned allocations, despite encountering several unexpected external challenges. Overall, the projects successfully achieved their goals through the optimal utilization of resources, with minimal wastage.

#### **D. Outcomes related to objective four**

The fourth research question focused on assessing both the intended and unintended impacts of food security interventions on households in the Gaza Strip. The evaluation revealed that these interventions produced significant positive changes aligned with the project's goals.

Primarily, the food security interventions substantially improved nutrition and health outcomes by ensuring that households received direct food assistance, which met their basic nutritional needs while promoting dietary diversity. This approach led to enhancements in overall dietary quality and a reduction in malnutrition rates. Furthermore, by breaking the cycle of poverty, these interventions allowed family members to redirect their focus from mere survival to education and productive work, thereby fostering economic growth and stability within the community.

A notable aspect of the interventions was their emphasis on empowerment and social inclusion, particularly for women. By specifically targeting women, the initiatives increased their control over household resources and decision-making processes. The assistance provided enabled women to purchase essential items such as medicine, rent, and clothing, thus decreasing their reliance on engaging in hard labor to support their families. Additionally, shops owned by women began offering locally produced goods from women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises, such as honey, olive oil, and other agricultural products, thereby promoting women's economic empowerment. This shift also influenced labor dynamics within households, as men increasingly contributed to domestic responsibilities and childcare, significantly altering the division of labor.

Moreover, the interventions contributed to reducing familial conflict and fostering community harmony by alleviating fears of starvation. This stability allowed some families to settle debts, enhance their quality time together, and secure additional critical needs, including medical care

and education. The initiatives also supported market stability during their delivery, resulting in increased sales and profits for local market actors, improved cash flow, and the settling of longstanding debts. Such financial stability enabled some businesses to expand their operations.

In conclusion, the evaluation rated the overall impact of the food security interventions as 'Highly Satisfactory.' The project successfully achieved its predefined objectives and targets, effectively addressing hunger and delivering significant outcomes. Feedback from stakeholders, beneficiaries, and partners highlighted the effectiveness of the interventions and the benefits experienced, indicating that the project met or even exceeded expectations.

Together, these findings underscore the success of the food security interventions in improving nutrition, well-being, and self-reliance among vulnerable populations in the Gaza Strip. Based on these outcomes, Table 5-1 summarizes how the researcher ranks each component according to the DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Impact.

**Table 5-1: Overall assessment of the food security interventions**

| <b>Criteria</b> | Relevance | Effectiveness  | Efficiency | Impact |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------|------------|--------|
| <b>Rank</b>     | High      | Medium to High | High       | High   |

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings presented in this research, the following recommendations are proposed concerning the evaluation criteria. The project effectively targeted the most vulnerable households with humanitarian food security interventions and extended support to the broader community through community asset development and support initiatives. Consequently, Table 5-2 outlines recommendations aimed at assisting practitioners, implementation researchers, and policymakers engaged in food security and nutrition efforts.

**Table 5-2: Research recommendations**

| <b>Evaluation Criteria</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Relevance                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a system that assigns overall assistance values per household member, adjusting for family size to ensure fairness in aid distribution.</li> <li>• Cash Working Groups and Food Security Clusters should continue to support food security actors in utilizing cash transfers and adjusting their values.</li> <li>• Increase intervention amounts to cover additional needs, including medical expenses.</li> <li>• Conduct continuous needs assessments to remain informed about evolving conditions and requirements, ensuring projects remain adaptive and relevant.</li> <li>• Share lessons learned and document best practices across all modalities to adapt to changing needs and approaches.</li> <li>• Coordinate closely with the Ministry of Social Development for household nominations and cross-checking against updated national registry data.</li> <li>• Collaborate with local authorities to improve beneficiary targeting acceptance.</li> </ul> |

| Evaluation Criteria | Recommendation  |
|---------------------|---|
| Effectiveness       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize Community Engagement and Accountability as fundamental components of ongoing efforts.</li> <li>• Disseminate monitoring and evaluation reports widely to raise awareness of food security outcomes in insecure contexts and to demonstrate best practices, which can mitigate misperceptions regarding food security modalities, especially in complex environments like Gaza.</li> <li>• Encourage multiple rounds of distributions to the same beneficiaries; while a single round can provide immediate relief, it often fails to significantly improve overall food security.</li> <li>• Adjust interventions based on individual indicators in response to rapid global fluctuations in currency exchange rates.</li> <li>• Address not only immediate food requirements but also the underlying factors contributing to food insecurity, such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to resources.</li> <li>• Support small-scale farmers and food producers by enhancing their access to markets, providing financial assistance, and offering business development services to improve livelihoods and ensure community food security.</li> <li>• Establish reliable monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, assess impact, and derive insights for ongoing project refinement and adjustment.</li> </ul> |
| Efficiency          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate closely with local NGOs, community-based organizations, government agencies, and international partners to leverage resources, knowledge, and networks for sustainable solutions.</li> <li>• Sustain market monitoring and analysis across all operational areas to facilitate timely adjustments in transfer values and strengthen market systems whenever possible, thereby fostering a supportive environment for aid provision.</li> <li>• Ensure timely assistance delivery, as this can significantly empower individuals to procure their food necessities effectively.</li> </ul>  |
| Impact              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate both immediate relief and longer-term recovery components into food security interventions, with durations ranging from 18 to 24 months, to foster the adoption and ownership of development initiatives.</li> <li>• Continue supporting current beneficiaries while introducing initiatives that promote savings, livelihoods, and income-generating activities to enhance long-term household food security sustainability.</li> <li>• Focus on livelihood and skills training for beneficiaries, emphasizing income-generating activities to transition them from reliance on external support to self-sufficiency. This may include business training, collaboration with microfinance institutions, grants, establishment of business incubators, and enhancement of agricultural value chains.</li> <li>• Incorporate sustainability into project design by identifying exit strategies that allow communities to continue benefiting from interventions post-project. This involves building local capacity, transferring ownership of assets and knowledge, and advocating for policies that support sustainable food systems. A well-informed exit strategy, based on evolving conditions rather than arbitrary timelines, is essential for a successful transition from crisis to recovery.</li> </ul>                     |

These recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of food security interventions, ensuring that they meet the needs of vulnerable populations and contribute to long-term food security outcomes.

### **5.3 Limitations and future research directions**

While this study presents promising findings, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations inherent in its variables, methodologies, and sample characteristics, similar to other empirical research endeavors. To assess differences between subgroups, the researcher employed t-tests to compare average differences at two time points within the same subgroup. This statistical method effectively determines whether there is a statistically significant relationship within the same group over time, thereby providing initial insights into the effects of the project. However, t-tests do not elucidate which specific variables influenced this relationship, nor do they identify those that did not. To address this gap, causation analysis could be employed to examine how changes in one or more variables correspond to changes in others. Two strategies that may enhance confidence in establishing causation include mixed-method approaches and the use of counterfactuals with control groups. In this study, we utilized mixed-method approaches; however, counterfactuals with control groups are typically reserved for impact evaluations. These evaluations aim to establish cause-and-effect relationships by comparing outcomes from the project sample with those from a control group unaffected by the project. Conducting such studies necessitates meticulous planning, including the implementation of a rigorous sampling design. Nonetheless, not all projects possess the resources and capacity to undertake this approach. Consequently, future studies may benefit from the inclusion of counterfactuals and control group analyses.

This research primarily focuses on household food security, specifically regarding availability and accessibility, while the dimensions of food utilization and stability were not examined. Furthermore, the evaluation of food security was conducted using four criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. These criteria are derived from the "Evaluating Humanitarian Action Guide Using the OECD/DAC Criteria," published in 2006 by Beck, which remains the latest guide focusing on humanitarian action. However, recognizing the need for continuous improvement, ALNAP launched an initiative in June 2023 to establish updated guidelines for evaluating humanitarian efforts, following more than 15 years of application of the previous framework. Therefore, future studies may explore the four pillars of food security while incorporating additional criteria, such as connectedness, coherence, and coverage, using the forthcoming guidelines published by ALNAP. This expanded framework could enhance the comprehensiveness and relevance of future evaluations in the field of food security and humanitarian assistance.

## 6 NEW AND NOVEL SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

This research has yielded several novel scientific outcomes that can serve as a foundational framework for future studies in the field of food security interventions.

1. **Addressing Theoretical Gaps:** The findings of this research have successfully addressed a significant theoretical gap in the literature by contributing to the development of strategies aimed at promoting food security interventions. By employing a methodology specifically focused on food security initiatives, this study fills a critical void in existing research, which has predominantly evaluated short-term interventions lasting between 3 to 6 months (e.g., PAEEP, 2021). In contrast, this investigation examined the effects of a project with a duration of one year, providing deeper insights into the sustained impacts of food security efforts.
2. **Long-Term Impact Assessment:** Data for assessing the impact of the interventions were collected three months after the project's conclusion, recognizing that true impact encompasses long-term and sustainable changes resulting from an intervention. These changes extend beyond immediate outputs and outcomes to include broader effects on individuals, communities, and systemic dynamics. Notably, this aspect is often overlooked in project reporting, as donors typically allocate only one month for final evaluations. This approach fails to account for the time required for certain impacts to manifest fully, underscoring the necessity for extended evaluation periods.
3. **Mixed-Method Approach:** The study employed a mixed-method approach that integrated qualitative and quantitative methods, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of food security interventions. Qualitative methods enriched the analysis by offering depth and context, while quantitative methods provided measurable data. Through this approach, the researcher established a positive and significant impact of food security modalities on food availability and accessibility, thereby enhancing the quality of food security information available for decision-making processes.
4. **Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation:** The research findings underscore the critical role of monitoring and evaluation in enhancing the performance, quality, and relevance of food security interventions. Improving the quality of humanitarian action necessitates a commitment to listening to the perspectives of affected individuals. Therefore, enhancing M&E systems and accountability mechanisms is essential for improving program quality. Engaging with affected populations not only fosters the effectiveness of humanitarian programs but also facilitates the collection of information that informs programmatic decisions, ensuring that the needs of those impacted by crises are better addressed.

These outcomes highlight the importance of a robust and nuanced understanding of food security interventions, paving the way for future research to build upon these findings and further enhance humanitarian efforts in the field.

