

Field Mission to Kharkivska and Donetsk oblasts



Report | 05-06 March, 2024

Destinations: Turove, Zolochivska hromada, Bogodukhivskiy raion, Kharkiv oblast
Makarove, Zolochivska hromada, Bogodukhivskiy raion, Kharkiv oblast
Kharkiv
Lyman, Lymanska hromada, Kramatorskiy raion, Donetsk obl.
Yarova, Lymanska hromada, Kramatorskiy raion, Donetsk obl.

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3. Action Points
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5. Results of the Field Mission

Executive Summary

March 05-06 2024, the WFP Monitoring Unit with the assistance of Food Security and Livelihoods Cluster conducted a comprehensive field mission in Kharkivska and Donetsk oblasts, monitoring WFP implementing partners and assessing the food security situation. The mission revealed that, despite coping strategies relying on kitchen gardens and humanitarian aid, stability in the monitored areas is precarious. Coordination challenges persist among cluster partners, necessitating additional resources and mapping efforts. The Lyman community faces a pressing need for building materials due to extensive house damage, while agricultural challenges include limited cattle, unsafe pastures, and the need for safe feeding practices. Cash assistance is crucial for settlements with market access, and the use of Starlink is essential for stable communication in areas with unstable mobile coverage. Institutional feeding requires flexibility and collaboration, and additional support for online education is needed in Donetsk oblast. The mission emphasized the interconnectedness of agricultural livelihoods, the persistent threat of landmines, and the importance of adaptable, collaborative humanitarian responses to ensure the well-being of affected populations.

Introduction

On March 05-06, 2024, the WFP Monitoring Unit initiated a field mission to analyze the situation and monitor the activities of WFP implementing partners in Kharkivska and Donetsk oblasts.

According to the mission plan, the work of WFP's implementing partner in Bohodukhivskiy raion - 100% Life - was monitored; a survey of beneficiaries who received institutional feeding assistance in Kharkiv was conducted; and the work of partners in Kramatorskiy raion of Donetsk oblast (Angels of Salvation) was monitored.

The organization of this field mission helped to see the work of partners in different modalities: mobile distribution point, institutional feeding, stationary distribution point, which allowed us to study these approaches and obtain relevant information from all key stakeholders: partners, representatives of local administrations, and beneficiaries.

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Action Points

- Food security in the monitored areas remains stable only due to humanitarian support. Coping strategies are mainly based on kitchen gardens and humanitarian aid in rural areas, and by accumulating utility debts and replacing medicines with cheaper counterparts.
- There is still a problem of additional coordination between the cluster partners in providing humanitarian assistance to the affected population. To address this issue, additional internal resources of the cluster need to be mobilized (more meetings between the CFP and representatives of organizations in the field), and additional mapping of partners working in Kharkivska and Donetsk oblasts is needed to visualize their presence.
- There is a great need for building materials in the Lyman community (Yarova, Sosnove, Novooleksandrivka), with more than 50% of the private houses having significant damage, circulation of the document through ICWG members are in high necessity.
- Additional attention should be paid to the agricultural component. In the monitored settlements, there is a small number of cattle without proper veterinary support and a big problem with providing safe feeding for animals (almost all pastures are mined), so people need to buy hay to feed their livestock. In terms of poultry farming, the population needs additional assistance with incubators and broiler chickens in rural areas.
- The special attention to the land release is required due to the large mine contamination of the lawns and fields, which is negatively impacted to the traditional Coping strategies for the population (agriculture, livestock and apiculture).
- Due to the use of lawns as kitchen gardens in neighbourhoods with multi-storey buildings, Lyman has the opportunity to increase the ability to grow food for consumption (vegetables and root crops).
- In the monitored settlements, there was no access to markets for their own products, and these settlements are unable to sell surplus products of their own production (lack of public transport and closed access to the nearest big settlement Kozacha Lopan), so they are supported with cash and in-kind assistance to cover basic expenses.
- - Due to the unstable mobile coverage in remote areas, using Starlink or Satellite Phones as an additional communication channel is a necessity to maintain stable communication, not an additional feature.
- Strengthening institutional feeding should be carried out in close cooperation with key stakeholders and should have flexibility in providing assistance (diversification of kits according to institutional profiles).
- In the monitored settlements, children are still living (Donetsk oblast) additional support for online education is required.
- To focus the WASH Cluster attention on strengthening the capacity of hospitals in Kharkiv city to use and preserve drinking water by installing reverse osmosis systems.

