AN EVALUATION OF WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME EMERGENCY AID DELIVERY MODALITIES
IN ZIMBABWE

Joseph Makumbe
A Graduate of the Regent Business School, Durban, South Africa who is a Zimbabwean National

Xolelwa Linganiso
Researcher, Regent Business School, Durban, South Africa

Anis Mahomed Karodia (PhD)
Professor, Senior Academic and Researcher, Regent Business School, Durban, South Africa

ABSTRACT

This study examines World Food Programme’s food assistance modalities. World Food Programme (WFP) has moved from food aid to food assistance few years ago. This has led to the introduction of in-kind food distribution, cash and voucher transfers. The aim of this study was to establish the best and appropriate food assistance delivery modalities in the Zimbabwean context.

A survey instrument was employed to collect data from beneficiary’s country wide, where the transfer modalities are used. Convenience sampling, a form of non-probability sampling was used to collect data from 100 participants. This research used descriptive statistics for data analysis and discussions.

The results of the study revealed that there is no one right transfer modality. The relative effectiveness of different modalities depends heavily on contextual factors such as the severity of food insecurity and the functioning of markets for grains and other foods. The three modalities have relatively larger impact on improving dietary diversity. The study also point to the need to pay increased attention to delivery costs: cash transfers were always significantly cheaper to deliver than food. The findings indicate that commodity prices are significantly lower under in-kind transfers compared to cash and voucher transfers. In-kind transfers lead to a fall in prices while cash transfers lead to a positive but negligible increase in prices. Prices of goods other than those transferred are also affected, but by a small amount. The exception is in remote villages, where the price effects (both the negative effects of in-kind transfers and the positive effects of cash transfers) are considerably larger in magnitude.
The study recommended the need for intensive market assessments in areas that are earmarked for cash and/or voucher transfers; capacitating of local traders; enhancement of security on all the transfer modalities and the need to buy food commodities locally or regionally so as to cut on transport costs. This study had limitations in its research design, strategy and sampling method; hence, areas for future studies addressing these shortcomings have been identified and recommended.

Key Words: Evaluation, Modalities, Delivery, Emergency Programmes, Food, Voucher, Economic, Transfer, humanitarian, Logistics, Organizational

INTRODUCTION
The study seeks to evaluate the transfer modalities which the World Food Programme (WFP) Zimbabwe is employing to assist food insecure households. The Strategic plan 2008–2011 expanded the role of WFP from food aid to food assistance, introducing a more varied toolbox of responses, including cash and vouchers (Guarnieri, 2009). This expansion in the available resource transfer modalities is intended to ensure that responses can be closely tailored to both the needs and the context of the people that WFP supports. In 2010, WFP Zimbabwe introduced cash and vouchers to selected districts as additional transfer modalities to large-scale in-kind food distribution.

Proponents of cash and voucher based approaches argue that they can be more cost effective and timely, allow recipients greater choice and dignity, and have beneficial knock-on effects on local economic activity (Harvey, 2005). Skeptics fear that cash and voucher approaches are often impractical due to additional risks of insecurity and corruption, and the fact that targeting cash may be more difficult than food commodities. Even where they are feasible, there are concerns that it might be misused by recipients, have negative effects on local economies and potentially fuel conflicts. The study investigates where the controversies lie and to demonstrate the need for a more pragmatic, balanced and context-specific approach for Zimbabwe.

There is a growing interest and practice in the use of vouchers and cash transfers. Such interest is fuelled by the fact that markets in Zimbabwe function better than they used to, food systems are more integrated, the pace of urbanization is accelerating and basic financial services are increasingly diffused, including rural areas. Moreover, high international food prices have also increased interest in the use of vouchers and cash transfers under certain circumstances. Such developments are important for international assistance, as they often offer the opportunity to use innovative ways to support food-insecure people. WFP Zimbabwe is considering having more districts on board, for the cash and voucher schemes.

In the past decade, WFP has assisted millions of food-insecure people across Zimbabwe, reaching peak levels in early 2009 when hyper-inflation and a breakdown of the commercial supply-chain led to empty shelves in shops. The recent emergence of a more enabling environment in Zimbabwe, however, has enabled a shift in humanitarian support from emergency to development assistance. Consequently, WFP is moving from a ‘Hunger Response’ to a ‘Hunger Solutions-based’ approach. Current operations focus on initiating early recovery activities which offer a more sustainable solution to food insecurity and inadequate nutrition. The strategy combines relief and early recovery elements and prioritizes food assistance through in-kind food interventions, voucher and cash transfers schemes.
Objectives of the Study

- To examine the impact of each food assistance intervention in terms of the immediate impact on beneficiaries’ livelihoods and the wider economic impacts on markets, prices and conflict dynamics.
- To examine the appropriateness of each approach; how the decision to use in-kind food, cash or vouchers is chosen and on the basis on what assumptions and assessment information
- To understand each transfer modality in terms of cost, speed and beneficiary satisfaction.
- To make recommendations to WFP, on the best transfer modality to be used in Zimbabwe

Finally, this study will provide information for future researchers who wish to study humanitarian food aid delivery modalities in other countries other than Zimbabwe. The recommendations from this study could be generalized across other humanitarian agencies and the government to ensure that best approaches can be used in the delivery of assistance to food insecure livelihoods.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will review the literature on the humanitarian food assistance transfer modalities. The literature regarding transfer modalities in humanitarian food assistance primarily focuses on evaluations of previous and current emergency responses. Moreover, much of the literature on humanitarian assistance management pays particular attention to agencies within the United Nations (UN) system. Therefore, the major share of the discussion in this section is gleaned from reports commissioned by WFP. In addition, other independent reports, journal articles and books concerning food assistance transfer modalities in various humanitarian crises, and supply chain performance will be reviewed. The chapter is divided into the following sections:

Humanitarian Aid

World Vision International (2012) defined humanitarian aid as all food-supported interventions aimed at improving the food security of people living in poverty in the short and long-term, whether funded via international, national, public, or private resources. Food aid is hard to summarize succinctly due to many related issues, but in general, it is about providing food and related assistance to tackle hunger, either in emergency situations, or to help with deeper, longer term hunger alleviation and achieve food security (Barret, 2004).