## 7 SUMMARY

In recent years, the Gaza Strip has faced persistent challenges characterized by limited trade and access, economic recession, high unemployment, and significant levels of poverty and food insecurity. These issues are exacerbated by prolonged internal conflicts and the broader regional context of instability. Humanitarian assistance plays a critical role in addressing these challenges, serving as a key component of both international and governmental efforts to bolster food security and reinforce the social safety net. Periodic outbreaks of violence further strain the region's economy, while trade restrictions impede reconstruction efforts and intensify the impact of ongoing crises. Additionally, internal political divisions complicate the situation. Evaluating humanitarian projects is essential for providing donors, implementers, and other stakeholders with insights into the effectiveness of interventions designed to enhance food security in targeted areas. This evaluation information guides future decisions regarding food security programs, ensuring their optimal effectiveness for affected populations.

The primary objective of this research is to explore the feasibility of developing an intervention model aimed at enhancing household food security in the Gaza Strip through humanitarian interventions. The efficacy of this model is subsequently verified through an evaluation process that assesses food security interventions based on four key criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, in accordance with established DAC evaluation guidelines. Principles of gender equality and women's empowerment are integrated throughout the evaluation process. A mixed-methods approach is employed, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods alongside a review of project documents. This approach is well-suited for humanitarian evaluations, as it facilitates the synergistic integration of diverse methodologies. The research methodology encompasses both exploratory and conclusive (descriptive) stages to comprehensively address the research objectives.

The exploratory research phase aimed to gain insights and understanding of the issue at hand, with its findings subsequently confirmed or quantified through conclusive research. The data collection process involved two main phases: first, a desk review of food security in the Gaza Strip was conducted, followed by empirical data collection to test specific hypotheses. This utilized two sets of data within a single cross-sectional design. The first data set assessed the intervention design (relevance) and tested the initial hypothesis, while the second evaluated the intervention effects (effectiveness, efficiency, and impact) and tested the remaining hypotheses through questionnaires. A limitation of this approach is the absence of a counterfactual for impact evaluation, which is crucial for understanding causal relationships. While designing a rigorous impact analysis with control groups necessitates extensive planning and resources, not all projects possess the capacity to implement such methodologies. Nevertheless, mixed methods were utilized to support confidence in establishing causation between variables.

The research findings are organized around four research questions. First, regarding the relevance criteria, it was observed that the food security interventions effectively addressed the immediate

needs of households. These interventions aligned with the HRP and were tailored to community needs, providing critical assistance to the most vulnerable populations. Project managers' responses indicated a high relevance of interventions to the requirements of the affected individuals. Support from the HRP facilitated the addressing of urgent needs while simultaneously enhancing resilience and food security, thereby building upon existing initiatives. These interventions served as a lifeline for numerous families in the Gaza Strip, enabling them to diversify their livelihood strategies and allocate resources to other essential needs. Furthermore, they closely aligned with the priorities of the Gaza Strip, the food security cluster Strategic Framework, and the SDGs.

Second, concerning the effectiveness criteria, the analysis focused on assessing the efficacy of intervention modalities in preventing deterioration and enhancing household food security within contexts of food insecurity. Respondents widely praised the intervention modalities, demonstrating a strong preference reflected in all quantitative data examined. The evaluation established that targets for outputs and outcomes were fully met, with positive outcomes evident in food security metrics, including higher rates of recipients achieving an acceptable FCS and decreased CSI scores observed at the endline. However, three months after the cessation of assistance, key indicators such as FCS and CSI revealed a regression in many of these gains, attributable to the ongoing acute needs of these households, which had not sufficiently improved over the course of a year to allow for substantial investments in income generation or savings after fulfilling basic needs. Nevertheless, the projects reported notable achievements in various targets, particularly in fostering resilient communities, raising awareness, empowering women, and increasing annual household income. Women's participation was highly valued within these projects, with numerous affirmative actions implemented to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment. Initiatives included recognizing women as heads of households, ensuring equal pay for equal work, facilitating direct payments through banks, and implementing renewable energy-based systems to support women-led enterprises. Support for women-led enterprises not only bolstered women's participation but also enhanced their economic and social empowerment.

Third, in relation to efficiency criteria, the research assessed how effectively inputs, including materials, labor, and capital, were transformed into outputs or desired outcomes while minimizing wastage to ensure optimal resource utilization and maximum impact. Advanced technologies were employed during assistance delivery, including over-the-counter cash collection (OTC) options and an e-wallet banking mechanism (Pal Pay). The OTC option, which does not require a teller or agent, was deemed particularly suitable, while Pal Pay provided participants with ATM cards and passcodes for convenient monthly assistance disbursement at designated cash-out points. Project activities were conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and both international and local NGOs, fostering community engagement, particularly with local authorities, to enhance the acceptance of targeting systems and the accuracy of beneficiary lists, which are crucial for rapid intervention initiation within tight timeframes. The projects demonstrated clear indications of cost-efficient delivery, with evidence of measures promoting

cost efficiency and value for money, resulting in service delivery costs lower than initially projected.

Fourth, regarding impact criteria, the research examined the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goal of producing change three months after completion, with longer-term impacts being realized and experienced. The study identified several significant impacts on beneficiaries, including improvements in the nutritional status of families, particularly among children and pregnant women. Additionally, the interventions facilitated a break in the cycle of poverty, enabling family members to prioritize education and work over basic survival, thereby promoting economic growth and stability. Furthermore, the interventions contributed to reducing social tensions and conflicts stemming from food scarcity and inequality. They also led to improved health outcomes by decreasing the incidence of malnutrition-related diseases, such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies among families.

