



**Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia (EREL) Program**  
**Funded by USAID/ Food For Peace (FFP)**  
**Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Quarter 1 Report**  
*October 1 –December 31, 2015*



**Project Summary:**

Award Number:  
**AID-FFP-G-15-0006**  
Start Date: January 7, 2015  
End Date: October 9, 2015  
Report Date: June 30, 2015  
Total Award: \$8,970,000

## **I. Program Overview**

The Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia (EREL) program is designed to assist 30,000 households (150,000 individuals) who have been economically affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Liberia. The EREL program targets three of the most affected counties – Lofa, Montserrado and Margibi, which represent the counties through which Ebola first entered Liberia, and the counties that have suffered some of the most recent and recurrent outbreaks. The program is assisting vulnerable populations in these counties to fill minimum food basket gaps, maintain normal agricultural production, protect vulnerable households' assets from depletion through sales and minimize the negative impacts on child nutrition. The project consists of two components: 1) direct cash transfers to the most vulnerable households; and 2) agricultural input vouchers targeting vulnerable households that contain smallholder farmers.

## **II. Quarter Executive Summary**

### **A. Overall Summary**

During this reporting quarter, which marks the last quarter in 2015, the EREL program made significant progress towards the expected results. During the quarter, a total of 12,751 households completed their third tranches of cash transfers and 90 households completed their second tranches. An additional 1,298 farming households also received agricultural inputs vouchers and exchanged them for agricultural inputs at trade fairs held in Margibi and Montserrado counties during the quarter.

During the quarter, the team conducted post-distribution monitoring and collected information to gain an understanding of how households are diversifying their diets in the three counties. The post distribution findings indicate that cash continues to enable beneficiaries to meet both food and other basic needs including health and education. The findings also showed that most of the beneficiary households continued to invest a proportion of their cash in small businesses and agricultural inputs.

The EREL program continued its beneficiary verification process to ensure that beneficiaries, registered by community committees and verified by implementing partners, meet the project's eligibility criteria. During the project a total of 90 beneficiary households were identified as not meeting the full eligibility criteria and hence were de-listed.

### **B. Security Context, Situation Overview and Operational Summary**

There were three confirmed cases of Ebola virus disease (EVD) reported from Liberia in November 2015. According to reports, the first of these cases was a 15-year-old boy who tested positive for Ebola virus after admission to a health facility in the Greater Monrovia area on 19 November. He was then transferred to an Ebola treatment centers along with five other members of his family. Two other members of the family – the boy's 8-year old brother and his 40-year-old father – subsequently tested positive for EVD whilst in isolation. Both tested negative twice for Ebola virus on 3 December. The 15-year-old boy died on 23 November. The EVD situation continued in the two neighboring countries of Sierra Leone and Guinea but at very low rates. Apart from the reported EVD cases the security situation in remained relatively calm.

## **III. Coordination**

Mercy Corps continued to participate in various coordination meetings including the Cash Transfers Working Group (CWTG) and the Food Security Cluster Meeting. Mercy Corps contributed to discussions around cash distribution best practice in Liberia by sharing lessons from its current cash distribution in the three counties. At the Food Security Cluster level,

MC participated in the discussions and development of processes aimed at establishing a national Food Security Monitoring and Surveillance System (FSMS). Mercy Corps has been providing information on its activities in the three counties to key stakeholders including the Ministry of Agriculture during the Food Security Cluster meetings

#### IV. Program Activities

##### **Objective 1: Most affected populations in Montserrado, Margibi and Lofa have access to enough food**

###### **Indicator 1.1:** # of recipients of cash transfers

The EREL program continued its cash transfers to households directly and economically affected by the Ebola Virus Disease in Montserrado, Margibi, and Lofa counties. During the quarter, a total of 12,751 households (70,825 beneficiaries) received their third installments of cash and graduated from Phase I, and 90 households received their second tranches. Another 90 households (with 450 beneficiaries) did not turn out for distribution, and another 90 households were removed from the beneficiaries list because they were disqualified through a verification exercise conducted by the EREL team and its implementing partners. Mercy Corps will do retroactive payments to all Phase I beneficiaries who were absent during one or more cash distributions. The payments are planned to take place in February 2016, once the project modification is approved.

Mercy Corps will conduct a verification process to determine whether households that participated in Phase I of the project will be eligible to participate in the second phase of the project. In an event where a beneficiary's economic situation/status has improved, said beneficiary will be replaced by another beneficiary who is eligible and more vulnerable. The verification exercises will be conducted from February up to early March 2016. The new beneficiary will be eligible for one round of 3 distributions of 42 USD.

###### **Indicator 1.2:** Total value of cash transfers

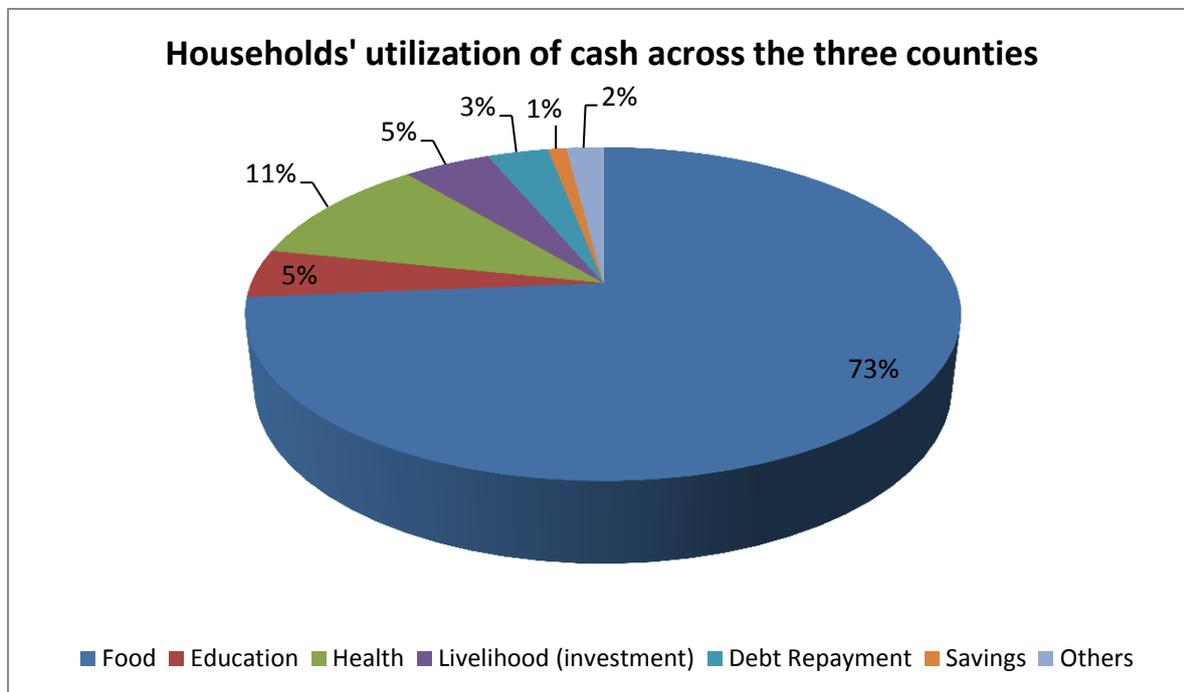
The total amount of cash disbursed to the project beneficiaries during this quarter was 535,592 USD. The EREL project has disbursed a total of 2,142,210 USD to the project beneficiaries up to the end of 2015. This amount constitutes 85% of the total amount budgeted for Phase I (2,520,000 USD). This indicates that the program is 85% on track with its Phase I cash transfers target.

###### **Indicator 1.3:** Usage of cash transfers

The EREL program conducted Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) among cash recipients to understand how households are utilizing or maximizing the cash assistance received. PDM data were analyzed at county level. The survey was conducted among 1,438 cash recipient households in the three counties as follows: Margibi County, 394 households; Montserrado County, 529 households; and Lofa County, 515 households.

The findings revealed that the greatest proportion of cash received was spent on the purchase of food. The data analysis showed that close to three quarters (73%) of the cash received by beneficiaries was spent on purchase of food items by households. Expenditures on health constituted households' second largest proportion. The PDM found that recipients typically spent 11% of the total cash they received on health. The analyses also revealed that 5% of the cash was spent on investments in petty trade/small businesses and purchase of additional agricultural tools. Respondent households explained that they are incrementally investing a portion of their cash in small businesses as part of their own sustainability strategy, so that

they can continue to access food after the project phases out. They also indicated that they were experiencing growth and expansion in their businesses. For example, one beneficiary in Kakata stated that he initially invested a small proportion of his cash in the sale of rice but later diversified his inventory to include sale of palm oil. He testified that his business is gradually expanding.



An area of interest could be an investigation into how households are meeting additional food needs since some of the cash they received is used to access education, health services and for investments. The PDM data analyses from the three counties indicate that households have other sources of income which should complement the current cash transfers to meet their minimum food needs. For example, the data analysis for Montserrado County showed that the monthly income from sources other than the EREL program ranged from 1,000 to 10,000 LRD (Liberian Dollars), equivalent to US \$11.90 – US \$119, using an exchange rate of 1 USD to 84 LRD. The additional income came from several sources, the most dominant being agriculture, which constitutes 54% of the income. The remainder sources are petty trade (24%); casual labor (15%); and others (8%).

The data analyses indicated that cash transfers are making impact in the lives of the beneficiaries. For example, all (100%) respondents from Margibi County said the cash is assisting them to meet not only their food needs but also meeting the education, health, and investment needs of households.

**Number of meals per day**

There are indications that the hunger situation within households is improving in all of the counties, as beneficiaries report that they are eating more frequently following assistance from EREL. Data analysis for Montserrado County indicates that 82% of beneficiaries can feed their children twice daily; 7% feed their children once daily; 5% feed their children three times; 2% feed their children four times daily; and 1% feed their children five times.

Similarly, data analysis for Margibi County indicated that more than three quarters of children (79.2%) and adults (77.6%) can have two meals each, twice daily. Data analysis for Lofa similarly revealed that a little over half (53%) of respondents are consuming three meals daily; 39% consume 1-2 meals daily; and 8% consume more than three meals daily.

## **Objective 2: Most affected farmers in Montserrado, Margibi and Lofa are able to maintain their production with improved inputs**

### **Indicator 2.1: # of recipients of input vouchers**

During the quarter under review, agricultural inputs trade fairs were held in two of the project counties, namely Margibi (695HHs) and Montserrado (603HHs) counties. A total of 1,298 farming households received agricultural input vouchers and exchanged them for agricultural inputs at trade fairs held in the two counties. Each farming household received four vouchers valued at 10 USD each. The total number of farming households that have received agricultural inputs vouchers up to the end 2015 stands at 5,424 households.

### **Indicator 2.2: Total value of input vouchers**

A total of 5,192 vouchers in the amount of 10 USD (for a total of 51,920 USD) were distributed to the 1,298 households from the two counties during the reporting quarter. A total 21,696 vouchers (total value of 216,960 USD) were distributed from the start of the project up to the end of 2015.

### **Indicator 2.3: % of vouchers redeemed**

Agricultural inputs post distribution monitoring (PDM) data showed that all farmers that received vouchers during the quarter exchanged them for agricultural inputs. Two agricultural inputs vendors participated in agricultural inputs at the fairs held in Montserrado and Margibi counties during the quarter under review.

EREL currently has five vendors participating in agricultural inputs fairs in the three counties (three in Lofa and two in Montserrado and Margibi). Five vendors were initially selected to participate in agricultural fairs in Montserrado and Margibi County. Three of the vendors for Montserrado and Margibi dropped out, either because they preferred being the sole suppliers of agricultural inputs to the beneficiaries or because they feel their profit margins were too low. The three vendors for Lofa County were active up until the end of quarter one, though there were not any fairs held in Lofa County during the reporting quarter.