Humanitarian aid or food assistance can come in different set of instruments used to address the food needs of vulnerable people. The instruments generally include in-kind food aid, vouchers and cash transfers (WFP, 2009). Humanitarian food assistance aims to ensure the consumption of sufficient safe and nutritious food in anticipation of, during, and in the aftermath of a humanitarian crisis, when food consumption would otherwise be insufficient or inadequate to avert excess mortality, emergency rates of acute malnutrition or detrimental coping mechanisms. This includes ensuring food availability, access to nutritious food, proper nutrition awareness and appropriate feeding practices. Food assistance may involve the direct provision of food, but may utilise a wider range of tools, including the transfer or provision of relevant services, in puts or commodities, cash or vouchers, skills or knowledge (European Commission, 2010).
Food aid has declined in absolute value and relative importance from over 20% of total bilateral development aid in the 1960s to less than 5% more recently. At present, some 90% of all food aid is provided in commodities rather than cash (Oxfam, 2005; Hoddinott, 2004: 1).

The WFP channels about half of all global food aid. The total expenditure by the WFP has increased as a result of its role in emergency relief, while its development role has contracted (OECD, 2005). However, the value of the WFP’s role in humanitarian assistance in the recovery/rehabilitation phases is doubtful, given its general institutional inflexibility, the restricted basket of available commodities which can create difficulties in providing culturally and nutritionally appropriate food packages, high logistical costs and uncertainty resulting from dependency on donor priorities (OECD, 2005; Clay, 2003).

Emergency in-kind food aid requires substantial logistical organisation if it is to be rapidly and effectively delivered. Nearly half of the WFP’s Tsunami relief budget of US$210 million was allocated to pay for logistics (Oxfam, 2005). The OECD (2005: 13) estimates that the inefficiency cost of providing direct transfers of food instead of financing commercial imports is at least 30%; 50% more than local food purchases. Cash is invariably more efficient than food aid in-kind (Tabor, 2002: 7).

Food aid in-kind has become increasingly controversial when it is considered in the context of longer term development plans. Devereux (2006: 11-12) considers that the cash versus food debate has become unnecessarily polarized. Depending on the context and the objectives, cash might be chosen as the resource transferred in some circumstances, and food in others. Social protection should be objectives-driven, not instrument-driven, and it should be beneficiary-driven, not donor-driven. No single relief input can be sufficient on its own and divisions between relief and development assistance are unhelpful in practice, although they can be ways of soliciting additional resources (Hay, 1986).

Emergency food aid encompassing disaster assistance and continuing humanitarian operations has become the primary focus of lower volumes of food aid. Despite critiques of its dominance in emergency appeals, in-kind food distribution continues to play a leading role in responding to emergencies. Of the 6 million metric tons of food aid provided worldwide in 2008, about 60 percent was for humanitarian purposes. Food aid made up more than 50 percent of total UN consolidated appeals in 2008 and 2009, as it had done between 2000 and 2005. As Maxwell, Young, Jaspars, Frize and Burns (2009) argue, despite many recent changes, food aid remains the largest single category of humanitarian response world-wide.

Economy
Multiplier Effects on the Local Economy
The effects of vouchers go beyond the immediate impact on household food consumption and on market prices. Cash flow generated through vouchers can produce indirect effects, which can either strengthen or weaken the programme objectives, and specifically WFP strategic objectives. These promote long-term resilience through supporting the re-establishment of livelihoods and food security of communities and families most affected by the conflict. These indirect effects are considered positive when money generated through vouchers is invested either in productive inputs creating short-term income or in assets that generate longer-term development. The effect
of a transfer through vouchers may therefore spill over from the target population to the whole local economy (Harvey, 2005).

Conclusion
This section introduced the discussion on the fundamental concepts underlying the emergency aid distribution modalities. Literature on supply chain concepts was also articulated and these include: supply chain, supply chain management and supply chain performance. The conceptual elements of in-kind food distribution, cash and voucher transfer modalities were reviewed. An in depth analysis was not undertaken in terms of the literature review.

Target Population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:119). Bryman (2008:698) defines a sample as being the segment of the population that is selected for research; it is a subset of the population. The study population consisted of 100 participants, drawn from beneficiaries of humanitarian aid in Zimbabwe.

Limitations of the Research

This study was not exempt from limitations. Covering all districts, in which WFP is distributing in-kind food, cash and vouchers, is difficult especially with time constraint. However, this study can be extended with another complementary study. Moreover, reaching all beneficiaries involved in the humanitarian operation to gather adequate information is limited. Sources for specifically cash and voucher are limited that require extra effort to complete this study successfully. With regard to the methodology employed, although justified, of the use of equal weighting of the constructs could have undermined the importance of some constructs that might have weighed heavier than the others.

The possibilities of sampling and non-sampling errors are acknowledged. Thus the measurements used in the research might not have reflected the true value of the underlying characteristic (measurement error) as perceptions are subjective and highly dependable on an individual’s state of mind (mood) on a particular day. The probability that an unanswered question was not coded properly (non-response error) may also not be ruled out. The probability that the chosen sample is not a representative of the population (sampling error) is real as the non-probabilistic purposive sampling method will be employed in this

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the survey carried out to answer the objectives of this study. The data collected is ordinal and numerical, hence quantitatively analysed. Statistical procedures were employed in the analyses using the Microsoft Excel 2010. Initially, the basic description statistics are presented followed by the statistical analysis for the hypotheses testing. The descriptive statistics encompass frequency distributions, pie charts and bar charts for graphical descriptions of data. The results of the statistical analysis are for the beneficiaries study samples. The findings of the research study are linked to the literature review.
RESPONSE STATISTICS

Table 1: Response statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distributed questionnaires</th>
<th>Received questionnaires</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Data

The findings are presented in three main sections, demographic information, income and livelihood information and distribution modalities. Each variable describing the profile of the respondents is illustrated by a frequency table, pie chart or a bar chart and a brief summary.

