

Terms of Reference

Protection and Gender Analysis of Cash and Voucher Programmes

Duration: 25 days

INTRODUCTION

As part of its transition from food aid to food assistance agency, WFP embarks on innovative ways to reach food-insecure populations. An important innovation is the use of *cash and voucher (C&V) transfers*, which are aimed at addressing hunger in an environment where food is available and markets functioning but beyond the reach of many. C&V especially lend themselves to use in urban areas and they benefit the local economy. While WFP is scaling up its use of C&V approach, it is necessary to carefully examine not only the efficiency but also the effectiveness of such food assistance tool in various operational contexts.

One way to examine the effectiveness of C&V programmes is from a protection and gender perspective. How do C&V transfers affect the risks faced by beneficiary communities? How do they positively contribute to the protection of affected populations, particularly women, who constitute the majority of WFP's beneficiaries? Understanding the outcomes of C&V programmes will help WFP improve its intervention.

ASSIGNMENT

It is envisaged that this research will be undertaken in two phases:

Phase 1: Desk review and development of framework and methodology for field research

Phase 2: Field research and consolidation of findings and recommendations

Working closely with the Protection Team under the Humanitarian Policy and Transition Service and the Cash and Voucher Unit, and in consultation with other relevant HQ Units and WFP Country Offices, the Consultant will undertake the activities required of Phase 1, which include the following:

1. To conduct a desk review exploring the constraints and implications of C&V programmes on the protection of recipient affected populations, drawing from a broad range of materials available in food assistance and other sectors. The review will map and analyse protection and gender related issues at community and households levels.
2. To develop practical, programmatic recommendations in applying a protection/ gender lens to C&V programmes assessment, design and implementation.
3. To develop the terms of reference and framework for field studies following the desk review, and to identify countries in Asia, Africa, Middle East and South America for case studies based on specific criteria.

DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Total days: 25 working days (desk review), divided into: 12,5 days of research and 12,5 days of writing.

LOCATION OF ASSIGNMENT:

Home but the consultant may be required to travel to Rome for one or two meetings.

REQUIRED EXPERTISE

1. Strong research and analytical skills
2. At least 7 years of experience with WFP, other UN agencies or NGOs working on food assistance and cash and voucher, and field experience is desirable
3. Understanding of protection, human rights and gender issues
4. Post-graduate degree in social science, development economics, international relations, or related field

Concept Paper

Taking Precautions with Cash and Vouchers - a Protection Perspective

1. Background

WFP is scaling up the use of cash and voucher (C&V) transfers as a means of helping food-secure populations in a climate of conflict, the financial crisis, high food prices and natural disasters. They enable WFP to address hunger in an environment where food is available and markets functioning, but beyond the reach of many.

Cash transfers provide targeted vulnerable and food insecure populations with money, whereas *voucher transfers* can be redeemed for food items in selected shops. WFP is using innovative ways to deliver C&V assistance, such as scratch cards or “e-vouchers” delivered to mobile phones by text message. C&V transfer especially lend themselves to use in urban areas and they benefit the local economy. While WFP looks closely at contexts and appropriateness, C&V transfers may not always be more efficient or more effective than food aid.

2. Objectives of the Operations Research

Although early research resulted in a primarily positive protection audit, more recent studies suggest doubts are emerging over protection and gender outcomes of some C&V programmes. Thus, as WFP is scaling up its use of C&V approach, it is necessary to carefully examine not only the efficiency but also the effectiveness as a food assistance tool in various operational contexts.

The primary goal of this research will be to explore the protection and gender outcomes and implications of C&V programmes for WFP beneficiaries. It will seek to understand whether C&V programmes are contributing not only to food security but also to the promotion of protection and gender goals for the WFP beneficiary communities. The research will therefore map protection and gender related issues, and identify the necessary steps involved in applying a protection and gender lens to C&V programmes, with the aim of applying a “do-no-harm” approach at the minimum. And, broadly, it will suggest ways that the overall effectiveness of C&V activities can be enhanced by integrating the protection concerns of target groups in the formulation and implementation of C&V programmes. The research will also aim to identify, where applicable, protection and gender-related costs and risks that should be considered when designing and implementing C&V programmes.

3. Problem Analysis

a. Gender

Context-specific gender analysis is just as essential to cash transfers as ensuring markets are working and prices are reasonable. Whether cash transfers, designed to strengthen local markets, also empower women and change gender roles is open to question and is dependent on the context. The research will, amongst other things, evaluate the levels of participation and seek to establish whether women are well positioned to decide if C&V is their preferred method of assistance. Other issues the research will examine include whether it is feasible, both in emergencies and other contexts, for WFP to aim to empower women through C&V; whether women influence the decision to move from traditional food assistance to C&V; whether a special methodology is required to analyse C&V issues, both before and after implementation, related to control of resources and the decision making process at household and community level.