### **Indicator 2.4: Usage of vouchers**

Beneficiaries used vouchers to purchase a range of agricultural inputs, both seeds and tools. All beneficiaries used their vouchers to purchase a mix of two or more agricultural inputs of different quantities and varieties. Key agricultural inputs purchased with vouchers by farmers included cutlasses/machetes; seed rice; wheel barrow; corn; pepper seeds; bitterball seeds; cucumber seeds; cabbage seeds; hoes; watermelon seeds; shovels; and watering cans. The tools purchased by farmers have been used for other revenue-generating purposes. For example, farmers are using cutlasses to harvest wild palm for production of red palm oil, which is an important source of income for many rural households in Liberia.

## **Agricultural training**

During the quarter the program provided training of trainer's sessions for 298 Lead and Deputy Lead Farmers in the three counties. Key topics covered during the training included vegetable production, cassava production, and upland and swamp rice production using improved agricultural practices. The Lead Farmers will train farming households who are EREL beneficiaries on key topics. The training adopts a mix of the Farmers Field School (FFS) approach and other conventional methods, whereby farmers will learn through hands-on experience.

## V. Lessons Learned

The following are the main challenges encountered during Quarter 4:

1. **Weather:** Though the rainy season officially ends in October, rains continued up to December with heavy downpours that worsened the road conditions in many of the project locations. This made travel to many locations difficult and more time intensive
2. **Delayed or postponed payments:** During the quarter, cash distributions were often delayed in the three counties, but particularly in Lofa County. Due to the delay a total of 4,057 households did not receive their cash transfers during the quarter. For example, the third cycle of cash distribution commenced in October 2015 and could not be completed up to end of December due to the delay on the part of Ecobank to disburse cash to Mercy Corps' payment team. As stated in other previous reports, Ecobank is the only bank with wide geographic coverage in Liberia. This limits any further options or alternatives. Mercy Corps is continuously engaging Ecobank on ways and means to improve the effectiveness of their services. Ecobank, on the other hand, has pledged their commitments to ensure timely disbursement. MCL's Finance Manager and Director of Programs met with the head of EcoBanks corporate division to discuss the difficulties EcoBanks lack of performance and its impact on the community and our beneficiaries in early December.

## VI. Conclusion

Despite all the challenges, a significant number of EREL beneficiaries received the third and final round of cash transfers for Phase I. Cash transfers and agricultural inputs assistance continue to contribute to households' food access. Though the cash was not intended for investment, households are investing to cash in small businesses and other livelihoods activities to enable them maintain relative food security status after the EREL program phases out. More importantly, households are utilizing some amount of the cash to invest in human capital-i.e. education for their children, as well as ensuring healthy households and increasing productivity and overall well-being.

### *Plans for Next Quarter:*

Once the proposed modification is approved, the program will conduct the following activities in the first quarter of year two

- Verification/vulnerability assessment amongst phase one beneficiaries to identify those eligible for Phase II
- Retroactive cash distributions to the remaining 4,057 households that did not receive the final tranches for Phase I

- Program review meetings with EREL staff members and partners
- Final post-distribution monitoring for Phase I
- Agriculture extension services to farmers and coaching and mentoring of Lead Farmers
- Identification and verification of additional beneficiaries
- Baseline assessment in new communities. The assessment will focus on the hunger situation in these communities.

# Monitoring Report on Household Agriculture Post Distribution (PDM) FY16 Quarter 1 (October- December 2015) Economy Recovery from Ebola for Liberia (EREL)

## I. Introduction

Mercy Corps -EREL program is supporting the recovery of smallholder farmers who lost their crops or harvest due to reasons associated with the EVD outbreak in Liberia. The support includes the supply of agricultural inputs through voucher trade fairs and agriculture extension services. During the quarter under review, EREL conducted a post distribution monitoring (PDM). The purpose of the PDM was to assess the immediate results of the inputs received by farmers and to understand any quality issues observed by the beneficiaries.

## II. Limitations/Challenges to the Monitoring Survey

Partner (VOSIEDA) field staff conducting the survey had limited training and experience in data collection, reducing the level of confidence in the data collected and analyzed. The data analysis was mostly done manually without the use of statistical packages and therefore the information provided in the report might not be as precise as it would be if statistical packages were utilized.

## III. Methodology

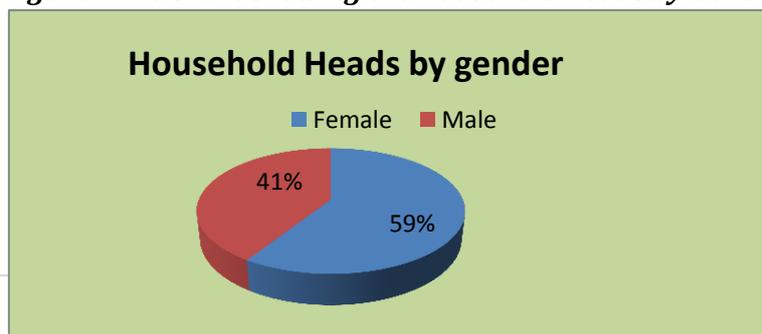
The agriculture post distribution survey covered 222 households in Foya, Quardu Gboundi, Voinjama, and Kolahun districts in Lofa County. The questionnaire developed for the survey was largely quantitative with a few qualitative sections. Communities and households were randomly selected from the EREL community and beneficiary database. The survey respondents were primarily heads of households. The survey data and entry and analysis were done with the use of excel spreadsheet and functions.

## IV. PDM Findings

### Households Sex and Age Composition

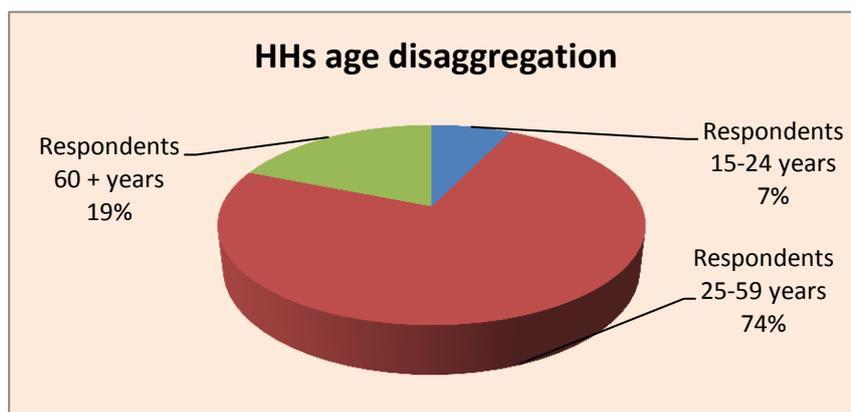
The Agriculture Post Distribution Monitoring (AG PDM) survey data analysis showed that female heads of households constituted a majority at 59% of the respondents while males constituted 41% of the respondents.

**Figure I: Pie Chart showing the Household Heads by Gender**



The survey also showed that young people (15-24 years) constituted 7% of the households interviewed. The survey further revealed that nearly three quarters (74%) of Heads of household were within the age range of 25-59 years, while elderly people (60+ years) constituted 19% of respondent households.

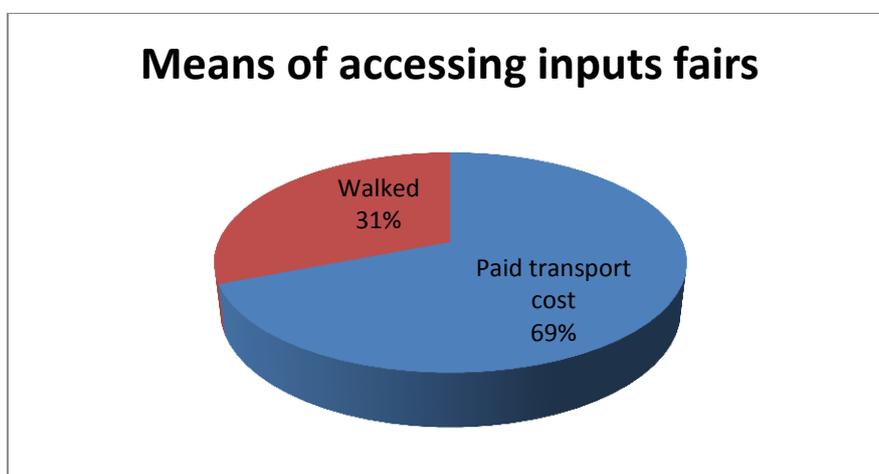
**Figure II: Pie chart showing the Heads of Household age disaggregation**



### Households' Movement to Agricultural Fairs Centers

The survey also showed that 69% of the respondent accessed the agricultural trade fairs center by means of public transport and thus incurred transport costs. The remaining 31% was within walking distance to the agricultural inputs trade fair centers.

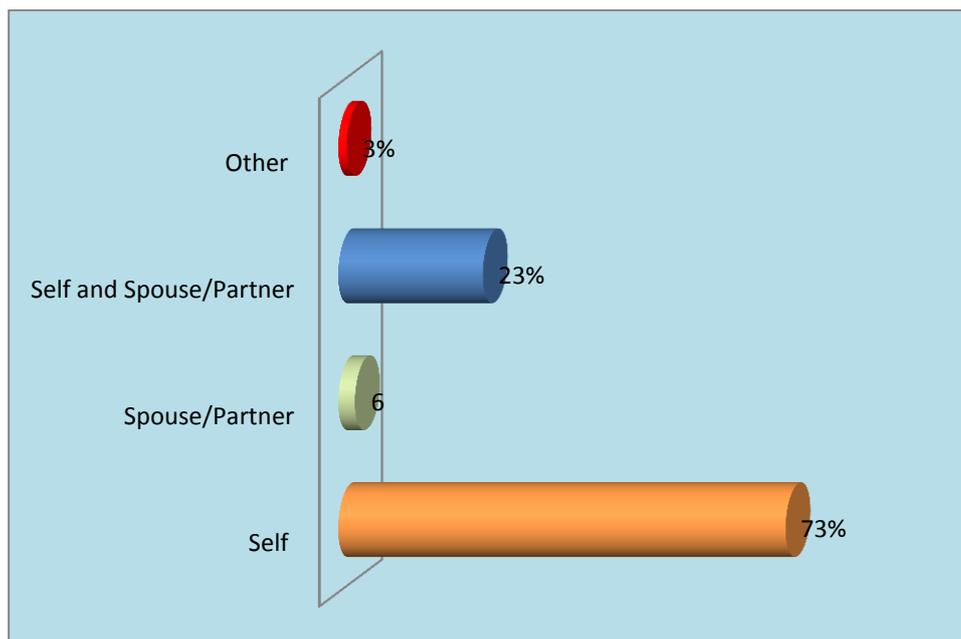
**Figure III: Pie Chart showing how households accessed agricultural input fairs**



### Household Decision Making on Which Inputs to Purchase with Agricultural Inputs Voucher

The agricultural inputs PDM data analysis revealed that 73% of household heads made the decision on which agricultural inputs to purchase with the vouchers. On the other hand, 23% of household said the decision on the inputs they purchased was made jointly by husbands and wives; 3% said the decision was made by their partner/spouse; while in 1% of households there was no clear information as to who made decision on the purchase of agriculture inputs.