Gender

According to the 2011 WFP publication, Women and WFP, women make up a little over half the world's population but in many parts of the world they are more likely to go hungry than men. The majority of WFP’s beneficiaries are women and children. In many parts of the world more women than men are chronically hungry. Women are the key to improving household food security and nutritional wellbeing, and they are most often the ones who prepare food for the whole family. Experience has shown that in the hands of women, food is most likely to reach the mouths of children in need.

Table 2: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above, table 2, shows participants by gender, where males comprised 40 % of the respondents, while female comprised of 60%. In this case each gender was almost equally represented. Gender equality is not merely socially desirable, but is critical to the reduction of poverty and hunger and it is linked to the achievement of WFP’s strategic objectives, where it seeks to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.
The figure 2 above indicates that 44% of beneficiaries that participated in this survey are from the age group of 31-40 years. A collective 34% comprises of participants who are below 30 years old. 22% is the group of participants that are above 40 years.
The above figure indicates that most households are headed by women. 53% of respondents are female household heads, while 47% are male headed. Reasons to this scenario could be the following:

- The husbands are employed in urban areas or surrounding countries.
- The spouse is late
- Some men are staying with the family but just do not participate in securing food for the family

**Figure 3: Size of households**

As shown in figure 4 above, most respondents indicated that their households comprise of 3-4 beneficiaries. 33% of respondents indicated that their households have 5-6 beneficiaries, whilst 13% have more than 7. The above scenario shows that due to the on-going economic hardship people are going through, people are limiting their household size to 3-4 members.

**Figure 4: Participants residents**
As reflected in figure 5 above, 67% of the respondents are rural residents, while 33% are urban dwellers. The diagram indicates that most of WFP beneficiaries reside in rural areas. This is where most people who are vulnerable are found. There is however a considerable number of beneficiaries in urban areas, who are on the health and nutrition programme. This programme supports a number of people that are on Anti-retro therapy (ART), breast feeding mother, children under the age of five, chronically ill or aged.

**Table 3: Level of education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Grad</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 above shows that 48% of the participants acquired secondary education. 1% never went to school. Respondents, who indicated primary school as their level of education, 21%, may have failed to raise fees for secondary school. A collective 16% of respondents indicated that they attended tertiary education. No respondent who went as far as post-graduation level. According to Silman (2011:1), “the individuals who pursue secondary education are perceived to be more ambitious, motivated, self-confident and teachable than their non-degreed associates”. For beneficiaries to understand the best transfer modality they need to have basic education so that they are able to review them.

**Figure 5: Employment status**
Figure 6 above shows that 93% of the respondents are unemployed. In this group some were once employed, but for different reasons they left employment. Most of WFP beneficiaries are not able to provide themselves adequate food because they do not have money. The 7% who indicated that they are employed are not formally employed. They survive on part-time employment, such as domestic workers on nearby areas.

**Income and Livelihood**

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Conway & Chambers, 1991). Livelihoods are formed within social, economic and political contexts. Institutions, processes and policies, such as markets, social norms, and land ownership policies affect our ability to access and use assets for a favorable outcome. As these contexts change they create new livelihood obstacles or opportunities.

**Livelihood Strategy**

Livelihood strategies are the combination of activities that people choose to undertake in order to achieve their livelihood goals (Hillyer, Patil, & Hunshal, 2001). They include productive activities, investment strategies and reproductive choices. Livelihoods approaches try to understand the strategies pursued and the factors behind people’s decisions; to reinforce the positive aspects of these strategies and mitigate against constraints. The choice of strategies is a dynamic process in which people combine activities to meet their changing needs. For example, in farming households, activities are not necessarily confined to agriculture but often include non-farm activities in order to diversify income and meet household needs.

**Figure 6:** Livelihood Activities

![Livelihood Activities Chart]

Figure 7 shows that most of the households heavily rely on Agro-pastoral activities as livelihood strategy. This activity involves agricultural and pastoral activities. Under agricultural activities households produce grains and vegetables for own consumption. They also keep livestock to
support their agricultural activities. The 36% of the respondents are only into agricultural activities. Responses to this question, especially on the activities seem to have misunderstood clearly. Afro-pastoral and agricultural activities seem to be treated as interchangeable activities. Three households indicated ‘other’ livelihood activities that were not on the questionnaire. Two indicated that the usually rely on agricultural labour, while the other one relies on construction (bricklaying) labour. There was no household relying on pastoral activities as livelihood activity. Although the above information shows how the households are occupied it does not indicate the importance of the different activities according to their contribution (financial or other value or kind of benefit) to the household (Hillyer, Patil, & Hunshal, 2001).

Table 4: Sources of income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crop sale</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock sale</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual labour</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begging</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty trade</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 above shows households’ different sources of income. 12% indicated that they get their income from selling their farm produce. In this case they sell part of their produce so that they can buy other important commodities like salt or soap. The largest group indicated that they sell livestock to get income. This may mean such households would want to buy food commodities to feed the family. 20% of the households get their income through casual labour. This group provides labour to families that a well up or in the surrounding farms. A very small group, 3%, indicated that they get income through begging. Twenty one households indicated ‘other’ as their source of income. In specifying this, the respondents indicated that their main source of income is from children or relatives who work around the country and nearby countries like South Africa and Botswana. This is again not consistently received.

Most households do not have consistence and proper sources of income. A number of them being WFP beneficiaries rely on monthly food rations (in-kind, cash or vouchers). Some however indicated different sources as shown in the figure below.