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General Mission Overview

The distance from Dnipro to the first point of the route, the village of Turove in Kharkiv Oblast, is 257 km. The route was mainly along the highway, with fields for planting crops stretching along the roads. A large number of fields have been plowed and are ready for the sowing campaign. There is a large number of fields with unharvested sunflower crops in Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska and Donetsk oblasts. In all three oblasts, this phenomenon is related to the following factors:

- the inability to store the crop in granaries due to their absence (destroyed during active hostilities),
- the high cost of storing seeds in available granaries, and the inability to harvest the two-year-old crop due to mined or contaminated fields. In addition,
- a small number of fields were sown with winter wheat in these areas, which is not a typical indicator for this period of time.

March 06, 2024 Turove village, Makarove village, Zolochivska hromada, Bohodukhivskiy raion, Kharkivska oblast.

Turove are located within the Zolochivska hromada, closer to the border with the Russian Federation. The main way to communicate with large agglomerations is through dirt roads, and the entrance to the nearest town of Kozacha Lopan is restricted for civilians due to the high risk of shelling and close proximity to the border with Russia.

At the time of the monitoring, 71 people lived in Turove village. The vast majority of people living in the area are elderly. There is no access to social and medical facilities, there are no shops, post offices, outpatient clinics or other medical and premedical institutions in the settlements. Mobile communication is difficult and does not cover most of the rural agglomeration of Turove-Makarove. There is no Internet connection in the agglomeration, which makes it impossible to provide education for preschool and school-age children through online education.

There is no centralized gas supply and no water supply and sanitation. Access to drinking water is provided through wells or boreholes. There is access to electricity. Liquefied gas in cylinders and solid fuel (briquettes, firewood, coal) are used for heating and cooking. There is a suburban railway station within 10 km. Access to stores is provided by a mobile shop that brings basic goods to support the population. The mobile shop comes twice a week on Wednesday and Saturday. The assortment of goods consists of basic household goods (candles, matches, household chemicals, tea, coffee, biscuits).

Observation of the agricultural component. At the entrance to the agglomeration, we noticed fields prepared for sowing, household gardens, and garden trees (mostly apple trees) were pruned and prepared for spring sowing. The soil is pure black soil without impurities, and there are no drainage and water conservation channels on large fields with a slight slope of the soil (up to 15-20 degrees), which does not allow for the retention and removal of excess water. Irrigation systems and, according to the beneficiaries, the planted crops are not diverse. Fields that have been plowed will be used for planting mostly cash crops, home gardens

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for growing fruit and vegetables (potatoes, cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini) Perennial crops are represented by berry bushes (raspberries, currants, etc.).

The main livestock group is poultry farming. According to a survey of beneficiaries, the vast majority of poultry is chicken, and a flock of geese of up to 10 people grazed near one of the households. There are no incubators for raising poultry, and poultry farming is replenished by purchasing broiler chickens in the center of the hromada – Zolotchiv, the connection with the nearest town – Kozacha Lopan is temporary closed due to safety measures..

Cattle are completely absent in Turove village, in Makarove village there are only 3 households that have a cow, there are no bulls to continue the livestock. There are no swine.

N.B. According to the beneficiaries, before the full-scale invasion, there were up to 200 cows and bulls in the agglomeration, but due to the intense fighting, most of the livestock was either destroyed or lost due to the inability to provide sufficient supervision.

The main group of agricultural tools is available in the agglomeration in the required quantity. Also, one household has a working tractor (Makarove village).

Humanitarian Assistance overview.

