

OG 5.50: Food Aid Programmes in DDR

Objectives

This module will:

- ✓ explain how food aid can be used in support of DDR programmes;
- ✓ provide operational guidance for planning and implementing food aid programmes in support of DDR; and
- ✓ highlight the need to provide for the nutritional needs of special groups.

1. Introduction

Food agencies are normally already involved in large-scale life-saving and livelihood protection programmes in support of vulnerable and war-affected civilian communities and displaced populations. These agencies are often asked to support DDR programmes by providing specifically designed food assistance to the disarmed or ex-combatants and their dependants.

In countries and regions emerging from conflict, food is generally scarce among the war-affected population. This includes members of armed forces and groups to be demobilized and their dependants, who often lack the most basic items as a result of the collapse of military logistics chains and networks and the dismantling of wartime mechanisms for acquiring food.

To minimize the risk of having hungry members of armed forces and groups raiding civilian communities for sustenance, food aid may be provided during demobilization and reintegration. The ultimate goal of food assistance during DDR, however, is to help bring about recovery, rehabilitation and progress towards ongoing self-reliance and food security. Ultimately, hunger and food insecurity are obstacles to human development, as well as to the realization of peace, security and human rights.



Humanitarian agencies shall not provide food aid to armed members of armed forces and groups at any stage of a DDR programme. All reasonable precautions and measures shall be taken to ensure that food aid donated to humanitarian agencies is not taken or used by combatants or armed forces and groups. When food needs to be provided to armed members of armed forces and groups during the pre-disarmament and disarmament phases of the programme, national governments, bilateral donors and other actors, and not humanitarian agencies, should be responsible for all aspects of the feeding, from the acquisition of food to its distribution.

2. Food aid in support of DDR

Food aid will be most often used in support of the demobilization and reintegration phases of DDR programmes, as it should be distributed to disarmed combatants and other DDR programme participants and beneficiaries admitted to the DDR programme in accordance with the eligibility criteria of the DDR programme.

Food aid aims to achieve different objectives in each phase, and is carried out through different activities, as Table 5.50.1 shows:

Phase	Objectives
Demobilization: cantonment and/or mobile demobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide food assistance to disarmed combatants and those associated with armed forces and groups (and in some cases their dependants) in order to meet immediate needs
Demobilization: reinsertion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide food specifically for reinsertion assistance as part of a transitional safety-net benefit package, with the aim of improving the intended recipient group's capacity to meet immediate household food security objectives until the dynamics of economic reintegration allow for a phasing out of the food assistance component
Reintegration, rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To provide rehabilitation and recovery assistance through projects providing for the food security needs of a wider group of beneficiaries, including those of receiving communities, among returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, and ex-combatants through community-based, participatory rehabilitation efforts ■ To provide focused assistance to special categories (war-disabled and chronically ill, women and children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, HIV/AIDS-affected people) in order to improve and support their reintegration efforts and strategies

Participants with special needs should receive assistance appropriate to their nutritional and social situation. Categories of participants with special food aid needs include: (1) children associated with armed forces and groups; (2) pregnant and/or lactating women; (3) disabled and chronically ill combatants; and (4) people living with HIV/AIDS.

Dependants may also be considered eligible for food assistance if they fulfil the vulnerability criteria and/or if the main household income was that of the combatant. Eligibility for food aid and vulnerability criteria should be agreed upon and coordinated among key national and agency stakeholders in the DDR programme, with humanitarian agencies playing a key role.

3. Planning food aid in DDR

Planning food aid should be an integral part of the integrated DDR planning process. As such, the design of food aid should be based on initial and detailed assessments.

3.1. Assessment

Food aid programmes should be context specific and respectful of local and regional approaches to assistance. In addition, they should be based on an understanding of the food security situation, and the vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms of households and communities.

It is therefore essential to understand the social, political and economic context in which food aid will take place, and carry out food security and needs assessments at the earliest possible stages of planning. This should be done in coordination with other detailed assessments carried out by the DDR programme to avoid overlapping and duplication during data collection.