Distribution modality

This section describes the type of transfer modalities the households are currently or have recently received. It also indicates how the assistance was spent with the households, effects of the assistance to the market, general challenges and beneficiaries preferred modality.
Table 5: Current transfer modality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transfer Modality</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind Food distribution</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 above indicates that 72% of the respondents have received in-kind food assistance, while 4% have received cash. 24% received conditional voucher, which they redeemed at the nearest retail outlets to get stipulated food commodities. Since in-kind food distribution is WFP’s traditional transfer modality, most of its beneficiaries are used to this although cash and voucher transfer modalities now considered as alternatives.

As indicated in section 4.3.1.5 above, most respondents were drawn from the rural areas, where cash and vouchers are at introductory stage. Households that have received cash and vouchers are either in urban or peri-urban areas. These modalities are however expanding to rural areas.

**Cash spending**

The evidence from monitoring reports and evaluations overwhelmingly suggests that people do not use the money to purchase non-essential goods, and do spend it on the basic items that they need to survive and protect their livelihoods. Usually, the main purchase is food, with some money spent on essential goods such as soap. In situations where large debts had been a major source of livelihood stress, a part of cash can sometimes be used to pay off debts. Narbeth (2004) found that most households use the cash for its intended (and stated) purpose: for debt repayment, and food and water purchase (or combinations of these). A smaller number of households use the cash to purchase water for livestock, medicines, and soap or construction materials. In these terms the project met its intended aims.

**Figure 7: How cash was spent**
Assistance given in the form of cash need to be monitored so that the beneficiaries spend the money on the recommended commodities. In this case the few respondents who received cash indicated that they all used it for the intended purpose. Cash can be spent on non-essential items, such as alcohol or cigarettes. However, individuals and households appear to make careful and strategic decisions about how to use this additional income for the best interests of the household (SCUK et al, 2005: 27).

**Effects of cash transfers on the market**

The potential effect of injecting cash into the market is an increase in prices of goods, affecting both beneficiaries and non-recipients of the cash transfer (Harvey, 2005). However, in-kind aid can also distort the market: food aid can depress the local price of food, thus hurting local producers.

**Table 6: Did cash injection have effects on the market?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 above indicates that the highest number, 55% of the respondents, were in agreement that cash transfer has effects to the local market. Creti and Jaspars (2006) indicated that cash can cause inflation and distort local markets. However, practitioners are finding solutions to mitigate these risks and have observed that many of the risks also apply to in-kind aid. Under appropriate conditions, the effectiveness of cash may well outweigh its risks. A collective 16% of the participants did not agree that cash transfer modality has effects to the local market. This may be as a result that the volume of the cash injected was insignificant, hence had little or no effect to the market. 28% have no idea on the effects caused by cash transfer modality. Such beneficiaries are still to receive cash and see its effects. Some respondents expressed their feeling even though they never received cash. They strongly agreed that the cash injection has effects to the local market.

**Percentage increase**

Response from the four participants that indicated that they have received cash shows that there was no effect to the market; hence no price increased was recorded.

**Handling of cash in a household**

Household structure and arrangements as well as social and cultural norms influence how households allocate resources internally. Where household decisions are negotiated between its members, the impact of cash transfers will depend on who receives the benefit, because it will strengthen their individual bargaining position (Baronets and DeJong, 2004: 15). A common
concern about giving cash to households is that women might be vulnerable within the household, and have less control over cash than over food or other commodities.

Findings from the survey indicate that heads of the household usually handle the cash. As indicated under section 4.3.1.3 above, 53% of the households are female headed. This then means there is an equal representation of control over WFP assistance, with 47% representing male headed households. As discussed under gender above, women are the key to improving household food security and nutritional wellbeing, and they are most often the ones who prepare food for the entire family. Experience has shown that in the hands of women, food is most likely to reach the mouths of children in need.

**Security challenges with cash**

One of the central reasons for caution in adopting cash- or voucher-based responses relates to security and corruption. Security risks include both the dangers associated with transporting and distributing cash for aid agency staff and the possibility that recipients will have the cash taken from them once it has been distributed. As indicated in chapter 2, literature review, cash is assumed to be more vulnerable to theft than food, particularly in an environment of heightened insecurity, violence or conflict. However, while food may not be as easy to loot as cash, food convoys are visible and easy to attack (Creti and Jaspars, 2006). Evidence shows that there are ways to deliver cash safely even in conflict environments. In Zimbabwe, WFP has insurance coverage against losses in transporting cash to areas where there are no banks, and the cash is delivered by a security company.

**Figure 8: Security challenges with cash**

![Chart showing security challenges with cash]

Figure 9 above shows that 50% do not agree that there are security challenges associated with cash transfer modality. Since, this modality was introduced in Zimbabwe; WFP has never recorded any incident related to security and corruption. A total of 26% participants however indicated that there are challenges associated with cash transfer modality. For some reasons, 24% of respondents do not know if there are any challenges associated with cash transfer modality.
In-kind food distribution
In section 4.3.3.1 above, it has been shown that most respondents are receiving food commodities. In most cases the households receive a complete basket, comprising of cereals, pulses, vegetable oil and corn soya blend. Some respondents’ especially urban dwellers receive food vouchers or cash and the corn soya blend (CSB). The CSB is a fortified commodity, normally considered as the ‘super cereal’, eaten as porridge.

Other uses of in-kind food assistance
The risk of misuse also exists for commodities as they can be sold and converted to cash, or used for other purposes. With in-kind transfers some people receive things that they need less than other priorities, and may well sell some of what they receive in order to buy things that they need more (Harvey, 2005).

Figure 9: How did you use in-kind food?