Food security. The agglomeration is programmatically supported with the participation of Cluster partners (WFP and WCK). Humanitarian aid is provided through mobile distribution points. During the monitoring of Makarove village, it was noted that both WFP implementing partners and WCK mobile groups distributed



assistance on the same day. The main difference between the partners' work is that WFP distributes humanitarian aid through 100% Life lists, while WCK leaves food packages according to the quantity with the village headman, who already distributes aid to the affected population against a personal signature and in the presence of supporting identity documents (passport or a photocopy of the passport). Agglomeration assistance by two cluster partners cannot be considered a duplication of efforts. While the WFP food parcel is balanced to provide a monthly

norm of food per person, the WCK food parcel has other food items (500 ml of condensed milk, 1 kg of buckwheat porridge, 1 kg of rice, 0.5 liters of sunflower oil, canned beans, canned sardines, sugar, cookies) that complement the WFP food box. Once a week, 100% Life brings fresh bread to Svitlychne village at the rate of 4 loaves of bread per month per person as part of the Rapid Response Ration (RRR) activity, after which residents either independently or in cooperation take the bread and distribute it among other residents free of charge. To improve coordination between cluster partners, in addition to monthly meetings of cluster partners and emergency updates via WhatsApp, it is advisable to hold bilateral meetings to agree on distribution plans to prevent distribution on the same dates.

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Other humanitarian aid. According to a survey of beneficiaries, the frequency of humanitarian assistance in other areas is high. Non-food aid in the form of mattresses from UNHCR was observed at distribution points, and hygiene and dignity kits from UNICEF were distributed in the agglomeration at the end of February 2024. As part of the winterization program, households received cash transfers to purchase heating materials, but the beneficiaries could not disclose the exact amount. According to the information received from the beneficiaries, at the end of 2023 and beginning of 2024, the affected population who registered for Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) received assistance in accordance with the recommended amounts.

In accordance with the objectives of the field mission, beneficiaries and the village starosta of Makarove were interviewed using a simplified questionnaire to determine the Livelihoods coping strategy (LCS). The results of the survey were attached to this report.

March 05. Kharkiv city, Institutional Feeding.

On 05.03, a visit was made to the Municipal Non-Profit Enterprise Kharkiv Regional Hospital "V.I. Shapovalov Regional Medical Clinical Center for Urology and Nephrology". The main task was to receive feedback from the medical center staff on the humanitarian assistance received from WFP partners in March 2023.. After the survey, the needs of the medical facility were identified. Due to the medical profile of the hospital, the main group of products supplied to the patients' tables are dietary products. At the moment, there is a monthly need to receive different types of cereals according to the list below: Barley porridge (150 kg), wheat porridge (150 kg), buckwheat (150 kg), pearl barley (150 kg) and oatmeal (100 kg). In accordance with the general issues, the need to provide bottled water in case of emergency power outages and the possibility of installing a reverse osmosis system to purify technical water to drinking water was identified.

March 06, 2024, Lyman, Yarova village, Lymanska hromada, Kramatorskyi raion, Donetsk oblast.



Lyman is located less than 12 kilometers away from the active combat zone. According to estimates, up to 8,000 people live in Lyman, and 13,000-14,000 people live in the Lyman community. The area is predominantly rural, but there are districts with high-rise buildings (5-9 storey houses). Gas supply has been partially restored in Lyman, electricity has been restored, and water supply and sewage systems are partially operational in densely built-up districts. The banking system (Privatbank and Oschadbank) is working in the town, and small shops are open. The

pricing policy in Lyman is quite high and comparable to prices in large cities (potatoes - 25-30 UAH/kg, pork 250-300 UAH/kg, chicken eggs 50 UAH/dozen, butter - 90 UAH per 180 g), while the unemployment rate is high due to the closure of almost all production and manufacturing industries in general (according to the statistics, the average percentage of unemployment rate in Ukraine is 18,3 %¹, in the Lymanska hromada more than 50%). Among the main problems of the population in the city is a large percentage of people with debts for utilities. Mobile communication is a separate problem. First-line medical facilities (outpatient clinics)

¹ [Unemployment rate will fall to 18.3% by year-end - NBU \(ukrinform.net\)](https://ukrinform.net)

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and pharmacies remain open in the town. The post office is open. Since 2024, suburban rail service has been restored using a diesel train (the train connects Lyman with Sviatohirsk and Izyum and nearby villages). Suburban bus service is active to Sloviansk and Kramatorsk.