Section 2 of OG 3.20 on DDR Programme Design

Initial qualitative data may be collected through surveys and rapid assessments at the initiative of the UN humanitarian coordinating body and partner UN agencies in coordination with the DDR unit/team. Box 5.50.1 lists data that should be collected to plan food aid in support of DDR programmes:

Box 5.50.1: Data for planning food aid

Data on food habits and preliminary information on nutritional requirements should be collected by food agencies through surveys and rapid assessments before, or immediately following, the start of the DDR process. Data should include:

- numbers of participants and beneficiaries, including dependants such as partners, children and relatives (disaggregated by sex and age and with specific descriptors about vulnerability);
- the nutrition situation (i.e. baseline nutritional data), especially of nutritionally vulnerable individuals (mainly children under 5 years and their mothers) to determine the need for selective feeding programmes, design rations for all types of food distribution and monitor the situation over time; and
- logistics corridors, accessible roads and other relevant infrastructure information, including mine risk areas and demining activities, and other security-related information regarding food aid distribution.

The design of any longer-term food aid in support of reintegration shall be based on a more comprehensive approach to assessing needs. This includes greater attention to the role of markets; to links among food security, nutrition and other sectors; and to building on data collected for food aid during cantonment or mobile demobilization and as part of reinsertion assistance.



Do you know how to design and carry out food assessments? See the *Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook* (<http://www.wfp.org>).

3.2. Design

The provision of food aid should be formalized in the food aid plan as an integral part of the DDR programme. The food aid plan should deal with the following issues:

- the estimated quantities of food aid for cantonment and/or mobile demobilization, reinsertion assistance and reintegration;
- plans and resources in place for special feeding programmes (e.g. school/ interim care centre [ICC] feeding, HIV/AIDS therapeutic feeding);
- the establishment of viable distribution mechanisms;
- the development of a logistics plan;
- the identification of human, material and financial resources covered through donor funds and contributions and the UN peacekeeping assessed budget;
- preparedness for special project activities (e.g. food for work [FFW], food for training [FFT], etc.);
- the establishment of monitoring and reporting systems;
- the development of contingency plans; and
- the establishment of security measures.

4. Implementing food aid in DDR


Table 5.50.2 shows potential food aid activities that may be carried out during cantonment and mobile demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration.

Table 5.50.2: Potential food aid activities in support of demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration

Phase	Activities
Demobilization: cantonment and/or mobile demobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food aid to disarmed participants and beneficiaries of DDR programmes ■ Supplementary and therapeutic feeding projects for groups with special needs, such as children under 5 years and their mothers ■ Feeding at ICCs and transit centres for children associated with armed forces and groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support to educational, civic training and information projects ■ Logistic support to implementing partners
Demobilization: reinsertion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food aid for reinsertion assistance usually lasts from three months to one year, but should not exceed a one-year period. Such aid may be offered in a single distribution or over multiple distributions.
Reintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expanded emergency rehabilitation and reintegration projects ■ Income- and employment-generating projects in exchange for food – FFW ■ Agriculture-based activities to support food security ■ Infrastructure rehabilitation (FFW); feeder roads reconstruction (FFW) ■ Household food security projects (urban/rural FFW initiatives) ■ <i>Ad hoc</i> projects for groups with special needs ■ Training and skills development projects (FFT, education, adult literacy)

5. Selecting commodities for rations


 *Food aid benefits provided for reinsertion and reintegration of all DDR participants (ex-combatants and dependants) should be balanced against assistance provided to other returnees as part of the wider recovery programme, in order to avoid inequities among war-affected groups. For example, careful consideration should be given when offering a more desirable commodity (such as rice) to ex-combatants when the programmes serving the broader communities are providing a less desirable commodity such as bulgur.*

Therefore, the value and appropriateness of the rations offered are of vital importance. When selecting commodities for rations, a cereal that is familiar to those being supplied with food, pulses and oil provide the basis for most rations. Additional items are included to provide extra nutrients if people have no access to fresh foods.

Box 5.50.2: Key questions and considerations for selecting commodities for food aid

- *What are the nutritional and dietary requirements?* The mix of commodities should provide the nutrients required to ensure that beneficiaries have adequate energy, protein, fat and micro-nutrients, taking account of what they can acquire from other sources. Particular consideration should be given to beneficiaries with special nutritional needs (HIV/AIDS-affected people, children, pregnant and/or lactating women, etc.).