Figure 10 above shows that 93% of the respondents consume the commodities as required. This may be because of correct targeting during the beneficiary selection. A collective 6% indicated that some participants used the commodities otherwise. 3% indicated that they sold some commodities, and this could be because of the following reasons;
- to pay school fees for the children
- To buy other important needs, for example soap, sugar, water, etc.
Some respondents also indicated that they paid debts. The debts could be in the form of food commodities, paid by food commodities. Households can borrow food commodities from each other and repay after receiving their allocations.

**Voucher transfer modality**

As described in the literature review, vouchers are often used when cash is not seen as possible or appropriate. This may be due to donor constraints, to a desire to ensure that a particular type of good or commodity is purchased by the recipients, because of security fears about the use of cash or because of market weaknesses. Vouchers may be denominated in money terms or in physical quantities of specific commodities. Vouchers can be exchanged to purchase commodities from traders, at distribution outlets, markets or special relief shops. Traders then reclaim the vouchers at a bank or directly from the implementing agency (Oxfam, 2003).

As shown in table 5 above, 24% of the households indicated that they received voucher so that they redeem them in the retail outlets. These vouchers are commodity voucher, with specific types of commodities. There is a monetary value, in each voucher, of US$5 given to the beneficiaries to cover for transport costs.

**Challenges with voucher transfer modality**

This being an open ended question attracted a number of different responses. Some challenges were however mentioned in most instances. Below are the challenges raised by the respondents, by order of frequency?

- **Distribution delays**
  Of the 21 respondents that received vouchers, 81% indicated that the modality is quite good but the issue of delays in the distribution was of concern. The process involves collection of the voucher distribution point (VDP), which involves verification of beneficiaries, and collection of the commodities from the approved retail outlets. In some cases there will be long queues in the shops.

- **Power cuts and connectivity**
  The vouchers are normally redeemed through phone networks or internet. 66% of the respondents indicated that the continuous power cuts experienced in the country is affecting the distribution and redemption of vouchers. Power cuts affect internet connectivity.

- **Supply failures**
  33% of the participants indicated that in some cases they find no recommended commodities in the approved shops. One respondent gave an example illustrating this, i.e. if one is entitled to 25kg of maize meal and the shop only has 20kg, this means that the beneficiary would get a credit note for the 5kg.

- **Limited choice for beneficiaries**
  Unlike cash, vouchers give beneficiaries limited choice. 19% of participants indicated that commodity voucher restrict them from acquiring other pressing needs such as soap.

**Distances travelled by beneficiaries**

The beneficiaries receive their entitlements (in-kind food, cash or vouchers) at a final delivery point (FDP). For health and nutrition programmes these FDPs are usually health institutions, that is clinics and hospitals. In cases where the health institution is too far from the beneficiaries the FDP can be established at a central location like shopping centres of churches.
Table 7: Distances travelled by beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2km</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2km and 4km</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 4km and 5km</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5km</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table, table 7 shows that most beneficiaries stay closer to their FDPs. A collective 90% of respondents live close to the distribution points. 10% of households stay more than 4km from the distribution points. Distance travelled has effect on beneficiaries especially for the elderly and sick beneficiaries. Some beneficiaries do not have means of transport to use, hence can hardly travel too many kilometres carrying food commodities on their heads. The table below shows the responses from the participants.

Table 8: Time taken to reach the FDP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 hour and 2 hours</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 hours and 3 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8, above, shows that 85% of beneficiaries take less than 1 hour to get to the FDP, while others take 2 hours. This question was asked to check consistency of respondents on distance travelled and time taken. The information provided relates to the above distances. Time taken to get to the FDP is dependent on age and means of transport. Some beneficiaries go by foot, scotch carts or public transport.

**Figure 10:** Time taken before receiving the assistance
Beneficiaries usually travel to the distribution points on the date of distribution. In some cases they have to wait for some time before they get their assistance. The delays are caused by different factors, which are discussed here below, under distribution delays. Information collected indicated that most people wait for between 2 and 3 hours before getting their allocations. These times apply to all modalities, in-kind, cash or vouchers. The maximum time recorded by some respondents is 4 hour, and this must be mainly on food distribution. Some beneficiaries receive their entitlements in less than 1 hour time. This could be for cash or voucher distribution where the systems are very fast. No respondent indicated that s/he received WFP assistance after more than 4 hours.

Table 9: Causes of delays when distributing the food assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of delays</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late delivery of food/cash or vouchers</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late arrival of CP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political interference</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor weather conditions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 above shows the reasons that cause delays during the distribution of food assistance. There are a number of delays that occur during the distribution. The delays are mainly dependant on the transfer modality. Information gathered reveals that in most cases the commodities, cash or voucher reaches the distribution points well after the planned time. 42% of beneficiaries noted this concern in the survey instrument. Most delays were recorded households that receive in-kind food. This could be attributed to transport challenges, namely poor road network, handling of commodities at the distribution points or breakdowns. The second most raised cause of delay is the political interference, with 39% of the respondents. This could be because Zimbabwe had harmonised elections this year, in July, hence affected some of the distributions conducted before the elections. A poor weather condition was however indicated by only 5 respondents. This could be rain falls, very cold winter or sunny conditions. The table below shows the types of delays recorded from the field.
A collective 9% selected ‘other’ as the cause of the delay. On specifying the cause it was noticed that the types of delays are linked to voucher transfer modality. The indicated delays include the following:
- poor systems
- poor internet connectivity
- power outages

**Figure 11: Incidents during distributions**

![Bar Chart](image)

Figure 12 above indicates that a collective 52% experienced some notable incidents during or at the distribution points. The other 48% indicated that they came across no significant incident, thus meaning that the distributions are mostly conducted smoothly. From the incidents recorded, the issue of theft was the most marked incidents, with 19% response. This issue was mainly raised by those who received in-kind food commodities. It was however very rare with cash and voucher modalities.