Overall, this research indicates substantial improvements in food security in the Gaza Strip, with strong community engagement highlighting effective interventions that contributed to these outcomes. In this best-case scenario, interventions resulted in gains in food security, nutrition, and women's empowerment. The activities demonstrated widespread and interconnected impacts, contributing to household incomes, access to nutritious foods, and women's empowerment. Moreover, the interventions were not merely about distributing assistance; they played a vital role in restoring dignity to vulnerable populations. Stakeholders expressed high appreciation for the design and implementation of intervention modalities, citing their relevance to beneficiaries' diverse needs, efficiency, effectiveness, and broader impact. Involving the local community through community committees, which participated in various project stages, facilitated better identification of community needs. This approach empowered beneficiaries, fostered a sense of ownership in target areas, and minimized challenges and conflicts within the wider community. However, it is important to note that decisions should not be solely entrusted to community committees and local authorities to prevent biases; rather, these entities can influence project systems and processes. The findings suggest that community involvement can enhance resilience, reduce familial conflicts, and promote community harmony during the project period. Nevertheless, key indicators declined three months after the last intervention, potentially indicating a return to previous challenging circumstances, particularly given the general decline in the country and the lack of alternative income sources for most beneficiaries to support savings.



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## 9 ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Evaluation team

This research was guided by the researcher's extensive background in monitoring and evaluation, assistant and enumerators.

The Evaluation Lead, Ms. Samia Nassar, served as a MEAL officer for an INGO in the Gaza Strip and has substantial experience in conducting and leading evaluations, even in remote settings like this one. She has a robust history of working with communities vulnerable to conflict, disasters, and climate change, having collaborated with organizations such as UNRWA, UNDP, NRC, MAAN Development Center, Secours Islamique France SIF, UNHCR, and their partners. She has independently conducted numerous evaluations in the Gaza Strip, encompassing a wide range of sectors and cross-cutting themes in both humanitarian and development contexts. In this evaluation, she employed a comprehensive approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. This included designing surveys and questionnaires, conducting interviews, and performing observational studies to collect thorough data. She has extensive experience in data analysis, using statistical tools and software to derive accurate conclusions. Throughout the process, she adeptly handled challenges such as mitigating biases, ensuring participant confidentiality, and adapting to unexpected findings. Additionally, she collaborated with other experts and stakeholders to validate her results and integrate diverse viewpoints. This rigorous approach not only enhances the credibility of her findings but also offers valuable insights for future research and practical applications.

The Evaluation Assistant, Mr. Suhail Enshassi, is a Senior MEAL coordinator at NGO in the Gaza Strip. In his leadership role, he focused on training the data collection team with a particular emphasis on including the elderly, vulnerable individuals, women, and children/adolescents. His training centred on gender and protection issues. He has extensive experience in program development and evaluation with various humanitarian and development NGOs, often in remote areas affected by conflict or crisis. Known for his attention to detail and problem-solving skills, Suhail effectively handled unexpected challenges such as technical issues or participant non-compliance. He worked closely with the evaluation lead, learning about methodological rigor and ethical considerations, which contributed significantly to the quality and reliability of the research findings. This active involvement provided him with invaluable practical experience and a deeper understanding of the research process.

Enumerators have multifaceted and dynamic experience working with NGOs, which requires a combination of interpersonal skills, precise methodology, and flexibility. They interact directly with a wide range of populations, adapting to different social, cultural, and geographical environments to collect accurate and significant data. Additionally, they adhere strictly to survey protocols to ensure the data's reliability and validity, all while remaining considerate of the respondents' situations and concerns. Samia, Suhail, and enumerators have worked together on many evaluations in the Gaza Strip in connection with partners for programs designed to support host communities, mostly about humanitarian interventions in the six sectors: food Security, protection, education, health and nutrition, Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

## Annex 2: Data Collection tools

### A. Qualitative tools

Introduction for interviews at subnational level is provided below:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a researcher. I am carrying out an evaluation after 3 months of finished HRP projects that the organizations have done supporting people to cope with prolonged stress and prevent the further deterioration in the humanitarian situation. We are talking with the project's managers who implemented the food security interventions during 2022.

We would like to collect your thoughts on this work which has supported your project. Your experience is very valuable, and your feedback will help humanitarian organisations and donors, as well as FSC/Ss and their members in-country to inform the design of future food security programmes, and the role they can play in the uptake of other interventions in contexts of acute food insecurity. We very much welcome negative feedback as it will help the organizations improve its support. And none of your feedback will bear any negative consequences for your community or yourself. If you agree to participate, at any moment you can stop participating without any penalty. The interview will last about 45-60 minutes. This evaluation is designed to help improve food security interventions by gathering opinions from everyone involved. Interviewers should take care to note the date, time, organization, name, gender and their contact information.

