



HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING AND MONITORING IN INACCESSIBLE CONFLICT SETTINGS:

A Literature Review

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February 2017

The World Health Organization is the
Cluster Lead Agency and provides
secretariat support.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Background

The changing nature of conflicts has resulted in an increased risk to humanitarian actors, reducing access for programming and monitoring, as well as the humanitarian presence in emergency settings; this withdrawal of international organizations has a harmful effect on affected populations. Remote operations (defined below) provide an alternative method to continue programs and services while reducing the risk faced by program staff. Although remote operations have been in use for several years, this programming method has mostly been implemented on an ad hoc basis with limited guidance. This review aims to identify approaches, lessons learned, and best practices, which will ultimately aid the creation of formal evidence-based guidance that supports future humanitarian programming and monitoring activities in inaccessible conflict settings.

2. Methods

The peer-reviewed literature was identified through a systematic search of 6 search engines, resulting in 1,853 abstracts screened, 63 full texts reviewed, and 14 studies eventually included in the final analysis. The online systematic review organizer Covidence was used and two independent researchers from UNICEF and CDC agreed upon all screening and selection decisions.

Grey literature resources (all documents that were not published in a peer-reviewed journal) were identified via a Google search, requests to humanitarian organizations, and snowball sampling to obtain additional contacts. The same two researchers screened all resources, coming to consensus on which complied with inclusion criteria; all findings and themes were summarized in this document. All results presented in this review were entirely taken from the literature and do not include any opinions from the authors. Because this field is not yet well-developed or defined, much of the literature outlines concepts and definitions, and addresses the preliminary steps required to advance this burgeoning field.

3. Results

3.1 Causes and Motivators of Remote Operations

The main causes of reduced access include general insecurity or a specific security incident, and restrictions on the movement of aid workers imposed by authorities in power. Many factors affect an organization's decision to switch to remote operations, including: the length of insecurity (it may be more feasible to temporarily shut down operations if risk is perceived as brief), the size of the program (larger programs are more difficult to handover than smaller ones), the feasibility of program activities in the context, the capacity of local partners, and the vulnerability and need of the affected population.

3.2 Traditional Modalities of Remote Operations

There are four modalities of remote programming that exist on a spectrum, varying by depth of roles and responsibilities of both international and local staff. They are:

1. Remote Control: commonly a reactive stance (action in response to a situation that has already occurred) and a last resort with the least amount of delegation of authority to field staff, and little capacity development or skills transfer.
2. Remote Management: a reactive stance with some delegation of authority to national implementers, moderate investment in capacity building, and procedures in place for better monitoring and quality. Assumes that decision-making and authority will revert back to internationals following restoration of security.
3. Remote Support: a proactive strategy (action in preparation for a situation that has yet to take place) with full investment in national staff capacity building, mentoring, and planning for eventual full handover of authority.
4. Remote Partnership: a proactive strategy where equal partnership is fostered with a local partner that already has significant internal capacity. The international organization supports via administration, resource mobilization, and advocacy, while the operational partner focuses on context and implementation.

3.3 Other Remote Approaches

Other remote approaches include community partnership arrangements, government partnership arrangements, and outsourcing to commercial contractors. Neutrality and impartiality remain issues in all remote approaches, including the traditional modalities outlined above.

3.4 Remote Operations Challenges, Considerations, and Approaches

3.4.1 Need to Maintain Humanitarian Principles

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence are necessary, albeit difficult, to maintain during remote operations. Humanitarian actors must increase efforts to both be and appear neutral and not align with any side of the conflict. Impartiality can be a concern when relying on local actors who may be influenced by parties to conflict or community pressures. Capacity building on humanitarian principles is required for all national staff and partners in order to ensure the program is delivered safely and as intended.

3.4.2 Partnerships

Selection: Selecting a suitable partner to implement remote operations requires protocols and checks in place to ensure partners have sufficient capacity and experience in the context, and are not influenced by alternate agendas. Hiring third party accounting firms, deferring to community elders, and identification through contacts have all been described as potential partner selection methods. Ultimately, selection must be transparent and benefits from more active recruitment methods such as consulting local experts and utilizing pre-conflict networks.

Capacity: Building the capacity of local staff is important to ensure the fidelity of remote operations, autonomy, and project ownership. Training needs (operational methods, security protocols, etc.) and methods (planned site visits, staff secondments, etc.) are varied and complex; see the full text for complete details. National staff can be experienced and assuming all nationals require training can create an unequal relationship and should be avoided.

Communication and Trust: Building trust is key for partnerships and is intrinsically linked to communication. Useful trust building mechanisms include: maximizing face-to-face contact, regular sharing of ideas and information, enhanced interactions (for example, videoconferencing), transparent decision making, and joint agenda setting, among others. A minimum level of face-to-face contact between senior staff and implementers is required to build trust and capacity.

Sustainability: Sustainability is a growing concern where national staff are relied upon to deliver services for increasing lengths of time. Prioritizing the sustainability of local partners involves focusing on operational and organizational capacity building of entire institutions, supporting long-term projects, providing core funds, and supporting alliances among local groups, thereby building a strong civil society.

3.4.3 Coordination and Collaboration

Coordination and collaboration are essential to ensure cohesive remote programming, however, certain coordination structures can also compromise an organization's independence and capacity. Structures should be rooted in the cultural context, with coordinating bodies and leadership carefully selected to promote neutrality and local ownership. There is a need for coordination mechanisms and standards to be adapted to the realities of operating in conflict contexts, and to improve the efficacy of the cluster approach for remote programming.

3.4.4 Acceptance

Acceptance of the program, by both the community and the local implementers, is necessary to ensure the fidelity, execution, and uptake of remote operations. Acceptance is both a security measure and used to eventually regain access, however, it should never be solely relied upon to reduce security risk.

Regular contact and participatory management styles that include national staff in decision making increase trust and acceptance by local staff; while selecting culturally appropriate staff, using diaspora nationals, and community outreach and participation increase beneficiary acceptance. The fundamental prerequisite to acceptance is competent and committed humanitarian programming with tangible results.

3.4.5 Risks and Risk Management

Risks to Local Actors: Remote operations involve the transfer of risk from international to local actors, who are assumed to be at lower risk for targeting and therefore safer when implementing. This is often a false assumption as they face unique threats that are often not acknowledged in security assessments. Additionally, local actors are infrequently present at trainings on security, and are often left with minimal security-related equipment when expatriates evacuate.

Mitigation of this risk can be achieved via: conducting thorough risk assessments, preparedness planning that decentralizes authority and transfers security equipment to nationals, capacity building on security issues and protocols, and additional monitoring and triangulation with community members for risk updates.

General Risks: General risks in remote operations are many and include: inadequate and poor quality information management, credibility, coordination, monitoring, and programming; inciting conflict; casualties and fatalities; insufficient impact; limited or no program expansion or adaptation; compromised neutrality and impartiality; corruption and fund diversion; and reduced advocacy or speaking out on behalf of affected populations. These risks are exacerbated by inadequate risk perception and a decreased sense of urgency from remote managers who lose touch with the situation on the ground.

General strategies for reducing risk include: building strong relationships with communities, strategic coordination with partners, and detailed monitoring, among others. Additionally, donor and organizational reporting requirements need to ensure they do not put national staff at increased risk and clear contingency plans are required prior to deterioration in security in order to maximize risk management.

3.4.6 Advocacy

Advocacy suffers in remote operations, as its legitimacy is highly dependent on the presence of international staff and cannot be substituted by that of local staff who carry less influence. Advocacy is closely linked to protection activities, which tend to suffer when field presence is reduced.

3.4.7 Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

Accountability is a crucial component of risk mitigation and management. Remote operations require increased monitoring and reporting requirements than traditional programming due to the lack of field presence and direct oversight by international organizations, but often have fewer resources to meet these increased demands.

Accountability is further compromised by limited opportunities for data collection, poor quality data and inaccurate information, and lack of monitoring skills and capacity of local staff, among others.

Upward Accountability: Upward accountability to donors is the focus of the majority of monitoring activities. However, donor expectations are often not well-suited to fragile settings, can increase risk to local partners, and can detract needed funds from programming; increased flexibility and realism is required.

Downward Accountability: Downward accountability to beneficiaries ensures target population needs are being met and aid is delivered equitably and as intended, however it is often forgotten by organizations. Methods for monitoring of downward accountability include: beneficiary rapid assessment surveys, feedback forms, and hotlines; meetings and discussions with communities; systems of complaints redress; structures that promote beneficiary participation; and prioritizing beneficiary accountability within senior management.

General Methods: A clear plan for M&E must be designed; monitoring in remote operations may need to be more intensive and can require significant resources and tools beyond those used in direct management settings. Several general methods exist to support internal and external M&E initiatives in remote operations; internal M&E is considered less rigorous than external due to reduced transparency, neutrality, objectivity and impartiality.

Internal monitoring methods include: having clear monitoring and reporting structures delineated in advance, specific monitoring capacity within an organization, and regular communication, written reports, and strict deadlines for field staff. External monitoring methods include: contracting local firms for independent third party monitoring, cross checking information with field and community contacts, and sharing monitoring capacity with other organizations. See the full text for complete details of methods used.

Technological Support: Technology has been employed in a variety of facets to enable electronic or web-based monitoring. Examples include mobile phone monitoring applications, satellite imagery, barcode tracking systems, and mapping software, among others. Further research and investment in data collection and analysis, and communications technology is required with the aim of streamlining its incorporation across programs.

3.4.8 The 'Remote Operations Trap'

The 'remote operations trap' refers to the inability to transition back to traditional management structures after a program has been implemented remotely for some time. This is caused by reduced ground-level information, less credibility of the agency, and increased risk for local partners. A well-defined exit strategy is required to ensure programs do not get stuck in remote mode and are not managed remotely for longer than is necessary.

3.4.9 Planning and Guidance

There is a significant need for proactive planning and guidance on when to employ remote methods, how to operate effectively remotely, and when to exit remote operations; most agencies lack specific criteria to assess risk and guide these transitions (including an exit strategy), plans for potential partnerships, and appropriate situation specific risk transfer practices to support decision making. Guidance should cover all these topics, include indicators and checklists, and be integrated into the initial program planning documents. When original remote operation guidance has not been produced, adapting protocols to the new context must be prioritized; it should not be assumed that strategies outlined for regular operations would be appropriate in an inaccessible conflict setting.

4. Conclusions

This review demonstrates that while many organizations are participating in remote programming or monitoring, few articulate their experiences in writing to disseminate lessons learned directly to other organizations or stakeholders, or to be available generally to guide future operations. More studies of the challenges and needs of local partners and staff who implement projects is required, as well as studies of beneficiary perspectives and how remote operations impact their communities.

International, national, and local partners must all be encouraged to document their work and consider incorporating areas of operational research from the onset of remote programming and monitoring activities, in order to improve knowledge of best practices and create practical tools and guidelines that can be used to improve humanitarian aid delivery in inaccessible conflict settings.

1. BACKGROUND

While the end of the Cold War saw a decline in conflicts affecting multiple countries, since 2013 there has been a rise in both number of conflicts and battle casualties; between 2013 and 2014 the number of conflicts increased from 34 to 40.¹ Humanitarian aid workers have been increasingly targeted in conflict; there were 190 attacks on aid workers in 2014, resulting in 121 deaths; this is three times the 2004 number of 63 incidents (with 56 deaths).² International actors are preferred as kidnapping victims as they provide both a higher ransom and a more visible political statement.³ The need to maximize the safety of staff results in reduced access for humanitarian programming and monitoring. This access is further limited by restrictions imposed by both governments and non-state actors seeking to exercise control over territories; there is a direct correlation between increasing violence and shrinking humanitarian presence.⁴

When the risk to international organizations working in conflict zones becomes too great or access is severely restricted, they are often left no other choice than to remove themselves from the situation. This has a harmful effect on local populations who are forced to remain without any support. Remote programming is an alternative to 'bunkerization'.⁵ It aims to continue the provision of services while operating under the assumption that local actors, through their greater knowledge of local context and acceptance in the community, are able to provide services at a reduced level of risk than that faced by international staff. In some situations where grave risk prevents access for expatriate staff from international organizations and national staff from national organizations, remote programs are executed and managed by local actors from communities.

This literature review aims to identify these remote approaches, collating lessons learned and best practices for humanitarian programming and monitoring in inaccessible conflict settings. While humanitarian programming and monitoring in inaccessible areas has been required in several recent conflicts, it has largely been governed by trial and error due to lack of comprehensive instruction and detailed strategy. This review hopes to inform the creation of formal evidence-based guidance to support future humanitarian initiatives in these settings.

A table of terms and definitions unique to this field is provided in the reference table on the following page.

1.1 Reference Table: Terms and Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Bunkerization	The barricading of aid workers behind highly secure walls, isolating them from the populations they are serving.
INGO/IO	International Non-Governmental Organization/International Organization
International Staff	Expatriate staff from an international humanitarian organization or expatriate actors working with large national organizations
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization (Can be at national level or smaller, includes community-based organizations)
Local Actors	Humanitarian stakeholders indigenous to the location in which they are working; can be national staff, staff from local community-based organizations, or even community members.
National Staff	Humanitarian staff native to the country in which they are working, working for a national or international organization.
Proactive Strategy	Action planned as a means of preparing for a situation that has not yet taken place.
Reactive Stance	Action taken in response to a situation that has already taken place.
Remote Control	A reactive stance in response to insecurity where relocated international managers have the most responsibility, making nearly all the decisions, with limited or no delegation of authority to field staff. The risk is completely transferred to national staff, who are left to implement programs with little capacity development or transfer of skills.
Remote Management	A reactive stance in response to insecurity that involves some delegation of authority and decision making responsibility to national implementers. There is commonly a moderate investment in capacity building for nationals and procedures in place that enable better communication, monitoring, and quality. Assumes that decision-making and authority will revert back to internationals following the restoration of security.
Remote Management Trap	The inability to transition back to traditional management after a program has been implemented remotely for some time.
Remote Operations	A general term for remote programming or monitoring. Used in this paper when the specific modality is not known.
Remote Partnership	A proactive strategy that requires equal partnership between both international and national/local staff. Each organization contributes different resources and there is a near-complete handover of responsibility and authority to local organizations. International staff often support via administration, resource mobilization, and advocacy, while the operational partner focuses on context and implementation.
Remote Support	A proactive strategy that is purposefully developed with the aim of handing over authority to national/local staff in the long term. Remote managers usually take on financial and strategic oversight to ensure donor accountability, however it is up to the field implementers, who are familiar with the current context, to make decisions on a daily basis.

2. METHODS

This literature review was completed in two parts: a systematic review of peer-reviewed published articles and a search of grey literature sources. Both parts were completed using consensus methodology by two independent researchers from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

2.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

English language articles published in peer-reviewed journals between January 1, 1990 and March 1, 2016 (inclusive) were included. Included studies met the following criteria: described real-world humanitarian operations, and took place in an inaccessible location in conflict or disaster. Humanitarian programming in disasters was included with the aim of identifying novel strategies that could be translated to an inaccessible conflict setting, however we were unable to identify any humanitarian strategies used in disasters that were transferable. Exclusion criteria were as follows: technology or methods described as having a potential humanitarian application but not yet proven (including simulations), technology or methods used in an inaccessible development context, studies with no specific intervention or outcomes, studies that examine preparedness or resilience not linked to response, and review papers; however, references of review papers were screened for primary data sources. Given the burgeoning nature of this field and the limited published literature on the topic, all study designs were considered.

2.2 Systematic Published Peer-reviewed Literature Methods

2.2.1 Search Strategy

Three search strings (Box 1) were entered into six search engines: Pubmed, Scopus, MEDLINE/Ovid, Web of Science, Cochrane, and EMBASE. All search results were exported to the online systematic review organizer Covidence. 1,853 titles and abstracts were screened, followed by the full text screening of 63 studies. References of all 63 studies that progressed to full text review were also screened to identify primary sources.

Box 1: Peer-reviewed literature search strings

1. (humanitarian OR crisis OR conflict OR disaster) AND (remote OR inaccessible) AND (Health OR nutrition OR polio OR wash OR trauma OR obstetric)
2. (humanitarian OR crisis OR conflict OR disaster) AND (remote OR inaccessible) AND (Health OR nutrition OR polio OR wash OR trauma OR obstetric) AND (monitor OR program)
3. (humanitarian OR crisis OR conflict OR disaster) AND (remote OR inaccessible) AND (Health OR nutrition OR polio OR wash OR trauma OR obstetric) AND tool

2.2.2 Included Papers

Ultimately, 14 papers were identified as meeting all criteria and included in this review. The breakdown by study design was as follows: 4 retrospective analyses of programs, 1 retrospective analysis of populations, 5 descriptive case studies, 1 case series, 2 cross-sectional surveys, and 1 before-and-after study.

2.2.3 Quality Assessment

A checklist adapted from the STROBE criteria was used for quality assessment of observational studies, resulting in a rating of high, moderate, or low quality.⁶ The one qualitative study⁷ was assessed using the CASP checklist,⁸ with a score of 1-4 considered low, 5-8 moderate, and 9-10 (out of 10) high. The case series study⁹ was assessed using the NIH Quality Assessment Tool for Case Series,¹⁰ with a score of 1-3 considered low, 4-6 moderate, and 7-9 high (out of 9). Given the lack of a validated tool, the quality of descriptive case studies could not be formally assessed.

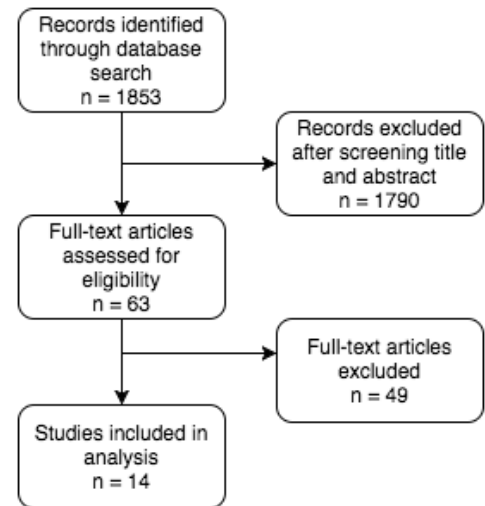


Figure 1 - Study selection flowchart

Upon quality assessment, 2 studies were found to be low, 6 were moderate, and 1 was high; 5 studies were not assessed due to the lack of an appropriate validated tool. A table summarizing the articles included and their corresponding quality assessments can be found in Annex 1.

2.3 Grey Literature Search Methods

2.3.1 Included Papers

The grey literature search included all sources that were not published in peer-reviewed journals, some examples of document types are: organizational guidelines, programming notes, program evaluations, presentations, and meeting notes.

In addition to a Google search, a call for resources was sent out to humanitarian organizations, with additional contacts obtained via snowball sampling. Contacts were asked to provide any grey literature sources pertaining to humanitarian programming and monitoring in inaccessible areas from their organization or elsewhere. References of documents received were also screened for additional primary sources.

All resources were screened by two researchers and consensus was reached on which were relevant and would be included. 131 total documents were reviewed, with 55 documents proceeding to in-depth analysis and included in the final report. The main

reason for exclusion was that several documents pertained to emergency settings but did not specifically discuss operations in inaccessible contexts within these settings.

2.3.2 Analysis of Grey Literature

Both researchers performed thematic analysis of the grey literature independently. Documents were reviewed and coded based on a defined set of codes created following the initial review; code conflicts were discussed until consensus on which code to include was reached. Examples and excerpts were then grouped into themes and included in the relevant sub-sections of the final report.

3. RESULTS

The information in this section was entirely taken from the literature and does not include any opinions from the authors. Because this field is not yet well-developed or defined, much of the literature outlines concepts and definitions, and addresses the preliminary steps required to advance this burgeoning field.

3.1 Causes and Motivators of Remote Operations

3.1.1 Causes of Reduced Access

The main causes of reduced access include general insecurity or a specific security incident, and restrictions on the movement of aid workers imposed by authorities in power. Additional factors that contribute to limited access include: weak international support or pressure to negotiate access with host states, tendency towards risk avoidance over risk management, and poor infrastructure requiring expensive airlift capacity.¹¹

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) has developed a tool to aid countries to collect and analyze data on access constraints in humanitarian settings.¹² This tool suggests incidents and policies that should be monitored and reported, indicators to facilitate this monitoring, and how to effectively track action taken to address constraints. Information generated can be linked to the OCHA access database; OCHA also provides guidance for using this information for advocacy and negotiation.

3.1.2 Motivators for Considering Remote Operations

Many factors need to be considered when determining whether to switch to remote operations. The first is the level and predicted length of insecurity; if the security risk is perceived as temporary, it may be more feasible to close the program and resume when the setting has become secured. The size of the program must be considered, with large programs harder to hand over than smaller programs; this may cause an organization to reduce services and hand over a scaled-back version of the program in order to maintain presence in a location. Feasibility also plays a role in choosing to operate remotely; activities for certain sectors can be more or less feasible based on security or capacity of local staff (for example, highly insecure road travel may make distribution of food aid less feasible). Feasibility will also be governed by an organization's operational history in a specific context. This ties into context considerations where the range, quality, and capacity of local partners must be considered, as well as their ability to operate freely in a region. Finally, the level of vulnerability and need is also a major consideration when debating the shift to remote programming, with organizations frequently opting to provide a program with reduced quality, monitoring and impact, rather than no support at all.^{4, 11, 13} One example of the prior consideration required comes from the UNICEF Peshawar office in Pakistan who, in conjunction with the Security Management Team, preceded their 2009 switch to

remote programming with a 'Program Criticality Exercise' to assess the need and feasibility; this resulted in reduced program activities with a strengthened focus on immunization and internal capacity development.¹⁴

The primary benefit of remote programming and monitoring is the continuation of assistance, services and flow of funding. It allows the retention of local knowledge, making it easier to return to traditional programming when access is restored, and provides opportunities for closer community involvement and local ownership. Remote operations increases the capacity of field staff, which contributes to sustainability. Additionally, the continued visibility of an organization will increase local acceptance of both current and future programming.^{11, 15} Despite these benefits, programming and monitoring quality tends to suffer with lack of international non-governmental organization or international organization (INGO/IO) presence and all options for keeping staff on the ground should be considered prior to moving to remote operations as a last resort.¹⁶ The potential benefits and challenges of shifting a program to remote mode require full consideration to inform the decision; challenges and considerations will be discussed in detail below.