Overview of the agricultural component. Due to intense shelling, most agricultural land cannot be used. The main factors affecting this are the high risk of mines and the impossibility of cultivating the land due to destroyed mechanized equipment. Residents of Lyman who live in multi-storey buildings create vegetable gardens in their yards, dividing the land in equal proportions among the residents, while in the private sector people use existing vegetable gardens. The soils in Lyman and the surrounding area are predominantly sandy lack soil, which additionally requires mineralization and fertility improvement. The main group of vegetables grown in the kitchen gardens is standard - fruit and vegetables. There are no kitchen gardens or perennials in urban areas.



The main gardening tool for the affected population is limited and scarce in the market.

The issue of animal husbandry is quite complex to analyze. Based on the possibilities of urban development, it is advisable to consider providing support to the affected population in the form of chickens and places for them, cattle are available in private housing, but veterinary support is an important component that cannot be covered by the population alone.

Overview of humanitarian assistance. According to the main activities, Lyman and its agglomeration are covered by the main partners of the cluster. On a regular basis (monthly), assistance is provided through WFP, GEM, WCK, in addition to short-term support programs provided by Peaceful Sky Kharkiv, New Way, NRC. The distribution points are stationary, with areas for protecting civilians from shelling (Shelter) and small warehouses for storage. The distribution of aid is based on pre-registration lists, taking into account the security situation (without long lines of beneficiaries). Bread distribution is not carried out in the Lyman hromada, despite the fact that the largest bakery in Lyman was completely destroyed and bread can only be delivered from Izyumskiy raion of Kharkivska oblast or from Sloviansk (Sviatohirsk has the capacity to strengthen its bakery and has convenient product logistics).

Other humanitarian aid. According to the beneficiaries, the delivery of drinking water from the Sloviansk resort was organized. Regarding to Winterization project, the affected population received assistance from both humanitarian organizations in the form of fuel briquettes, stoves, gas stoves with gas cylinders, blankets and rugs, solar-powered lanterns, and local authorities (firewood for heating). The issue of providing hygiene kits for the affected population was raised. According to beneficiaries, hygiene kits were last distributed about 3 months ago. . According to the information received from the beneficiaries, Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) was provided in full in accordance with the recommended amounts last summer.

March 06, 2024. Yarove, Lymanska Hromada, Kramatorskyi raion, Donetsk oblast

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Yarove village (the starostat includes Oleksandrivka village with a population of 40 people, Sosnove village with a population of 3 people and Yarove village with a population of 818 people) is located 15 km away from the combat zone. The village experienced active combats in May and September 2022. Most households are damaged or completely destroyed. Electricity and mobile communication are available. The Starostat has Starlink and a generator for public use. A mobile branch of Oschadbank visits the village once a month.

There is a social bus that goes to Izyum and Lyman once a week. Suburban connection is provided by the restored railway (from Sosnove village).

The situation in the Yarova agglomeration underscores the complex interplay between agricultural livelihoods and the persistent threat of landmines and explosive remnants. Despite the predominantly rural landscape, the inherent dangers posed by the presence of mines severely restrict traditional farming practices such as grazing and haymaking, thereby exacerbating the challenges faced by the local population.



A recent survey conducted by local administration representatives highlights the significance of agricultural activities in the area, particularly in households where livestock rearing forms a cornerstone of livelihoods. The statistics reveal a substantial presence of livestock, with 16 cows, 7 bulls, 24 goats, and 3 sheep distributed across the agglomeration. Additionally, the prevalence of poultry in almost every household further underscores the importance of animal husbandry in sustaining rural communities.