| OPENING  |
|--|
| First of all, we want to ask the questions regarding the evaluation criteria. We evaluate your project according to four criteria. Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. |
| A. RELEVANCE   |
| A.1. In your opinion, how did you perceive the relevance of the food security intervention modality in your project?   |
| A.2. In your opinion, to what extent is the project relevant for the needs of family members?  |
| A.3. In your opinion, how did you perceive that the project activities are aligned with the humanitarian response priorities?  |
| A.4. To what extent have the community committees and the local authorities that participated in the project played a role in achieving the project's relevance?                     |
| A.5. Is there a need for improvement? What would you suggest?  |
| B. EFFECTIVENESS   |
| B.1. To what extent did your project achieve their objectives including the timely delivery of relief assistance?  |
| B.2. In your opinion, to what extent have results been achieved? Explain with reasons  |
| B.3. To what extent has the project been flexible and responsive?  |
| B.4. Tell us about the Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in the project.  |
| B.5. What is the effect of engaging the Community Committees in the project?   |
| B.6. How was the participatory approach applied in the project?  |
| B.7. Describe how the assistance's redemption process affected the project's effectiveness.  |
| B.8. Describe how your project addressed the cross-cutting issue in terms of vulnerability coverage, protection, gender equality, do no harm?  |
| C. EFFICIENCY  |
| C.1. To what extent did adequate access to resources have a significant effect on your project's efficiency?   |
| C.2. How did the partnership agreement with the stakeholders affect the project's efficiency?  |

|   |
|---|
| C.3. To what extent are the costs (transfer, cost per beneficiary) and operations (logistics, program deliveries and M&E arrangements) aligned with program design? |
| C.4. How did your project deal with the increase in food prices in the local market?  |
| <b>D. IMPACT</b>  |
| D.1. What is the impact of your project on the beneficiaries?   |
| <b>E. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED</b>   |
| E.1. In your opinion, what would you suggest for corrections to improve the food security interventions for the next cycle?   |

## B. Household survey questionnaire

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>My name is ..... and I work for ..... (name) and my colleague is ..... and works for ..... We are part of a team carrying out a survey to gather information on the evaluation of the food security interventions in Gaza Strip.</p> <p>We would like to ask you some questions about your family. The interview usually takes around 30 minutes to complete. Any information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shown to other people. This is voluntary and you can choose not to answer any or all of the questions if you want. However, we hope that you will participate since your views are important.</p> <p>Do you have any questions? May we begin now 1. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> ↓ (go to the following questions) 2. No <input type="checkbox"/> →Refused</p> |   |
| Outcome of interview  | 1. Completed 2. Partially completed 3. Interview postponed 4. Others        |
| <b>SECTION A– BASIC QUESTIONNAIRE INFORMATION</b>   |   |
| A01. Questionnaire Number: _____  |   |
| A02. Location: <i>Governorate</i> _____   |   |
| A03. Date: ____/____/____ / 2023 (Day/Month /Year)  |   |
| A04. Enumerator Name _____  |   |
| <b>SECTION B – BASIC INFORMATION OF INTERVIEWEE</b>   |   |
| B01. Name of the interviewee  | _____   |
| B02. Gender of interviewee  | 1= Male 2= Female   |
| B03 Relationship to the head of the household   | 1= Himself/herself 2= Spouse 3= Other adults in the family (Explain: _____) |
| B04. Phone number (if any)  | ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____                           |
| <b>SECTION C – BASIC INFORMATION OF BENEFITING</b>  |   |
| C01. In which humanitarian organization did you benefit the food security intervention?   | _____   |
| C02. Type of benefit received   | 1= MPCA 2= CFW 3= In-Kind 4= FV   |
| C03. During the 12 months of your being beneficiaries of the HRP food security intervention, did your household receive any income/assistance from other humanitarian organization?   | 1= Yes 2= No  |

| SECTION D: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION (ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO CURRENTLY LIVE AND EAT AT THE HOUSEHOLD INCLUDING THE RESPONDENT) |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
|---|------|--|------------------------------------|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| ID Code   | Name | Relationship to household head<br><br>1. Household head<br>2. Husband/wife<br>3. Son/daughter<br>4. Brother/Sister<br>5. Father/mother<br>6. Other, Explain<br>_____ | Gender<br><br>1. Male<br>2. Female | Age (years) | Marital Status<br><br>1. Single<br>2. Married<br>3. Widow/widower<br>4. Divorced/separated<br>5. Deserted | Educational level Which has been completed:<br><br>1. He reads and writes<br>2. Primary school<br>3. Preparatory school<br>4. Secondary<br>5. Diploma<br>6. Bachelor's degree<br>7. Master's degree<br>8. Ph.D | The role in the family is:<br><br>1. The head of the family and supports<br>2. Head of a family and dependent<br>3. He/she depends<br>4. He/she is supported | Relationship between individuals (Above 18 years) in the workforce<br><br>1. He/she works<br>2. He/she does not work and wants to work, and he/she has worked previously<br>3. He/she does not work, wants to work, and has never worked<br>4. He/she does not work and does not want to work because:<br>a) Devoting full time to study<br>b) Devoting yourself to housework<br>c) Disability/old age/illness<br>d) The presence of regular income (retirement, regular transfer, property rental...) |
| 01  |      | HHH  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 02  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 03  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 04  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 05  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 06  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 07  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 08  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 09  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 10  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 11  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |
| 12  |      |  |                                    |             |   |  |  |  |