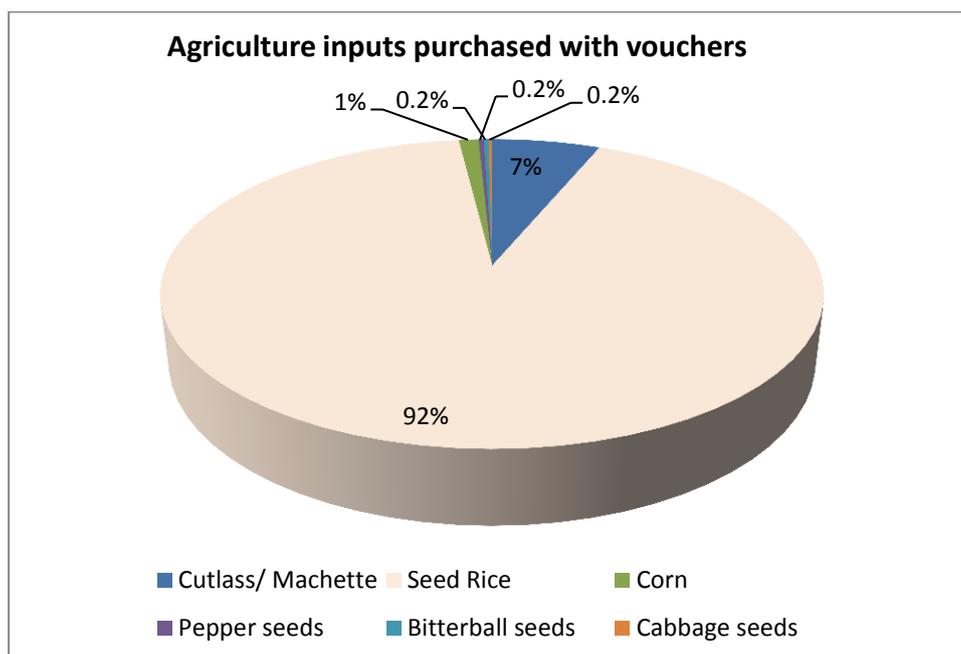
**Figure IV: Bar chart showing how decisions were made on what inputs to purchase with the vouchers**



**Inputs purchased with vouchers**

The agricultural inputs PDM data analysis gave an indication about the level of informed decision farming households made for the purchase of agricultural inputs with the vouchers. The PDM results showed that 92% of the total inputs purchased was rice. This was closely followed by cutlasses/machetes. This result is the expression of the fact that rice production is the primary agricultural activity for farmers in Lofa County. It also indicates that the agricultural fairs were timely in Lofa County. It was obvious that the main agricultural input needs for the beneficiaries as primarily seed rice, followed by cutlasses.

**Figure V: Pie chart showing the inputs purchased by the Household Heads**



### **Seed Viability- Post Control Test**

The PDM also explored the viability of seeds purchased by the beneficiaries. The results showed a germination rate ranging as low as 70% and as high as 100%. Further data analysis showed that 12% of the households indicated they experienced seed germination of 70-79%; 43% noticed 80-90% germination; and 44% of households had a very high germination rate (90-100%).

### **Conclusion**

Agricultural input vouchers received by farmers were used to purchase agricultural inputs and no beneficiary had to pay any additional amount to vendors or EREL staff to receive vouchers or to for exchange of vouchers for agricultural inputs. However, some of the beneficiaries incurred additional costs to access the agricultural inputs trade fairs centers. The germination test proves that EREL needs to fully monitor and further conduct germination tests on seeds brought to sell to voucher holders to identify which vendors are exchanging seeds with low viability.

# Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia Post Distribution Monitoring Report FY16- Quarter 1- October-December 2015

## I. Introduction

The USAID/FFP funded Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia Program is supporting with 8,000 households directly and economically by affected by the EVD outbreak in Voinjama, Kolahun, Quardu Gbondi, and Foya districts in Lofa County. Each beneficiary receives an amount of USD \$42 or its equivalent in Liberian Dollars (LRD) per month. This amount (\$42) is intended to meet 50% of households food needs, based on the minimum food basket. Households are expected to meet the remainder 50% of their food needs through other sources. This report covers findings of cash post-distribution monitoring conducted in Lofa County during the period October to December 2015.

## II. Methodology

The team employed the data collection techniques to administer the post distribution monitoring tools for cash and agriculture component of EREL program with immediate results informing the management of the project direction.

The techniques follows the thorough sampling of selected cash recipients from the beneficiary listing representing 10% of EREL monthly target as respondents of post distribution monitoring form (PDM). The total 515 direct cash beneficiaries were interviewed through a random selection process. The questionnaires were administered staffs of EREL and its implementing partner (VOSIEDA). EREL staff conducted data entry and analysis using Excel spreadsheets.

## III. Summary of Findings

Data analysis showed that female heads of household constituted 62% of the total respondents while male heads of household constituted 38% of the total household interviewed in Lofa County. The average household size for cash respondents is five people. The analysis indicated, however, that some households constitute as little as one person, while other households are comprised of 14 people.

In terms of household disaggregation, 10.4% of the respondents were young people aged 15-24 years; 66.5% of the respondents were within the age range of 25-59 years; and elderly persons (60+ years) constituted 23.1% of total respondents. Further beneficiary (household members) disaggregation of respondent households showed the following

Statistics on classification/category of beneficiaries:

EVD Orphan.....	1.2%
EVD Survivor.....	1.2%
Quarantined.....	48.6%

Economically Affected.....28%  
 Key members died from EVD..... 21%

In reference to number tranches of cash transfers received by respondents, 43% of the respondents said they received cash three times; 51% said they received cash two times; and 6% received cash one time. In terms of expenditures with cash received by beneficiaries: on average 73% of the total cash received was spent on food, 7% on health/medical expenses, 7% on education, 7% on livelihood related activities, and 6% on debt repayment.

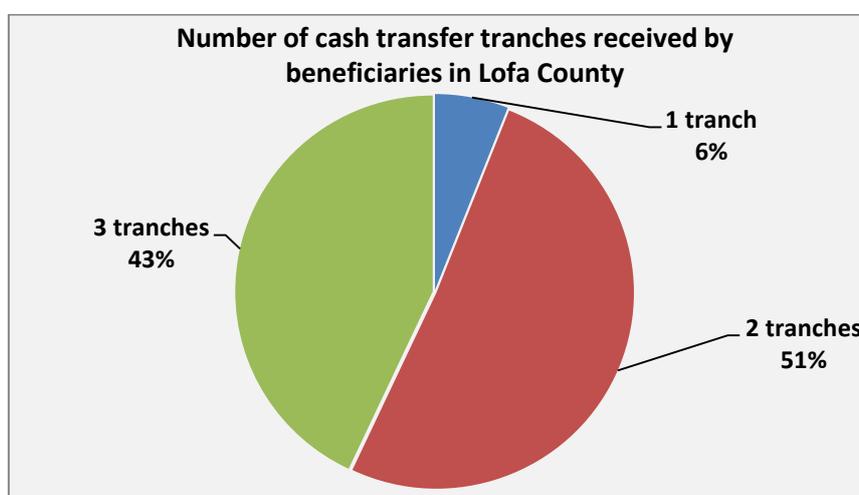
#### IV. Detailed Findings

##### 1. Number of Cash Transfers Received by Respondents

The PDM data revealed variations in number of tranches of cash received by households. The data analysis revealed that 6% of the respondents have received cash only once since the cash transfer commenced in May 2015. The analysis revealed that 51% of respondents had received two tranches, while 43% of them received three tranches before the monitoring was conducted.

51% of the 2015 target, which category should have been graduated for their third phase in December but due to Ecobank delay to process cash distribution transactions this was not realized. This caseload was rescheduled to February 2016.

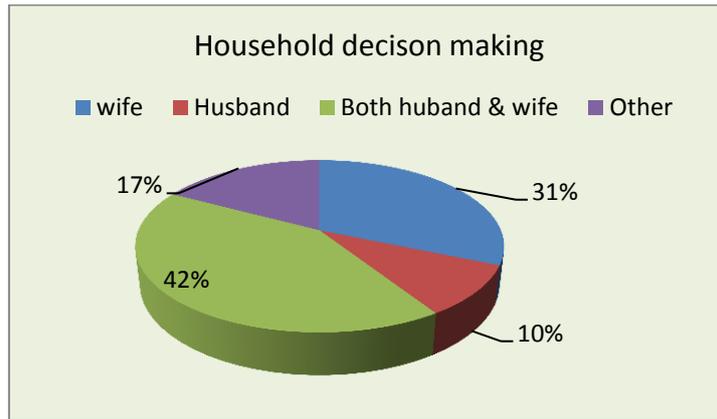
*Figure 1: Pie Chart showing number of cash transfers received by respondents*



##### 2. Household Decision Making

According to the PDM results, decision making on how to use cash was most frequently a discussion with an agreement including both husbands and wives. It was revealed that 41.9% of respondents said both husband and wife made the decision regarding the usage of the cash they received. The results also revealed that decision making regarding the use of cash is made by the wives in 31% of respondent households. Husbands rarely make the cash usage decision, with only 9.5% of respondent households admitting that husbands made decision alone. The remaining 17.2% respondent households have a mix of different household members participating in decision making on the usage of cash.

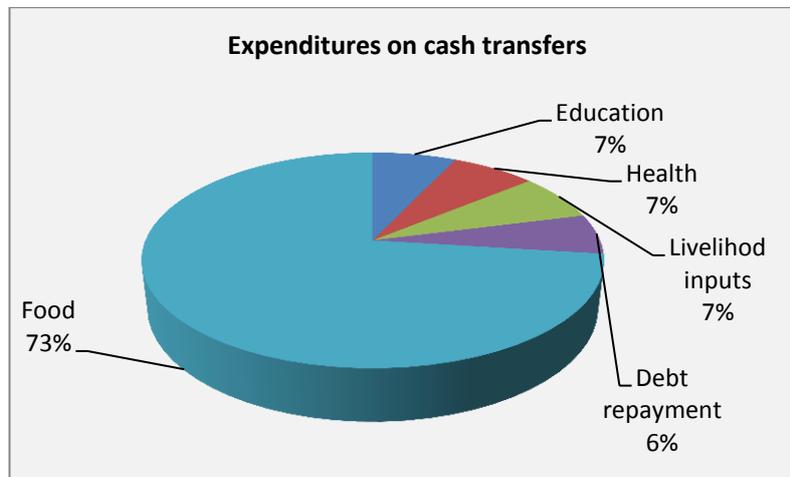
**Figure II: Pie Chart showing decision makers on the use of cash transfers**



### 3. Expenditure on Cash Transfers

The PDM results showed that nearly three quarters (73%) of the cash received by beneficiaries was spent on food. Most of our beneficiaries in Lofa County depend on agricultural related activities for their survival and food is the most importance aspect of their lives. The analysis also found that 7% of the cash was spent each on health, education, and livelihoods inputs, while 6% was spent on the repayment of debts.