- *What are the local food habits?* Foods should be familiar to beneficiaries, correspond to their traditional dietary habits and respect any religious taboos. Consider whether there are any suitable items available for local purchase, or whether they can be obtained in exchange for food aid commodities.
- *What types of food should be available for children and elderly people?* Families should be able to prepare easily digestible energy-dense foods for young children. Easily chewed and digestible foods are also needed for elderly people.
- *How should the food be transported and stored?* Foods should be reasonably easy to transport, capable of being stored (including at the household level) and simple to prepare using a minimum amount of fuel. Foods should be adapted to the availability of cooking facilities, water and cooking fuel.
- *What are the cost-effectiveness, attractiveness and local value of the commodities to be used?* Commodities should be considered in relation to: the nutrient value the food delivers; the local (resale) value (beneficiaries may trade limited quantities of some items to obtain other essential items, e.g. fruits and vegetables from the local market); and whether some items are more likely to be misappropriated than others.

 **Tables 2 and 3 in sections 8.3.3 and 8.3.5, respectively, of IDDRS 5.50 on Food Aid Programmes in DDR show the recommended daily nutritional requirements during cantonment or mobile demobilization, and the recommended take-home ration in support of a three-month reinsertion period.**

5.1. Food aid and special groups

Participants and beneficiaries with special needs should receive food aid appropriate to their nutritional needs. Table 5.50.3 outlines these types of food aid support:

Table 5.50.3: Possible interventions in food aid support for special groups

Pregnant or lactating women	Children associated with armed forces and groups	HIV/AIDS-affected ex-combatants and receiving communities	Disabled and chronically ill combatants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food distributions/ take-home rations ■ Supplementary feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food distributions/take-home rations ■ Support to families through take-home rations ■ Supplementary feeding in ICCs ■ Food for education (FFE)/FFT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food distributions/take-home rations ■ Therapeutic feeding for HIV/AIDS-affected populations ■ Food support to community-based education programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Food distributions/take-home rations ■ Support to families through take-home rations ■ FFE/FFT

6. Monitoring and evaluation of food aid

To encourage accountability and improve the approaches taken in implementing food aid programmes in support of DDR, mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential elements of the food aid programme. Arrangements for monitoring the distribution of aid should be made in advance between the lead food agency and the implementing partners. Table 5.50.4 describes in detail how M&E activities should take place for food aid programmes:

Table 5.50.4: Monitoring and evaluating food aid programmes in DDR	
Food distribution monitoring (minimum requirement for information gathered)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Receipt and delivery of commodities ■ Number of people (disaggregated by sex and age) receiving assistance ■ Food storage and handling and distribution of commodities ■ Food aid availability and unmet needs ■ Inequalities in distribution
Two main activities for gathering food distribution data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Distribution monitoring:</i> This comprises several activities such as commodity monitoring, on-site monitoring and food basket monitoring, carried out on the day of distribution. ■ <i>Post-distribution monitoring:</i> This takes place some time after the distribution, but before the next one. It includes monitoring of the end use at the household and community levels, and market surveys.

 For more information on monitoring and evaluation, see OG 3.50 on Monitoring and Evaluation of DDR Programmes.

7. Summary of key guidance on food aid programmes in DDR

- ✓ Food aid can be provided in support of cantonment and mobile demobilization, and as part of reinsertion assistance. Food aid should be distributed to disarmed combatants and other participants and beneficiaries in DDR programmes.
- ✓ Food aid should be planned as an integral part of the integrated DDR planning process.
- ✓ Food aid within DDR should be geared towards reducing vulnerability and providing for the nutritional and social needs of special groups (e.g. children associated with armed forces and groups, war-disabled ex-combatants, pregnant and lactating women, and those beneficiaries affected by HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses).

- ✓ Food aid should be part of a coherent, broad strategy to improve the livelihoods, coping mechanisms and food management skills that already exist in communities, so that ex- combatants are well placed to become contributors to local food security in the long term.