| SECTION E– HOUSEHOLD INCOME  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Now I would like to know about income earned by household members in the last 12 months of being beneficiaries of the HRP food security intervention               |   |   |
| Member ID Code<br>(from section D)   | Income activity<br>1 Regular paid work in the private sector (also includes civil and international institutions)<br>2 Irregular paid work in the private sector (also includes civil and international institutions)<br>3 Self-employed work in the private sector (private business - shop/taxi/...etc.)<br>4 Employers in the private sector (small businesses that include at least 2 workers + large businesses such as companies - factories - stores... etc.)<br>5 Work in the government (public sector)<br>6 Working in the UN Relief Agency (UN institutions)<br>7 Government work under the contract system (permanent government unemployment, municipal workers... etc.)<br>8 Social insurance, pensions and retirement (early retirement or after retirement age)<br>9 Salaries/entitlements for martyrs, wounded, and prisoners<br>10 Other (specify)..... | How much was <b>earned</b> from this activity? (Total of 12 months, in NIS) |
|  |   |   |
|  |   |   |
|  |   |   |
|  |   |   |
|  |   |   |
| During the 12 months of your being beneficiaries of the HRP food security intervention, how much did your household members receive from the following activities? |   |   |
| Activity   | Annual Cash Income (in NIS)   |   |
| Help from friends and relatives  |   |   |
| Real estate rentals  |   |   |
| Earnings, interest and dividends   |   |   |
| From agriculture (including animal husbandry) (annual revenue)   |   |   |
| Other (specify).....   |   |   |
| SECTION F – EVALUATION CRITERIA  |   |   |
| CRITERIA 1: RELEVANCE  |   |   |
| Did the project intervention benefit your family members? (Record all mentioned)   | 1 = No benefit<br>2 = Access to Nutritious Food<br>3 = Improved Health<br>4 = Enhanced Productivity<br>5 = Education Opportunities<br>6 = Reduced Vulnerability to Shocks<br>7 = Empowerment and Self-Sufficiency<br>8 = Social Stability<br>9 = Other (specify)  |   |
| Did you recognize the project's ability to fulfil your needs? How?   | 1 = yes<br>2 = No<br>Explain:.....  |   |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| Did the project help the family provide its needs to be food secure?   | 1 = Yes, sufficiently<br>2 = Yes, to a limited extent<br>3 = No<br>Explanation: .....   |
| What were the levels of food needs coverage whether by the assistance only or by additional sources                          | % of family needs coverage by assistance only .....<br>% of family need coverage by additional sources .....  |
| How did the assistance intervention play a role in covering your needs?  | .....   |
| To what extent was the project relevant for the needs of your family members?  | .....   |
| Did you saw that the distribution of the modality assistance for the project are suitable for you?                           | 1 = Highly suitable<br>2 = somewhat suitable<br>3 = not suitable<br>Explain: .....  |
| Did you saw that the objectives and design of the project are relevant to your needs?  | 1 = Highly relevant<br>2 = somewhat relevant<br>3 = not relevant<br>Explain: .....  |
| What are your suggestions that you would like to improve in the next project, or what would you want to be done differently? |   |
| <b>CRITERIA 2: EFFECTIVENESS</b>   |   |
| Did the project intervention was flexible and responsive to you? (Record all mentioned)                                      | 1 = No flexibility<br>2 = Yes, due to.....<br>1 = Ease of registering for the project<br>2 = Ease accessing to the assistance support<br>3 = Team helpfulness when needed |
| Did you know that there is a system for suggestions and complaints in the project?   | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes<br>Explain: .....   |
| Did you experience any embarrassment or anything that prevented you from filing a complaint during the project?              | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes   |
| Have you ever filed a complaint related to the project?  | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes<br>If yes, Did you receive a response to the complaint?<br>1 = No<br>2 = Yes  |
| Do you have any complaint or observation that you would like to address to the evaluation team?                              | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes<br>If yes, explain .....  |
| To what extent do you evaluate your satisfaction with the complaint and feedback mechanism implemented in the project?       | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain: .....  |
| Have you received the clarification about the full redemption process?   | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes   |

|   |   |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | 3 If no, explain .....  |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| To what extent do you evaluate your satisfaction with the redemption process in the project?  | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:..... |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| Have you faced any negative consequences for your participation in the project?   | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes<br>If yes, explain .....  |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| Do you think that females, children, and people with disabilities got a safe and equitable opportunity in the project?  | 1 = No<br>2 = Yes<br>If no, explain .....   |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| To what extent are you satisfied with the value of the assistance?  | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:..... |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| To what extent are you satisfied with the coverage period of the assistance?  | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:..... |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| Do you prefer to extend the coverage period or increase payment amounts?  | 1 = I prefer to extend the coverage period<br>2 = I prefer to increase the payment amounts<br>Explain:.....         |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| To what extent are you satisfied with the access to the distribution point?   | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:..... |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| To what extent are you satisfied with the helpfulness of project team members?  | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:..... |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| <b>EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS: COPING STRATEGIES INDEX (CSI)</b>  |   |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| During the <u>last 7 days</u> , how many days did your household have to employ one of the following strategies to cope with a lack of food or money to buy it? |   | Frequency: Number of days out of the past seven: (Use numbers 0 – 7 to answer number of days; Use NA for not applicable) |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
|   |   | All the time?<br>(Every day)   | Often? (3-6 days a week) | Occasionally? (1-2 days a week) | rarely? (Less than one day a week) | never? (0 days per week) |
| 1.  | Skip entire days without eating?  |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |
| 2.  | Restrict consumption by adults in order for small children to eat?  |  |                          |                                 |                                    |                          |