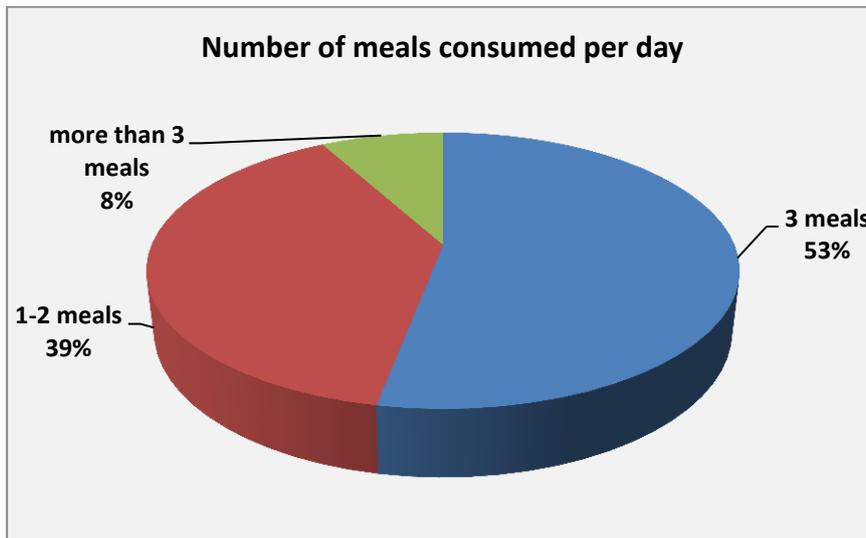
**Figure III: Pie Chart showing expenditure pattern of cash received by respondents**



### 4. Household Meals Consumption

Understanding the number of meals typically consumed by beneficiaries is of key interest to the EREL program. The number of meals consumed daily informs the program on whether the hunger situation at household level is improving or not. A little over half (53%) of respondents said they consumed three meals a day, 39% stated they consumed 1-2 meals per day; and 8% stated they consumed more than three meals a day. None of the respondents indicated they were eating one meal per day.

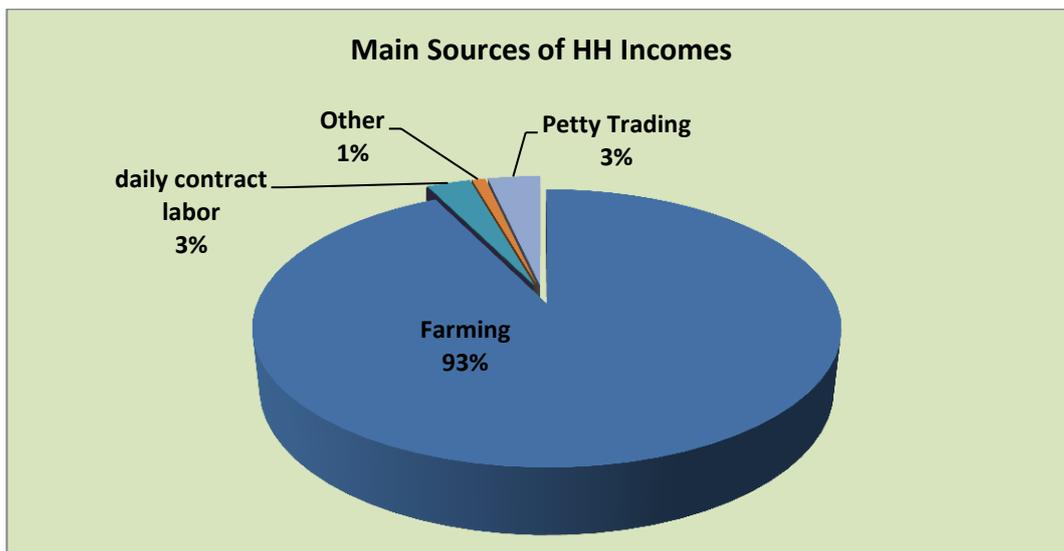
**Figure IV: Pie Chart showing number of meals consumed per day amongst respondents**



### 5. Source of Income and Household Monthly Income

EREL Post Distribution Monitoring also gathers information on other sources from which beneficiaries access income to meet the remainder food needs. The Post Distribution Monitoring revealed that sales of agricultural produce/products constitute 93% of households' income in the four districts where the EREL program is implemented. This is followed by contract/labor, which constitutes 3%; petty trade at 3%; and other sources at 1%.

**Figure V: Pie Chart showing number sources of income for respondents**



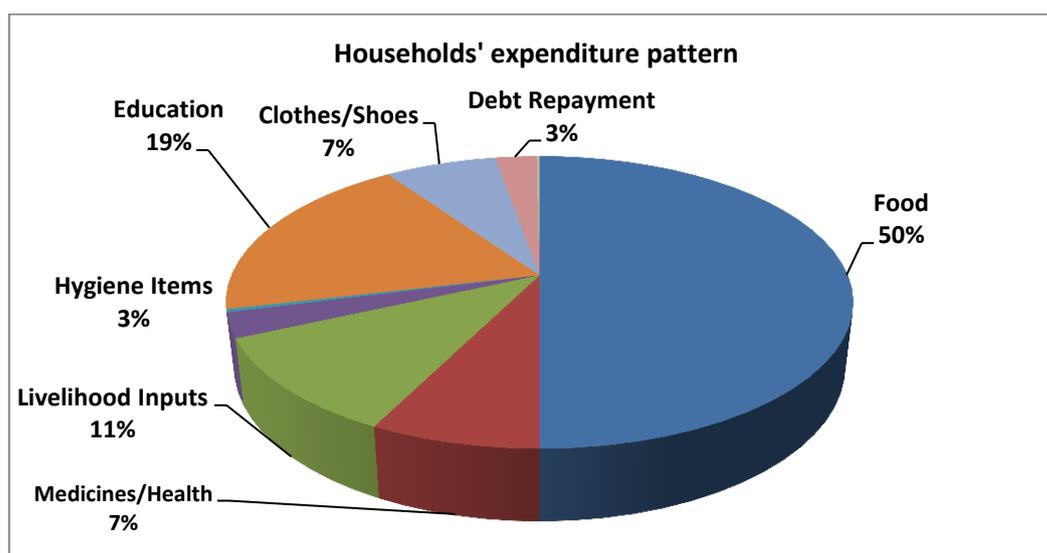
According to the data, more than half (61.6%) of the respondents earned more than 5,000 LRD (USD \$58) per month; 18.2% earned from 1001-2000 LRD (USD \$11.6 - 23.3) per month; and 8.7% earned 4001-5000 (USD \$46.5-58). The analysis indicates that 70.3% of households can typically earn income sufficient to meet the remaining

50% of their food need. However, the tool and method of data collection are unable to provide information as to whether these households can also meet other basic needs once they purchase food with the cash they earn; or whether they also have other sources of food to complement the cash provided by the EREL program.

## 6. General Household Expenditures

Apart from information collected specifically on the use of the cash transfer, the EREL program also makes inquiries regarding household general expenditures, which takes into account expenditures on the sum of all incomes received by households (including cash transfers). The data revealed that purchase of food constitutes 50% of households' expenditures, followed by education at 19%, 11% related to livelihood activities such as investment in agriculture, 7% each on clothes and health, and 3% each on debt repayment and hygiene. The statistics show that households' incomes are used to meet diversity of needs. However, the data collection tool and methodology are unable to provide information on the extent to which these needs are met and what the relative gaps and constraints could be.

**Figure V: Pie Chart showing respondents' general monthly expenditure pattern**



## 7. Beneficiary Satisfaction and Perception

EREL PDM has a qualitative section that provides space for beneficiaries to express their perception and level of satisfaction about the project and key processes. This includes an evaluation of the community committees, the payment process, and the kind of reception they received during the payment.

The PDM result indicated that all respondents (100%) said they are satisfied with the EREL payment process. Regarding the role of the community committees, 97% of respondents said they are happy about the role that community committees play in the EREL program implementation. However, 3% of respondents said they are dissatisfied with the community committees. At the same time, all (100%) of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the beneficiary selection and registration processes.

Additionally, all of the respondents said they did not have to pay money to receive cash or vouchers. Regarding the complaint/feedback mechanisms, 96% of respondents stated that channels were available for them to raise complaints or give feedback. Finally, all the respondents admitted that the project is making positive changes in their lives.

## **Conclusion**

The PDM results showed that cash is making positive impacts on the lives of the beneficiaries in Lofa County. Though the money is intended to create access to food (and food is the primary expenditure item), households are investing some of their in small businesses to ensure longer term food security. So far, beneficiaries are generally happy with the process through which they were selected and the cash payment process.

# Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia Cash PDM Report for Margibi County FY16 Quarter1-October-December 2015

## **I. Background**

The Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia (EREL) program is supporting 30,000 households (150,000 beneficiaries) that were economically affected by the Ebola outbreak in Montserrado, Margibi, and Lofa to recover from the impact of Ebola and to protect them from food insecurity. To achieve its objectives, Mercy Corps has been transferring cash and assisting vulnerable smallholder farmers to access agricultural inputs to enhance food production in the three counties. EREL is transferring cash equivalent to 50 percent of cost for the minimum food basket of a typical household size of five persons.

EREL conducts post distribution monitoring to assess the immediate outcomes of the project activities amongst beneficiary households. This report covers findings from post-distribution monitoring conducted in Margibi County during the period October to December 2015.

## **II. Methodology**

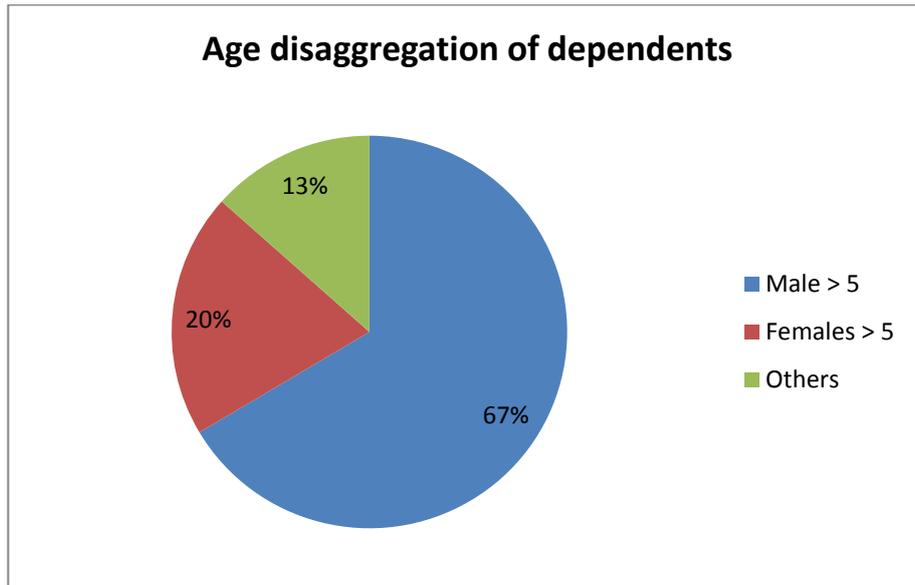
As part of the routine post distribution monitoring (PDM) data collection exercises, the EREL team employed probability data collection techniques, specifically utilizing a systematic sampling to select all recipients of cash transfers in the three counties. A sample of 396 households was selected from the EREL beneficiary database through a random process. The randomly selected households are from 60 communities in the three counties. Much effort was made to utilize non-leading questions. The questionnaires were administered mostly by staff from EREL's implementing partners and EREL field staff. Data entry was completed using Excel spreadsheets, and the data was analyzed with the use of Excel tools.

## **III. Findings**

### **1. Household Composition**

During the fourth quarter of the EREL program implementation, post distribution monitoring forms were administered to 394 households in 63 communities where project beneficiaries exist. 79% of households interviewed were female-headed households, and the average household size was 4 (minimum 1, maximum 15). Over half of respondents interviewed (65.5%) were people aged 25–59, followed by 26.6% of individuals that are 60 years and above. The smallest percent of individuals recorded are those who fall between the ages 15-24. There were a total of 641 dependents in these households, 86.6% of which are children under five (66.5% males, 20.1% females).

**Fig. 1: Percentage of dependents under five**



The above figure indicates that the EREL project is responding to more households that have children under five.