3.2 Traditional Modalities of Remote Operations

Remote operations are often the only choice for organizations that wish to continue the delivery of aid in inaccessible conflict-affected locations. Remote programming and monitoring involves a shift in responsibility to national or local staff on the ground. They become the project implementers, while the program is managed by international staff from a secure remote location. There are four modalities of remote operations that exist on a spectrum and vary by depth of roles and responsibilities of both international and local staff; they are remote control, remote management, remote support, and remote partnership (Table 1). They will be referred to together as 'remote operations' for the remainder of the paper, unless a certain modality is being specified. It is useful to note that the literature often uses the term 'remote management' to discuss remote operations generally and not this specific modality. All of these definitions were taken from the literature and do not include opinions of the authors.

3.2.1 Remote Control

Remote control is commonly a reactive stance in response to insecurity and is considered to be a last resort prior to closing a program. Relocated international managers have the most responsibility, making nearly all the decisions, with limited delegation of authority to field staff; in some situations the international managers can have control over all decisions and resources, leaving field staff with none. The risk is completely transferred to national staff, who are left to implement programs with little capacity development or transfer of skills.

Remote control is the least sustainable of the remote operating modalities as it is highly vulnerable to staff turnover, inflexible, and tends to lack monitoring and data on the changing needs and context, all of which contribute to low quality programming. It is

most suitable for short-duration projects where there is little organizational capacity on the ground, such as isolated distributions in highly insecure areas.¹⁷⁻¹⁹

3.2.2 Remote Management

Remote management is also a reactive stance. However, it involves some delegation of authority and decision making responsibility to national implementers. There is commonly a moderate investment in capacity building for nationals and procedures in place that enable better communication, monitoring, and quality. Despite this, it is still considered temporary, and assumes that decision-making and authority will revert back to internationals following the restoration of security. Remote management is an option for agencies with some infrastructure and experience in the context; it is not appropriate for newcomers. As with remote control, it is very vulnerable to staff turnover.¹⁷⁻¹⁹

3.2.3 Remote Support

In contrast to remote management and control, remote support is a more proactive strategy that is purposefully developed with the aim of handing over authority to national/local staff in the long term. Remote managers usually take on financial and strategic oversight to ensure donor accountability, however it is up to the field implementers, who are familiar with the current context, to make decisions on a daily basis. This is a developmental approach with full investment in capacity building, skill transfer, mentoring, and planning for eventual handover. As such, it is less susceptible to disruptions. A high level of experience in the context, organizational infrastructure, and commitment to adaptability and neutrality are required for this modality.¹⁷⁻¹⁹

3.2.4 Remote Partnership

Remote partnership is also a proactive modality but entails equal partnership between both international and national/local organizations and staff. Each organization contributes different resources and there is a near-complete handover of responsibility and authority to local organizations. International staff often support via administration, resource mobilization, and advocacy, while the operational partner focuses on context and implementation. The international partner is unlikely to engage in capacity development, as the local partner would already need to have significant internal capacity for the partnership to function. While this is beneficial for sustainability and adapting to the changing context, it can be difficult to ensure equitable status between partners and funding due to donor reluctance.¹⁷⁻²⁰

3.3 Other Remote Operating Methods

Additional options, other than working with local organizations, include community partnership arrangements, government partnership arrangements, and outsourcing to commercial contractors.¹¹

3.3.1 Community Partnership Arrangements

Community partnership arrangements involve an INGO/IO forming an agreement with a community wherein community leaders or a group of selected individuals implement a program in the area in which they live. This can range from full program implementation to aid distribution or monitoring. This approach is beneficial as it promotes community ownership and resilience against insecurity, and community members delivering aid will be highly accepted and better able to target needy beneficiaries. On the other hand, community members can be less impartial and more susceptible to influences from family and friends; there is an increased risk of corruption and aid being selectively distributed to influential members of the community.¹¹

Case Study 1: Community partnership in Northern Uganda¹³

An anonymous NGO working in Uganda without access to their project area for a number of years looked to the community they were serving for help with programming. Through regular meetings in the neighboring town where the NGO office was located, community representatives developed program activities and implementation timelines together with the NGO. Community members took on the responsibility of program implementation (with private contractors employed for some technical components) and documented implementation using a field journal to detail various steps and activities, which were corroborated by photographs taken with a digital camera. The NGO provided support to the community implementers via supplies and training. Regular guidance and feedback was given following review of field journals and photographs, enabling the constant improvement of the project.

The community was made aware that the NGO would be monitoring activities, and independent monitors from the communities were recruited to triangulate information. However, a change in the security situation, which permitted the NGO to visit the project area with government escorts, led to the findings that this monitoring system was unreliable. Work was found to be of a low standard, and in some cases not carried out at all, despite payments being made and verification of the work by the NGO's national staff. Community members were found to be providing information that they thought the NGO wanted to hear, instead of reporting on the realities on the ground.

This case highlights both the advantages and disadvantages of relying on communities to implement projects.

3.3.2 Government Partnership Arrangements

Government partnership arrangements involve an INGO/IO developing a program in conjunction with and/or handing over an existing program to authorities. This can promote long-term development, sustainability, and community acceptance;

however, impartiality, independence, and neutrality can suffer. There is also increased risk of corruption or that the government may not have the support of the community.¹¹

3.3.3 Outsourcing to Commercial Contractors

Outsourcing to commercial contractors is when an INGO/IO arranges a fee for service with a private firm or local academic institution. This is commonly for specified services such as distribution of basic provisions, but can include more complex services such as independent third party monitoring. Benefits of this approach include neutrality and impartiality; however, targeting of beneficiaries may be weaker.¹¹

Table 1 - Summary of Remote Operation Modalities^{11, 17, 18, 20}

	REMOTE CONTROL	REMOTE MANAGEMENT	REMOTE SUPPORT	REMOTE PARTNERSHIP
Nature	Reactive	Reactive	Proactive	Proactive
International staff authority	High/Complete	Moderate	Low	Low/None
National staff authority	Low/None	Moderate	High	High/Complete
National staff capacity development	Little	Moderate	Full	Unnecessary
Monitoring	Little	Some	Full	Full
Flexibility	Little	Some	Very	Very
Quality	Low	Moderate	High	High
Sustainability	Low	Moderate	High	High
Time-line	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Long term
Vulnerable to staff turnover	Highly	Highly	No	No
Experience in context and infrastructure required	None	Some	Yes	Yes
Potential benefits	- Continuity of program - Better oversight	- Continuity of program - Better oversight - Capacity building	- Continuation of program long term, sustainable - Tailored to changing context	- Continuation of program long term, sustainable - Tailored to changing context
Potential weaknesses	- Communication problems - National staff bear much of responsibility and risk with little authority - Unsustainable	- Communication problems - National staff bear much of responsibility and risk with little authority	- Corruption risk - Lack of oversight - Scarcity of experienced national staff	- Corruption risk - Lack of oversight - Scarcity of experienced national staff - Reduced funding due to donor reluctance

Table 2 - Summary of potential benefits and hazards of operating agents^{4, 11}

PRESENCE AT PROJECT SITE	DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL BENEFITS	POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES AND HAZARDS
International staff	Senior agency staff visit the project site on a regular basis. Senior agency staff direct programming and manage employees from a distance.	– Provides continuity of leadership – Shows accountability and transparency from better monitoring and oversight – Demonstrates solidarity with local population, and possibly offers a level of 'protection by presence' – Maintains perception of neutrality and impartiality – Shows that management has a better understanding of the context which can lead to better planning and implementation – Encourages donor trust	– Limits transfer of responsibilities to national and local staff – International visits attract attention to the project – Leads to possible suspension or withdrawal if a staff member is a victim of violence – Communication difficulties due to lack of continuous international presence and management oversight
National 'relocatable' staff and/or local staff	National and/or local staff assume decision-making authority.	– Increases ownership by national/local staff – Emphasizes capacity-building – Ensures sustainability in the program – Allows monitoring and evaluation by agency staff	– Puts pressure on staff (if not trained, lacks capacity) – Allows potential for corruption/collusion – Exposes national staff (if security assessment determines they are at risk and the organization has not responded appropriately with training, assets, and procedures) – Communication difficulties – National/local staff may accept a greater degree of risk than is deemed appropriate – May lead to suspension or withdrawal if a staff member is a victim of violence – Risks undermining the perception of neutrality and impartiality

Local NGO	The international agency hands over program/ project to local NGO to manage.	– Shares the values of the aid organization – When done properly, supports the development of an indigenous civil society – Emphasizes capacity-building and sustainability – Increased program acceptance and targeting within local community	– Often has limited capacity and weak incentives for accountability to donors and beneficiaries, as well as the possibility of corruption – Communication difficulties – Transfers risk – Local NGO risks being used only as service provider – Risks undermining the perception of neutrality and impartiality
National or local government authorities	The international agency develops program in consultation with government authorities and/or hands over existing program as 'exit strategy'.	– Promotes long-term development – Emphasizes capacity-building and sustainability – May promote security via increased community acceptance	– Risks undermining the perception of neutrality and impartiality, especially if the host government is a party to the conflict – Government may not have local support – Possibly allows weak accountability to beneficiaries – Risks corruption – Transfers risk – More suitable for development aims than emergency relief
Commercial contractors	The international agency has a fee for service arrangement with a private firm to do logistics or other activities.	– Increases technical capacity – Infrastructure projects often seen as easier to monitor – Greater acceptance (if contractors are local to the community) – Better targeting	– Does not share the values, including humanitarian principles, of the aid organization; partiality especially a concern – Communication difficulties – May lower quality of service – Risks corruption and collusion – Transfers risk – Lack of contextual analysis – Difficult to identify/screen
Community based organizations	International agency arranges for community group or leaders to implement a portion of the program.	– Partners have a vested interest in the right implementation of the projects – Promotes best community participation – More stable and familiar presence to local population – Better targeting of beneficiaries – Community ownership – More resilient to insecurity	– Capacity deficits – Projects can only be implemented at a very local level, and have to be small in scale – Lacks impartiality – Communication difficulties – Risks corruption and collusion – May put populations at risk – May not be representative – Risk of elite capture

Table 3 - Remote control strategy and implications¹¹

STRATEGY	MODALITY	IMPLICATIONS FOR SECURITY, ACCEPTANCE AND QUALITY
Removal of all or nearly all staff	Provision of funding and/or in kind goods for humanitarian response to local NGOs, churches, mosques, and/or the national Red Cross or Red Crescent society (some examples of international NGOs handing over programs other international NGOs).	– May generate acceptance – Quality of programming and financial management may suffer
Removal of expatriate staff	National staff run programs, and international staff may make occasional visits to bring funds, monitor programs and give technical assistance. A variation on this model is the use of expatriates from developing countries, who may be less at risk than Westerners.	– May expose expatriates to higher risk when visiting due to lack of security infrastructure/carrying cash for program – May expose national staff to higher risks when expatriates absent
Removal of program staff and infrastructure from insecure area	Normally to a town or city where security can be managed more easily. This may be temporary or intermittent. In this model, some beneficiaries may access programs by traveling themselves.	– Beneficiaries exposed to risk in accessing assistance
Removal of program staff from insecure areas	Use of contractors to deliver assistance.	– Quality of programming may suffer

3.4 Remote Operations Challenges, Considerations and Approaches

Several themes were identified throughout this literature review. Themes pertained to challenges, considerations and lessons learned for remote operations, with detailed programming and monitoring methods often omitted from documents in an effort to protect security. The themes identified are as follows: need to maintain humanitarian principles, partnerships, coordination and collaboration, acceptance, risk and risk management, advocacy, accountability, the 'remote operations trap', and the need for planning and guidance. Each will be explored in detail below.

3.4.1 Need to maintain humanitarian principles

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence²¹ are necessary to ensure the safety of staff and communities. However, they are difficult to maintain during remote operations. Many IOs give little consideration as to whether or not local partners seek to uphold these principles.¹¹ Neutrality can be affected through partnering with military forces to deliver aid,^{14, 22} while impartiality can be compromised by religious, ethnic, or political dynamics that put pressure on local staff.^{4, 23} One example of compromised humanitarian principles was the UNICEF operation in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2010. Military partners were relied upon to access southern provinces and meetings with populations and stakeholders were held in military-controlled Provincial Reconstruction Team facilities; while this was the most feasible option at the time, it severely compromised their stance as an impartial and neutral actor.²⁴ Ensuring national and local staff have a sound understanding of humanitarian principles is necessary for programming and monitoring to be delivered in keeping with global standards.⁵

Some discussion posits that while impartiality and neutrality are important in these contexts, the core principle that deserves emphasis is the humanitarian imperative: the need to get critical assistance to those in need regardless of the method. This argument implies that a "by any means necessary" approach should be favored over attempts to maintain humanitarian principles in these settings.⁴

Key Lessons in Humanitarian Principles

- Humanitarian actors must make an increased effort to appear neutral and not align themselves with any side of the conflict.
- Impartiality can be a concern with a reliance on local actors who may be influenced by community pressures.
- National and local staff require capacity building on humanitarian principles to ensure programming is delivered as intended.

3.4.2 Partnerships

Effective partnership is a crucial component of any remote operation. Clearly delineated responsibilities, a defined supervision structure with a variety of focal points, and transparent policies allow all parties to make informed choices and adequately

fulfill their roles.^{11, 25} Four sub-themes emerged throughout the partnership discussion, these are: selection, capacity, communication and trust, and sustainability.

3.4.2.1 Selection

Selecting suitable partners can be difficult in conflict settings where scarce resources and desperation are primary influencers. It is necessary to have protocols and checks in place to weed out disreputable partners or those with alternate agendas, such as those linked to political parties, commercial business, or with religious motives; while partnering with private companies or individuals with strong beliefs or affiliations may sometimes be advantageous, it is important to ensure that biases do not negatively effect programming.⁴ Considering national NGOs early on and having a list of pre-qualified partners can be beneficial.²⁵ UNICEF hired a local accounting firm in Afghanistan to assess both the skills and finances of potential and current partners. While this proved to be effective in some parts of the country, the limited number of potential partners with the required capacity and reputation in Kandahar proved to be a risky roadblock. Capacity building interventions were put in place but were ultimately a longer term process, necessitating dependence on the government to implement projects in the near term. This resulted in the transfer of significant amounts of resources through government channels known to be corrupt and lacking oversight; the risk was further exacerbated by UNICEF's inability to monitor government activities.²⁴ Another example of partner vetting is the use of the US Provincial Reconstruction Team's and other partners' lists to recruit national NGOs in Iraq.²⁶

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Somalia described a method of selecting unskilled staff that involved deferring to community elders or the local administration for suitable recruits; this ensured both an appropriate clan balance and MSF was not held responsible for a community's potential dissatisfaction. This same mission found that pre-existing programs in the field were crucial for the success of remote operations, as nationals were already familiar with MSF protocols and principles and therefore were excellent candidates to take over when the international staff were forced to evacuate.²³

Partners have also been identified through contacts, coordination meetings with local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs), and local organizations that contact the INGO/IO. This is a form of passive selection that biases towards LNGOs with networks. While this method was prevalent in Syria, more active methods, such as partner mapping, consulting local experts, searching via social media, interviews with community members, and utilization of pre-conflict networks were considered to be better alternatives. Additionally, partner selection works in both directions, with INGO/IOs required to have good relationships with reputable partners if they are to be chosen by LNGOs.²⁷

Transparency of the selection process and terms of employment is also important.²⁸ Deciding on the most appropriate contract type can be a point of contention, with NGOs preferring Project Cooperation Agreements (an agreement between the UN and an NGO that will be executing the project) that portray equal partnership, despite often suffering from liquidity and capacity issues that may prevent them from making

an equal contribution. UNICEF Chief of Operations in Pakistan has highlighted the Special Service Agreement as their preferred contracting modality;¹⁴ this modality is used for short-term contracts between the UN and a contractor or supplier of services, and typically carries very few employee benefits. The ethics of each contract type must be explored in each context to ensure maximum risk is mitigated.

3.4.2.2 Capacity

Building the capacity of local staff is incredibly important to ensure the fidelity of remote operations, autonomy and project ownership. While local partners may be well versed in the culture and context of a situation, they may be less adept at technical and operational activities. Training needs to include:

- Operational methods/implementation,
- Security protocols,
- Negotiation skills,
- Monitoring and evaluation methods,
- Proposal writing,
- Advocacy,
- Rights and humanitarian law,
- Basic problem solving, and
- Management skills.^{4, 14, 18, 26, 29}

Training must take into consideration the capacities and needs of those being trained, acknowledging cultural and linguistic differences in both training and mentoring.¹¹ It should be prioritized before remote operations take effect and include follow-up and feedback to ensure retention and continuous improvement.^{4, 19, 30} Trainings by local staff/non-experts are not well received¹⁵ and LNGOs dislike top-down trainings as they are not always relevant to their needs; instead they prefer smaller trainings on mutually selected topics that are tailored to their priorities.²⁷ Training has also been found to be more effective when trainees shadow international staff and learn by exposure.¹³ Monitoring of training is important to ensure standardization.³¹ One program evaluation found that LNGOs provided with capacity building training were significantly better at meeting program outputs and quality goals compared to INGO/IOs.⁴

Methods used for capacity building include:

- Planned site-visits from remote management and support staff
 - These were especially useful for fostering mutual trust and improved coordination,³²
- Bringing field staff to secure locations for trainings or implementing a training of trainers approach,^{19, 23}
- Distance learning (where technology permits),²³
- Participatory workshops,²⁷
- Partnership focal points/forum for local partners to learn from one another
 - This was considered more useful than top-down training,²⁷
- Staff secondments,²⁷
- Pilot projects,²⁷
- Cross-program exposure visits, and
- Good practice presentations.³³

Case Study 2: Capacity building in the NGO Coordinating Committee in Iraq (NCCI) Field Focal Point Network⁴

An example of effective knowledge sharing is provided in the NCCI Field Focal Point Network. The NCCI is a consortium of 67 INGOs and NGOs operating aid programs in Iraq. This focal point network consists of 24 local NGOs across the country who gather and monitor information in their localities, guided by ongoing training on data collection and dissemination provided by the NCCI. They then come together to share security and political information; participate in trainings on monitoring, advocacy, rights and humanitarian law; and share information and experiences.

INGOs working remotely from offices in Amman, Jordan benefitted by having evolving real-time information of the situation on the ground throughout all 18 regions of the country; while national NGOs gained a deeper understanding of humanitarian issues as well as regional and national information that would not normally be received. This system not only improved collaboration and programming, but was also crucial for civil society empowerment.

On the other hand, it is important not to create an unequal relationship by assuming all national staff require capacity building; many have years of experience and expertise in management, implementation, and monitoring, and disregarding these skills can create a divide between internationals and nationals that inhibits collaboration and negatively impacts programming quality.³⁴

While capacity building is important, it is a long term goal that can also lead to a short-term loss in efficiency; this trade-off requires consideration and needs to be evaluated against the urgency and needs of the context.³⁵

Case Study 3: Tele-medicine and tele-mentoring by MSF

Information and communication technology has also been used to provide clinical health care at a distance (telemedicine) and build capacity (tele-mentoring).³⁶ It has been successfully used by MSF in Somalia to support Somali clinicians when expatriate staff were no longer able to be physical on site at a district hospital due to security risks.³⁷ Daily video conferencing was set up to link clinicians with a pediatric specialist in Nairobi. Specific referral criteria were used, resulting in 346 of 3920 (9%) of cases being referred for telemedicine. A significant change was made to the management of 222 (64%) of these cases, and a life-threatening condition was detected that had previously been missed in 88 (25%). Clinicians' capacity also improved through regular education via tele-mentoring, as demonstrated by the drop in adverse outcomes from 7.6% in 2010 (without telemedicine) to 5.4% in 2011 (with telemedicine) (30% reduction, odds ratio 0.70, 95% CI: 0.57-0.88, p=0.001). In addition to improved management and recognition of risk signs, clinicians also found it to be of high value as it built a relationship of solidarity with distant specialists, improving morale in an otherwise isolating situation.

A retrospective analysis of pediatric cases handled by the MSF telemedicine system from April 2010 to March 2014 across 28 countries found that two thirds of responses were deemed useful by the patient and three quarters were found to be useful by the medical team.³⁸

3.4.2.3 Communication and Trust

Building trust is key for partnerships and is intrinsically linked to communication. Maximizing face-to-face contact, regular sharing of ideas and information, enhanced interactions (for example, through videoconferencing or instant messaging), transparent decision making, joint agenda setting, forums for feedback and reflection, regular mentoring/supervision, clarity about conditions that would necessitate withdrawal of funding, and a general openness to partner perspectives are all considered to be useful trust building mechanisms in remote operations.^{19, 27, 33, 39, 40} Communication can be enhanced by the designation of a focal point, responsible for communicating messages between the field and the office, and communications should be sure to reference the value of work and provide moral support to field staff.²⁵ Communication strategies should specify the frequency, mode and type of information to be shared.¹⁹

Case Study 4: Partnering in Syria²⁷

An examination of partnerships in Syria identified several variables that strongly influenced partnerships in this context. How an INGO/IO defines its end goal affects the relationship, with organizations who are looking for a delivery system to reach an inaccessible population fostering much different relationships than those looking to build capacity and strengthen civil society. The partnership is also affected by the INGO/IO's capacity to partner and the manner with which they approached the partnership; an organization's culture (partnerships that are streamlined into programming were found to be more effective than those viewed as a last resort), the stability of the INGO/IO within the local context (infrequent staff turnover, consistent funding, and well defined strategies), and the donor's level of comfort with risk all influence their capacity to partner.

Partnerships in Syria were enhanced with a collaborative and trusting operative environment; a partnership with joint-problem solving between all levels, information sharing, and cooperation improves project quality and coverage. On the other hand, lack of INGO/IO support of local partners' core costs was associated with mistrust.