|     |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3.  | Children skipped meals/or eaten smaller portions        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.  | Send children members to eat elsewhere?                 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.  | Purchase food on credit?                                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.  | Borrow food, or rely on help from a friend or relative? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.  | Reduce number of meals eaten in a day?                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.  | Reduced amount eaten in meals by all household members  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.  | Rely on less preferred and less expensive foods?        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. | Purchased low quality market “leftovers”                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. | Consume seed stock held for next season?                |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. | Gather wild food, hunt, or harvest immature crops?      |  |  |  |  |  |

#### **EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS: FOOD CONSUMPTION SCORE (FCS)**

| Food groups: How many days in the last week (7 days) did anyone in your household consume the following food groups |  |   | Last Week<br>0-7 |
|---|--|---|------------------|
| 1.  | Cereals  | Any bread, rice noodles, biscuits, or any other foods made from millet, sorghum, maize, rice, wheat, .... etc.? |                  |
| 2.  | Root and tubers  | Any potatoes, yams, manioc, cassava or any other foods made from roots or tubers?                               |                  |
| 3.  | Vegetables   | Any vegetables?   |                  |
| 4.  | Fruits   | Any fruits?   |                  |
| 5.  | Meat, poultry, offal   | Any beef, lamb, rabbit wild game, chicken, duck, or other birds, liver, kidney, heart, or other organ meats?    |                  |
| 6.  | Eggs   | Any eggs?   |                  |
| 7.  | Fish and seafood   | Any fresh or dried fish or shellfish?   |                  |
| 8.  | Pulses/legumes/nuts  | Any foods made from beans, peas, lentils, or nuts?  |                  |
| 9.  | Milk and milk products   | Any cheese, yoghurt, milk or other milk products?   |                  |
| 10.   | Oil/fats   | Any foods made with oil, fat, or butter?  |                  |
| 11.   | Sugar/honey  | Any sugar or honey?   |                  |
| 12.   | Miscellaneous<br>(Spices (black pepper, salt...)<br>Drinks (coffee, tea...)) | Any other foods, such as condiments, coffee, or tea?  |                  |

#### **CRITERIA 3: EFFICIENCY**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| To what extent are you satisfied with the time regularity of the assistance distribution?   | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:.....        |
| To what extent are you satisfied with the assistance?   | 1 = Very satisfied<br>2 = Satisfied<br>3 = Somewhat<br>4 = Not satisfied<br>5 = Not very satisfied<br>Explain:.....        |
| How long did it take time to reach the distribution point?  | 1 = less than 30 minutes<br>2 = 30 – 60 minutes<br>3 = 61-90 minutes<br>4 = 91- 120 minutes<br>5 = More than 120 minutes   |
| Were there overcrowding and obstruction during your receiving the assistance?   | 1 = Yes<br>2 = No<br>Explain:.....   |
| Did you encounter any difficulties/obstacles/risks in reaching the disbursement points?   | 1 = Yes<br>2 = No<br>Explain:.....   |
| In case you were received food voucher modality, were the prices of items in the contracted shops competitive in comparison with market prices? | Explain:.....  |
| <b>CRITERIA 4: IMPACT</b>   |  |
| In your opinion, to what extent did you see that the intervention benefited you and your family?  | 1 = Very beneficial<br>2 = Beneficial<br>3 = Moderate<br>4 = Less beneficial<br>5 = Not at all beneficial<br>Explain:..... |
| If you see that the project is beneficial for you and your family, what benefits of the project?  | Explain:.....  |
| What are the coping mechanisms you did not need use but would have had to if the project was not implemented?                                   | Explain:.....  |
| What is the impact of the project on your family?   | Explain:.....  |
| How your family members spent their time as a result of the project?  | Explain:.....  |
| How many hours did the head of the household spend on daily chores during the project implementation?   | .....  |

|   |   |       |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|-------|---|---|---|---|
| How many hours did the head of the household spend outside the home during the project implementation?  |   | ..... |   |   |   |   |
| To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following statements. Please use the Likert scale to answer the following questions: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). |   |       |   |   |   |   |
| The Impact of the food security intervention  |   | 1     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1   | Food security intervention improve the nutritional status of your family, particularly children and pregnant women.   |       |   |   |   |   |
| 2   | Food security intervention improves health outcomes, reducing the incidence of diseases related to malnutrition, such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies for your family. |       |   |   |   |   |
| 3   | Food security intervention enhanced cognitive function and physical capacity, leading to improved productivity and economic output  |       |   |   |   |   |
| 4   | Food security intervention break the cycle of poverty by enabling your family members to focus on education and work rather than survival, thus promoting economic growth and stability.    |       |   |   |   |   |
| 5   | Food security intervention increased the school attendance and improved cognitive abilities, leading to better educational outcomes.  |       |   |   |   |   |
| 6   | Food security intervention reduced the social tensions and conflicts arising from food scarcity and inequality.   |       |   |   |   |   |
| 7   | Food security intervention promoted gender equality by empowering women through better health and economic opportunities.   |       |   |   |   |   |