11% of the participants that experienced notable incidents indicated that crowd control has been witnessed on some distributions. This mostly occurs at in-kind food distribution where beneficiaries jostle for food. Other incidents indicated include political interference and inadequate commodities, with 9% and 4% respectively. The study was carried out soon after Zimbabwe’s harmonised elections, hence political interference in some cases. Inadequacy was recorded and this must be from in-kind food distributions.

The issue of demobilisation was also raise by some participants. Eight people, 9%, indicated that this is caused by delays in the dispatch of food commodities, load shading especially during the distribution date, and poor network affecting redeeming of vouchers.
Table 5 indicates the modalities which households are currently receiving. Figure 13 above indicates the preferred modality, compared to what households are currently receiving. In-kind food distribution remains the most preferred modality, with 63%, although there was a slight decrease compared to the current modality. There was significant increase in the number of respondents who prefer cash compared to current cash recipients. As for voucher transfer modality, the percentage of interested households is less than the current recipients.

Reasons to justify the preferred modality
This question was an open ended, and the respondents gave different views. These are as follow;

a. Cash transfer modality
   A number of interesting reasons were raised here. These include;
   - Cost-effectiveness - Shipping food across oceans is expensive and slow, particularly when it is procured far away from its distribution points. It may take more than five months, on average, for emergency shipments to reach their destination. This causes delays and can cost lives in the initial period of an emergency. Another reason for the effectiveness of cash is the relatively low cost of transfer, administration and logistics.
   - Cash transfers provided to women can also lessen the risk of households resorting to negative coping mechanisms, for example reducing the likelihood of female and child-headed households resorting to ‘risky behaviour’ such as transactional sex, in order to survive.
   - Some respondents indicated that small but reliable flows of income help poor households to diversify livelihoods and improve their long-term income generating potential by funding the costs of job seeking, allowing them to accumulate productive assets and avoid losing them through distress sales. Transfers allow households to make small investments; and in some cases take greater risks for higher returns.
   - A number of households indicated that the local market has significantly improved few years ago. The market mechanisms have become active and resilient. Nowadays almost everyone lives in a cash economy; people earn wages, sell goods and services, and buy what they need with cash. Cash transfers stimulate local markets.
Cash transfers help households to access a wider range of foodstuffs, which can provide a more nutritionally balanced diet. Cash can allow households to purchase local items, which may better suit their needs than the items selected and procured from elsewhere by aid agencies. In addition, cash can enhance a sense of empowerment and dignity among recipients.

b. In-kind food distribution modality
This being the traditional and widely known transfer modality, most respondents preferred this, citing the following reasons;
- Effects of local prices
  An in-kind transfer modality increases local supply of food commodities. This is said to have an effect on the local prices as they fall. Contrary to in-kind food distribution, the cash transfer modality pushes the prices of food commodities, as there will be too much money chasing few goods.
- Consumption nutritionally approved goods
  The in-kind transfers encourage consumption of particular goods or to induce less needy individuals to self-select out of the program. These potential benefits of in-kind transfers are weighed against the fact that cash transfers typically have lower administrative costs and give recipients greater freedom over their consumption.
- Nutrition and food security
  One of the strongest and most consistent findings regarding the in-kind transfer programmes is their contribution to reducing hunger and food insecurity.
- Improved school attendance
  Where there are school feeding programmes, in-kind transfers help to improve school enrolments, attendance, nutrition and children to learn better.

c. Voucher transfers modality
According to the preferred transfer modality indicated by the respondents, voucher had a least number. The reasons given by the 12 respondents include the following;
- Vouchers are more effective, compared to cash if the objective is to meet a particular goal, such as improving nutrition. Beneficiaries get exactly what is on the voucher, nothing else.
- There is much more visibility as to how the voucher is used. Once cash is issued it is impossible to tell exactly how the beneficiary has used that cash, except by asking them. With vouchers it is possible to collect information on where, when and how the beneficiary redeemed the voucher. In many cases this information can be real-time, giving WFP and its partners the opportunity to gain valuable insights into how the project is actually being utilized by the beneficiaries.
- Contrary to cash transfers, commodity prices do not respond to voucher injection because the partners agree to price ceiling.

Why other transfer modalities are not preferred

Here the respondents gave different view on why other modalities are not of interest. The most cited reasons are as follow;
i. Cash
  - It can be misused if in wrong hands
  - It can be diverted
  - It is very risk to transport and distribute
Fear of corruption

ii. In-kind food
   - Very expensive, transportation costs
   - It affects local markets

iii. Voucher
   - Set up process is time consuming
   - Easily affected by power problem and internet connectivity

4.5 Conclusion
This section presented the analysis of the data collected through the self-administered questionnaires that were distributed to humanitarian aid beneficiaries. The responses were presented using figures and charts. The results of the study indicated that the three transfer modalities are appropriate in certain set ups. There are a number of factors to consider before a transfer modality is introduced in a particular area. The findings were discussed and justified by theoretical support from relevant reviewed literature.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the previous discussions. Key to this section is the evaluation of the linkages between the literature reviewed and the study findings, in order to offer recommendations. Areas of future research related to this study is identified and proposed. In this chapter conclusion and recommendations were linked to the research objectives. These recommendations are to be made available to the World Food Programme Zimbabwe management for possible integration into strategic decision making. Moreover, suggested areas for further research are outlined.

The Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study were grouped into different broad areas of concern. These are appropriateness, cost effective, implementation and impact issues. The main objectives include the following:

- To examine the impact of each food assistance intervention in terms of the immediate impact on beneficiaries’ livelihoods and the wider economic impacts on markets, prices and conflict dynamics.
- To examine the appropriateness of each approach; how the decision to use in-kind food, cash or vouchers is chosen and on the basis on what assumptions and assessment information
- To understand each transfer modality in terms of cost, speed and beneficiary satisfaction.
- To make recommendations to WFP, on the best transfer modality to be used in Zimbabwe

Findings from the Study

The findings from the research study are discussed under two headings namely; key findings from the literature review and key findings from the primary research.
Key Findings from the Literature Review are as follows:

The impact of in-kind transfer modality
- In-kind food distribution has effects of local prices. It increases local supply and dampen local prices. If the government injects supply into a partially-closed economy, for example a village, then relative to cash transfers, local prices should fall when transfers are provided in-kind (Nichols and Zeckhauser, 1982; Besley and Coate, 1991; Bearse, Glomm, and Janeba, 2000).
- It encourages consumption of particular goods with much needed nutritional value to the beneficiaries. Some of the commodities would be fortified.
- Food distribution reduces hunger and food insecurity. Regardless of the form of transfer, households receiving transfers average significantly higher spending on and consumption of food. The impact of in-kind transfers on hunger has been most pronounced in low income countries where poverty is generally more severe.
- Significant evidence indicates that food distribution tend to improve school enrolments attendance and improved nutrition, this can probably help children to learn better. (Greenslade, Conway, & Arnold, 2011)

Cost effectiveness for in-kind food distributions
- It is very expensive, in terms of transport, warehousing, handling and distribution, to move food commodities from internationally to the receiving country.
- Food is often able to reach places and people that cash does not. In the most remote areas banking systems may not be in place, and security risks may be too high for transporting and distributing cash.

Beneficiary preferences
Beneficiary preferences for cash or food are too context-specific to be generalized. There are plenty of examples of beneficiaries clearly stating their preference for food over cash and vice versa (Gentilini, 2007). However, there is evidence that people’s preferences are disaggregated spatially, temporally and by gender. Figure 5.1 below shows beneficiaries’ preference depending on location, gender and season.

Figure 13: Beneficiary preferences

![Figure 13: Beneficiary preferences](source: Gentilini, 2007)
People living in remote areas distant from main markets tend to prefer food transfers, while proximity to markets makes it easier to spend cash on the desired goods (Devereux, 2006). Cultural habits regarding the management of cash resources within households make women more likely to prefer food transfers (Devereux, 2002). Cash transfers are said to be more appropriate (and to generate maximum benefit) right before and during harvests; conversely, food transfers are preferred during the period when household grain stocks have been consumed or sold and grain must be purchased from the market (Adams and Kebede, 2005).

Beneficiary preferences vary with time and place, and it is important that programmes reflect such diversity.

**Implementation challenges for in-kind transfer modality**

- The U.S. being the main source of humanitarian food aid, it takes long for the commodities to reach the receiving country. Critics, including the Administration, point to delayed arrivals of up to four months when U.S. commodities are shipped in response to emergency situations.
- In-kind food distributions are poorly equipped to meet diversity needs of people. With an in-kind transfer programme, beneficiaries consume more of the subsidised target good than they would in the absence of the programme. This results in consumption of the subsidised target good beyond the point at which its marginal benefit is equal to its marginal social cost (Tabor, 2002: 8).
- Some people receive things that they need less than other priorities, and may sell some of what they receive in order to buy things that they need more.
- The risk of misuse also exists for food commodities, as they can be sold and converted to cash. In its manual on cash transfers, Oxfam stated its belief that, stopping cash distributions will not stop people buying non-essential commodities (Creti and Jaspars, 2006: 13).

**Cash transfer modality**

As stated in the Sphere Minimum Standards for Disaster Response (2004:121), general food distribution might not be appropriate when adequate supplies of food are available in the area and a localized lack of food availability can be addressed by the support of market systems. The modality is best especially where markets and infrastructure close to the affected areas are functioning. There are also cases where cash seemed more cost effective than food in the design phase but more costly in the implementation phase.

**Impact of Cash Transfers**

- Immediate poverty alleviation
- Cash transfers can accelerate reductions in morbidity and mortality (Yablonski and O’Donnell: 2009), by working on the ‘demand side’ to help poorer families to overcome the economic barriers to access to and use of health services. economic productivity and growth;
- Cost-effectiveness - one reason for the effectiveness of cash is the relatively low cost of transfer, administration and logistics (Schubert 2005, 10). In most circumstances, the OECD (2005, 12) contends that financial aid is the most cost-effective and efficient way of supporting food or project assistance.
- Cash transfers can have benefits across the spectrum of HIV prevention, treatment, and care and support. Cash transfers may play a role in HIV prevention by reducing the factors that place people at risk of infection by reducing school drop-out, migration, and girls’ and women’s social and economic inequality Temin (2010).
Cash transfers help to create livelihood opportunities and enable households to escape poverty traps; increase labour productivity and earnings; stimulate local markets; and cushion families from the worst effects of crises (Yablonski and O'Donnell: 2009).

Cash transfers provided to women can also lessen the risk of households resorting to negative coping mechanisms. In Malawi, the Social Cash Transfer Scheme has reduced the likelihood of female and child-headed households resorting to ‘risky behaviour’ such as transactional sex, in order to survive (Schubert and Huijbregts, 2006).

With cash people can access a wider range of foodstuffs, which can provide a more nutritionally balanced diet (Harvey, 2005). Cash can allow households to purchase local items, which may better suit their needs than the items selected and procured from elsewhere by aid agencies.

**Appropriateness of cash transfer modality**

- Cash transfers are best in countries where market mechanisms have become active and resilient, including at the local level.
- It is also appropriate where infrastructure and technology for transport, communications and financial transactions have improved. Nowadays almost everyone lives in a cash economy: people earn wages, sell goods and services, and buy what they need with cash (Creti and Jaspars, 2006).
- If markets are still functioning, emergency affected populations can be supported to buy the commodities that they need on the market.

**Cost effectiveness for cash transfers**

- Cash transfers have relatively low cost of transfer, administration and logistics (Schubert 2005, 10). Cash-based responses are more cost-effective than alternatives such as food. It clearly has lower transport and distribution costs than bulky commodities.
- Shipping food across oceans is expensive and slow, particularly when it is procured far away from its distribution points (Barrett and Maxwell, 2004). This causes delays and can cost lives in the initial period of an emergency.
- Food is often able to reach places and people that cash does not. In the most remote areas banking systems may not be in place, and security risks may be too high for transporting and distributing cash.