Table 4 - LNGO opinions of what builds or diminishes trust²⁷

BUILDING TRUST	LACK OF TRUST
- Face to face meetings - Dedicated partnership person in INGO/IO - Language capabilities - Clearly defined roles - Fulfilling commitments - Demonstrated flexibility - Joint problem solving - INGO/IO respects LNGO opinions	- Lack of overall transparency - Feeling used (for networks/sub-contracts) - Excessive documentation - Top-down communication - Condescending attitude - Cultural insensitivity - Slow response time

3.4.2.4 Sustainability

Sustainability of remote operations is a relevant concern in this growing climate of long-term conflicts where national staff are relied upon to deliver services for increasing lengths of time. Prioritizing the sustainability of local partners involves focusing on operational and organizational capacity building of the institutions (not just the individual), supporting long-term projects, providing core funds (funds for daily operations and salaries), and supporting alliances among local groups, thereby building a strong civil society. Local partners should also be encouraged to develop their own contingency plans and procure goods locally.²⁷

LNGOs have cited a variety of approaches to promote sustainability in the face of donor withdrawal, these include: switching to less capital-intensive activities (for example, switching from aid distribution to education and awareness initiatives), diversification, downsizing (relying on volunteers), dormancy, and approaching other donors and the private sector for funding.²⁷

Sustainability is also supported by rapid decentralization to skilled staff and flexibility in rapidly changing contexts, versus hierarchical management structures and procedures.¹⁷

3.4.2.5 Examples of Partnership Strategies

The peer-reviewed literature described several specific examples of remote approaches that emphasized task-shifting to local providers. A 2015 UNICEF project implementing Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) in Somalia found the use of local health NGOs crucial to successful execution, given their access to communities, even in conflict-affected areas.⁴¹ Their longstanding commitment to the health of the community made them ideal implementers of a comprehensive and enduring sanitation program. A MSF surgical program in Somalia also took advantage of local expertise when the expatriate presence ended in 2008 due to insecurity.⁴² The surgical program was then run remotely by a coordination team in Nairobi, with services provided by 1 Somali doctor who had trained under the expatriate surgeon for 2 years, 1 surgical nurse, and 1 anesthetic nurse. Peri-operative mortality was found to be lower when the procedures were performed by non-surgeons between 2008-2009 (0.2%) than when performed by surgeons between 2006-2007 (1.7%, $p < 0.001$).

Further examples of effective task-shifting have taken place in Myanmar. The Backpack Health Worker Team (BPHWT) is a group made up of indigenous health workers who provide care to internally displaced people and local tribal communities, not accessible to international organizations due to insecurity and government restrictions when the country was ruled by a military junta. BPHWT was able to complete a retrospective mortality survey of conflict zones,⁴³ as well as provide critical health services to over 78,000 individuals.⁴⁴ The latter was made possible via a cross-border global-local partnership where BPHWT team leaders crossed into Thailand twice annually to resupply, receive training, and compile collected health information at the administrative headquarters; technical support was provided by international NGOs. BPHWT was also involved in a trauma management program where indigenous health workers were trained for 4-6 days in trauma management; 200 patients were treated between 2005 and 2007 and 91% of cases survived.⁴⁵

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) described local contractors and consultants as essential to their remote water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) program in Iraq.⁴⁶ 2006 marked the year this program attempted a new operational framework, reducing staff exposure and increasing networking to promote acceptance while building up a system of local implementers; the extensive network of competent local staff, working with ICRC engineers, was crucial in carrying out 78 remotely managed projects in 2007.

However, not all humanitarian programs are amenable to remote operations. MSF's long term Human African Trypanosomiasis (HAT) campaign, which began in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2007, found that the complexity of HAT's diagnosis and treatment prevented any emergency handover to local partners when MSF was forced to evacuate due to insecurity.⁴⁷

Key Lessons in Partnerships

- Vetting the quality of potential partners early can make selection easier when a shift to remote operations is required.
- Targeted proactive recruitment of partners must acknowledge social divisions.
- Focusing on operational and organizational capacity building of the entire local institution is a prerequisite for sustainable programming.
- Capacity building of local staff should favor participatory approaches and be tailored to national/local staff needs and priorities.
- Regular communication with field staff is required by any means necessary (Skype, E-mail, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.).²⁵
- A minimum level of face-to-face contact between senior staff and implementers is required to build trust and capacity.⁴⁸

3.4.3 Coordination and Collaboration

Coordination between internationals and national staff is essential to ensure cohesive remote programming and monitoring. One study found that many agencies lack an internal communications protocol, leading to serious reductions in real-time information.⁴ An Iraq case study found that while the cluster system was in place throughout remote programming, it was not inclusive of the Inter-agency Standing Committee or LINGOs.²⁸ The inability of international humanitarian actors to coordinate the response and share information in Syria led to a disharmonized approach that negatively affected the absorptive capacity of LINGOs and compromised programming.²⁷ A study of the humanitarian space in Somalia found that actors were pulling away from the conventional cluster coordination system to work independently. While in some cases this improved access and allowed organizations to implement their own tactics, the lack of a common standard to deal with demands (for example, negotiation techniques, stances on taxation and fees, etc.) and lack of understanding of what other actors were doing ultimately compromised program activities. This same study found that the 2007-2008 OCHA joint operating principals for Somalia were never operationalized as actors were worried that they would not be able to operate if they followed international humanitarian standards.⁴⁹ Dependence on the UN system for logistics was also found to be an issue by MSF in Yemen as it locked INGO/IOs into decisions made, or not made, by the UN, ultimately compromising their independence, mindset, and capacity.⁵⁰

In addition to structured and regular communication strategies,¹⁵ coordination is achieved through regular interaction between various levels of staff (site visits, video conferencing, etc.).^{19, 32} With whom an agency coordinates must be carefully considered in order to appear neutral and reduce security risk.²⁰ Proximity of support departments is thought to be important as well, with central administration and logistics centers increasing coordination.¹³

An example is UNICEF's Iraq mission where a cadre of 15 senior facilitators was established to strengthen coordination across all governorates; this group was then coordinated by the emergency specialist.²⁸ The International Organization for Migration

(IOM) in Iraq found that coordination with the government's Ministry of Displacement and Migration, the IDP working group, and with at least two implementing partners per program helped to avoid duplication.⁵¹ The NCCI has also used coordinated local networks to map the security situation.⁵²

Case Study 5: The shura (council) system in Afghanistan^{4, 18, 26, 53}

One example of effective coordination is the *shura* (council) system in Afghanistan developed by Tearfund to mimic the local decision-making structure based around group consultation. Following insecurity that forced coordination activities to relocate from Kandahar to Kabul, the lack of an expatriate program manager was feared to unleash tribal differences among Afghan staff members. In an attempt to preempt these tensions from causing problems, a *shura* was developed with the 5 program heads from the Kandahar office, each taking turns to coordinate the *shura*; all other staff members were invited to participate in deliberations as well. The inclusiveness to all opinions and lack of one controlling member helped to manage conflict and tensions between staff and prevented fraud or corruption as all members worked together and monitored each other.

While this process was slow to develop and resulted in slow decision making initially, it was important given the cultural context and demonstrated respect for local governance mechanisms. The *shura* system led to programming that was highly accepted by the community, well-coordinated, and fairly implemented, while building sustainable local capacity and ownership. This system also generated meeting minutes and weekly reports that could be used for monitoring. The expatriate coordinator also benefitted by receiving multiple perspectives on any situation through individual contact with each member.

Collaboration between multiple organizations at all levels is an important component of effective remote operations. Low collaboration was found between UN agencies in Pakistan which negatively affected programming.¹⁴ UNICEF Somalia demonstrated effective collaboration through teaming up with the World Food Program (WFP) on missions and access negotiations, resulting in increased field time, more effective response, and good staff security. This approach of teaming up with other humanitarian agencies was thought to be more beneficial than being locked in the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) structure.⁵⁴ The Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan partnered with ICRC to conduct negotiations and gain access for their polio eradication initiative in high-risk areas.⁵⁵

Recommended mechanisms to improve collaboration include: best practice learning events, training and capacity building workshops, resource sharing, and engagement with humanitarian and development coordination bodies.³³ Cluster leads should support the sharing of good practices and lessons.⁵

Key Lessons in Coordination and Collaboration

- Coordination structures should be rooted in the cultural context to promote acceptability and community ownership.⁴

- There is a need for coordination mechanisms and standards that take into account the realities of operating in conflict contexts.
- A designated network of focal points can relay goods, equipment, information, and lessons and improve coordination.^{17, 18, 28}
- There is a need to improve the efficacy of the cluster approach for remote operations.²⁴
- Good practices exist, but are generally confined within an organization and need to be shared.³³

3.4.4 Acceptance

Acceptance is important to ensure the fidelity, execution, and uptake of remote operations. Activities need to be accepted by both the national/local staff implementing them and the communities they aim to serve; program ownership is linked to program success.²³ Acceptance is both a security measure and used to eventually regain access,^{53, 56} and is closely linked with trust, which is difficult to foster in situations with limited contact. One study found pervasive levels of distrust at all levels: between agencies and local staff, between agencies themselves, and between agencies and beneficiaries; reasons cited included distance, lack of local presence and contact with people, and differences in pay.³⁴ Additional reasons for growing mistrust include: the establishment of heavily guarded compounds ("bunkerization") further distancing agencies from locals, heavily guarded visits by internationals leaving locals unguarded, and reduced dialogue with local actors.^{4, 15} Reputation building is further compromised by disruptions in and poor quality of programming.^{57, 58}

Having national staff visit locations where the program is being remotely managed is thought to be especially important to build trust between internationals and local staff in cases where the local staff have little experience in the setting.¹¹ Planned site visits by managers to the remote locations also promote project ownership.³² Face-to-face communication helps both management and trust building.^{4, 26} Participatory management styles that include both national staff and communities in decision making, planning, and implementation are thought to be especially important as they promote acceptance and increase uptake of services.¹³ One example of promoting acceptance was the hiring of retired army members and bureaucrats as facilitators by UNICEF Iraq; this promoted good relationships with the government and acceptance on a national level.²⁸

Several techniques have been employed to increase beneficiary acceptance. Ensuring staff are from an appropriate cultural, religious, or geographic background is important when programming in sensitive areas.⁵² The use of diaspora nationals as international staff was found to increase acceptance in Somalia, as, in addition to bringing technical skills, they are better able to assimilate and communicate with local populations. However, this case also noted that resentment could foster among these communities due to diaspora nationals receiving high salaries and seeming to be out of touch with the context.^{5, 26, 49, 59} Increased communication and advocacy efforts promote local ownership.²⁴ An example of successful community outreach is that established by an INGO/IO in Afghanistan that built relations via discussing the

similarities between the Islamic teachings and the ICRC code of conduct; this initiative was supported by the Ministry for Hajj and Religious Affairs as well as influential Islamic scholars.²⁶ Another example in Afghanistan linked the teachings of the Qur'an to humanitarianism when gaining support from community members during the transition to remote operations; they also found that explaining the project to the communities prior to the deterioration in security, along with their operational history in the area, led to increased acceptance.¹³ The UN Mine Action Coordination Center Afghanistan (UNMACCA) recruited young adults in areas that needed demining via community nomination; they received two months of training and went back to work in their own community, demonstrating the possibility of local staff utilization for activities that require defined skills.⁵ Training community volunteers can also be used to shift program ownership.⁶⁰

Case Study 6: Building of community acceptance by International Medical Corps (IMC) Somalia⁶¹

IMC Somalia used Community Health Committees (also known as Health Center Committees) to bridge the gap between the organization and the community. These volunteer committees were established at every health facility and were comprised of elected and well-respected community members with an appropriate clan balance. They generated demand for the services and increased community ownership of the health facility by facilitating health promotion and mobilization activities. They also served as a mechanism for beneficiary accountability by feeding back the community's concerns and needs and holding IMC accountable. They have also acted as mediators, de-escalating conflicts when they arise and reducing security risks.

Additionally, this program also found that using 100% local staff with an appropriate site-specific clan balance fostered good local perception and minimized checkpoint bribes, confiscations, raids, and threats of violence when hiring or firing staff. Interventions that have also reduced risk for IMC (compared to other INGOs operating in the same areas) include: giving local sites the authority to hire their own non-skilled staff, replacing skilled staff who leave with someone from the same clan, using the Community Health Committees to informally recommend new staff, and ensuring transparency when staff are let go, including the provision of a culturally appropriate severance package.

Further examples of the benefits of building acceptance include a World Health Organization (WHO) report on poliomyelitis eradication in Afghanistan and Pakistan that found that indirect contact with anti-government groups, and the support gained as a result of this contact, allowed hostilities to be ceased during immunization activities, increasing areas accessible to vaccinators between September and December 2007.⁶² Support from community leaders was found to be crucial during triggering and implementation of the CLTS program in Somalia⁴¹ and for project implementation and gaining safe passage for program staff in insecure regions throughout Global Fund-supported malaria programs.⁷ Additionally, the ICRC found strong collaboration with and ownership by local authorities to be essential for the success of their remote WASH program in Iraq.⁴⁶ MSF's pediatric tele-consultations and tele-monitoring program in Somalia required awareness raising meetings with community elders prior to its introduction;³⁷ understanding new technology was key to

program acceptance in this community whose cultural beliefs negate the use of cameras.

Visibility has also been cited as necessary for long-term acceptance, but while having logos present during programming can help ingratiate an organization with the local population, it must be balanced with the risk to security and could jeopardize effectiveness in the short-term.¹⁷ Techniques used to build an agency's reputation include identification at distribution points with removable signage and the use of media messaging.⁶³ In Pakistan, negotiations with local tribes to deliver food aid to remote communities raised visibility and built confidence with the locals.²⁶

Two caveats regarding acceptance are: an organization can never rely on acceptance-based security alone in dangerous environments, and the fundamental prerequisite to acceptance is principled, competent and committed humanitarian programming with tangible results.⁵

Key Lessons on Acceptance

- Investment in highly localized staff structures and hiring of local technical staff should be prioritized where possible.
 - Local staff are familiar with the context and can help facilitate working relationships.⁵
- Adopt participatory management styles and recruit staff members in consultation with communities.⁵
- Pursuing and sustaining positive community relationships is crucial for beneficiary acceptance.^{33, 60}
- Acceptance cannot be solely relied upon for security.

3.4.5 Risks and Risk Management

3.4.5.1 Risks to National/Local Staff

Remote operations involve a transfer of risk from international staff to national and local staff, who are thought to be at lower risk for targeting and therefore safer as program implementers.^{19, 64} This risk is exacerbated by the under-representation of national/local staff in security training and unequal distribution of assets and support; very few agencies have clear policies outlining which security-related equipment will be turned over to partners when expatriates are forced to leave. The assumption that nationals are at a reduced risk because they are more familiar with the local context is often false; national staff can be seen as outsiders if they are from a different part of the country, which can result in higher levels of mistrust than with internationals.⁵ Nationals face different threats that need to be acknowledged in comprehensive security assessments, with the implementation of security measures unique to these risks, and agencies' risk thresholds, applying equally to all staff.^{3, 4, 11, 34, 56} Another issue is that incidents involving national staff are not documented as thoroughly due to separate insurance policies and reporting requirements, contributing to the underestimation of the risk that they face.³

Local aid workers are further influenced by financial and other competing priorities that encourage risk taking and they may not be in the best position to assess what are acceptable risks. They are also often excluded from international staff support arrangements like hazard pay, rest leave, and counseling;³⁴ whether or not partners fully understand and accept risks and whether their profile truly allows them to undertake tasks with less risk should be assessed.¹⁶ Additionally, they often accept additional security risks to comply with donor requirements; for example, a local partner reported having to use money from their already small core budget to pay smugglers to move people and documentation across siege lines so the INGO/IO could be provided with a beneficiary list.²⁷

Mechanisms to mitigate this risk include:

- Conducting thorough risk assessments,^{16, 19}
- Preparedness planning that decentralizes authority,⁵⁹
- Transfer of security equipment (vehicles, communication tools, etc.) to nationals and transparent guidelines that allow them to know what they will be receiving and make informed decisions accordingly,¹¹
- Employing nationals that will “blend in”⁵⁶ and are able to maintain a low profile,¹³
- Recruitment of non-western staff from neighboring countries with similar cultures,⁵⁶
- Capacity building on security issues and protocols,⁴
- Additional monitoring,^{4, 19} and
- Liaising with community members for risk updates.⁵⁸

3.4.5.2 General Risks

General risks in remote operations are many and include: inadequate and poor quality coordination, information management, credibility, monitoring, and programming; inciting conflict; casualties and fatalities; insufficient impact; limited or no program expansion or adaptation; compromised impartiality; and reduced advocacy or speaking out on behalf of affected populations.^{23, 32} These risks are exacerbated by inadequate risk perception and a decreased sense of urgency from remote managers who lose touch with the situation on the ground;^{19, 50} this distance is thought to undermine the emergency mindset and the solidarity with victims needed to be willing to take risks.^{17, 63} UNICEF Somalia found that the indecisive and process-focused culture of their Nairobi-based remote management center contributed to a habit of risk avoidance over risk management, preventing the seizure of opportunities and new implementation modalities. Specifically, this inhibited the creation of an independent monitoring system with partners and contractors when opportunity permitted, resulting in the later creation of weaker monitoring structures that became an accountability and reputational risk.⁵⁴

One example of combatting remote operation risks is the Risk Management Unit formed in 2011 by the UN country team in Somalia. It maintains a directory of aid and local actors to ensure quality and accountability, and advises all agencies through monitoring of financial, programmatic, and reputational risks.²⁶ General strategies for reducing risk include:

- Building strong relationships with communities,
- Strategic coordination with partners,
- Gaining support and acceptance from partners,
- Employing qualified staff with capacity and skills,
- Regular communication across all levels, and
- Detailed records and monitoring.^{19, 65}

Financial and programming concessions are commonplace yet rarely addressed. Risky practices include paying money at checkpoints and unofficial taxes, employing local militia, avoiding need areas that will potentially antagonize local authorities, altering target criteria, and risky partnerships. Corruption and fund diversion is prevalent throughout these complex settings where chronic poverty is prevalent and local actors are often acting with little to no supervision. Attempting to control corruption requires checks and monitoring, and not an unrealistic zero tolerance policy.^{24, 29, 58} Reduced aid diversion and increased program quality have been found to be correlated with increased face-to-face contact between INGO/IOs and LNGOs.⁴⁰ International staff are thought to be better able to resist local social and political pressures to divert resources and impartially target beneficiaries, contractors, or suppliers.^{23, 58}

Additionally, not wanting to take the same risks as other agencies contributes to a tendency to act independently, which is more prevalent in remote operations than regular programming.⁴

Box 2: The UNICEF Minimum Components of the Comprehensive Risk Management Approach:⁶⁵

1. Assessing the non-security risks for UNICEF programs;
2. On the security side, linking our planning with the Stringent Regulatory Authority and the inter-agency Program Criticality exercise;
3. Comprehensive multi-source monitoring with capacity to triangulate and analyze information, including:
 - a. Regular program monitoring by staff
 - b. Self-reporting by partners (high frequency output level)
 - c. Independent third-party verification/monitoring systems
 - d. Affected populations / community feedback mechanisms (including use of call centers);
4. Internal management measures such as training, partner screening, audit and risk management working group/committee at Country Office level.

Additional components of risk management may include:

1. Capacity building for staff, partners, facilitators and contractors, on risk management and on red lines based on humanitarian principles;
2. Agreeing on and implementation of common UN risk management tools, due diligence measures and mechanisms;
3. Conflict sensitive programming;
4. Overall: Country Office articulates its approach to mitigation based on the threat and risk analysis.

Key Lessons on Risk and Risk Management

- Donor and INGO/IO reporting requirements need to ensure they are not putting national staff at increased risk.
- Risk needs to be managed not avoided.
- Opportunities to mitigate future risk need to be seized and not succumb to bureaucratic delays.
- Clear contingency plans are required prior to a deterioration in security, including local security costs in the budget.^{27, 35}
- Ongoing risk analysis, regular security training, and equipment and psychological support for national staff is essential, and should be comparable to that of internationals.^{5, 35}
- Policies need to be implemented that acknowledge the realities of fraud and corruption on the ground.

3.4.6 Advocacy

Advocacy suffers in remote operations, as it is highly dependent on the presence of international staff. The legitimacy of the message is directly related to presence in the field, and cannot be substituted by that of LNGOs who do not carry the same weight and influence as their international counterparts. Remote operations were found to weaken protection activities in Afghanistan that were dependent on advocacy from INGO/IOs.⁴ Communication and advocacy efforts are also critical to the re-enforcement of community ownership and program acceptance, thus despite the restrictions, they should be increased when shifting to remote operations.²⁴ UNICEF Iraq found that implementing partners could be used to deliver messages on the ground, however policy and decision messaging had to come from UNICEF directly to be effective.²⁸ MSF Somalia reported that outsiders (international staff) were in a better position to witness and speak out about intolerable situations.²³

Key Lessons on Advocacy

- Advocacy is dependent on the field presence of international staff.
- Protection activities suffer when advocacy is reduced.