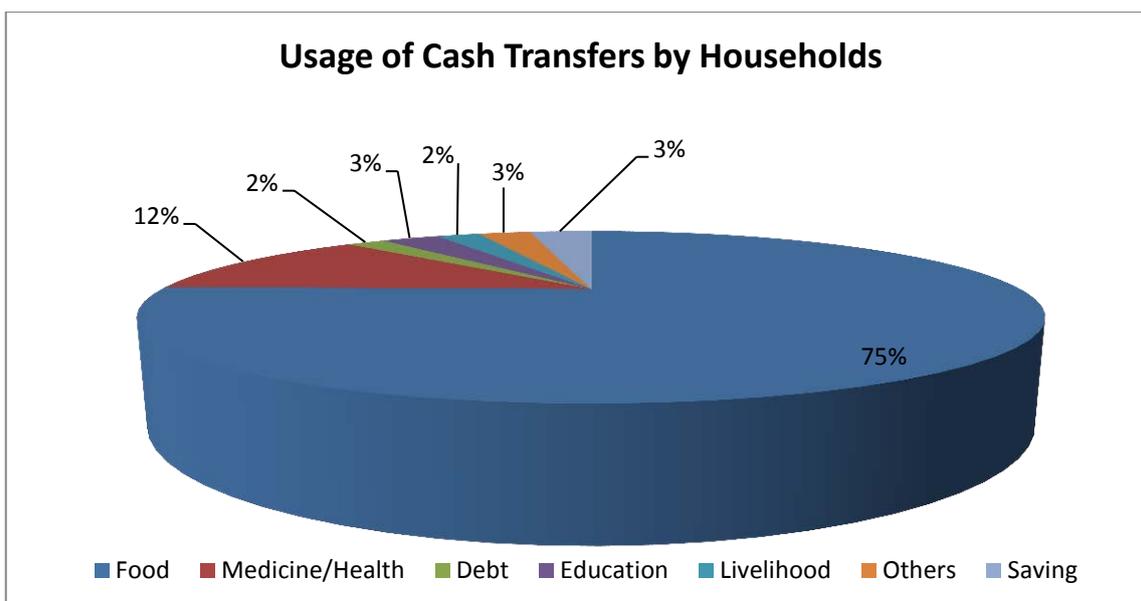
## **2. Cash & Utilization**

Responses tallied regarding the number of transfers that have so far been received by households interviewed indicated that 40.6% received one transfer, 9.6% received two transfers, and almost 50% received three transfers. It is worth noting, however, that cash distribution was ongoing in these locations where PDM interviews were taking place. This is due to retroactive payments that were made in selected communities that were a little behind schedule. 100% of all respondents interviewed said the transfers received were for the correct amount.

Questions on issue about who makes decisions regarding cash utilization in the households revealed that 67.5% of households surveyed are households in which females make fiscal decisions, followed by 14.0% in which males make fiscal decisions. Rotating husband/wife decision making or joint fiscal decision making constitutes 9.9%. This analysis further strengthens the findings that 79.2% of households interviewed are female-headed households.

The PDM exercise sought to find out what beneficiaries were spending their transfers on. The chart below indicates spending priorities, with spending on food constituting 75% of the total cash received, followed by spending on health (12%). The remaining cash was spent on livelihood inputs or investments (3%), education (3%), debt repayment (2%), saving (2%), and other (3%).

**Fig. 2: Cash Transfer Usage by Household**



### 3. Travel & Wait-Time at Distribution

Distribution locations were designated taking into account the proximity of the beneficiaries to ensure that they are not walking long distances to receive their transfers. As such, only 4.1% of respondents indicated that they are covering and most likely walking between one to two hours to receive their transfers. That means that 95.9% are travelling less than an hour to their distribution site.

However, it is important to note that there are beneficiaries travelling from communities that are not accessible by vehicles or motorbikes and therefore have to travel to longer distances. The average travel time is 30 minutes (with the minimum travel time as 15 minutes and maximum as 2 hours). Average transportation fare to distribution locations is L\$153.3 or US\$1.8 (with the minimum equaling L\$30 or US\$0.36 and the maximum equaling L\$400.00 or US\$4.76). Only 17.0% of households interviewed said they have to wait for an hour or more to receive their transfers. The remaining 83% said they wait between 30 minutes to an hour to receive their transfers. Only 3.6% of respondents said they feel unsafe on their way to or during distribution. Some of the safety concerns include fear of robbery and or theft. The remaining 96.4% said they felt safe while en-route to, during, and after distribution.

### 4. Beneficiary Satisfaction and Perception

100% of respondents said they have benefited from the project. Some of the benefits include: food, payment of children's' school fees, access to medical services, and involvement in petty trade. With a lot of the households that have average income of L\$3,000.00 or US\$35.70, the cash PDM revealed that 79.2% and 77.6% of children and adults are having two times meal a day. Only 12.3% and 14.3% of children and adults are having one meal per day while the remaining 8.5% and 8.2% of children and adults are now having meals three times a day.

**Fig. 3: Number of meals per day among children & adults**

No. of meals	Children	%	Adults	%
1 time	48	12.3	56	14.3

<b>2 times</b>	<b>309</b>	79.2	<b>304</b>	77.6
<b>3 times</b>	33	8.5	32	8.2
<b>Total</b>	390	100.0	392	100.0

Generally, these households have monthly expenditures to which the EREL project contributes income. Again, the food and medication/health account for 74.6% and 8.1% respectively. Other lower level expenditures include livelihoods, hygiene items, and education, which individually constitute less than 6% of the overall totals.

The project is indeed providing alternative source of livelihood for our beneficiaries. This is evident by 50% of respondents who said they would have reverted to daily labor if they had not received the transfers. Daily labor is one of the primary sources of income in communities where the USAID/FFP funded EREL project is working.

Respondents rated their level of satisfaction with different aspects of the program ranging from work processes, payment, amount of cash received, as well as the roles of community committees.

*Level of satisfaction with project activities*

	Work processes		Payment		Amt. of payment		Role of Comm. Comm.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Satisfied	303	76.9	314	79.7	336	85.3	340	86.3
Very satisfied	<b>91</b>	23.1	<b>80</b>	20.3	<b>58</b>	14.7	<b>54</b>	13.7
	394	100.0	394	100.0	394	100.0	394	100.0

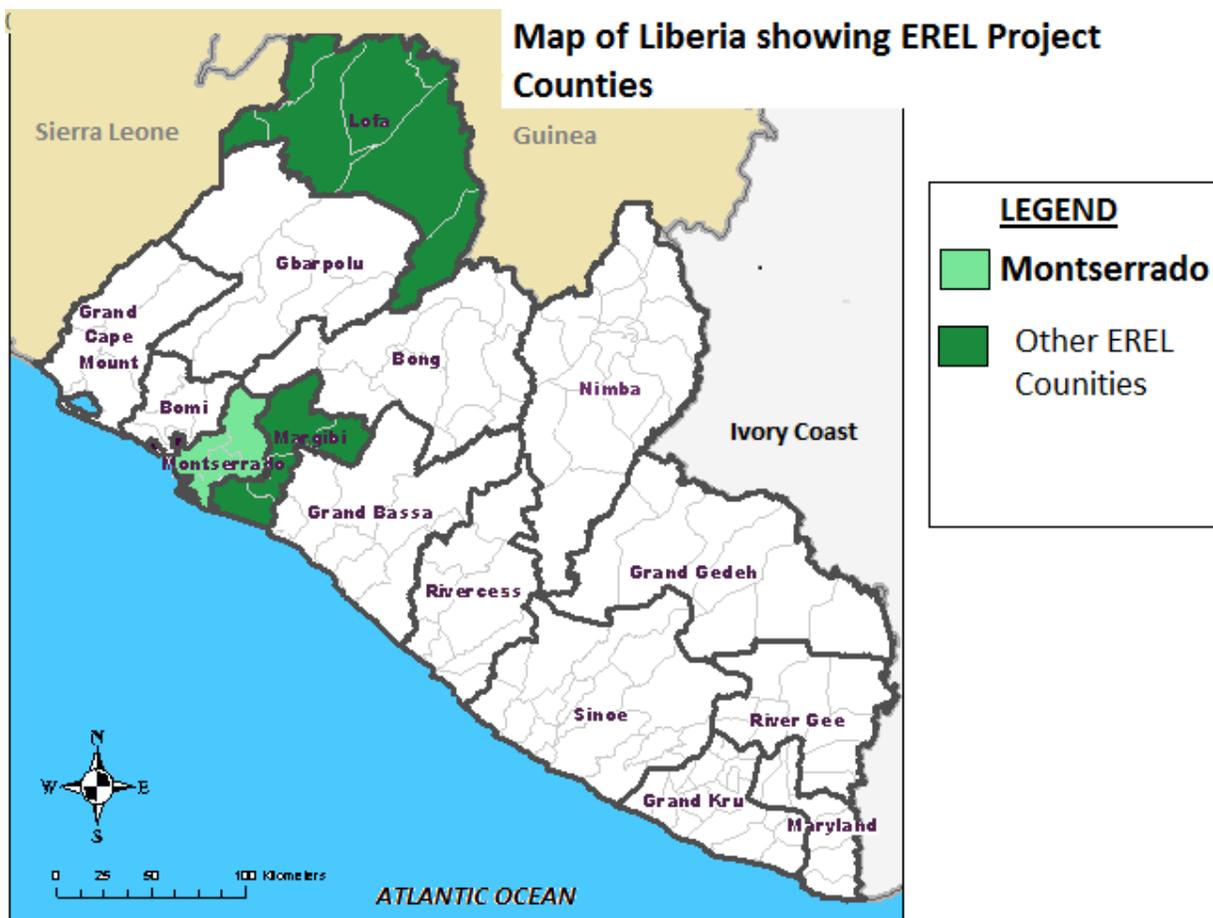
All respondents said they were also satisfied with the beneficiary registration processes. This was reinforced when 100% of respondents said they did not pay a fee or gift to get cash or inputs supplies.

Participants were appreciative of the program while at the same time requesting for the extension of the program.

## Economic Recovery from Ebola for Liberia Cash PDM Report for Montserrado County FY16 Quarter 1-October-December 2015

### I. Background

The EREL program provides support to families and communities recovering from Ebola in the three counties hardest hit by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD): namely Lofa, where the outbreak began, Montserrado where it had the highest number of cases, and Margibi, which had the second highest number of cases and location at the epicenter of the most recent outbreak. 6,781 are part of the program in the county under discussion.



The EREL project funded by USAID is providing 50 percent of food purchase to its beneficiary households, while also giving agricultural inputs tools to help beneficiaries to regain post-Ebola status and grow more food for better sustainability of families.

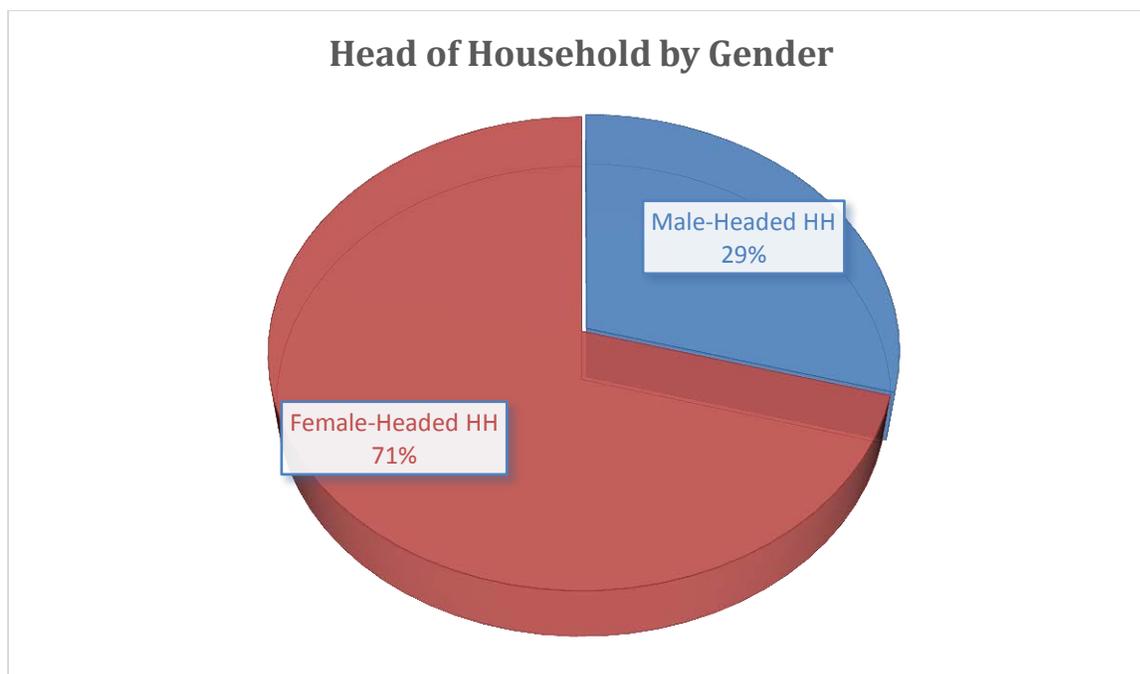
This report covers the Post-Distribution Monitoring in Montserrado County during the period of September to December 2015, which researched the changes in income and expenditures caused by the program.