However, the agricultural sector is not without its challenges. The accessibility and affordability of cattle feed emerge as critical concerns, amplifying the economic strain on farmers grappling with the repercussions of landmine contamination. The perilous conditions of mined meadows render grazing untenable, forcing farmers to rely on expensive fodder purchases to meet the dietary needs of their livestock.

Addressing the fodder shortage necessitates a multifaceted approach that combines short-term relief measures with long-term sustainable solutions. Immediate interventions may include targeted aid packages to alleviate the financial burden of fodder purchases on vulnerable households. Moreover, initiatives aimed at diversifying livestock feed sources, such as promoting alternative forage crops or implementing feed supplementation programs, can help mitigate the impact of fodder scarcity while enhancing agricultural resilience.

Furthermore, concerted efforts are needed to address the root causes of landmine contamination and facilitate the safe rehabilitation of agricultural land. Collaborative partnerships between government agencies, international organizations, and local communities are essential in implementing comprehensive

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landmine clearance initiatives and fostering the adoption of risk-reduction strategies to safeguard agricultural livelihoods.



Investments in agricultural infrastructure, including the rehabilitation of mechanized equipment destroyed by explosive remnants, are also crucial for revitalizing farming operations and promoting sustainable agricultural development in the agglomeration.

By prioritizing the accessibility of cattle feed and addressing the underlying challenges posed by landmine contamination, stakeholders can work towards fostering a more secure and prosperous agricultural landscape in the Yarova agglomeration. Through coordinated action and sustained commitment, the resilience of rural communities can be strengthened, ensuring their continued prosperity in the face of adversity.



Overview of humanitarian assistance. According to the main activities, the city of Lyman and its agglomeration are covered by the main partners of the cluster. Assistance is provided on a regular basis (monthly) through WFP. Complementary assistance to the food parcels was also provided by representatives of the starosta. The affected population received dietary supplement (see photo). The entire agglomeration is covered according to the carpeting plan, meaning that all residents receive assistance. However, none of the cluster's partners distribute bread in this location, although the agglomeration is close to Sviatohirsk, which has the ability to provide bread to the affected population.

Other humanitarian aid. According to the beneficiaries and the head of the agglomeration, there is a great need for construction, roofing and window materials. As noted above, the high-intensity contact line passed twice within the agglomeration, causing significant destruction. Due to the destruction of all schools in the community, education is provided online, but the cost of tablets is unaffordable for most residents, so additional monitoring and needs assessment is desirable by the Education Cluster.

Results of the Field Mission

The field mission proved to be instrumental in addressing the urgent needs of the affected population and gaining valuable insights into the prevailing food security situation in the area. Despite the challenges posed by hostilities and limited communication infrastructure, the mission successfully fulfilled its objectives through strategic coordination and innovative solutions.

Short but productive meetings were conducted with representatives from implementing partners, local administrations, and beneficiaries, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges

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faced by the community. Through direct engagement with households, a preliminary analysis of livelihoods was conducted to ascertain the minimum requirements for sustaining life in the region. This firsthand assessment provided crucial information for informing future intervention strategies and resource allocation.

Furthermore, the mission served as a conduit for gathering critical data on the additional needs of the population, which will be relayed to relevant Clusters for further response and integration into action plans. By leveraging collaborative networks and partnerships, the mission aims to ensure a coordinated and targeted approach to addressing the evolving needs of the community.

Effective communication proved to be indispensable throughout the mission, despite the logistical constraints imposed by the conflict environment. Thanks to the support of the ET Cluster, essential working contacts were maintained, enabling seamless coordination with the Security Informational and Operational Center (SIOC) and other stakeholders. Additionally, the utilization of Starlink technology enabled the mission team to adhere to schedules and participate in regular online meetings, ensuring continuity and alignment with overarching objectives.

The success of the field mission underscores the importance of adaptability, resilience, and collaboration in humanitarian response efforts. By leveraging innovative solutions and fostering strategic partnerships, the mission remains committed to delivering timely and effective assistance to vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas. Moving forward, ongoing communication and coordination will remain paramount in ensuring the sustained impact of interventions and promoting the resilience and well-being of affected people.