3.4.7 Monitoring & Evaluation

Accountability in remote operations is multifaceted and includes both upward accountability to donors and downward accountability to beneficiaries. Its value lies in its ability to contribute to prioritization in these fragile and resource-limited settings.⁶⁶ Accountability is a crucial component of risk mitigation and management, with increased monitoring and reporting requirements than traditional programming due to the lack of field presence and direct oversight of INGO/IOs. Accountability is further compromised by limited opportunities for data collection, poor quality data and inaccurate information, lack of monitoring skills and capacity of local staff, lack of good baseline data for performance indicators, issues with safely sharing information, rapid aid influxes that necessitate immediate action and prevent M&E from being built in at the onset, and difficulty gaining support from local staff who may feel money is better spent on delivery of aid.^{18, 30, 32, 33, 53, 58} One study found that only eight out of the 20

INGO/IOs interviewed had an organizational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.⁵⁸

3.4.7.1 Upward Accountability

Donor accountability is essential to ensure continued funding and confidence in programming, despite common apprehensions associated with lack of senior staff presence. Meeting donor accountability expectations tends to be the focus of the majority of M&E,⁴ however, these expectations are often not well suited to fragile settings, can increase risk to local partners,²⁷ and can detract much needed funds from programming; this has led to a call for flexibility and realism from donors.^{24, 32} Straying away from institutional donor agreements towards unnecessary reporting requirements was observed in Afghanistan and resulted in the limited human resources being directed away from program implementation.²⁴

3.4.7.2 Downward Accountability

Accountability to beneficiaries ensures the needs of target populations are being met, that aid is delivered equitably to all that require it, and that any (inadvertent) harm to beneficiaries by humanitarian actors is addressed, however, it is often forgotten by organizations.^{19, 67} The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) essential benchmarks of beneficiary accountability good practice are outlined in Box 3. A recent study across four conflict settings found that surveys of local beneficiaries reported that aid received was frequently not what was most needed.²⁹ It is especially important to have independent beneficiary accountability mechanisms in remote operations as communities are unable to directly follow-up with management.¹⁵ Monitoring of downward accountability can be achieved by:

- Beneficiary rapid assessment surveys,⁵¹
- Beneficiary feedback forms,^{19, 32, 52}
- Beneficiary hotlines,²⁶
- Meetings and discussions with communities^{32, 53}
 - Designated “Beneficiary Reference Groups” to provide direct feedback on program and implementation quality,⁴
- Transparency of entitlements: ensuring the aid is expected and beneficiaries know what they are meant to be receiving so any large diversions are noticed,^{4, 19}
- Systems for complaints redress,^{4, 19, 33}
- Qualitative story telling from beneficiaries,⁵³ and
- Community structures that promote beneficiary participation.³³

Case Study 7: Tearfund Darfur's beneficiary and community oversight committee³³

When using a remote operating approach in Beida, West Darfur, Tearfund established a number of committees to support project monitoring and implementation. One such group was the beneficiary and community oversight committee that assisted Tearfund personnel based in the neighboring Geneina Region. This included representatives from the local beneficiary population and from wider communities where projects were being implemented. Tearfund personnel were able to visit activity locations twice weekly when they would meet with the committee and exchange views and ideas on how the project was progressing and its level of quality; concerns and issues were then addressed by Tearfund staff. Committee representatives also participated in exchange visits between project sites that enabled them to evaluate and compare activities. This participatory accountability mechanism was essential in improving project implementation, quality, and impact.

Tearfund Afghanistan found that beneficiary accountability improved following its prioritization within senior management. The hiring of a monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) officer resulted in dedicated capacity to provide training on accountability practices and to monitor their progress. Progress was assessed by the incorporation of beneficiary accountability indicators in project evaluations and the liaising of the MEAL officer with project offices and staff.³³

Box 3: The 2010 HAP essential benchmarks to support beneficiary accountability good practice^{33, 68}

1. *Establishing and delivering on commitments:* the organization sets out the commitments that it and its partners or contractors will be held accountable for and identifies how they will be delivered.
2. *Staff competency:* the organization ensures that staff and/or partners or contractors have competencies that enable them to meet the organization's commitments.
3. *Sharing information:* the organization ensures that the people it aims to assist (directly or remotely), as well as other stakeholders, have access to timely, relevant, and clear information about the organization and its activities.
4. *Participation:* the organization listens to the people it aims to assist, incorporating their views and analysis in program decisions.
5. *Handling complaints:* the organization enables the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible, and safe process.
6. *Learning and continual improvement:* the organization learns from experience to continually improve its performance.

3.4.7.3 General M&E Methods

A clear plan for M&E must be designed; monitoring in remote operations may need to be more intensive and can require significant resources beyond those used in direct management settings.¹⁹ Several general methods and practices exist to support internal and external M&E initiatives in remote operations. Internal M&E is thought to be less rigorous than external consultants due to reduced transparency, neutrality, objectivity, and impartiality.³⁰

Internal Monitoring Methods:

- Decentralized organizational authority.⁵⁹
- Clear monitoring and reporting procedures, instructions, and advanced planning.^{4, 19, 31}
- Daily or weekly debriefings.⁴
- Regular communication between remote managers and field staff (telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, etc.).^{4, 31}
- Regular written reports with strict deadlines.^{4, 13}
- Date and time stamped, and Global Positioning System (GPS) encrypted photographs of project sites/activities.^{4, 13, 27, 51, 69}
 - UNHCR Somalia found that having camera phones, and even taking notes, could be risky in the field, resulting in monitors having to mentally retain information and report it via the internet once they returned home.²⁶
 - Training to take effective photos is required, they are only useful to assess tangible outcomes (less so for intangible outcomes like social change), and may not always be culturally appropriate.⁵³
- Bringing local personnel out of the field for monitoring reviews, technical discussions, coordination meetings, and forward planning.⁴
- Unplanned visits by senior staff to project sites.^{4, 13, 51}
- Selection and performance review committees.²⁶
- Regular strategic surveys that consider the program within changing context.³⁹
- Simulated technical field visits.⁶⁹
- Independent INGO/IO and LNGO monitoring for the same program to allow for cross-checking of data.⁴⁰

Case Study 8: Save the Children Somalia simulated technical field visit⁶⁹

Save the Children Somalia experimented with simulated technical field visits to provide support to their nutrition operations in Hiran, Somalia; the first visit was completed over Skype in October 2015. The objectives of the visit were to monitor the nutrition programs and verify their existence, assess quality against benchmarks, identify gaps and areas for capacity development, and motivate the field teams via establishing rapport.

After agreeing upon standards and benchmarks, the field team would provide electronic evidence (scanned patient cards and stock records, focus group discussion notes, completed checklists, photographs, etc.) for the international staff to review prior to the call. Document analysis included assessing whether cards were filled in properly, if correct treatments were prescribed, and if follow up was tracked properly, among others. The Skype or phone call would then take place allowing for a joint review of the documents with the field, providing feedback, and agreeing on an action plan.

Findings from a recent simulated field visit included the mean upper arm circumference measurement was too tight in six out of ten photographs submitted and outpatient cards were being filled out improperly, indicating further training was required. They were also able to assess the site via photographs, noting the buildings did not provide a shaded waiting area for mothers and lacked adequate furniture.

Several lessons were learned from this process: prior preparation and extensive communication is required to ensure a complete set of documents is delivered for assessment, taking representative photographs is a skill that must be taught, quality checklists were very useful, and strict discipline was required to set aside uninterrupted time to complete the visit. However, the question remains of how useful can a simulated field visit be when the field team is choosing what to show you.

External Monitoring Methods:

- Independent third party monitoring via contracting local firms.^{4, 5, 28, 32, 39, 51, 70}
 - Recruitment from local communities allows monitors to move around without incident.²⁸
 - Shared third party monitors across the UN system could reduce costs.²⁴
 - Quality of monitoring was found to be higher for supply-related programming (i.e. infrastructure) versus more complex programming (i.e. child protection).²⁸
 - Third party monitoring is considered the gold standard as it is assumed to be the most neutral and impartial; however, it is resource intensive, expensive, and its objectivity can be compromised through the repeated use of the same firm.²⁷
- Project/data verification through cross checking information with other field and community contacts (triangulation).^{4, 5, 19, 39, 48, 59, 70}
 - UNHCR Somalia used simple feedback from people, contractors, and implementers who were in the area but not a part of the program for post-distribution monitoring; it was significantly cheaper than hiring a third party contractor to be present during the distribution.²⁶
 - On the other hand, the Northern Uganda case study described the use of community members for triangulation as unreliable because they

provided unrealistic information that they thought the NGO wanted to hear.¹³

- Joint monitoring: sharing the monitoring capacity of other organizations.³⁵
 - UNICEF Afghanistan reduced costs by using the monitoring capacity of WFP.²⁴
- Peer-monitoring (also known as cross-monitoring): inter-agency agreements allow staff from different NGOs, staff from different programs within an NGO, or even between government agencies, to monitor each other's programs.^{33, 39, 53}
- Community/beneficiary-led monitoring: training of community facilitators or mobilizers in monitoring techniques.
 - Tearfund in Darfur (2009 – 2011) used village supervisory committees to report on project concerns and share notes on implementation and quality.³³

Case Study 9: Quality Assurance Unit in Afghanistan³³

One anonymous INGO operating remotely in Afghanistan described the creation of a highly efficient Quality Assurance Unit. Each member of the unit was from a different province in Afghanistan, with all members based in Kabul. In addition to a strong understanding of the people and culture, each member was previously immersed in the organization, where they built knowledge of the INGO's values and ethos.

This unit was regularly dispatched to project locations where they monitored project quality and implementation, and assisted field staff with the development of work plans and log frames. With their deep cultural, contextual, and organizational understanding, they were able to provide objective and effective third party monitoring to the INGO's projects.

3.4.7.4 Technological Support

Web-based monitoring allows projects and activities to be verified over the Internet through uploaded visual evidence with geo-referenced data.^{19, 27, 39, 59} The UNHCR has a Project Tracking Database that allows for evidence of projections (GPS encrypted photographs, costs, delivery info, etc.) to be uploaded, with payments tied to photographic evidence.⁵ UNHCR Iraq found that the downsides of their Project Tracking Database was that it was costly, labor intensive, and required constant maintenance.²⁶

One organization in Afghanistan has developed a Geographic Information System (GIS) Internet database that allows for program monitoring via the extensive storage of photos, maps, and cross-checking data. It allows for the superimposing of activities onto satellite maps and can be accessed from any location with internet.⁴ Satellite imagery has also been used to identify appropriate camp locations, obtain information regarding impact and needs of emergencies, and aid first responders.⁷¹

Case Study 10: Technology for monitoring in Syria⁴⁰

An anonymous INGO working in Syria described the technology employed to monitor project implementation as one of its major strengths. The INGO operates remotely but manages a cloud server that allows them to maintain daily oversight of project activities; dedicated skilled INGO staff focus on data management and analysis full time.

Data collection is facilitated by forms and questionnaires programmed into Open Data Kit (ODK), enabling field staff to use android tablets to enter data that is encrypted and automatically uploaded to the cloud server when the tablet is connected to the internet. Additionally, WhatsApp on each tablet allows for direct communication between data collectors and the INGO. This process has the added benefit of data coming directly from the field to the INGO, bypassing the middle partner organization. This system is used to collect data from warehouses, pharmacies, communities, and clinics, with a variety of data collection tools covering rapid needs assessment, WASH, nutrition, health, and logistics.

Data cleaning and organization is performed automatically, with data downloaded and stored in a series of folders daily. Folders are only accessible by the monitoring officers and senior management, with subsets stored in different folders for access by partner organizations as required.

QLIK Dashboards (a business analytics tool) are used to analyze and visualize data, depicting indicators visually and allowing for easy exploration by the user. QLIK Dashboards are dynamic so clicking any part of the dashboard filters and shifts the visual representation to enable a more in-depth look. It also incorporates GPS data and GIS to create maps on program updates.

INGO program officers and managers review the analysis before it is shared with senior management and technical advisors; relevant results are then shared with donors and partners. Manual cross-checking between different data sources is used to make sure logistics operations correspond with program delivery and results. Data is also cross-checked with partner monitoring data (photographs, videos, paper forms, etc.) to ensure ODK forms submitted match with hard copy stock and distribution records, for example.

A 2015 study by MSF demonstrated the utility of mobile technology for capturing local conditions as they evolve on the ground, and using them as an early warning related to food insecurity.⁷² Community health workers were trained in using an android mobile phone application to collect information about socioeconomic vulnerabilities related to malnutrition, access to resources, and coping capacities in the Central African Republic (CAR). This information was combined with satellite-derived information on rainfall and soil moisture conditions to confirm that the food insecurity situation in 2013-2014 was related to violent conflicts rather than climactic shock. Additionally, smart phones with GPS were found to be useful for analysis as they recorded the location of every assessment and provided a direct link to satellite-derived information. Mobile

phones were also found to be valuable in the MSF drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB) program in the DRC where they were used to connect non-TB clinicians to a TB specialist.⁹

While not specific to inaccessible areas, the RAMP mobile phone reporting system in the Central African Republic (CAR) is an excellent example of how technology can enhance reporting. Healthcare workers from health centers across the country were trained in sending routine health data through pre-designed forms from their phone; this resulted in rapid field intelligence and communication that prevented stock outs and encouraged the IFRC, MSP, and Global Fund to expand malaria services.⁷³ Other emergency technology that could be useful in remote operations include 'OpenStreetMap' and other live crisis mapping technology,⁷⁴ the Commodity Tracking System with open source data collection, GPS mapping, and coding tools used in Syria to monitor the movement of goods.^{19, 75}

Additional examples of technology that have been used to monitor supplies in remote settings include stocks tracked digitally through a barcode system^{23, 40} and GPS shipment tracking.²⁷

Additionally, remotely measuring populations has been demonstrated by Bharti et. al. who used nighttime satellite imagery and mobile phone call detail records to measure average population size and dynamic changes during the 2010-2012 Côte d'Ivoire internal political conflict.⁷⁶ They compared composited stable nighttime lights values, the density of phone towers, and the density of subscriber identity modules (SIMs), and found that they were able to obtain measurements in long and short term population dynamics by overlaying the sources. The strongest correlation between the phone and satellite data sets were found in economic regions, and not in administrative regions that contained varying degrees of wealth.

Key Lessons on Accountability

- Transparency to both donors and beneficiaries is crucial.^{20, 26}
- M&E must be incorporated into the program framework in the planning phase as it is much more difficult when it is an afterthought.^{30, 33}
- A minimum standard of clear, simple, and pre-determined indicators and procedures is required.^{16, 18, 20, 66}
- A monitoring system requires several layers of checks and filters for continuous verification.^{33, 51}
 - M&E officers/mentors can train and support field staff to improve the quality of data collection and reporting.⁵³
- Specific monitoring capacity is required that is separate from but works closely with the program; this ensures consistent monitoring and mainstreams M&E procedures across the program.^{26, 33, 77}
- A mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative) approach is required.⁵³
- Research and investment in data collection and analysis software and information and communication technologies, with the aim of adopting and streamlining it across programs, is required.^{33, 39}

- Monitoring reports must be shared with partners to validate work and justify M&E activities.⁶¹
- Accountability networks and relationships with stakeholders can be useful for monitoring and triangulation.¹⁸
- M&E must be relevant to the needs of the program and used for learning and continuous improvement.³³

Table 5 - UNICEF Remote Monitoring Modalities Summary³⁵

INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Web-based remote project monitoring	As a response to high security threat environments, organizations such as UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) have developed Project Tracking Databases, i.e. a computer system to monitor project activities in Iraq (UNHCR) and Somalia (DRC) undertaken by local partners. Rather than sending staff out to see the outputs of the program activities, local partners can take pictures that are uploaded with GPS info (UNHCR) and submit concerns via SMS, which will be sent to the program staff concerned (DRC). Evidence-based monitoring of construction, costs, and deliveries take place before, during, and after construction, and payments are tied to the photographic evidence.	– Information regarding UNICEF remote programming activities can be shared in real time with all relevant partners – Beneficiaries have a direct line of communication, with the accountable organization, and is thereby able to report any irregularities – A web-based remote monitoring system could be applied at scale and linked to corporate monitoring systems	– Setup costs of such systems are high. However, if done at an organizational level, economy of scale could justify such an investment – Such systems require a high level of technological awareness of local partners and availability of the required internet facilities in the areas of operations – The system relies heavily on input from local populations, with little quality control available to check the actual situation on the ground
Quality Assurance Teams (QAT) for remote management accountability	Establishment of QATs with solid backgrounds in relevant technical fields, e.g. auditing, programming, protection, WASH, education, etc., who have access to the operational areas to monitor program activities. QATs can also provide technical support to partners to identify critical issues related to remote programming.	– QATs can in a flexible manner bring highly skilled national staff from different sectors on a short, medium, or long basis and effectively strengthen UNICEF's and partners' monitoring capacity	– Assurance teams can face similar access restriction as UNICEF staff – Contracting of specialized technical experts can have a significant negative cost implication on the UNICEF program delivery
Third party monitoring	Third party monitoring can provide UNICEF with an independent and honest account of progress on program activities, as the contractors are detached from the project implementation. UNICEF, WFP, and UNHCR have been using third party monitoring in a number of contexts, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia.	– Provides UNICEF with an independent and critical assessment of the quality of implemented program activities – Is a critical data source, which also can be used to assess beneficiary needs in the operational areas (if combined with other types of data sources)	– If used alone it is neither effective nor efficient – High cost implications for utilizing third party monitoring due to reliance on scarce and expensive consultants – Monitoring typically takes place after the activities have taken place, leaving little or no management influence to correct malpractices – Due to the difficulty related to contractual oversight by UNICEF, there is a moral hazard risk involved in third party monitoring
Monitoring by beneficiaries local community groups/ local government officials	UNICEF can contract a number of local community groups, beneficiaries, or government officials to monitor program activities in real time, or once the activity has taken place.	– Provides UNICEF with an evidence base of beneficiary perspectives in relation to program activities – Provides UNICEF with local knowledge of the situation on the	– Local population can be co-opted by parties of the conflict and hence not provide objective monitoring – By involving beneficiaries/local community groups in monitoring, UNICEF can

		ground – Generates a local ownership and accountability of the program activities	expose them to unwanted risks, e.g. seen as closely affiliated with UNICEF – Requires that UNICEF dedicates time and resources to national capacity development – Lack of formal technical monitoring expertise
Triangulated monitoring	In areas where access is impossible for its national and international staff alike, UNICEF and international and national NGOs have used a combination of vendors, local government officials, and community members for program quality and accountability assurance, wherein all parties have to sign off on each project activity.	– UNICEF is able to utilize key strengths of monitoring instruments to verify program activities – Provides information on program implementation from different levels of the operational environment	– The setup requires proper oversight mechanisms to be in place within UNICEF to guide such a complex monitoring instrument – Requires contracting of multiple parties, which can have significant cost implications on the program budget – Exposes UNICEF to a wider range of program management risks

3.4.8 The ‘Remote Operations Trap’

The ‘remote operations trap’ⁱ refers to the inability to transition back to a traditional management mode after a program has been implemented remotely for some time.^{4, 78} This is caused by a number of factors and effects including: reduced ground-level information, less credibility of the agency, and increased risk for local partners. One NGO reported that after a year of programming remotely in Somalia, national staff became identified as decision makers and resource handlers and threats against them increased;³ this made it more difficult for them to reengage later by traditional means. Additional contributors to the resistance to returning to regular operating mechanisms are: the potentially outdated perception of dangerous areas and risk secondary to a loss of familiarity with the operating environment, a protection-oriented security culture, security costs allocating resources away from more comprehensive programming, and bureaucratic inertia.^{4, 15} The best way to avoid the remote management trap is continuous reassessment and a pre-planned exit strategy.

Key Lessons on Remote Management Traps

- Reduced insight into the situation on the ground can lead to programs getting stuck in remote mode.
- An exit strategy is necessary to ensure programs are not managed remotely for longer than is necessary.

3.4.9 Planning and Guidance

The need for comprehensive planning and guidance was a recurring theme throughout this review. This need pertained to proactive guidance on when to shift to remote operations, how to operate remotely, and strategies to exit remote operations. Not considering a remote strategy in the initial planning phase of a program in Libya led to a four month long standstill of project activities during the shift.¹⁵

Most agencies lack criteria to assess risk and guide the decision to shift to remote operations, and the guidelines that do exist often fail to fully consider the unique threats and circumstance national partners face.¹¹ Few agencies have plans for potential partnerships and outsourcing, appropriate situation-specific risk transfer practices or frameworks to support decision making.³⁴ Programs require contingency plans built into the programming guide, using formal checklists that dictate when and how to shift to remote mode.^{14, 16, 25, 56} These checklists should consider the security risk assessment, the political and conflict context, stakeholder interests analysis, non-security risk mapping, cost analysis, and exit strategies.³⁵ Additionally, these plans should account for the required program simplification by including details on which activities are critical versus those that can be put on hold.¹⁸ Guidance on partner selection should be included in the planning and preparedness process, identifying potential partners that would be appropriate in the event of withdrawal.¹¹

ⁱ While this was originally referred to as the ‘remote management trap’ in the literature, it has been changed to ‘remote operations trap’ to maintain consistency with the terminology used throughout this report.

Flexibility needs to be incorporated into the overall strategy, as it has been shown to foster success.^{14, 79} It is up to donors to provide flexible funding that is able to adapt to changes in implementation secondary to insecurity.⁵² Criteria for funding remotely managed programs have also been developed,⁷⁸ but need to be more widely adopted. UNHCR Somalia identified a situation where a lack of flexibility resulted in a lost opportunity when IDPs requested assistance with voluntary return, the funding was not immediately available and took six months to authorize, ultimately preventing the assistance of these individuals.²⁶

Additional important components to include in planning and guidance include:

- Costs of remote management and administration,^{24, 67}
- An effective cluster approach,²⁴
- Team structure,³³
- Training of national staff,¹⁵
- An assessment of key operational gaps that may occur,¹⁵
- Indicators to guide gradual expansion,¹⁷
- Prepositioning of emergency supplies,⁵²
- Precise communication instructions (including methods and frequency),¹³ and
- Remote monitoring.²⁵

Studies in Afghanistan and Pakistan found that while remote mode is often considered a temporary measure, few organizations have thought through criteria that would guide a return to traditional programming or an exit strategy.^{4, 14} The incorporation of an exit strategy into overall program strategy could facilitate the release of organizations from the 'remote operations trap'.⁴ Continuous reassessment of the situation on the ground is required to facilitate the timely implementation of exit strategies and minimize international staff time away from the field.³⁵

3.4.9.1 Adapting Protocols to Context

Ensuring strategic guidance is appropriate for the context is crucial in rapidly changing conflict settings. While the creation of specific remote operation guidance is ideal, modifying previous guidance to adapt to the new setting is also an option. The CLTS program in Somalia reported that adapted, context-specific protocols were essential in guiding effective program roll out in their fragile context. In addition to modifying their protocols, they used a decentralized approach to enable implementation in a weak central government context.⁴¹

Global Fund-supported malaria treatment and prevention programs in Afghanistan have found that culturally specific adaptations, such as amendments of educational materials for rural populations, religious awareness for gender groupings for health and educational interventions, and amendments to program branding resulted in improved uptake of bed nets and improved access in insecure regions.⁷

A 2006 MSF DR-TB program in the DRC found that they were able to successfully treat 3 patients diagnosed with DR-TB using a simplified monitoring protocol, despite the providers being non-TB clinicians.⁹ Standardized forms were used to maintain an

overview of treatment despite frequent changes in staff; these simplified forms were found to be useful despite their susceptibility to transcription error.