## II. Methodology

The EREL team carried out data collection using prepared instruments. These were deployed systematically to Careysburg, St. Paul, and Todee Districts where respondents in 42 communities were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. To get details, questions that are both open and closed-ended were used with follow-up questions included.

529 households were interviewed during the exercise, composed of a total of 2,279 individuals with 1,748 dependents.

**Figure 1: Sample size in comparison with total beneficiaries.**



The average size of the household participant was 4.3, with the largest household size at 15 people and the smallest size at 1.

## III. Findings

### 1) Selection Process

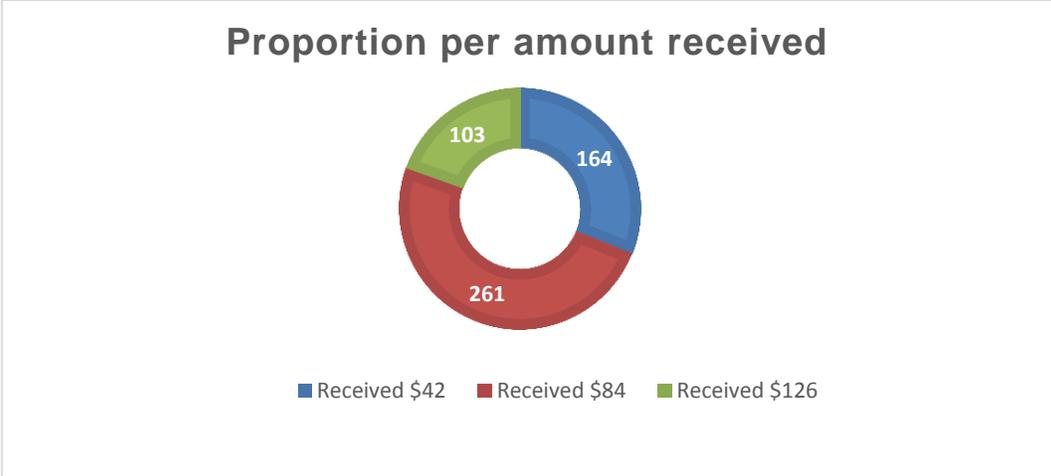
Nearly all households (95%) were selected by their community committee with the remaining 25 (5%) selected by the local partner. Reasons for the selection fell into

four main categories: 1% of the households host an EVD survivor; over half (51%) lost their main source of income; 17% lost a key member of their household (who was not the main source of income) and 29% of households had been previously quarantined, while 2% (10 households) were chosen for other reasons such as chronic illness or old age.

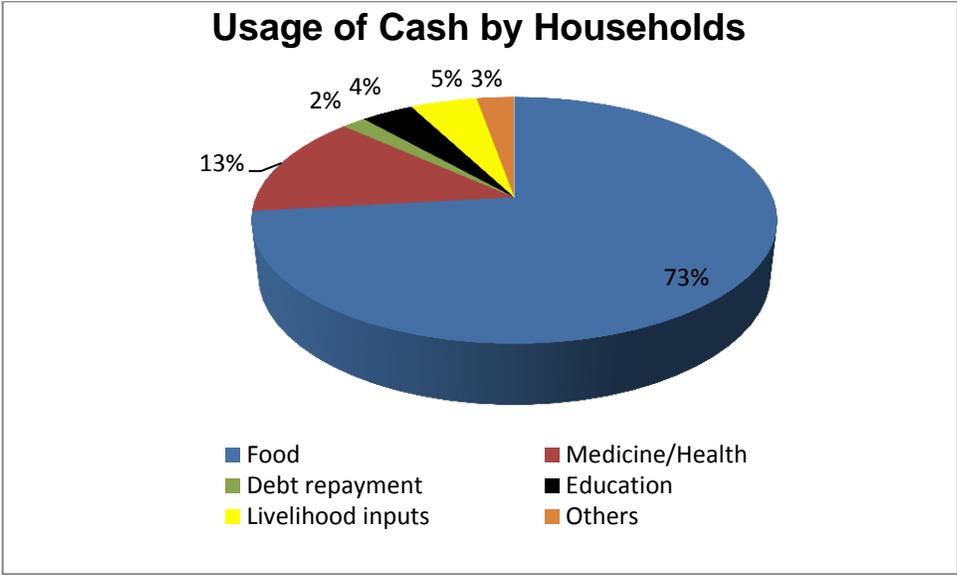


## 2) The assistance received

Nearly everyone (99%) acknowledged receiving cash payments directly. Of this number, 31% received \$42, close to half (49%) received \$84, while 20% were given \$126. All recipients indicated that the figure received was the amount discussed. The variations were due to the timing in which locations were visited for monitoring in relation to the payment cycle.



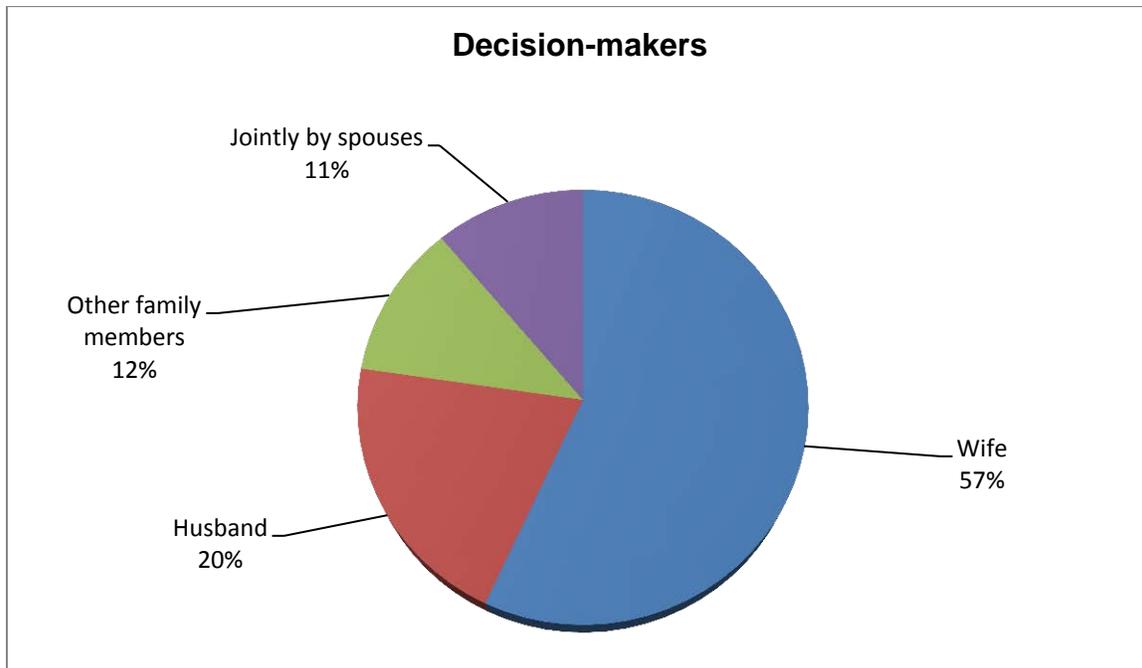
The data analysis showed that 73% of cash received was spent on food. Households spent 13% of their cash received to access health services. As a sustainability strategy, households spent 5% of the cash they received to invest in small businesses so that they can continue to earn cash when the project phases out. Due to the importance attached to education, they spent 4% of the cash on children’s education. The remainder cash was spent on debt repayment (2%) ; and others (including gifts, clothing, savings, etc).



**3) Decision-making**

Whenever any group decides that something is a priority, a question that comes out is “who in the group made the decision?” In this case, with a large number of the households being female-headed, it is no surprise that wives or mothers made the

most decisions, making the decisions 57% of the time; followed by husbands who decided 20% of the time; other family members (such as children, grandparents) 12% of the time; and jointly by the spouses 11% of the time.



#### **4) Income other than cash transfer**

Monthly income from sources other than the EREL program ranged from 1,000 to 10,000 LRD (Liberian Dollar), equivalent to US\$11.9– US\$119, using an exchange rate of USD\$1 to 84 LRD. The additional income came from several sources, the most dominant being agriculture, which constitutes 54% of the income. The remaining sources are petty trade (24%), casual labor (15%), and others (8%).

#### **5) Comparison of usage of EREL's cash transfer funds with that of beneficiaries earnings**

The average income of households during the quarter was USD \$65, which is greater than the value of the EREL monthly cash transfers. This indicates that households typically earn another USD \$42 to complement the cash transfers in order to meet their minimum food needs. However, the design of the survey does not explore the extent to which households are meeting other needs since some of the cash the received was used to access education, health services and for investments.

Relative to households' expenditures from the various sources of income (including the cash transfers), purchase of food accounted for 74.6% of total expenditures

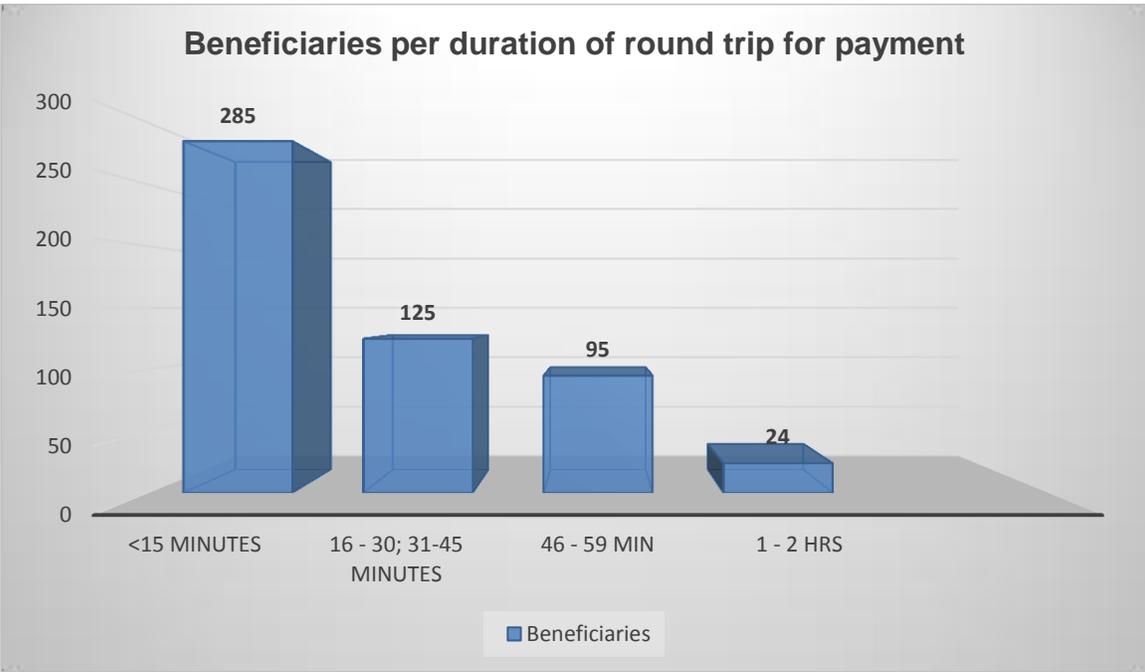
followed by health (8.1%), education (5.4%), hygiene items (2.7%), social contributions (2.25%), clothes (1.6%), shelter (0.5%), debt repayment (0.4%), and others (1.7%).