### Annex 3: Correlation coefficient

**Table 9-1: Internal validity for the impact of food security interventions**

| The Impact of the food security intervention |   | Relation Coefficient | P-value |
|--|---|----------------------|---------|
| 1  | Food security intervention improve the nutritional status of your family, particularly children and pregnant women.   | 0.58                 | 0.000*  |
| 2  | Food security intervention improves health outcomes, reducing the incidence of diseases related to malnutrition, such as stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies for your family. | 0.61                 | 0.000*  |
| 3  | Food security intervention enhanced cognitive function and physical capacity, leading to improved productivity and economic output  | 0.81                 | 0.000*  |
| 4  | Food security intervention break the cycle of poverty by enabling your family members to focus on education and work rather than survival, thus promoting economic growth and stability.    | 0.73                 | 0.000*  |
| 5  | Food security intervention increased the school attendance and improved cognitive abilities, leading to better educational outcomes.  | 0.59                 | 0.000*  |
| 6  | Food security intervention reduced the social tensions and conflicts arising from food scarcity and inequality.   | 0.66                 | 0.000*  |
| 7  | Food security intervention promoted gender equality by empowering women through better health and economic opportunities.   | 0.83                 | 0.000*  |

\* Correlation is statistically significant at  $\alpha$  0.05

## Annex 4: Research matrix

Table 9-2: Research matrix for answering research question

| Questions   | Hypothesis   | Evaluation Criteria | Research Methods  | Data source   | Research Designs   | Sampling  | Objective   |
|---|--|---------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| What is the context of household food security and the rationale for intervention, in Gaza Strip in particular? | -  | -                   | -   | Literature Review   | Exploratory research (Qualitative Approach)                                      | -   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To inform on the context of household food security and the rationale for intervention in Gaza Strip.</li> <li>✓ To formulate of the research objectives, hypothesis, and the theoretical intervention model.</li> </ul> |
| What are the current humanitarian interventions for household food security?                                    | -  | -                   | A desk review to select the humanitarian food security interventions' case studies  | Reports from Food Security Cluster Office in Gaza Strip   |  | The case studies selected in judgmental sampling by using ranking criteria designed by the author | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To select the intervention's case studies.</li> <li>✓ To select the participants in each of the intervention's cases.</li> </ul>   |
| To what extent did food security interventions meet the immediate needs of households?                          | H1: Humanitarian Interventions for food security are relevant interventions. | Relevance           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Desk Review</li> <li>✓ KIIs</li> <li>✓ Survey with participants' statements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project documents</li> <li>✓ Project managers</li> <li>✓ Targeted HHs</li> </ul> | Descriptive research (Qualitative Approach) Analysis<br>✓ Descriptive statistics | The case studies selected in judgmental sampling and their project managers who                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To analyse the design of the intervention's case studies</li> </ul>  |

| Questions  | Hypothesis   | Evaluation Criteria | Research Methods  | Data source   | Research Designs  | Sampling   | Objective   |
|--|--|---------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |                     |   |   | ✓ Secondary document review triangulated with KIIs  | were selected purposively.                                 |   |
| To what extent did food security interventions achieve their objectives including the timely delivery of relief assistance?  | H2: Humanitarian Interventions for food security are effective in achieving their objectives.                              | Effectiveness       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Desk Review</li> <li>✓ KIIs</li> <li>✓ Survey with participants' statements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project documents</li> <li>✓ Project managers</li> <li>✓ Targeted HHs</li> </ul> | Descriptive Research (Quantitative, Qualitative)<br><br>In analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Descriptive statistics</li> <li>✓ Inferential statistics (t-test)</li> <li>✓ Pre-Post evaluation</li> </ul> | ✓ Randomly sampling for participants from the case studies | ✓ To analyse the effectiveness of the intervention's case studies |
| To what extent did adequate access to resources have a significant effect on the efficiency of food security's intervention? | H3: Adequate access to resources has a significant effect on the efficiency of humanitarian intervention for food security | Efficiency          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Desk Review</li> <li>✓ KIIs</li> <li>✓ Survey with participants' statements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project documents</li> <li>✓ Project managers</li> <li>✓ Targeted HHs</li> </ul> | Descriptive Research (Quantitative, Qualitative)<br><br>In analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Descriptive statistics</li> </ul>   | ✓ Randomly sampling for participants from the case studies | ✓ To analyse the efficiency intervention's case studies           |



| Questions  | Hypothesis   | Evaluation Criteria | Research Methods   | Data source  | Research Designs  | Sampling   | Objective  |
|--|--|---------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| What intended and unintended impact has the food security interventions made on the household? | H4: Humanitarian Interventions for food security have a significant impact on household food security. | Impact              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ KIIs</li> <li>✓ Survey with participants' statements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project managers</li> <li>✓ Targeted HHs</li> </ul> | <p>Descriptive Research (Quantitative, Qualitative)</p> <p>In analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Descriptive statistics</li> <li>✓ Inferential statistics (t-test)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Randomly sampling for participants from the case studies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ To analyse the impact of the intervention's case studies</li> </ul> |