Key Lessons on Planning and Guidance

- Comprehensive planning is required, including integrating contingency plans and remote operations exit strategies into initial program plans.
- Guidance on how to operate effectively and make strategic decisions based on up-to-date situational analysis is required through all phases (initiation, continuation, and withdrawal) of remote operations.
- Adapting previous program guidance and protocols to inaccessible settings should be considered when specific remote operations guidance is unavailable.

4. LIMITATIONS

This review of grey and peer-reviewed literature on humanitarian programming and monitoring in inaccessible conflict settings highlighted many themes and issues spanning through multiple domains: humanitarian principles, partnerships, risks, advocacy, accountability, the 'remote operations trap', and planning and guidance. While thorough in its analysis of content, one of the main limitations found throughout this review was that the literature focused on INGO/IO perspectives, with little information on the experiences of other players including national and local staff, religious and community-based organizations, and communities themselves. The literature was also focused on service delivery, with little discussion of the needs of the population or incorporation of a human rights framework. There is also limited discussion on ethical issues other than risk transfer, such as confidential beneficiary data management, appropriate engagement strategies in high-risk environments, and the dissemination of monitoring data.³² More documentation is required to ensure all perspectives are considered.

An additional limitation was the general lack of discussion on the costs of remote operations; specifically, what is sacrificed and lost when one is forced to program or monitor remotely. Only one peer-reviewed study reported on these drawbacks, citing limited coordination capacity resulting from reduced contact with local implementers,⁴⁶ and while it was mentioned in the grey literature, the responses were based more on observation than rigorous analysis. Further examination of the potential losses in program quality and fidelity are necessary to obtain a complete picture that can then be fully addressed; this cost-benefit analysis is an important avenue for future research in this field.

The majority of documents pertaining to this subject were neither published nor peer-reviewed; even within the peer-reviewed literature over one third of the studies were case studies, a study type considered to be the lowest on the hierarchy of evidence.⁸⁰ This limitation was exacerbated by the lack of detail throughout the literature, often attributed to organizations not wanting to discuss specific methods for fear of contributing to increased security risk; resultantly, the case studies in this review were presented with all the details available but still lack much-desired information. Despite

this major drawback in evidence quality, it is important to acknowledge that emergency conflict settings, especially those that are inaccessible, are not conducive to data collection generally, with randomized controlled trials being especially difficult. This is true for a number of reasons including security concerns, ethical considerations, limited resources, and the urgency with which humanitarian aid needs to be delivered. Nevertheless, this cannot be used to excuse the humanitarian community from committing to evidence-based practice. Rigorous data collection and reporting, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, needs to become commonplace in humanitarian emergencies; it is required to share lessons learned, create best practice guidelines, and root humanitarian action firmly in evidence.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Contributions to the Understanding of this Field

The descriptive nature of the literature and the focus on defining concepts highlights that this field is in a relatively nascent stage. This review provides conceptual background and definitions that will aid in future discussions of remote operations using a common understanding and language. The information in this review provides a foundation of examples of and lessons learned from experiences with remote operations in conflict-affected areas. The collection of tools that have been developed for remote programming and monitoring should also be helpful to other stakeholders as they work to develop their own tools.

5.2 Gaps in the Literature

The literature demonstrates that although many organizations are participating in remote programming or monitoring, few have documented their experiences so that lessons learned can be disseminated to other organizations or stakeholders. Of the documentation that exists, case studies were the predominant form of literature available; the lack of rigorous operational research measuring robust outcomes limits the ability to draw strong conclusions on the effectiveness of different approaches. Furthermore, there is a lack of detail in the literature on how interventions were implemented, which makes it difficult to replicate these efforts and to evaluate which strategies were effective.

In addition to the lack of rigorous research and evaluation of remote operations, there is a lack of guidelines or recommendations on best practices. Although some tools exist and are shared in this review, there do not seem to be any harmonized tools that reflect the variety of experiences or that have been vetted by the different agencies working in the field.

Finally, the literature overwhelmingly represents the point of view of international agencies; the experiences of local partners who are carrying out much of the work in extremely insecure contexts are not represented. Additionally, there is no information representing the perspective of the communities that remote operations are intended to help.

5.3 Priority Areas for Future Research

As the evidence base for remote programming and monitoring is extremely limited, further research is needed on all aspects of this field of work. Specifically, we have identified the following priority research questions:

- What are the best practices that should be adopted by agencies carrying out remote operations?

- How effective are various guidelines and tools when implemented in different contexts?
- What are feasible and effective methods of monitoring and evaluating remote programs?
- What are effective communication and accountability mechanisms to ensure adherence to implementation guidelines by remote teams?
- What are the key criteria for vetting local partners or local staff to help ensure adherence to humanitarian standards?
- What are the critical needs and challenges identified by local partners implementing programs in conflict settings? What support is needed from their remote partner?
- What is the assessment of remote interventions from the point of view of the affected populations?

5.4 Next steps

There is an urgent need for guidelines and tools to assist agencies in applying best practices in remote programming and monitoring. Once these guidelines and tools are available they must be piloted and validated in inaccessible conflict settings. To develop these guidelines and tools, we suggest the following actions:

First, we propose to follow this literature review with further in-depth documentation of experiences and lessons learned. This can be done through a combination of field visits; detailed case studies of remote operations; qualitative research with various stakeholders, including international and national program staff and members of affected communities; and collection of available quantitative program data. Following this collection of data, a comprehensive review of the evidence should be done by an expert review panel. The conclusions and recommendations of the expert panel will then be used to develop an initial set of guidelines and tools to be tested and validated.

Finally, international and national partners must be encouraged to document their work and consider incorporating areas of operational research from the onset of remote programming and monitoring activities, in order to improve knowledge of best practices and create practical tools and guidelines that can be used to improve humanitarian aid delivery in inaccessible conflict settings.

Annex 1 - Summary of peer-reviewed articles

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
CDC, 2008 ⁶²	WHO	Progress Toward Poliomyelitis Eradication – Pakistan and Afghanistan, 2007	Afghanistan and Pakistan, ongoing conflict	Large-scale house-to-house Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs) with Oral Polio Vaccine - 4x national immunization days - 7x subnational immunization days	Interrupt transmission of WPV in Pakistan and Afghanistan	Descriptive case study	- Post-SIA coverage below district average of 95% in 20% of sub-districts in Pakistan. - Suboptimal coverage in insecure and remote areas along the border in both countries - Up to 20% of children still missed in areas of southwest Afghanistan. - In 2007, Afghanistan and Pakistan reported 17 and 32 cases of confirmed polio, respectively	- Extensive cross border movement necessitating SIA synchronization - Indirect contact made with anti-government groups in an attempt to cease hostilities during SIAs, their support increased areas accessible to vaccinators during Sept – Dec 2007 - Support from tribal and religious leaders, and local communities necessary for reaching children in insecure areas	N/A
Balfour, 2015 ⁴¹	UNICEF Somalia	CLTS in fragile and insecure contexts	Somalia, ongoing conflict	Community Led Total Sanitation	Improve sanitation access in rural areas and small towns and describe adaptations necessary to adjust to insecure setting	Descriptive case study	- Initially ineffective; gaps and barriers to CLTS approach identified during training of implementers in 2014 - Began training program for NGO partners in 2015 (emphasis on NGOs that stay in communities for years, rather than leaving once construction is finished) - Decentralized approach allowed implementation in presence of weak central government.	- Implemented by local NGOs because of their access to communities even in the conflict-affected areas - The development of adapted, context-specific protocols to guide CLTS programming is essential for effective rollout in fragile contexts. - Involvement of key traditional and religious leaders found to be critical during triggering and implementation	N/A

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
Bharti, 2015 ⁷⁶	Part of the Human Mobility Mapping Project	Remotely measuring populations during a crisis by overlaying two data sources	Côte d'Ivoire, internal political conflict 2010-2012	Nighttime lights satellite imagery and mobile phone call detail records (CDRs) - Compared composited stable nighttime lights values from 2012 and 2010, the density of phone towers present, and the density of SIMs - Assessed average population size and dynamic changes across spatial and temporal scales	Rapid, large-scale measures of displaced populations and movement	Retrospective analysis	- Agreement in average measures of population sizes - Able to obtain measurements in long and short term population dynamics by using 2 sources	CDRs did not provide long-term data on population movements, a pre-conflict baseline or movement across national boundaries. - Satellite images did not provide high-resolution mobility traces and were sensitive to environmental factors. - Used these two complementary data sets to overcome the limitations of each; strongest correlation in economic regions (not administrative regions with varying wealth)	Low
Chu, 2011 ⁴²	MSF	Providing surgical care in Somalia: A model of task shifting	Somalia, ongoing conflict	Task Shifting - Expat presence ended Jan 2008 due to increased insecurity - Surgical program since run remotely by coordination team in Nairobi; visit site 2x/year to ensure standards being met - Services provided by 1 Somali doc with surgical skills (trained under expat surgeon for 2 years), 1 surgical nurse, and 1 anesthetic nurse - Surgical consult available by email	Continue provision of surgical care by local doctors and nurses following evacuation of expatriate staff	Before and after study	- 2086 operations were performed between Oct 2006 and December 2009. - After Jan 2008 all procedures (1433) were performed by non-surgeons (doctor with surgical skills and surgical nurse) - Peri-operative mortality was lower when procedures were performed by non-surgeons (0.2%, 2 cases) between 2008-2009, versus 2006-2007 when surgeons were present (1.7%, 6 cases, $P < 0.001$)	- Low rates of spinal anesthesia due to lack of training of anesthetic nurse (most general anesthesia); extra training for Somali staff required - Videoconferencing would be beneficial	Moderate
Enenkel, 2015 ⁷²	- MSF - Vienna University of Technology	Food Security Monitoring via Mobile	CAR, violent conflict	Mobile data collection and remote sensing - SATIDA COLLECT: android	Collect information about socio-economic	Cross-sectional survey	- May 2015: households consumed 0.9 meals per day; average	- Recording the location of every assessment via the smart phones' GPS	Low

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
	(TUV) - International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)	Data Collection and Remote Sensing: Results from the Central African Republic (CAR)		application that facilitates rapid and simple data collection. - Local CHWs working with MSF used mobile data collection application on smart phones to conduct nutrition assessments and interviews in the local language - Inputs from satellite derived drought indicators	vulnerabilities related to malnutrition, access to resources and coping capacities using smart phones; to capture local conditions as situations evolve on the ground (early warning related to food insecurity)		household size was more than nine people; despite this, children between 6 and 59 months were not malnourished - Satellite-derived information about rainfall/soil moisture conditions and the Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index confirmed that the food insecurity situation in 2013/2014 was related to violent conflicts rather than to a climatic shock	receiver enabled analysis and display of coupling between drought risk and impacts over many years (direct link to satellite derived info) - Complementary use of information from satellites and SATIDA COLLECT can support the translation of early warnings into action, reducing the risk of false alarms and strengthening overall disaster preparedness	
Kevany, 2014 ⁷	- The Global Fund - Afghanistan Ministry of Health - National Malaria and Leishmaniasis Control Programme (NMLCP)	Global Health Diplomacy Investments in Afghanistan: Adaptations and Outcomes of Global Fund Malaria Programs	Afghanistan, ongoing conflict	Adaptation of Global Fund-supported malaria treatment and prevention programs: 1- amendment of educational materials for rural populations 2- religious awareness in gender groupings for health educational interventions 3- recruitment of local staff, educated in languages and customs, for both quality assurance and service delivery 4- alignment with diplomatic principles and avoidance of confusion with broader strategic and military initiatives 5- amendments to program 'branding' procedures	- Ensure security of staff - Improve local acceptability, coverage, and service utilization	Qualitative study and retrospective program evaluation	- Service utilization improvements, improved access of service delivery in insecure regions - Temporal association noted between intervention and improved uptake of nets - Intervention implementation and safe passage for program staff were facilitated by negotiations with community elders in insecure regions - Prestige and acceptability of international donor activities were observed to improve as a result of the adaptations process	- Successful adaptation of global health interventions to insecure regions may help to build up an international presence in otherwise-inaccessible provinces of Afghanistan, which would, in turn, be impossible without appropriate adjustments to program design, selection and delivery - Must maintain clear and explicit distinctions between development, military and political agendas	Moderate

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
Lee, 2006 ⁴³	Backpack Health Worker Team (BPHWT)	Mortality rates in conflict zones in Karen, Karenni, and Mon states in eastern Burma	Burma (Myanmar), ongoing conflict	- Cluster surveys conducted by indigenous mobile health workers - Interviewed heads of households over 3 month time periods in 2002 and 2003; randomly selected within clusters via systematic sampling	Estimate mortality rates in conflict-affected areas in eastern Burma inaccessible to international organizations	Cross-sectional mortality survey	Completed surveys from 1290 (64.5%) households in 2002 and 1609 (80.5%) households in 2003. - Estimates of vital statistics for 2002 and 2003 respectively: infant mortality rate: 135 (95% CI: 96–181) and 122 (95% CI: 70–175) per 1000 live births; under-five mortality rate: 291 (95% CI: 238–348) and 276 (95% CI: 190–361) per 1000 live births; crude mortality rate: 25 (95% CI: 21–29) and 21 (95% CI: 15–27) per 1000 persons per year	- No other governmental or international organizations working with this population from within Burma. - Use of indigenous mobile health workers provides one means of measuring health status among populations that would normally be inaccessible due to ongoing conflict; advantages: high level of familiarity with local communities, are highly trusted by the villagers, and visit all communities in the course of their normal work - Low response likely underestimated mortality	Moderate
Mahn, 2008 ⁴⁴	- Back Pack Health Worker Team (BPHWT) - Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) - Local ethnic organizations - Regional and international partners	Multi-level partnerships to promote health services among internally displaced in eastern Burma	Burma (Myanmar), civil conflict and government restrictions	Cross-border local-global partnerships - BPHWT indigenous health workers travel to villages to provide general medical, maternal, and child health care; provide education workshops - BPHTW partners with KDHW, village leaders and village health volunteers, Burma Medical Association, the National Health and Education Committee, the Mae Tao Clinic, the Center for Public Health and	Provide critical health services to IDPs in eastern Burma	Descriptive case study	In 2005: - HWs had 95% diagnosis accuracy and 85% treatment accuracy for common illnesses - Treated nearly 78,000 cases throughout their IDP service areas - Administered nearly 43,000 doses of Vitamin A, as well as deworming treatments, to children and postpartum women - The local-global partnership was able	Key factors contributing to their success: - Local access - Multi-ethnic collaboration - Coordination (of who delivers what services, supply procurement and delivery, etc.) - Standard data collection; information used for advocacy	N/A

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
				Human Rights at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health - International NGOs provide technical support for the local medical and public health programs - Twice annually, BPHWT team leaders cross from Burma into Thailand to program's administrative headquarters, to resupply, receive training, and compile collected health information			to provide care to IDPs inaccessible to traditional international humanitarian models		
Martinez Garcia, 2014 ³⁸	MSF	A retrospective analysis of pediatric cases handled by the MSF tele-expertise system	28 countries, conflict or unstable locations	Telemedicine - 3 telemedicine networks combined into single multilingual system, telemed.msf.org - Case-coordinator receives referral and allocates to specialist; individual case follow-up (progress report) automatically requested from referrers since Oct 2013	Provide specialized pediatric medical consultations in remote areas	Retrospective program analysis - Pediatric cases referred to MSF telemedicine platform from April 2010 to March 2014 inclusive - 467 cases total, 48 then randomly selected	- Mean rating for the quality of information provided by the referrer was 2.8 (on a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good)); mean rating for appropriateness of the response was 3.3 (same scale) - 2/3 of responses were useful to the patient, 3/4 responses were useful to the medical team		Moderate
Mattli, 2008 ⁴⁶	ICRC	A neutral, impartial and independent approach: key to ICRC's acceptance in Iraq	Iraq, ongoing conflict	- Reinforced assistance programs through remote-control mechanisms: work with trusted implementing partners, periodic short visits by ICRC expatriate staff - Moved staff to Amman, Jordan and	- Implement programs of increasing scope and size and build acceptance through networking and communication	Descriptive case study	- 2.7 million people directly benefited from ICRC W&S activities in 2007 - In 2007, 54 water and sanitation projects were carried out under direct ICRC supervision and 78 projects under remote control	Keys to the success of the remote-control model: - Highly experienced, motivated and committed ICRC Iraqi employees; - Strong collaboration with and ownership by the relevant local authorities;	N/A

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
				kept only a core staff in Iraq due to security risk - Remote-control for WASH: mobilization of network of local contractors and consultants working with ICRC engineers - New operational framework in 2006: • Minimized movements to reduce staff exposure • Increased networking to promote acceptance	on with low-visibility presence - Increase level of competence and responsibility of ICRC local staff			- An extensive network of local contractors/consultants throughout the country; - Strong control mechanisms, whereby separate entities are involved in needs assessment and project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - Downside: limited contacts limited capacity for coordination	
Richard, 2009 ⁴⁵	- Karen Department of Health and Welfare (KDHW) - Back Pack Health Worker Team (BPHWT)	Essential trauma management training: addressing service delivery needs in active conflict zones in eastern Myanmar	Myanmar, civil conflict	Trauma management program - 4-6 day trauma course for health workers - Part of CBO-run health system providing care for approximately 250,000 IDPs and war-affected residents	Improve the capacity of indigenous health workers to deliver effective trauma care	Retrospective analysis of program	- Since 2000, around 300 health workers have received Training - Between June 2005 and June 2007, more than 200 patients recorded in the trauma patient registry; majority were victims of weapons-related trauma. - Trauma victims treated by health workers survived in 91% of cases		Moderate
Shanks, 2012 ⁹	MSF	Treatment of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in a remote, conflict-affected area of the Democratic Republic of	DRC, ongoing conflict	- Remote support of non-TB clinicians by TB specialist via mobile phone - Use of simplified monitoring protocols - Addressed stigma to support adherence	Provide remote support from TB specialist to non-TB clinicians in remote settings using simplified	Case series	- Able to successfully treat patients with simplified protocol - All 3 DR-TB patients completed treatment	- Standardized forms helpful in maintaining overview of treatment despite multiple staff changing; however, susceptible to transcription error - Communication between treating staff and headquarters was	Moderate

Author	Organization	Title	Location and Type of Crisis	Intervention	Goal of Intervention	Study Design	Results	Additional Details	Quality
		Congo			monitoring protocol			a challenge	
Tong, 2011 ⁴⁷	MSF	Challenges of controlling sleeping sickness in areas of violent conflict: experience in the Democratic Republic of Congo	DRC, violent conflict	HAT detection and treatment campaign	Targeted medical interventions to address operational and medical challenges of managing HAT in conflict areas	Descriptive case study	- 2007: 46,000 screened and 1,570 treated for HAT - 2009: 2 centers forced to closed due to insecurity; reopened early 2010 - Complexity of HAT diagnosis and treatment prevented any emergency handover to local partners; operations suspended - 2010: 770 patients treated	- Active screening and follow up compromised in conflict - Community awareness and acceptance necessary for health program - Displacement potentially creates new foci of transmission in previously cleared areas - Insufficient international support and funding	N/A
Zachariah, 2012 ³⁷	MSF	Practicing medicine without borders: tele-consultations and tele-mentoring for improving paediatric care in a conflict setting in Somalia?	Somalia, ongoing conflict	Tele-consultations and tele-monitoring - To support Somali clinicians when expatriate staff were no longer able to be physically on site at district hospital due to security risk - Specific risk criteria requiring mandatory referral defined - Consultations with specialist in Nairobi scheduled every afternoon; specialist spoke Somali language - 'Tele-mentoring' (education) also provided by specialist	Improve quality of pediatric care in remote conflict setting	Retrospective analysis of program data with historical control (2010 data prior to implementation of telemedicine)	- Of 3920 pediatric admissions, 346 (9%) were referred for telemedicine. - In 222 (64%) children, a significant change was made to initial case management - In 88 (25%), a life-threatening condition was detected that had been initially missed - Adverse outcomes fell from 7.6% in 2010 (without telemedicine) to 5.4% in 2011 (with telemedicine); 30% reduction, odds ratio 0.70, 95% CI: 0.57–0.88, P = 0.001 - All 7 clinicians involved rated it to be of high value	- Prior to introduction, meetings held with community elders to raise awareness and understanding of new technology; led to acceptance of technology in community with cultural beliefs that negate the use of cameras - Reasons clinicians found it to be of high value: helped to improve recognition of risk signs (7/7), improved management protocols and prescription practices (6/7), built a relationship of solidarity through direct contact with distant specialist colleagues (5/7)	High

Annex 2 - Summary of grey literature articles

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
Schreter & Harmer 2013 ⁵⁹	Humanitarian Outcomes	Delivering aid in highly insecure environments: A critical review of the literature 2001 - 2012	n/a	n/a	Literature Review	Literature highlights a range of good practices in remote management, including: - Establishing highly localized, and static, staffing which may involve an increase rather than a decrease of national staff because reduced mobility results in the need for more staff in more places - The use of diaspora nationals as international staff - 'Soft' remote management which involves senior international staff having a regular, but not full-time, presence - Methods to enhance accountability and mitigate quality deficits for remote programming, such as web-based monitoring and project verification through third-party triangulation Literature suggests that good practice in preparedness and planning involves decentralizing organizational authority. This can bring benefits for improved internal monitoring, beneficiary accountability and acceptance, thereby increasing staff security. Literature falls short in documenting and providing guidance on implementing program by remote management, particularly to ensure greater preparedness and planning: patchy literature, need for guidance on good practice; lack of evaluations, especially in WASH and protection; limited sharing of knowledge on targeting.
Stoddard, Harmer, Haver 2006 ¹¹	Center on International Cooperation	Providing aid in insecure environments: trends in policy and operations	n/a	n/a	Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) Report Qualitative study	- Remote management = devolution of responsibility to local actors - Other factors that can limit access to those in need, which are not necessarily related to or driven by security conditions: 1- Poor infrastructure requiring expensive airlift capacity 2- Political and military controls on the movements of aid workers 3- Weak international support 4- Shift from refugee to internal displacement situations → complex aid efforts that require political negotiations with host state to secure access Motivators to consider remote management: 1- Insecurity; if temporary may close program and resume thereafter 2- Size of program: less likely to hand over large program; need to maintain presence for solidarity/visibility encourages remote management 3- Sector and feasibility of what you're trying to do (if goods will be secure, if subcontractor has the capacity to move them etc.) 4- Level of vulnerability and need 5- Context: range of local partners, quality of national staff, capacity to operate in a region - 'Soft services' more easily undertaken by local entities (psychosocial) than infrastructure or food aid - Benefits: avoids complete closure, allows funding to continue to flow, security environment can be better upon re-entry because local knowledge has not been completely lost, opportunity for closer community involvement