There are indications that the household hunger situation seems to be improving in the county. According to the data 82% of beneficiaries said they feed their children twice daily, 7% stated they feed their children once daily, 5% feed their children three times daily, 2% stated they feed their children four times daily, and 1% stated they feed their children five times daily. Regarding meals consumed by adults, 83% of adults stated they eat twice daily, 10% eat once daily, 4% eat three times daily, and 1% eats four times daily.

**6) Security and Transportation**

93% of 494 beneficiaries felt safe going to and from payments, while 7% or 35 individuals felt insecure. All beneficiaries felt secure at the payment site itself.

75% of beneficiaries do not pay transportation in order to pick up their payments, while 25% do so. Fares paid range from L\$30.00 to L\$530.00 (US\$0.35 to \$6.00). According to 285 or 54% of the participants, they walked less than 15 minutes to and from the center, 77 or 15% walked 15-30 minutes, 95 or 18% walked 46 mins-1 hour, while 24 or 5% walked 1-2 hours, and 48 or 9% walked 31-45 minutes.



#### **IV. Conclusion**

It can be clearly stated that cash is making significant impacts on the lives of the beneficiary households. Cash is also enabling households to purchase food, access health services, ensure livelihoods, and at the same time bolster their ability to spend on education. This can be seen as leading to a higher standard of living for the recipients of the transfers. 100% of the beneficiaries are happy about the project and hope to get extended, as they have had cordial relationships with the staff at distribution points.

# Monitoring Report on Household Agriculture Post Distribution (PDM) FY16 Quarter 1- November-December 2015 Economy Recovery from Ebola for Liberia (EREL)

## **I. Introduction**

Mercy Corps- EREL program is supporting the recovery of smallholder farmers who lost their crops or harvest due to reasons associated with the EVD outbreak in Liberia. The support includes the supply of agricultural inputs through voucher trade fairs and agriculture extension services. The purpose of the PDM is to assess the immediate results of the inputs received by farmers, and to understand any quality issues observed by the beneficiaries.

## **II. Limitations/Challenges to the Monitoring Survey**

Partner (Lutheran Church in Liberia) field staff conducting the survey had limited training and experience in data collection, hence reducing the confidence level of the data collected and analyzed. The data analysis was mostly done manually without the use of statistical packages and therefore the information provided in the report might not be as precise as it would be if statistical packages were utilized.

## **III. Methodology**

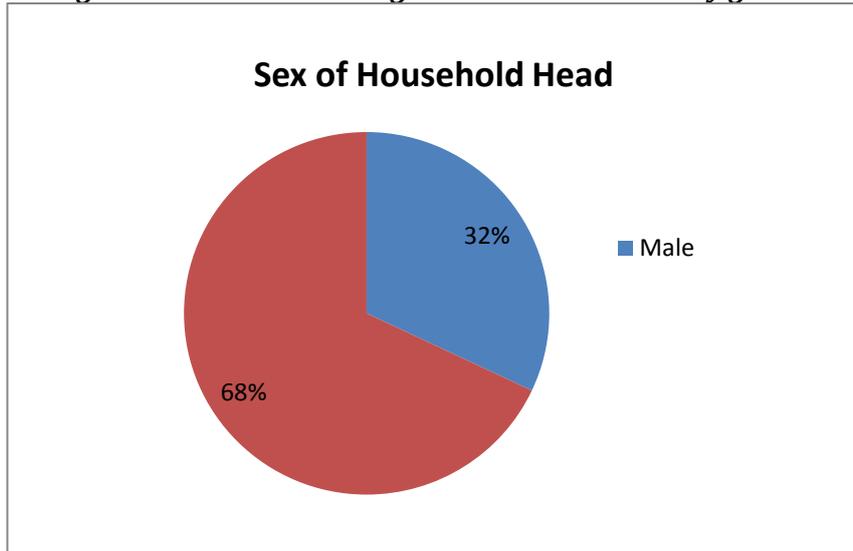
The agriculture post distribution survey covered 28 households, in Careysburg and Todee districts in Montserrado County. The questionnaire developed for the survey was largely quantitative, while few sections of the questionnaire were qualitative. Communities and households were randomly selected from the EREL community and beneficiary database. The survey respondents were primarily heads of households. The survey data and entry and analysis were done with the use of Excel spreadsheets and functions.

## **IV. PDM Findings**

### **1. Households sex and age composition**

The Agriculture Post Distribution Monitoring (AG PDM) survey data analysis showed that female heads of households constituted a majority (86%) of the respondents while male heads of households constituted the rest, 14% of the respondents.

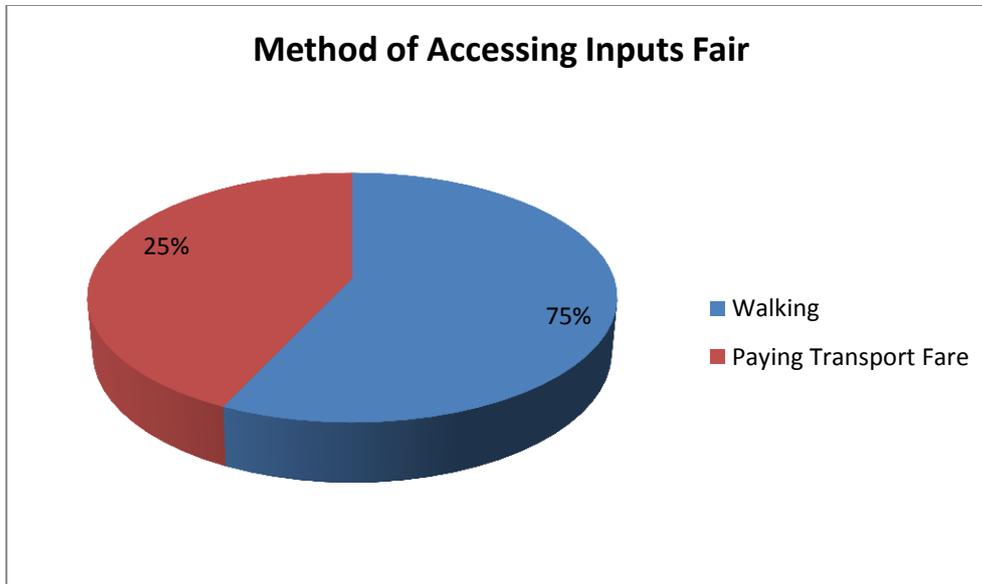
**Figure I: Pie chart showing the household heads by gender**



### **2. Households' movement to agricultural fairs centers**

The survey also showed that 25% of the respondent accessed the agricultural trade fairs center by means of commercial transport and thus incurred transport costs. The remaining 75% was within walking distance to the agricultural inputs trade fair centers.

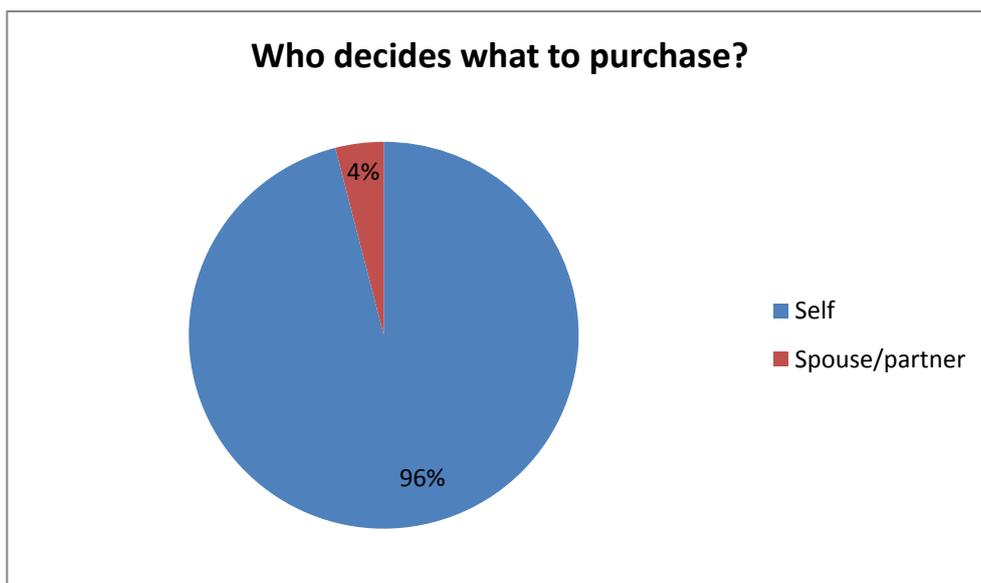
**Figure III: Pie chart showing how households accessed Agricultural input fairs**



### **3. Household decision making on which inputs to purchase with agricultural inputs voucher**

The agricultural inputs PDM data analysis revealed that a majority, 96% of the participants interviewed decided what to purchase with the voucher and 4% decided after holding a discussion with their spouse/partner.

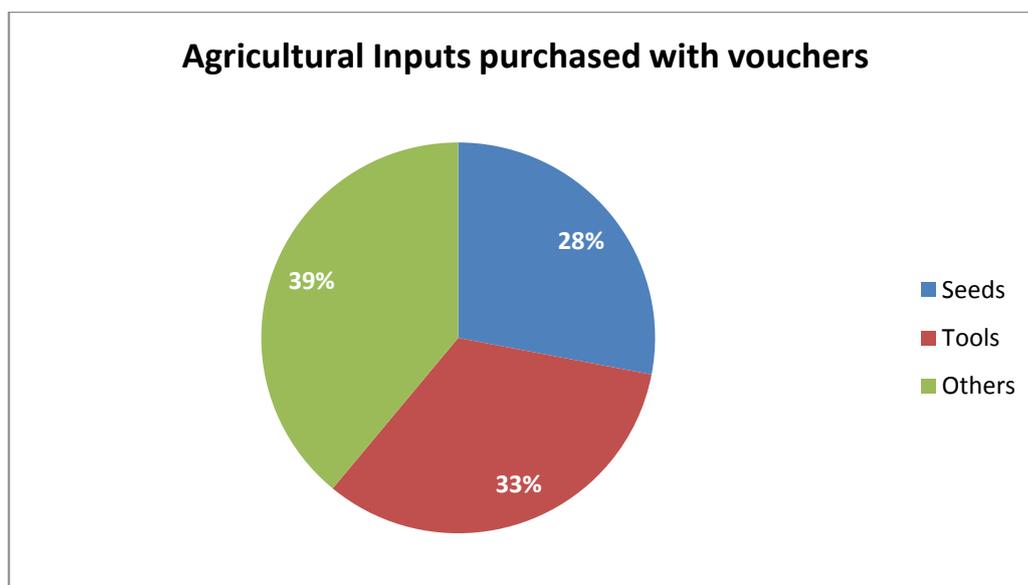
**Figure IV: Bar chart showing how decisions were made on what inputs to purchase with the vouchers**



#### **4. Inputs purchased with vouchers**

The agricultural inputs PDM data analysis gave an indication about the level of informed decision farming households made for the purchase of agricultural inputs with the vouchers. The PDM results showed that most 39% of items purchased were spent on 'other', items not specified in the analysis, while a comparable percentage, 33% was expended on the buying of tools and just 28% on the seven different types of seeds laid out in the data collected.