C&V are a possible trigger for domestic or other violence. Giving cash directly to women may create protection concerns. The research will examine these issues together with whether C&V are a possible or actual trigger for a rupture of social fabric in such a way as to alienate men or other community members.

b. Innovative methods of delivery and use of technology

Innovative methods of delivery of assistance may have left some beneficiaries without assistance. Examination of distribution modalities, especially in operations where mobile phones were used, will establish whether WFP adequately catered for those who do not have access to mobile phones. Whether any special in programme design is necessary to cater for certain beneficiaries not familiar with technology will be considered. In particular research will examine access to information and services for women who, in gender conservative contexts, have limited scope to locate and use information. And research will examine the complexities of a child-headed household receiving the transfer through formal banking channels.

d. Shop keepers and bankers

Shop keepers and banks as implementing partners need to be aware of and apply humanitarian principles. Similarly, they must be aware of and active in preventing sexual **exploitation** and **abuse** (PSEA). Research will establish whether special monitoring measures have been in place to verify that shop keepers and bankers do not abuse their position of relative power by being coercive or discriminatory. The voucher-scheme offered by shop keepers and bankers will be examined to

assess whether the transfers occur in an atmosphere of safety and dignity and whether there is a need to put preventive measures in place.

d. Targeting

Those persons who are excluded from registration because of lack of citizenship, national identity card or possession of other appropriate documentation to enable inclusion may be particularly at risk. Issues relating to targeting people marginalized though being undocumented will be identified. Initiatives to ensure the inclusion of such marginalized beneficiaries will be illustrated.

e. Understanding the cash economy

Research will establish what protection issues may arise for that small portion of marginalized beneficiaries who do not sufficiently understand the cash economy to use C&V effectively.

f. Community impact

Cash transfer experiments do not always result in positive community benefits. C&V programmes can create tension in social relations leading to protection problems within communities and between households. A balance needs to be found between the benefits of poverty reduction and any negative consequences on social relations. Changes in a local community caused by any intervention may have wider political impacts. A deeper understanding of how to address potential negative community impacts will enable WFP to more fully understand the risk involved and to target accordingly.

g. Corruption and risk management

Cash may be more attractive than in-kind assistance, and so particularly prone to being captured by elites, to diversion or to seizure by armed and criminal groups. The attractiveness of cash may create risks, both for staff transporting cash and for recipients, even if there are ways of distributing it to reduce possible security risks. Cash can also be easier to hide and thus be a safer method of delivery than more highly visible commodities. The research will examine these issues and provide WFP with additional variables to consider when assessing, implementing and monitoring C&V.

h. Political and social context

The operational context, in which WFP implements cash programmes, particularly where political instability exists, may provoke resistance from government or prevent access to beneficiaries.

Research into a protection framework for analysis in this context will assist Programme Officers place appropriate emphasis on protection issues in such complex environments.

Overall, this research will provide WFP with substantive arguments that can be taken into account when estimating or calculating the cost effectiveness of C&V. In principle, whether C&V are cost effective requires an assessment of secondary economic impacts of C&V transfers, such as effects on social cohesion, gender based violence, social behavior including the use of cash for drugs, alcohol or gambling and the political diversion of cash.

4. Methodology

a. Desk review aimed at setting out what is already known, policy statements and their implications, and identify protection gaps to be studied.

B. Field case studies in Asia, Middle East, Africa and South America to be identified following the desk review. The field research will include undertaking interviews, and/or survey, use of participatory tools including focus groups with beneficiaries and discussion with staff, partners, local, national or international NGOs and authorities.

5. Outputs

The Operations Research will result in;

- a. An analysis of protection and gender implications of WFP's C&V programmes.
- b. Identification of situations where WFP needs to be more mindful of the possible negative protection and gender impact, and describing solutions to protection concerns and detailing best case practices;
- c. Practical, programmatic recommendations for specific areas of C&V work including assessment, design, implementation, review and monitoring, and evaluation.

4. Timeframe

September – October 2011	Desk review + TOR for case studies
November 2011 – April 2011	Simultaneous case studies
May 2011	Consolidation of findings from the desk review and field studies
June	Presentation of report and recommendation
July	Final draft of report and recommendations