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
						- Challenges: establish trust with local staff; cultural and linguistic differences need to be acknowledged in training and support → mobile/email helps, need to prevent overreliance on tech given it tends to function intermittently; difficulty maintaining strategic direction due to inability to conduct needs assessments or measure impact - Challenge: tendency to maintain status quo instead of responding to acute issues; due to info deficit, movement and access restrictions, low-profile security approach, cautious remote managers, coordination challenges - Challenges: accountability, advocacy strategies, staffing capacity - Most agencies do not have set criteria to assess risk or to guide the decision to shift to remote management; most guidelines and practice do not fully take into account the unique threats, incentives and circumstances faced by national staff - International agencies need to increase efforts to ensure security of all levels of staff equally, assessing each level's unique risks and having transparent policies that accommodate them
Stoddard, Harmer, Didomenico 2009 ³		Providing aid in insecure environments: 2009 Update. Trends in violence against aid workers and the operational response	n/a	n/a	HPG Policy brief Qualitative study	- Kidnapping of aid workers has increased by over 350% in the past three years; - Remote management effects that make it difficult to shift back to regular programming: reduced ground-level information, less credibility and trust in the agency, increased risks for local implementing actors - Given unique tasks and relationships with the communities, national staff require specific security measures that are proportionate to, but not the same as, those provided to international staff. - Security incidents not documented as systematically for nationals, partly because the risk to the organization varies (different insurance policies and liability). - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) developed tracking system to monitor and report access constraints; being piloted in six insecure contexts.
Collinson & Duffield 2013 ³⁴	Paradoxes of presence. Risk management and aid culture in challenging environments.	Humanitarian Policy Group Global Insecurities Centre	n/a	n/a	Commissioned report	- Lack of common framework to support decision making - Local staff's ability to assess risk can be influenced by financial or other competing priorities and incentives that encourage risk-taking; distinct threats rarely acknowledged and have less access to security measures, information, and support - Pervasive levels of distrust: distrust between people within agencies, between agencies, between agencies and their alleged "beneficiaries"; due to distance, differences in pay, lack of local presence or contact with local people
Rivas 2015 ³²	- Integrity research and consulting - Axiom M&E - UK AID	No Longer a Last Resort: A Review of the Remote Programming Landscape	Somalia, Kenya	n/a	Literature review (Part of a DFID evaluation)	- Remote programming is no longer temporary or a last resort, becoming long term - Literature focuses on international organizations: little information on the experiences of other bodies, including national, local, and non-Western organizations and staff - Talk of risk transfer but not other ethical problems, such as: the transfer of beneficiary data to third parties, appropriate engagement strategies in high-risk environments, and how monitoring information is used. - Most common risks: inadequate information management/credibility/quality, corruption, inciting conflict, causalities and fatalities, insufficient impact, poor monitoring, informal taxation, security challenges, and fund diversion - Most common monitoring methods: third party monitoring, beneficiary feedback

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
						forums, evaluations and independent analysis, and community meetings - Donor accountability expectations are often unrealistic in these contexts; donor flexibility and realism required - Best practices include: remote management planning; on the ground networks to enable accountability; third party M&E; capacity building focusing on tech support, problem solving, and management skills - Planned site-visits from remote management promote local capacity and autonomy, coordination, information-sharing, and trust
Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) 2016 ²⁹		Briefing Note, April 2016	Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria	3 year research program exploring effective response delivery amid high insecurity	Briefing note Mix-methods study (850 interviews with aid actors, 4000 surveys of affected people)	- Aid agencies tend to cluster in safer areas; presence can be deceptively shallow - Local beneficiaries reported that aid received was often not what was most needed - Concessions included: Paying for access and granting concessions are commonplace, yet generally taboo as subjects of discussion. Practices include paying money at checkpoints and ; paying unofficial taxes, ; altering targeting criteria,; employing local militia,; and avoiding some areas so as not to that would antagonize a local authority, armed actor or dominant community; zero tolerance on corruption policies are unrealistic in war zones - Many humanitarian actors are uncertain about whether or how to engage with non-state armed actors; local staff need specific skills in negotiation, context, and networking
Steets 2012 ⁵⁶	Global Public Policy Institute (GPPI)	Evaluation and review of humanitarian access strategies in DG ECHO funded interventions	n/a	n/a	Literature review and Qualitative study (388 interviews)	- 3 methods to tackle access constraints: persuade controllers to allow more access, mitigate and manage security risks to continue assistance, remote management - there is widespread agreement among humanitarians that the task of negotiating humanitarian access with non-state armed groups should be left to implementing organizations. - DG ECHO should consider seven Key issues: risk transfer to field staff/partners/beneficiaries, need for plans on program acceptance building, need to specific level of experience and technical capacity of field staff, when taking these decisions and ensure that its partners address these issues in proposals and remote policies. First, organizations must avoid undue risk transfer to field staff, partners and beneficiaries. Second, partners proposing remote approaches should describe how they intend to build acceptance – both as a security measure and to eventually regain access. Third, they need to specify the level of experience and technical capacity of responsible field staff. Fourth, where projects are implemented in volatile areas with fragile access, organizations should have contingency plans for how to switch to remote mode when access deteriorates. Need contingency plans to trigger switch to remote programming. Fifth, monitoring procedures have to be adapted to the challenges of remote management monitoring methods require adaptation to remote settings, preference should be given. Sixth, DG ECHO should give precedence to organizations that have located senior staff as close as security conditions permit to the proposed area of intervention. Finally, DG ECHO should give precedence to organizations that seek to deliver outputs directly or limit the chain of sub-contractors and sub-contractors for implementing projects for implementation - DG ECHO needs to improve its ability to monitor projects directly. It should recruit senior staff who can more easily “blend in” with the respective local environment and who are less encumbered to travel by administrative restrictions. - These approaches entail risks that need to be carefully reviewed in each case by DG ECHO and partners. Risk review required; Remotely managed operations can

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
						bring about a loss of control and oversight. Further, remote approaches potentially lead to a transfer of risk to national staff and recipients - Switch to remote mode can reduce project complexity and quality; should thus be a last resort
Stoddard , Harmer, Renouf 2010 ⁴	Humanitarian Outcomes	Lessons and challenges in remote management of humanitarian operations for insecure areas	Afghanistan case study with+ comparisons to Iraq, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Sudan	n/a	Report for Center of International Cooperation Mixed methods study (58 interviews field visit to Afghanistan and desk review)	- The most successful examples of remote management found involved coordination structures rooted in the local context, with potential for building sustainable local capacity in humanitarian action - NCCI (NGO coordinating committee in Iraq) Field focal point network: 24 LNGOs across country, share security/political info, receive training on how to collect/disseminate info, advocacy, rights/law; share info and experiences with other LNGOs; civil society empowerment - Shura system developed with heads of program and all national staff members: each member coordinated council for 1 month in absence of expatriate, permanent coordinator eventually agreed on; shura members involved in all important decisions; downside: slow to develop, slow decision making - Potential pitfalls: remote management trap, risk transfer to nationals with few resources and training; reduced program quality and effectiveness; reduced efficacy and accountability; impartiality of local actors - Need better/more differentiated risk assessment for national staff, capacity building on implementation and security, and coordination structures rooted in local context - Reasons for shift to remote mode: security, political, solidarity, visibility, develop capacity of local actors, donor support, sustainability - Factors that govern shift: range of local partner organizations, quality of national staff, and their freedom and capacity to operate in a given country or region - Despite largely considered temporary, few organizations have exit strategy or criteria to guide shift back from remote management - Remote management trap shaped by: potentially outdated perception of no-go areas, cost pressures, need to follow protective stance of other organizations as to not become a target, bureaucratic inertia - Risk issues: transferred to national staff, may change after internationals leave and difficult to assess remotely - Management and communication in remote operations are helped by face-to-face interactions; important for trust backgrounds criteria and selection process. - Methods to mitigate quality deficits: clear procedures and instructions for monitoring and reporting; maintain regular communication between field staff and external managers; bring implementers to remote area regularly for discussion and planning; spot checks; crosscheck information with other field contacts; third party monitoring; and ensure beneficiaries know what they should be receiving - Guidelines for improving RM: plan for it, adopt a long-term view, develop practical and policy guidance, avoid risk transfer, invest in relationships with local staff/partners and community authorities prior to shift, coordinate policy development, and share lessons learned among agencies and donors
Herbert 2013 ⁷⁹	GSDRC	Remote management of projects in fragile states	n/a	n/a	Helpdesk research report	- Key factors that can foster success in remote management projects include: acceptance of activities by local communities; effective staff recruitment, training and retention; flexibility in programming and budgeting; proximity to beneficiaries; visibility; mobility; and effective preparation for fast changing environments

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
UNICEF EMOPS 2011 ²⁴	UNICEF	Unicef and Remote Programmin g: Afghanistan case study	Afghanista n	n/a	EMOPS guidance on remote programming background papers Case study	- Relied on military partners to access southern provinces; impartiality issue - Selection of credible and competent partners was critical; local accounting party hired to assess all potential and current partners (skills and finances) - Kandahar risk: had to transfer funds to the government to manage long term capacity strengthening initiatives given limited partners with required capacity; government known to be corrupt yet were unable to monitor government activities - Used remote monitoring capacity of WFP; joint monitoring reduced costs - Need to consider effective cluster approach in remote programming - Communication and advocacy efforts should be strengthened when moving to remote programming; critical to pro-actively re-enforce community ownership and acceptance of the program - Need for constructive dialogue with donors to establish realistic benchmarks for remote context
UNICEF EMOPS 2011 ²⁸	UNICEF	UNICEF and Remote Programmin g: Iraq case study	Iraq	- Gradual shift to remote mode triggered by 2003 Canal Hotel bombing; relocated to Amman - Remote management intensified from 2008-2009 as security deteriorated	EMOPS guidance on remote programming background papers Case study Qualitative	2004 – 3rd party monitoring contract signed w/ Iraqi company (Al-Sami); monitors recruited from communities and able to move around without incident; group assigned to each sectorial priority – 60-70% WASH 2006 – monitors role expanded and became facilitators, duties included: service delivery, program planning and coordination with government and other partners; 80 facilitators by end of 2007 - Remote mode did not result in increased collaboration between the UN system; cluster system not inclusive to NGOs - Partnerships: must ensure transparency in selection and terms of employment, involve contractors in planning, and maintain single point of contact - Communication and Advocacy: implementing partners can be used in practical advocacy on the ground, however policy decision and messaging has to remain within UNICEF control
UNICEF EMOPS 2011 ¹⁴	UNICEF	UNICEF and Remote Programmin g: Pakistan case study	Pakistan	2009 move to remote mode following kidnapping	EMOPS guidance on remote programming background papers Case study	- KPK and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) highly volatile; 2010 remote program in these regions in response to floods - Program criticality exercise for Peshawar office conduction to prioritize prior to shift; resulted in decreased activities with a focus on immunization - Conducts orientation sessions on remote operations to build partner capacity, however, largely learning by doing - Removed all logos to keep low profile - Third party monitoring found program to be below standard; resultantly, invested in national capacity building, coaching, and training - Issues: involvement of military to deliver aid, low collaboration between UN system, lack of formal guidance and checklists to guide programming - Need for flexible program policy and procedure in changing environment
UNICEF EMOPS 2011 ⁵⁴	UNICEF	UNICEF and Remote Programmin g: Somalia case study	Somalia: protracted crisis with annual flood cycles		EMOPS guidance on remote programming background papers	- Presence over 18 years, strong partnership with local NGOs and government allows maintenance of good delivery in reduced access settings - Efficacy and security may be enhanced by a UNICEF system that works closely with that of the other humanitarian agencies, rather than being locked into UNDSS structures - Issues with large Nairobi-based remote support center: indecisive culture,

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					Case study	processes dominate over results and diverts resources from field offices, habit of risk avoidance rather than management, have prevented seizing access opportunities and new implementation modalities - Opportunity to build independent monitoring system through partners and contractors was not seized when local access would have allowed negotiations; resulted in poor feedback on aid delivery and reliance on external partners to set up smaller/weaker monitoring structures on their behalf (accountability and reputation risk) - Lessons: stay focused/don't stretch too thin; be decisive and use strategic opportunities; try new delivery methods; unite and have sectors work together; regular and honest dialogue with partners and donors builds trust
Belliveau 2013 ²³	MSF	'Remote management' in Somalia	Somalia	- Remote mode following 2008 roadside bomb and deaths of 3 MSF employees - Country management team in Nairobi - 2 new hospital wards opened	Humanitarian Practice Network Paper	- International staff benefits: bring outside experience and technical skills, increased legitimacy of advocacy, increased ability to resist local pressures for resource diversion - Risks of remote mode: reduced control over resources, declining quality, limited or no program expansion or adaptation, increased risk to national staff, potential loss of impartiality and ability to witness/speak out on behalf of affected population - Key concepts of model: centralized decision making, micro-management and cross-checking, support and training (increased frequency and wider range) - Local administration or community elders aid recruitment of unskilled workers to ensure appropriate clan balance and deflect potential dissatisfaction away from MSF - External evaluation concluded that strong remote management procedure and extra scrutiny work well, no systematic leakage or noticeable corruption, high standard of stock management and financial control - Success due to: rigorous control system, competence of national field staff, their familiarity with MSF's principles and ways of working, high degree of national staff ownership
Howe, Stites, Chudacoff 2015 ²⁷	Tufts University	Breaking the Hourglass: Partnerships in Remote Management Settings—The Cases of Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan	Turkish-Syrian border 2013	Remote operations from outset in Syria due to government regulation	Historical analysis Qualitative study (123 interviews with 46 organizations)	- Access dependent on local networks and reputations; partners identified through contacts, coordination meetings with LNGOs, and LNGOs who reached out to INGO (passive and biased towards LNGOs with skills and contacts, active methods of recruitment preferred) - Technics for capacity building: trainings, workshops, partnership focal points, staff secondments, pilot projects - Innovative M&E approaches: call centers, GPS shipment tracking, debriefing meeting with local partners; local methods: photos and videos of distributions, web-based remote project monitoring, daily verbal reports, peer observations; 3rd party monitoring = gold standard - Donors can prioritize longer-term sustainability of local partners via: organizational and operational capacity building, a focus on the capacity of the institution, supporting longer-term projects, providing core funds, and supporting alliances among local groups - Trust building key for local partnerships; build trust with their local partners via: regular in-person meetings, transparent decision-making, robust feedback mechanisms, joint agenda setting, and openness to partner perspectives - Need to prioritize security for both national and internationals with clear contingency plans and ensuring local security costs are included in budget
Same		Syria case	n/a	Modes		- Inability to engage in coordinated response led to disharmonized approach to

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study				employed: direct implementation fully or partially by INGOS with hired Syrian staff; Sub-contract, short term and logistical (ex distribution of food aid); Partnerships		working with small pool of organizations; negatively affected the absorptive capacity of local organizations and ultimately compromised humanitarian activities - Partner selection is two-way street; INGOS need to have good relationships with reputable partners if they want to be chosen by LNGOs in future - LNGOs prefer tailored smaller trainings on mutually selected topics; dedicated focal point person can help to address local partners needs - Issues with third-party monitoring: resource intensive, expensive, repeated use of same firm can compromise objectivity and neutrality, firm accountable to same organization that hired them (limits objectivity) - Donor requirements can be security risk and prohibitive to programming; to provide international organizations with beneficiary lists from under-siege area, local partners were obliged to pay smugglers to move people and documentation across siege lines - Sustainability in the face of donor withdrawal: LNGOs switched to less capital-intensive activities when access reduced, diversified, and approached other donors for funding - Lack of INGO support of core costs (operating, salaries) of local partners inhibits trust and sustainability
Same study		Iraqi Kurdistan Case	n/a	n/a		LNGO coping strategies to withdrawal: dormancy, downsizing (reliance on volunteers), private sector and income generation,
Hammond, Vaughan-Lee 2012 ⁴⁹	HPG ODI	Humanitarian space in Somalia: a scarce commodity	Somalia	- Remotely managed out of Nairobi or Mogadishu since late 90s; increased when security risks significantly increased in 2007 – 2009	Working Paper	- Use of diaspora returnees; advantages: technical skills and more acceptable than westerners; disadvantages: resented by locals for large salaries and being out of touch with realities on the ground - Have pulled away from conventional coordination mechanism (cluster system) to work independently: some cases improved access but no understanding of what other actors are doing or common standard for dealing with demands - 2007 – 2008 development of OCHA joint operating principals for Somalia: never formally operationalized; likely worried that if they followed international humanitarian standards would not be able to operate
IMC 2016 ⁶¹	IMC	Details from IMC Somalia Programming (e-mail)	Somalia	n/a	Email communication	- Increase beneficiary access via: mobile teams, community messaging advertising service availability, demand generation via “spreading word” (discharging patients with literature and simple repeatable messaging), used Community Health Committees (elected respected volunteers) as bridge between IMC and community - Used nearly 100% local staff with appropriate clan-balance, resulted in good local perception and minimal bribes at checkpoints, confiscations, raids, and threats - M&E methods: spontaneous visits and planned-capacity-building-visits, third party monitoring - Transparency: shared reports with employees to validate work and justify visits
IOM 2008 ⁵¹	IOM	Programme Management by 'Remote Control'	Iraq	- Remotely managed from Amman - At least 2 implementing partners per	Book chapter	- Coordination with government of Iraq and international community via IDP working group (NGOs, NCCI, UN) to avoid duplication - Types of monitoring used: direct by IOM staff traveling to sites; IOM staff and third party; IOM-contracted external consultants; monitoring of NGO-implemented projects by external organizations who visit every 2 weeks - Monitoring procurement system has several filters: program unit goes through

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				program		checks, logistics unit that double checks prices/contract terms/authenticity of requests, also do unannounced spot checks
Kjaerum 2015 ¹⁵	Danish Refugee Council	Remote Management in Humanitarian Operations: Lessons learned from Libya and beyond	Libya	12 month Armed Violence Reduction program in Sabha Remotely managed from July 2014 to today from Tunisia	Evaluation and Learning Brief Qualitative study	- No remote management contingency plan despite ongoing tensions in country prior to planning, resulted in standstill of project activities from July – Oct 2014 during shift - Capacity issue: several activities required presence of international technical expert and were cancelled; trainings by local staff (non-experts) not well received - Bunkerisation contributes to beneficiary mistrust and remote management trap - Benefits of remote mode: increased local ownership, decision making, increased capacity/sustainability of field staff; continued engagement build trust among communities/stakeholders making it easier to shift back to normal operations - Need for country offices to develop remote management plans, training plans for national staff, and assessment of key operational gaps that would occur following shift to remote mode
Cunningham 2016 ⁵⁰	MSF	Emergency Gap Series 02: To Stay and Deliver? The Yemen Humanitarian Crisis 2015	Yemen 2015	Managed from Amman	Qualitative study	- Remote managers had inadequate risk perception and decreased sense of urgency to the needs on the ground - Locus of security decision-making misplaced: decision making should be in hands of operational managers rather than security personnel - Dependence on the UN for logistics is major issue: locks INGOs into decisions made, or not made, by UN, and affects INGO independence, capacity, and mindset
Hansen 2008 ¹⁷	NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq	Operational Modalities in Iraq	Iraq	n/a	Briefing paper	- Need for acceptance: achieved over time through dialogue and staff actions - Need for flexibility: rapidly changing context; rapid decentralization to skill field staff gives more options for continuing programming - Need for proximity to victims: increases quality of humanitarian data, safe access, aid effectiveness - Need for visibility: necessary for acceptance in long term but jeopardizes effectiveness short term - Need to expand operations: expansion should be gradual and controlled in order to groom partners without becoming a target; sudden increase in resources interferes with team dynamics and contributes to loss of control on how they are used
Hansen 2008 ⁶³	NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq	Adapting to Insecurity in Iraq	Iraq	n/a	Briefing note	- Withdrawal of international staff and mobility constraints on national staff result in incremental increases in geographic and psychological gaps between beneficiaries and providers - Flexible management where remote managers play supporting role to skilled teams; authority delegated to field staff to make decisions about operations and safety as intimately familiar with context requirements - Identification at distributions via removable signage or via media useful for building reputation of organization and acceptance
Oxfam and Merlin 2009 ²⁰	NGO Consortium	Remote Programming Modalities in Somalia	Somalia (Insecurity and drought)	Remotely managed from Nairobi or Hargeisa	Discussion paper	- Remote control used for distribution of goods; issues: inflexible, limited delegation of authority, increased local staff security risks, loss of access to adequate information about need and context - Remote support: national managers receive additional training, mentoring that enables handover; senior staff well respected, good relations with communities and large decision making autonomy. Issue: working through specific institutions can be seen as taking sides and has potential to increase security threats - Remote partnership: strong risk management needed, funding an issue due to