**Figure V: Pie chart showing the inputs purchased by the Household Heads**



#### **5. Seed viability- post control test**

The PDM also explored the viability of seeds purchased by the beneficiaries. The results showed a germination rate ranging as low as 75% and as high as 95%. Further data

analysis showed that most seeds fell in the 80-85% range, while 84% was the average seed viability for the participants.

## **Conclusion**

Agricultural inputs vouchers received by farmers were used to purchase agricultural inputs and no beneficiary had to pay any additional amount to vendors or EREL staff to receive vouchers or to for exchange of vouchers for agricultural inputs. However, some of the beneficiaries incurred additional costs, particularly transportation to access the agricultural inputs trade fairs centers. The germination test proves that EREL needs to fully monitor and further conduct germination tests on seeds brought to sell to set a benchmark of permitted germination rates and identify which vendors are exchanging seeds with low viability.

# Monitoring Report on Household Agriculture Post Distribution (PDM) FY16 Quarter 1- November-December 2015 Economy Recovery from Ebola for Liberia (EREL)

## **I. Introduction**

Mercy Corps- EREL program is supporting the recovery of smallholder farmers who lost their crops or harvest due to reasons associated with the EVD outbreak in Liberia. The support includes the supply of agricultural inputs through voucher trade fairs and agriculture extension services. The purpose of the PDM is to assess the immediate results of the inputs received by farmers, and to understand any quality issues observed by the beneficiaries.

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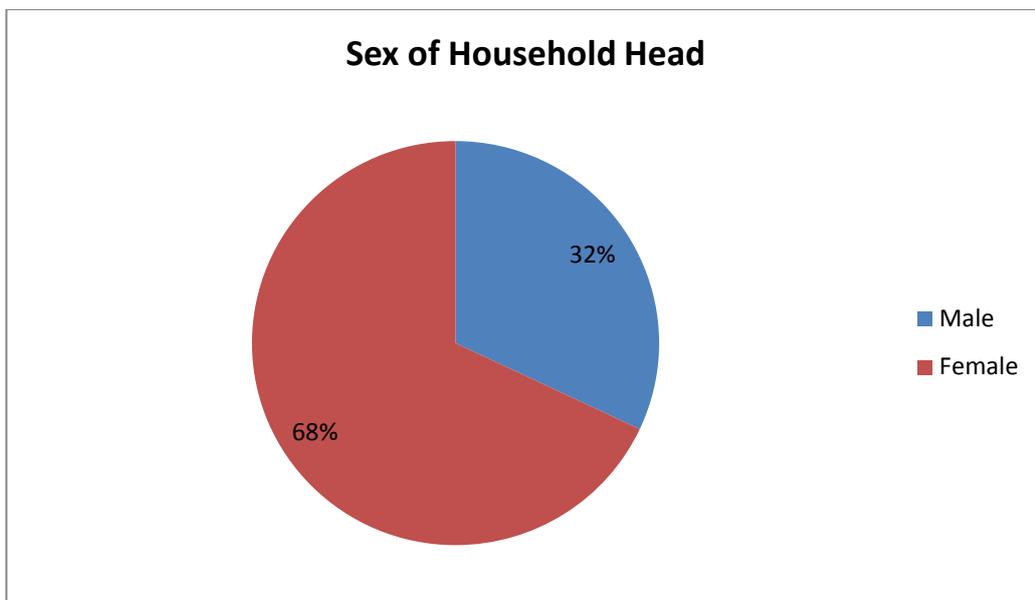
The agriculture post distribution survey covered 44 households in the Kakata district in Margibi County. The questionnaire developed for the survey was largely quantitative, while few sections of the questionnaire were qualitative. Communities and households were randomly selected from the EREL community and beneficiary database. The survey respondents were primarily heads of households. The survey data and entry and analysis were done with the use of Excel spreadsheet and functions.

## **IV. PDM Findings**

### **1. Households sex and age composition**

The Agriculture Post Distribution Monitoring (AG PDM) survey data analysis showed that female heads of households constituted a majority (68%) of the respondents while male heads of households constituted the rest, 32% of the respondents.

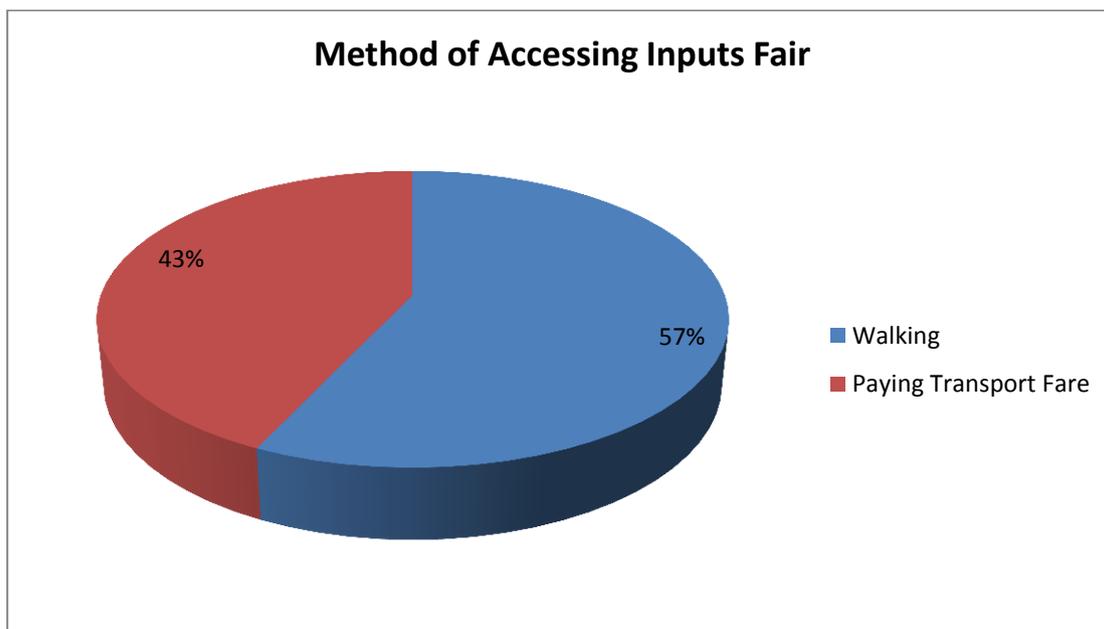
**Figure I: Pie Chart showing the Household Heads by gender**



### **2. Households' Movement to Agricultural Fairs Centers**

The survey also showed that 43% of the respondent accessed the agricultural trade fairs center by means of commercial transport and thus incurred transport costs. The remaining 57% was within walking distance to the agricultural inputs trade fair centers.

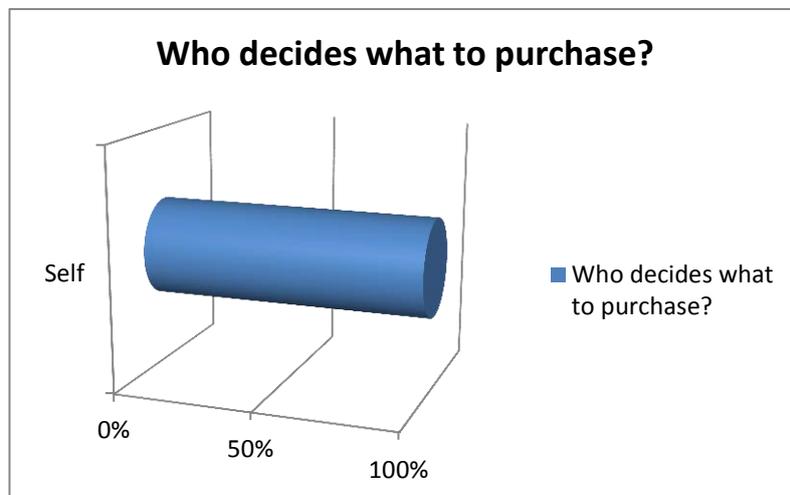
**Figure III: Pie Chart showing how households accessed agricultural input fairs**



### **3. Household Decision Making on which inputs to purchase with Agricultural inputs voucher**

The agricultural inputs PDM data analysis revealed that 100% of household heads made the decision on which agricultural inputs to purchase with the vouchers.

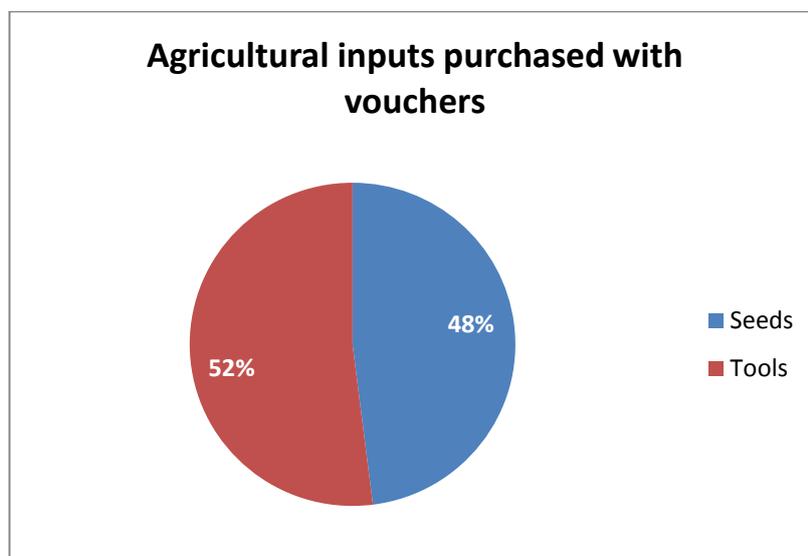
**Figure IV: Bar chart showing how decisions were made on what inputs to purchase with the vouchers**



#### 4. Inputs purchased with vouchers

The agricultural inputs PDM data analysis gave an indication about the level of informed decision farming households made for the purchase of agricultural inputs with the vouchers. The PDM results showed that 25% of the total inputs purchased were cutlasses/machetes. This was followed by seed rice and shovels at 14% respectively, pepper at 12%, bitter boil at 11%, corn seeds at 5%, cucumber seeds at 1 percent, cabbage at 2%, watermelon at 3%, hoes on 7%, watering cans at 4%, and other items on 2%. This result is an indication that much of the agriculture in Margibi supports immediate household consumption and so the items needed cover the tools, rice, and essential ingredients for stew. It also means that almost 52% of the purchase was spent on tools, while a slightly similar percentage, 48% was on seeds.

**Figure V: Pie chart showing the inputs purchased by the household heads**



## **5. Seed viability- post control test**

The PDM also explored the viability of seeds purchased by the beneficiaries. The results showed a germination rate ranging as low as 70% and as high as 90%. Further data analysis showed that most seeds fell in the 80-89% range, while 90% was reached with some of the rice and cassava.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Agricultural inputs vouchers received by farmers were used to purchase agricultural inputs and no beneficiary had to pay any additional amount to vendors or EREL staff to receive vouchers or to for exchange of vouchers for agricultural inputs. However, some of the beneficiaries incurred additional costs, particularly transportation to access the agricultural inputs trade fairs centers. The germination test proves that EREL needs to fully monitor and further conduct germination tests on seeds brought to sell to the various to set a benchmark of permitted germination rates and identify which vendors are exchanging seeds with low viability.