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						donor reluctance, limited number of sufficiently strong partners - M&E needs: minimum set of clear simple indicators for basic standards; transparency with donors about challenges; build capacity to collect data; verification mechanisms: staff visits, activity monitoring, third party monitoring; triangulation and communications technology
Polio Oversight Board 2014 ²²	PGEI	Decision Paper: Strengthening Program Leadership & Management in Pakistan	Pakistan	n/a	Decision paper	- Primary strategy: negotiated access with community/religious leaders, military/law enforcement, and armed groups - Used military and law enforcement protected vaccination campaigns - Increase acceptability via community engagement via media, interpersonal communication
Jeene 2014 ⁵⁷	Save the Children	Integrated Community Case Management In a Pastoral Society	Karkaar region, Puntland State, Somalia	- ICCM around watering points serving small settled and large transient populations - Remotely managed from Kenya	Case study with Survey data	- High staff turnover and long vacancies contributed to supply chain disruptions and stock outs, inhibiting treatment and reputation building - Long time to take action when supply chain failed due to remote management; need for improvement in quality of support systems - Issues: increased cost and reduced effectiveness
UNHCR 2014 ²⁶	UNHCR	Remote Management in High-risk Operations Good Practice and Lessons Learned	Somalia	Multiple programs	Case study Qualitative study	- IDPs requested assistance to voluntarily return but funding was not immediately available; took 6 months for budget to be authorized and lost opportunity to adjust to changing situation - UN country team formed Risk Management Unit (2011): maintains directory of aid and local actors, monitors and analyzes financial programmatic and reputational risks to advise operations of all agencies - Facilitating face-to-face meetings with local actors and beneficiaries helps to maintain closeness and supervision - Transparent reporting raised credibility among donors - Considered unacceptable in remote mode, resulting in suspension or closure of program: direct payment (material or cash) for access to people in need; payment of taxes, registration fees, any form of payment to armed groups; transfer of humanitarian goods to any party to the conflict for distribution
Same study			Iraq			- Recruited and intensively trained 50 national NGOs, vetted using US Provincial Reconstruction team and others' lists of partners - Established Project Tracking Database: GPS encrypted and time-stamped digital photographs taken by local partners to monitor programs; data uploaded and payment tied to photographic evidence. Issues: costly, labor intensive, constant maintenance required
Same study			Afghanistan			- Worked closely with Shuras (councils) and Community Development Committees to ensure fairness in implementation of shelter assistance and income generating activities. Ensured local ownership, accountability, checks and balances, but decision making and local capacity building were slow - M&E methods: beneficiary hotlines, informal contacts with other agencies,

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						implementing partners; changed monitoring partnersevery two monthsto avoid conflict of interest and collusion - Community outreach team with mullah established by an INGO to build relations, discussed similaritiesbetween Islamic teachingsand ICRC code of conduct - Triangulating monitoring techniquesby one NGO: used vendors, local government officials, and community membersto monitor project outputsand quality
Same study			Pakistan			- Negotiatedwith local tribes to deliver flood aid to remote communities, raised visibility and built confidence with locals - Methodsto address fraud: complaint mechanism for refugees; implementing partner selection and performance review committee; grievance committee of field staff; multi-function team to assess implementing partner processes on procurement, recruitment and financial monitoring
Same study			Syria			- Relies on local staff and created networks of volunteers to assist with operations
UNICEF 2016 ⁷⁰	UNICEF	(Unofficial title: Syria and Yemen lessons learned)	Syria	n/a	E-mail correspondence	- Inaccessible/armed group controlled areas: programs planned and developed jointly with implementing NGOs and local communities. - M&E via third party monitors who provide weekly reports, data, and photos; telecommunication with inside informants; reports from UN humanitarian convoys when allowed access
Same study			Yemen			- Community midwives in isolated conflict areas set up make shift primary care clinics in their homes; UNICEF supported with provision of supplies - Empowered female health worker in conservative communities
Oxfam International 2007 ⁵²	NCCI Oxfam	Rising to the humanitarian challenge in Iraq	Iraq	n/a	Briefing paper	- Prepositioning of emergency supplies supports efforts in hot-spots - Donors must provide flexible emergency programming and overcome reluctance to fund remotely managed programs - Strategies: using local contact networks to map security situation; making sure staff working in particularly sensitive areas are from appropriate religious, cultural, or geographic background and have experience in insecure environments; and keeping low profile (operating in unmarked vehicles, varying routines, not using permanent offices where possible, and restricting accumulation of assets) - One NGO relied on personal contacts in different project locations to monitor, evaluate, assess impact of the projects; included surveys of beneficiaries - Previously established relationships with local leaders and communities enabled rapid assessments and monitoring
Ministry of Public Health Afghanistan 2015 ⁵⁵	Ministry of Public Health Afghanistan	Annual Report 2015 Polio Eradication Initiative Afghanistan	Afghanistan	n/a	Government report	- Permanent transit teams (PPT) established at entry points of inaccessible area to vaccinate children coming and going; 165 PPTs; 6,271,752 children vaccinated - At least one district polio officer employed in all conflict affected districts for surveillance, actively searching for cases and case response vaccinations - Partnered with NGOs that have access to inaccessible areas for delivery of vaccine and campaign monitoring - Negotiated through partners (such as ICRC) for full access in high-risk areas
Rogers 2006 ¹³	University of York	Accessing the Inaccessible. The Use of Remote Programming Strategies	Afghanistan	Program assisted returnees to build a shelter	Master's Thesis Case study	- Process of transitioning to remote mode: held meeting with community members and supporters, thanking them for their help and requesting assistance; outlined teachings of Qur'an linked to humanitarianism - Close relationship organization had with communities and operational history increased acceptance - Unannounced monitoring visits when security improved; no major problems identified, beneficiaries and community members did not report any problems when

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		In Highly Insecure Countries to Ensure the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance. Iraq: A Case Study				interviewed individually - Highly experienced afghan staff, without whom operation would have been suspended
Same study			Northern Uganda Case study	IDP camps		- Community representatives worked in collaboration with the agency to develop program activities and timelines for implementation; guidance on activities provided through use of field journals by community members implementing the work and digital cameras to record activities. - NGO visited once a week when security improved; found that work was not being completed as expected by community or contractors - Independent members of community used for monitoring and triangulation; monitoring system proved to be unreliable as they provided information that they thought agency wanted to hear, not reality
Same study			Iraq Remote programming since 2004	Remotely managed from Jordan		- Lack of face-to-face contact lead to misunderstandings and difficulty maintaining interpersonal relationships - Need more support departments centralized in Iraq to improve function, coordination, and coherence - Trainings included: security related courses, administration, project management, finance and conflict resolution; better when shadowed international staff • Length of operational history in country enabled agencies to move from more directive remote control strategy to more supportive role • Strong understanding and awareness of local culture and religion required • Greater use of participatory management styles is required
Faubert 2010 ⁶⁷	UNDP	Assessment of Development Results. Evaluation of UNDP Contribution Somalia	Somalia	Remotely managed from Nairobi	Evaluation report	- Insufficient written institutional guidance for programs operating in complex circumstances; country office not proactive enough in seeking guidance and tapping institutional resources. - Strategic partnership agreement eventually developed with Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), providing resources and technical support - Increased exposure to operational risks regarding effectiveness, cost efficiency, and accountability - High travel and per diem costs for limited staff visits, setting up expensive network of NGOs, and liaising with Somali partners; administrative costs need to be more clearly defined and planned for
Anonymus 2015 ⁴⁰	Anonymous	Remote Partner Management -- Monitoring and Accountability Systems for Limiting Aid Diversion	Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan	n/a	Qualitative study 12 interviews with staff	- Syria: local groups provide a lot of support in inaccessible areas (monthly monitoring reports) - Iraq: involved both IDPs and their host communities in planning and implementation of interventions; eased tensions between the communities and increased uptake of services - Egypt: deployed Syrians as outreach workers to do referrals and spread awareness; good entry point into Syrian community in Egypt and cultivated trust with community members. - Capacity of local partners quite low, need to invest a lot in training
Zyck	n/a	Remote	Afghanistan	n/a		- Need for remote mode contingency plan which can be activated when designing

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2012 ⁶⁰		Control Project Management	n			programs in order to account for required simplification - Need to develop accountability networks: establish relationships with stakeholders that can help independently verify projects are being implemented as intended; and build partnerships for third party monitoring and evaluation - Need to build capacity of local partners to enable daily decision making - Need for coordination bodies and networks to share good practices and lessons learnt - Issues with M&E: site visits rare, external monitors not given accurate information, local staff require training on monitoring and reporting, lack of independent beneficiary feedback mechanisms
Benini 2016 ⁶⁶	ACAPS	Information gaps in multiple needs assessments in disaster and conflict areas	Syria	Syria Needs Assessment Project 2012	Report	- In situations of frequent lack of access and patchy indicators, severity of situations and quality of assessment information were best measured on simple ordinal scales; assessment gaps and priorities established by comparing the values of governorates, districts, etc. on these scales. - Assessment information allows for prioritization
IFRC 2016 ⁷³	IFRC Global fund	Central African Republic and RAMP How technology is transforming health facility reporting in a complex operating environment	CAR	RAMP mobile phone reporting system throughout country	Report	- RAMP is a monitoring and evaluation tool using mobile phones and simple to use pre-designed forms - Health care workers trained to send routine health data from health centers via mobile phones - Rapid field intelligence and communication resulted in the expansion of malaria services, prevented stock outs, allowed for monitoring of malaria prevalence and trends
CDC 2016 ³¹	CDC	CDC remote monitoring summary	Variety of countries	n/a	Excel spreadsheet (unpublished)	- Staff required a lot of training due to varying capacities and some hired due to bureaucratic/political reasons rather than skill or abilities - Due to lack of commitment from lead agency, surveillance staff did not receive salaries or funds to carry out regular activities, and system could no longer function. - Within survey duplication and duplication over time between repeated surveys should be checked for potential fraud; pre-programmed algorithms are an essential tool in detecting survey quality and fraud consistently and rapidly - WhatsApp allowed for daily communication with teams in Syria; however, communication of more technical concepts was challenging - Ensuring data quality was the biggest challenge; training and working with staff prior to data collection help to ensure quality and consistency of data
Balslev-Olesen Huls 2011 ³⁹	IRC Thailand Burma Border Consortium	Consultancy. Strengthening Monitoring in Eastern Burma	Eastern Burma	n/a	Independent evaluation (18 interviews)	- Regular and strategic surveys have allowed remote managers to be less cautious; sets programming in reality - Strong community connections resulted in strong participatory planning, implementation, and monitoring - Recommendations: systematic but voluntary horizontal data exchange, support

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		Final Report				partners with common standard in collecting monitoring info; more consistent and regular mechanisms for client/community feedback; cross-monitoring; common protocols and global standards; consistently analyze and correlate data; harmonized and coordinated in house support for monitoring; training on humanitarian principles and sample techniques to monitor performance against principles; direct investment in M&E - M&E methods used currently: web-based (project activities verified through visual evidence, geo-referenced), quality assurance teams (national staff travelling to monitor program activities, indicator-based terms of reference); triangulated local monitoring; third party monitoring
IRC year unknown ⁷⁷	IRC	Project for Local Empowerment (PLE) REMOTE MONITORING	Eastern Burma	SHIELD program - 6 local partners - Thai based office	PowerPoint presentation	- Challenges: log books sent to Thai based office, some missing, several languages and format (could not be reviewed from all ethnic health organizations) - Lessons learned: need for multi-lingual data entry staff, standardized case definitions, and check-lists for log book review; activities should not be donor driven; need to strengthen technical support to partners via team of experts; program implementation team and monitoring team should be separate but work closely
January 2015 ³⁰	International Business & Technical Consultants Inc. (IBTCI) George Washington University	Findings in Monitoring and Evaluations Practices During Humanitarian Emergencies	n/a	n/a	Situational analysis Literature review Interviews	- Challenges: lack of good baseline data for performance indicators make it difficult for third party evaluators to measure impact; rapid influxes of aid required prohibit M&E practices from being built in from onset; explaining to local staff why M&E is necessary; coordination difficult due to distrust between orgs and lack of transparency (duplication of efforts and hard to ensure accuracy) - Internal M&E tends to be less rigorous than external consultants as third parties have less vested interests, increased transparency and therefore legitimacy - Building local capacity (ideally prior to emergency) leads to trust and more autonomy by implementing partners, and therefore better M&E - Need to mainstream M&E and incorporate into planning phase
Zikusook a 2015 ⁶⁹	Save the Children	Simulated Technical Support Visit to Inaccessible locations in Somalia	Somalia	Simulated field visit Oct 2015	PowerPoint presentation	- Aims: provide support to inaccessible program, monitor nutrition program and verify existence, assess program performance against quality benchmarks, identify gaps and areas for capacity development; connect with field teams - Methodology: minimum standards/quality benchmarks agreed → documents and photos provided by field (photos with GPS encryption, scans of patient cards and stock records, etc.) → Skype/phone calls with field → joint review of documents with field → feedback and action planning - Analysis: was card filled in correctly? Was correct amount of meds provided? Was follow-up tracked correctly? Etc. - Lessons learned: prior prep required to ensure complete set of supporting documents are received; must train team to take quality photos; discipline required to set up uninterrupted time to complete whole process
Souness 2011 ⁵³	Tearfund	Monitoring & beneficiary Accountability in Remote Managed Locations An assessment	Kandahar, Afghanistan	Relocated coordination to Kabul in 2008 following kidnapping of expat NGO worker	Independent assessment Qualitative study (interviews, observations,	- 3 types of monitoring in Kandahar: direct monitoring in the field, operational monitoring and report, and activities to build M&E capacity - M&E methods: field data collection, monitoring by Afghan Kabul-based specialists, beneficiary feedback, stories of transformation (collected by field staff), monthly program reports, project evaluations, office shura, weekly progress reports, peer monitoring - Reliance on national staff resulted in lower quality reporting in some cases - Recommendations: establish clear methodology; improve rigor of qualitative and

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		of Tearfund's Monitoring & accountability practices (a part of larger Tearfund report, below)			document analysis)	quantitative methods, KAP survey to track changes over time; peer monitoring - Must focus on building capacity of staff; M&E officer mentors project managers and trains staff to build capacity in monitoring - Strong relationships with communities and acceptance necessary for security during field visits - Allowing field staff and communities to tell their stories is important method of monitoring; mixed-method monitoring required
Norman 2011 ⁵⁸	Tearfund	Effective Monitoring and Beneficiary Accountability Practices for Projects Implemented Remotely in Insecure Environments (Interim report)	Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan	Programs implemented in 42 locations that use some remote mode approach	Qualitative Study (Interviews and focus groups with 28 organizations)	- Remote Monitoring issues: quality, ensuring rigorous monitoring system, reduced regularity of visits to implementation areas, inaccuracy of project data and reporting, limited capacity of staff, weak technical oversight of implementation, poor communication between head office and field, increased risk to staff and beneficiaries, increased pressure on local staff, increased risk of corruption and fraud
Norman 2012 ³³	Tearfund	Monitoring and accountability practices for remotely managed projects implemented in volatile operating environments (final report)	Afghanistan, Iraq, South Sudan, Pakistan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Somalia	Programs implemented in 42 locations that use some remote mode approach	Qualitative Study (Interviews and focus groups with 28 organizations)	- Much existing good practice but confined to single org and not shared - Remote Project monitoring good practice recommendations: limiting size and scope of programs, building positive community relationships, targeted recruitment of local recruitment, capacity building of local staff, regular face-to-face meetings, promoting organization values, developing a remote management strategy, building micro-management approaches to monitoring, ensuring dedicated monitoring and evaluation capacity, developing an M&E framework, investing in information and communication technologies, peer-monitoring, beneficiary led monitoring, increasing collaboration between humanitarian and development communities - Essentials for beneficiary accountability good practice: establishing and delivering on commitments, staff competency, sharing information, participation, handling complaints, learning and continual improvement
ACF 2015 ⁶⁰	Action Contre la Faim	Be prepared to switch to remote operations	n/a	n/a	Power point presentation	- Lessons learned: focus on building staff capabilities, build relationships with community stakeholders, simplify reporting, transfer reporting responsibility to field staff, formalize current/target roles and responsibilities for all activities - To better communication with field: promote proactive regular timely communication, make remote supervisors liable to field staff as well, prove utility of monitoring systems to field staff by providing timely meaningful data interpretation, regularly contact all staff to boost morale, communicate face-to-face as much as possible
ECHO 2013 ⁴⁸	ECHO	Instruction note for ECHO staff on Remote Management	n/a	n/a	Organizational guidance note	- Building acceptance among governments, non-state authorities, and beneficiaries is most sustainable and effective way of gaining and maintaining access - Crosschecking local staff assessments through trusted third parties is essential - Recruit national partners with experience, train and build capacity - Minimum face-to-face contact between senior staff and field staff/beneficiaries

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						required - Monitoring mechanisms: photo, telephone complaint system for beneficiaries, triangulation, peer monitoring, third party monitors
IMC 2016 ²⁵	IMC	Field practices for remote management	n/a	n/a	Email correspondence	- Communication: maintain regular communication by whatever means possible, designate field focal point, communicate value of work to team - Contingency planning: ensure there is one for both foreseen challenges and potential emergencies - Training and capacity building: ensure tools and support to implement activities is provided before hand, training of trainers with key field staff - Data and information management: triangulate info, third party monitors, explore mobile technologies, develop strong protocols - Personnel structure: ensure clear field supervision with specific focal points - Policies and procedure: have written procedures on which to conduct internal training prior to deployment - National partners: consider working with national NGOs early, have a list of vetted partners
Egeland 2011 ⁵	OCHA	To Stay and Deliver Good practice for humanitarian s in complex security environment s	Field research in: Afghanistan, DRC, occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan, Somalia, Darfur, Sudan		Desk review and qualitative study (255 interviews, 1100 national staff surveyed)	- Remote management good practices: invest in highly localized field staff, recruit staff in consultation with communities, web-based monitoring, quality assurance teams for accountability, third party monitoring, triangulated local monitoring - Methods to build acceptance: outreach teams, community memorandums of understanding that stipulates its role in program, local broadcasting and published materials, community co-ownership, positive associations with trusted entities, ongoing local consultations - Recommendations: address gaps to mitigate risk and ensure duty of care to national staff, ensure strong cooperation that meets the needs of partners, ensure deployed staff understand humanitarian principles and organizational policies, share good practices and lessons learned
UNHCR 2016 ¹⁶	UNHCR	Remote management in high security risk operations	n/a	n/a	Part of 4 th edition of UNHCR Emergency Handbook	- Guidelines: conduct thorough risk assessment considering needs of all parties, weigh whether partners fully understand and accept risks, build partnership networks - Monitoring guidelines: exploit tracking and information technologies; keep methods and messages simple; explore peer monitoring, monitoring by communities, national and local staff, local authorities, private companies, consultants, other agencies; set up clear and simple monitoring and reporting procedures; communicate frequently with partners - When regular programming starts, build on increased capacity of local partners and do not replace them with internationals - Risks: less able to monitor needs and understand local perspectives, assistance may not reach those on need, difficult to detect fraud, donors may be unwilling to fund due to lack of direct monitoring, UNHCR less visible in communities and among donors
UNICEF EMOPS 2012 ³⁵	UNICEF	Remote Programmin g in Humanitarian Action			Program guidance	- Steps towards decision to switch to remote mode: security risk assessment, political context/conflict dynamics and stakeholder interests analysis, cost analysis or options, map non-security risks, exit strategies - Incorporate exit strategies into program management cycle; must reassess situation on ground to determine when to return

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
						- Implementing Remote programming: partner mapping and assessments of capacity and position in conflict should inform partner selection - Must engage partners in security management and planning activities, budget for appropriate logistical and security communication, and establish clear procedures for reporting security incidents
EHCO Director-General, 2015 ⁷⁸	ECHO	ECHO's Approach to Remote Management	n/a	n/a	Organization guidelines	ECHO funding for actions involving remote management is based on seven questions: - Is there an access problem due to security or administrative obstacles? - Does the proposed action include acceptance-building measures? - Is it a direct life-saving action or an action aimed at preserving livelihoods? - Have all possible measures been taken to reduce the risk of losing the lives of those undertaking the work on the ground? - What is the source of the needs assessment in a remotely managed action? - Have robust systems been put in place to allow staff on the ground to provide all of the relevant information to those who are ultimately responsible for the management and the quality of the action? - Are monitoring arrangements adapted for remote management?.
GOAL 2016 ¹⁹	GOAL	Remote Management Guidance v0.4 DRAFT	General, examples in Sudan and Syria	n/a	Draft guidance document	GOAL uses seven minimum criteria when determining whether to use remote management - Access restrictions or the risk to staff in the project area is unacceptable - Risk faced by staff or partners is acceptable to the organization and individuals implementing the activities - Context analysis and needs and security assessment justify remote management - Sufficient capacity among staff and/or partners to deliver the program (or training to build capacity) - Program activities can be implemented following humanitarian principles - GOAL provided added value to meeting the humanitarian needs - Minimum standard of monitoring can be implemented - Strategies for mitigating risks: planning, risk analysis, program and policy adaptation, prioritizing staff training and development, increasing resources for monitoring and evaluation, clear communication and strong information management tools, and community accountability procedures to strengthen acceptance and program support
Hüls, 2011 ⁶⁴	n/a	Remote Management of Humanitarian Assistance	n/a	n/a	Essay	- Risks include: shifting risk to local staff, reduced quality assurance and timely action, decreased knowledge transfer to local staff, - Methods of risk mitigation: third party monitoring or verification, information and communication technology, community involvement
UNICEF year unknown ⁶⁵	UNICEF	Compendium of best practices: UNICEF approach to Comprehensive	n/a	n/a	Minimum standards guideline	The Minimum Components of the Comprehensive Risk Management Approach: - Assessing the non-security risks for UNICEF programs; - Linking security planning with the SRA and the inter-agency program - Comprehensive multi-source monitoring with capacity to triangulate and analyze information - Internal management measures such as training, partner screening, audit and risk

Author	Organization	Title	Location	Program details	Type of Paper	Results
		ve Risk Management and Due Diligence in Complex and High Threat Environments				management working group Additional components of risk management may include: - Capacity building for staff, partners, facilitators and contractors - Agreeing on and implementation of common UN risk management tools - Conflict sensitive programming - General strategies for reducing residual risk: building stronger community relationships, actively managing security risks, weighing short versus long-term risks, coordinating with and gaining support of partners, employing qualified staff, and ensuring records on all decisions are maintained
Bally, 2005 ⁷¹	European Space Agency, Directorate of Earth Observation Programmes	Remote Sensing and Humanitarian Aid – A life-saving combination	n/a	n/a	Review article	- European Space Agency is utilizing satellite imagery to assist the European Community Humanitarian Office to obtain information regarding the impact and needs of both slow and sudden onset humanitarian emergencies: development of a database for use in GIS, up-to-date topographic maps for responders, identifying appropriate locations for camps and fulfilling camp-setting criteria, and aiding food and supply distribution - Satellite imagery also used to identify hidden water sources and site new camps, and estimating available wood and allocating cooking fuel resources
Meier, 2011 ⁷⁴	n/a	New information technologies and their impact on the humanitarian sector	Haiti earthquake, Russia forest fires, Libya humanitarian crisis, Somalia complex emergency	Crisis mapping and digital volunteer networks	Review article – case studies	- Article focuses on use of information and communication in Haiti, Russia, Libya and Somalia, particularly crisis mapping and crowd-sourcing information - There are still concerns over the ethical and security concerns of mapping user-generated content during conflict, the liability of volunteers, data protection protocols, verifying information in real time, and the capacity of humanitarian organizations to respond to all information added to the maps

Annex 2 – GOAL Monitoring tools and examples of use¹⁹

7.2 Annex 2 – Monitoring

Tools and examples of use³

Tool	Explanation	Strengths	Weaknesses / Challenges	Examples of use
Activity reports	Local Partner or field staff provide written or verbal reports in a set format detailing activities and outputs per location/ beneficiary group	Detailed source of information	- Bias in information - Limited objectivity - Absorbs time of implementing staff - Language	Activity implementation
Feedback journal	Journal carried by field-workers to record, in a structured way, impromptu conversations. A useful way of retaining information that otherwise is forgotten or lost. Field-staff need to be de-briefed regularly and the information fed systematically into the analysis system.	Captures a wide variety of information	- Difficult to analyse - Takes time of implementing staff	- Needs' assessment - Activity monitoring - Impact monitoring
Meetings	Meetings between remote staff and implementers can provide an opportunity for discussion of activities, challenges, planning etc. Meetings should have an agenda, actions and minutes.	Face to face contact	- Getting people in the same place - Allowing for open and honest discussion	Activity monitoring
Questionnaire survey	Questionnaires designed for the purpose. Surveys are done by INGO staff or partners.	Provides a good spread of information	- Can be misleading in the representation of sensitive issues - Require training enumerators	- Assessment - Baseline data - Post Distribution monitoring - Impact monitoring
Focus group	Carefully selected groups, homogeneous in at least one respect (e.g. men, women, and shopkeepers). Interviews are semi-	Allow for in-depth investigation of issues relevant to the group	Require trained facilitators	- Needs' assessment - Targeting - Post Distribution

³ This table draws from a range of literature including Dfid Assessment of Syria Response Cross-Border Partner Monitoring Systems, Jeremy Loveless, 19th Dec 2014 and UNICEF Guide to Remote Programming 2012 – see bibliography

Tool	Explanation	Strengths	Weaknesses / Challenges	Examples of use
	structured. Good to carry out a series of focus groups, depending on the issues to be investigated.	members.		Monitoring • Impact monitoring
Key informant interview	Individuals chosen because they have a particular perspective (e.g. teachers, religious leaders, local council members). Interviews are semi-structured.	• Allow detailed probing of issues (e.g. what happens to distributed items after the distribution).	• Good to interview as wide a range of key informants as possible to minimise bias.	• Needs' assessment • Targeting • Post Distribution Monitoring • Impact monitoring • Check arrival of goods • Situational updates
Case study	In-depth study of a community, family etc. to demonstrate typical impact of the project. This can give qualitative support and can provide explanation of the numbers.	• In depth study • Can explore intended and unintended project impact	• Deciding what to study	• Impact monitoring.
Advertise Distribution details	Details of beneficiaries' entitlements announced before the distribution. People therefore know what they should get and are less likely to be swindled.	• Increases accountability	• May present security risks for distribution staff and beneficiaries	• Distribution
Beneficiary list	Disaggregated list of people receiving items or services, preferably with a signature or other form of verification. Can be done electronically, with thumb-prints.	• Demonstrates delivery of items	• Data protection	• Targeting • Distribution Monitoring • Cross-check goods' transfer
Waybills, invoices etc.	Documentary evidence that a purchase has been made, or that goods have passed from one person's responsibility to another's.	• Standard procedures	• Need to ensure that the quality of goods is verified	• Goods' transfer and arrival
Spot check	Unannounced visit to activities, services or office to see if everything is in order. Depending on security access could be	• A good way to check on procedural compliance.	•	• Activity monitoring • Service delivery monitoring

Tool	Explanation	Strengths	Weaknesses / Challenges	Examples of use
	conducted by international staff with approval from HO.			• Shop monitoring • Goods' transfer / arrival
Photos	Provide evidence of any stage of a project. Can provide date-registration (showing when a picture was taken) and geo-tagging (giving the location).	• Quick to do • Many devices have cameras • Can give the remote manager a "feel" for the location and activities	• Large file size can cause data transfer problems • Training required on how to take photos • Privacy and data protection issues • Can be sensitive or raise suspicion in some contexts	• Needs' assessment • Distribution Monitoring • Construction and other activities paid in stages • Goods in transit and on arrival
Video	Similar to photographs. It is good to video practical aspects of projects (e.g. beneficiaries picking up packages and signing lists). Be clear on the purpose to get right type of footage.	• Observation of what is going on • Provide a feel for the context for remote managers	• As for photos	• Needs' assessment • Activity monitoring • Goods in transit and on arrival
Video tour	Using the skype or other online video feature, field staff can take counterparts on a virtual tour of facilities or operations. For example, a health facility manager can guide "visitors" around the facility and show documentation.	• Live updates for remote managers • Can facilitate direct support and project input from remote managers	• Requires good internet	• Activity monitoring, PDM • Goods in transit, storage facilities
Third party monitoring	Monitoring by a fully independent body (not connected to INGO or partner). In theory this should be more objective than monitoring by implementing agents. A consultant with knowledge of the relevant sector/ location are contracted to review programme progress and prepare a report. This could be on a once off basis or a series	• More independent and objective	• Getting a monitoring agency with appropriate skills, access and independence • Acceptance of monitors by communities and authorities • Cost	• Needs' assessment • Activity monitoring • Impact monitoring • Resource Transfer systems (e.g. finance specific)

Tool	Explanation	Strengths	Weaknesses / Challenges	Examples of use
	of reviews on say a quarterly basis.			
Corroboration by local government officials	Local Government officials could be engaged to corroborate reported implementation, through phone call / emails or meetings	• Involvement of key stakeholder • Officials value their role • Opportunity to strengthen local government engagement with community	• May be biased • Have a range of duties so may not be able to do properly	• Targeting • Activity monitoring
Community based monitoring	Persons in the community agree and are trained to monitor the programme.	• Strengthens community participation and ownership of programme • May increase acceptance • Community members are continuously present	• Community members may be unwilling to criticise for fear of programme withdrawal • Requires a lot of training • Need to establish direct communication lines • Need to ensure monitors are representative	• Activity monitoring
Peer review	Monitoring by another, similar organisation. One NGO monitors the work of another. Could also be done within an agency (one team monitors another) or by neighbouring relief committees.	• Gives you an separate critical view • Learning opportunity if done between agencies • Separation between monitors and implementers	• Acceptance of monitors • Ability of organisations to effectively monitor others	• Activity monitoring • Post Distribution Monitoring • Impact monitoring. • Resource Transfer
Triangulated monitoring	A group of local NGOs, vendors, local government officials and community members are organised and agree to sign off on each other's activities.	• Access wide perspectives from various levels to give a rounded picture of the programme and how it is doing	• Method may be complicated and time consuming to set up and the dynamics may need careful management to be maintained.	• Activity monitoring • Impact monitoring
Call centres	Staff or partners provide an agreed	• Allows for some	• Beneficiaries need to	• Post Distribution

Tool	Explanation	Strengths	Weaknesses / Challenges	Examples of use
Call Out	percentage of beneficiary names and mobile numbers in an area where they have carried out an activity. Remote monitors based at the call centre call the beneficiaries to verify whether the activity has taken place and what was actually done. Beneficiaries are asked a series of questions, unknown to the activity implementers.	independent verification	- have access to phones - Language	Monitoring
Call centres Call In	Beneficiaries are provided information and can either call or send SMS messages to a central call centre/number, where information can be collected. This model allows for direct feedback from the community to remote monitors.	Increases accountability	- Beneficiaries need to have access to communicate - Lack of understanding - Validation of feedback - Overlap with complaints and response mechanisms	- Activity monitoring - Post Distribution Monitoring
Crowd sourcing / Social Media	Involves the use of one or many tools/platforms for obtaining information from large groups of people e.g. SMS, facebook, twitter. Can post about activities for people to comment or get people to respond to specific questions.	- Gather a wide range of inputs - Collect 'live' comments	- Needs careful design - Difficult to analyse	- Activity monitoring - Situational Analysis

Annex 3 – UNICEF Checklist for implementation of remote programming³⁵

Guiding Principle	Issues	Actions
<i>Programme Criticality Review</i>	Establishing the acceptable security risk for staff working on various activities	Identification of programme activities and justification for remote programming Analysis of the impact of suspension or complete withdrawal of UNICEF Country Programme The justification for implementing under remote programming should be review on a regular basis and aligned to other planning tools as appropriate - at a minimum on a yearly basis
<i>Non-security Risk Assessment</i>	Assessment of the non-security risk of UNICEF's shift to remote programming Implication of risk transfer to Partners	Conduct structured risk assessments
<i>Conflict analysis</i>	A solid analysis of the political context, conflict dynamics and stakeholder interests, the implications of transferring security risk from UNICEF to partners is needed.	Conduct conflict analysis
<i>Cost Analysis</i>	Assessment of the cost implications of shifting to remote programming	Analysis of costs implication on the overall budget envelope for transitioning to remote programming and the required capital investments and recurrent costs
<i>Acceptable non-security risk</i>	The Acceptable Risk Framework tells us the maximum acceptable security risk, but there is no equivalent tool to tell us the maximum acceptable non-security risks are. This is an internal UNICEF management decision, which must be based on strong analysis.	Regional Director makes decision
<i>Exit Strategy</i>	Exit strategies from remote programming modalities should be included at the onset, so Country Offices can work towards exiting remote programming modalities as soon as possible.	Establishment of a national capacity development strategy can play a critical role to exit from remote programming
<i>Donor Dialogue</i>	Sensitization of donors on UNICEF approach to remote programming	Presentation to donors on the rationale and justification for the shift to remote programming. This should as a minimum include: ✓ Remote programming approach ✓ M&E approach ✓ Cost Implications ✓ UNICEF value-added (national capacity development, knowledge management and sharing)
<i>Due Diligence</i>	Vetting of partner's material, technical and financial capacity Checking of partners in relation to international and national sanction lists Analysis of implication of working with NSEs	Ensure compliance to international and national sanction conditionality
<i>Contracting Arrangement</i>	Ensure appropriate contracting arrangements are used to replace presence of UNICEF staff	Identification of appropriate contracting modalities for the types of programming activities
<i>Needs Assessments</i>	Identification of alternative data sources to be included in initial and ongoing needs assessment	Ensure to always triangulate assessment through utilization of a wide range of information sources
<i>Monitoring</i>	Identification of monitoring modalities appropriate for the area of operation	UNICEF should ensure to utilize a mix of remote monitoring instruments
<i>Evaluation</i>	Identification of the types and scope of	Identification and assessment of contractors available

Guiding Principle	Issues	Actions
	evaluations possible in the remote programming environment	to conduct evaluations
<i>Humanitarian Principles</i>	Partners involved in remote programming need to understand and adherence to humanitarian principles	Identification of partners with similar values as UNICEF Sensitize partners on humanitarian principles as part of partner orientation sessions
<i>Accountability to beneficiaries and donors</i>	Upward and downward accountability to donors and beneficiaries	Involvement to the extent possible of beneficiaries in the programme design and implementation Ensure regular dialogue with donors throughout programme management cycle
<i>Assessment of Local Partners</i>	Partner capacity assessments need to be carried out to determine appropriate level of implementation responsibility	Identification of capable and trusted partners and contractors, with the required potential to operate effectively in the affected areas Establishment of a national capacity development strategies
<i>Communication Strategies</i>	Communication strategies are needed to mitigate the negative effect of absence of UNICEF staff, reduced visibility	Review communication and advocacy strategies to ensure they address UNICEF's approach and value-added in remote programming Strengthening of local partners knowledge of UNICEF CCCs in Humanitarian Action

Annex 4 – UNICEF How to assess non-security enterprise risks of remote programming³⁵

Before making a decision to use remote programming modalities, a systematic approach must be taken to understand potential non-security risks. These risks should be assessed and prioritised in accordance to UNICEF's Enterprise Risk Management²³ (ERM) and guided by UNICEF's Risk Management Framework (RMF). It may be useful to structure this analysis by rating the likelihood and impact of each threat on a 1-5 scale, illustrated below (this is the same methodology as in the SRA). Key threats whose risk should be examined are suggested in this guidance, but the list is not exhaustive.

Non-security threat risk assessment example:

Decision: Contract national NGO to conduct rapid assessment in location x for all emergencies for 1 year
Threat: National NGO is will not sufficiently capture gender dimensions
Risk: Low

Impact/Likelihood	Low - 1	Medium - 2	High - 3	Very High - 4	Unacceptable 5
Unacceptable - 5					
Very High - 4					
High - 3		The impact would be high, as women and girls have consistently been shown to be most affected; Likelihood is medium, after developing capacity of NGO.			
Medium - 2					
Low - 1					

Following is a non-exhaustive list of threats that should be considered, with mitigation measures to lower the risk.

- **Threat: Donor relations are negatively impacted by use of remote programming.** Remote programming increases the risk for these donor agencies, e.g. lower quality of implementation, monitoring and evaluations. Donors may also not see the value added of UNICEF when most activities are contracted out.

Mitigation measures:

- Share with donors a structured risk analysis that clearly documents threats and risks.
- Establish a common understanding with donors on the acceptable risk level for specific non-security risks, with reference to the [Busan Declaration](#) commitments to “manage rather than avoid risk, including through the development of joint risk management frameworks with providers of development cooperation.”
- Regularly engage with donors on risks from the design stage to programme implementation and evaluation
- Make UNICEF's value-added role in assembling partners clear.

- **Threat: UNICEF funds benefit individuals and entities subject to anti-terror legislation and sanctions.** Sanctions and listings of individuals and entities may create increased risks for

humanitarian agencies using remote programming modalities. Donor governments have over the past years increasingly made humanitarian funding conditional on assurances that it is not benefiting listed individuals, entities or organisations. UNICEF may as a consequence of relying on partners get exposed to liability risks through partners.

Mitigation measures:

- Establish a common understanding with donors on due diligence requirements. This should be done in close consultation with UNICEF HQ.
 - Establish comprehensive vetting procedures of local partners in collaboration with members of the UNCT.
 - Ensure that all staff members are familiar with current sanctions regimes, and that relevant information on the issue flows between staff members at different levels.
- **Threat: UNICEF funds are misappropriated and programmes do not reach the intended beneficiaries.** Remote programming transfers programme implementation and monitoring from UNICEF staff. This inevitably decreases UNICEF's direct oversight over implementing partners; and may increase risk of misappropriation.

Mitigation measures:

- Use of sureties and bank guarantees returnable upon completion of deliverables;
 - Use of partners with sufficient financial resources to re-pay any misappropriated supplies or funds;
 - Use of appropriate contracting modalities with clear benchmarks and deliverables, and clear means of verification adapted to third party monitoring capacity.
 - Establishment of Quality Assurance Teams to monitor financial management under remote programming;
 - Utilisation of multiple monitoring modalities to oversee programme implementation, including overt and stealth monitoring; verification including films and pictures;
 - Wide consultation, including with local community groups, in the design and implementation of remote programming, to ensure accountability of resources; and
 - Information sharing within the UNCT/HCT on performance of relevant partners used in remote programming
- **Threat: UNICEF is unable to obtain reliable and unbiased information and assessments.** Remote programming entails immediate reduced security risks to UNICEF staff, but may significantly limit UNICEF's ability to assess humanitarian needs in affected localities.

Mitigation measures:

- Train partners on methods and standards for good qualitative data collection
- Critically evaluate data once collected, including data cleaning
- Use standardized methods of information collection
- Invest in good data management in the office, including GIS.
- Use innovative technological solutions, like data pens, audio-visual materials, SMS and GPS where capacity of partners allow.
- Use multiple independent sources of information

➤ **Identification of potential partners**

The below table highlight key issues in relation to working with different partners using remote programming modalities, and outlines key advantages and disadvantages.

Presence at field level	Description	Potential Advantages	Potential Threats
<i>International NGO</i>	UNICEF funds international NGO through a PCA, SSFA or ICC	• INGOs may have technical expertise to implement complex programmes • Financial oversight and programme results may be stronger • Likely to share values with UNICEF	• INGOs may face operational restrictions similar to UNICEF • Less national capacity development • Donors may not see the value-added of UNICEF • More likely to suspend activities if staff are targets of violence
<i>National NGO</i>	UNICEF funds national/ local NGO through a PCA, SSFA, or ICC	• Stronger national capacity development and sustainability • May have lower costs	• May have limited technical capacity and financial management • Possibly weaker understanding of humanitarian principles
<i>National or local government authorities</i>	UNICEF develops AWP with national or local authorities specifying outputs and activities to be implemented	• Promotes development of national capacity to deliver emergency relief • Strong sustainability	• May undermine neutrality and impartiality, if government is a party to the conflict • Government may not have local support and access to deliver humanitarian assistance • Financial oversight may in some cases be weak
<i>Community Based Organisations</i>	UNICEF funds CBOs or local leaders to implement portions of the UNICEF programme through ICCs or CICS	• Partners have strong interest in the proper implementation of activities • Promotes community participation • In-depth knowledge of the local context	• Community capacity may be weak • Scalability may be impossible • UNICEF may face communication difficulties to engage with local communities, negatively impacting monitoring • Financial oversight may be weak
<i>Private contractors</i>	UNICEF establishes a service agreement with the private sector through ICCs or LTAs	• Possible to ensure high technical level of expertise • Easy to structure contracts against deliverables • Easier recourse for non-delivery	• Possible higher cost • Minimum incentive to engage with local population in programme delivery – lack of incentives to promote for equity • Difficult to adhere to humanitarian principles

Annex 5 – TEARFUND Summary checklist for remote project monitoring good practices³³

	Project monitoring good practice recommendation	Check?
1	Programmatic considerations, including recommendations to:	
	• Consider limiting the size and/or scope of the programme	
	• Implement multi-region projects in both secure and insecure locations	
	• Pursue and sustain positive community relationships to encourage acceptance and access	
2	Targeted recruitment of local, national and international staff, and personnel management, including recommendations to ensure that:	
	• Local staff demonstrate existing capacity and the potential to develop capacity	
	• Team leaders demonstrate strength in capacity building and team motivation	
	• National staff who are less vulnerable to conflict when visiting insecure locations are recruited and adequately briefed on risk assessment	
	• Nationals from the diaspora are considered for expatriate positions	
3	Capacity building initiatives for local staff and/or partners, including recommendations to:	
	• Develop a regular internal training schedule (quarterly to biannually)	
	• Invest in collaborative training events with local/international actors in the humanitarian and development community	
	• Arrange cross-programme exposure visits	
	• Invest in international training events (using training-of-trainers approaches)	
	• Promote good practice presentations (internal and external)	

Continued on next page

	Project monitoring good practice recommendation	Check?
4	Ensuring facilitation of regular face-to-face meetings, such as: • Grant review meetings • Project inception workshops • Programme review and planning meetings • Local staff meetings • Meetings with other project stakeholders (eg beneficiaries, community, local government, national government)	
5	Promotion of organisational values and ethos, including recommendations to: • Capacity build local staff / partners on international codes and standards • Capacity build local staff / partners on own organisational values • Promote team building activities • Ensure regular face-to-face interaction and communication	
6	Developing a remote management strategy, considering factors relevant to the: • Foundations (programmatic considerations, recruitment, logistics, finance systems) • Preparation (adapting all existing systems to the context of remote management) • Implementation (implementing the remote management approach, referring back to new methods of operating and supporting programme monitoring) • Review (conducting ongoing assessments and reviews, documenting the learning, and improving remote management programming)	
7	Tightening controls and building micro-management approaches to monitoring, including to: • Ensure additional layers of sign-off and decision-making authority at project office • Increase the frequency of reporting • Increase the frequency of project review meetings • Conduct spot-check, unannounced monitoring visits to project offices	
8	Ensure dedicated monitoring and evaluation capacity is instigated at programme and project level, such as: • Programme-wide advisers (M&E or Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning – MEAL) • Project or region-specific officers (M&E or MEAL) • Other models (eg Quality Assurance Unit, M&E teams etc)	
9	Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework, at programme and project level • Develop programme-wide M&E (or MEAL) framework • Develop project or region-specific M&E (or MEAL) framework	
10	Research and invest in information and communication technologies to support remote monitoring, including recommendations to: • Develop web-based project monitoring • Invest in global positioning systems (GPS referencing) • Use photography as a monitoring tool • Use video monitoring	
11	Peer monitoring, including recommendations to: • Promote cross-agency monitoring • Promote local government monitoring • Arrange cross-project exchange visits and monitoring within own organisation • Contract monitoring assignments to external sources	
12	Beneficiary- and community-led monitoring, including recommendations to: • Recruit community facilitators and/or mobilisers • Use existing structures within the community to support ongoing project monitoring • Use community-based surveying tools • Consider community-implemented and monitored programming	
13	Greater collaboration between organisations of the humanitarian and development community, including recommendations to: • Facilitate and/or participate in best practice learning events • Facilitate and/or participate in training and capacity building workshops • Share resources between agencies (monitoring and beneficiary accountability) • Use existing structures to support ongoing collaboration (eg Clusters; UN OCHA) • Engage with local and national humanitarian and development coordination bodies	

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