**Implementation challenges for cash transfer modality**

- Cash is more vulnerable to theft than food, particularly in an environment of heightened insecurity, violence or conflict. However, while food may not be as easy to loot as cash, food convoys are visible and easy to attack (Creti and Jaspars, 2006).
- Cash can be spent on non-essential items, such as alcohol or cigarettes. However, individuals and households appear to make careful and strategic decisions about how to use this additional income for the best interests of the household (SCUK et al, 2005: 27).
- A wider use of cash transfer may increase the risk of fraud and corruption. However, such risks hinge on the level of transparency in reporting, and in financial and accounting procedures, rather than on the type of transfers per se.
- Cash transfers have errors in targeting the rightful beneficiaries. Misspecification in the selection criteria may lead to errors of inclusion or exclusion. For instance, if the benefits are targeted to households with children, one risk is that this can cause caregivers to take in more
children into the household in an attempt to secure more income from the scheme (SCUK et al, 2005).

- A common concern about giving cash to households is that women might be vulnerable within the household, and have less control over cash than over food or other commodities. (Baronets and DeJong, 2004: 15).
- The injection of cash into the local economy leads to an increase in prices of goods, affecting both beneficiaries and non-recipients of the cash transfer.

**Voucher transfer modality**

Voucher transfer is best when in-kind and cash are not seen as possible or appropriate. It ensures that beneficiaries buy recommended food commodities. It however requires more planning and preparation than the distribution of cash (Harvey, 2005). Agreements need to be established with traders so that vouchers can be exchanged. Shops may be reluctant to accept vouchers because of the extra administration costs that they create. The local markets need to be active so that the beneficiaries get their food whenever required.

**The impact of Voucher transfers**

- Voucher transfer modality supports small shops proximity to the beneficiaries; ideally supporting the same shops where beneficiaries purchase their food items every day.
- The injection of vouchers into the local economy can increase the demand for certain food items and trigger commodity price increase in the local markets. The magnitude of this effect depends on the scale of transfer.
- Vouchers are more cost-effective in improving food consumption indicators than standard in-kind food transfers.
- The voucher project has an impact on gender dynamics within the household. In most cases, whenever redeeming voucher, both men and women may go together to the shops and in many cases it is the wife who decides and drafts the list of food items to purchase.
- A major distinction between cash and vouchers is that with vouchers there is much more visibility as to how the voucher is used. Once cash is issued it is impossible to tell exactly how the beneficiary has used that cash, except by asking them.

**Beneficiary preferences**

- Comparing voucher and cash transfers, beneficiaries always try to save the money and access less quality goods and this will create a sense of stress. The report from Gaza’s voucher project indicated that the women’s groups, when comparing cash and voucher, mentioned that “cash will go with the wind” to mean that it will be spent easily on other things at the expense of food.
- Women also mentioned that cash cannot fully replace the voucher option, because they are not confident that they would have direct control over the money as “the men may take it to buy dry food in bulk, whereas the family wants weekly supply of fresh food”.

**Cost effectiveness for voucher transfers**

- Just like cash, voucher transfers have relatively low cost of transfer, administration and logistics. It also has lower transport and distribution costs than bulky commodities.
- The costs associated by voucher transfer include voucher administrative costs (printing, distribution, exchange fee, etc.) and service fee charged by shops.
Implementation challenge on voucher transfers

- Vouchers are complex and time-consuming to set up (Crete, 2011).
- Voucher solutions have a greater reliance on IT solutions, and these solutions are likely to be more “customized” and more complex than is the case with cash solutions (Crete, 2011).
- The main risk with paper vouchers is the possibility of counterfeiting. This can however be reduced by including sophisticated printing techniques which make the voucher difficult to copy, adding a security device to each voucher.
- Voucher redeeming is dependent on the IT system, and this can be affected if the central server failed (WFP, 2011).
- The power supply and network connectivity at the distribution points and retailers may affect the distribution of the vouchers and food if interrupted.

Key Findings from the Primary Research are as follows:

Current transfer modality
The findings revealed that the majority of beneficiaries, 72%, are receiving in-kind food assistance. Most of the WFP beneficiaries reside in rural areas, where cash and voucher modalities are difficult to implement. The rural markets are not active, if compared to urban and peri-urban markets. Internet connectivity, electricity/power and financial institutions are not well established in rural areas. This leaves in-kind as the best and appropriate transfer modality. Cash and voucher modalities had 4% and 24% respondents, respectively. The programmes were introduced in cities, the towns and peri-urban, where the markets are vibrant. The modalities are working very well in the areas.

Cash spending
The study reflected that 95% of beneficiaries who received cash used it to buy food commodities, as required by WFP. Because some people receive things that they need less than other priorities, and can buy things that they need more. This was represented by 5% of the survey subjects.

Effects of cash transfers on the market
A collective 55% of the beneficiaries agreed that cash injection has effects to the local market. Only 16% of the participants could not agree that cash transfers may lead to the local price increase. The other beneficiaries had no idea on the effect of cash transfer to the market.

Handling of cash in the household
The research shows that 53% of the households are female-headed. This then means there is an equally balance representation of control over WFP assistance, with 47% representing male headed households. Experience has shown that in the hands of women, food is most likely to reach the mouths of children in need.

Security challenges with cash
The research indicated that 51% of the households do not agree or have never witnessed any security challenges associated with cash transfer modality. Since this modality was introduced in Zimbabwe, WFP have never recorded any incident related to security and corruption. 26% of participants were however suspected some challenges associated with cash transfer modality.

In-kind food spending
The results of the study indicated that 93% of the households consume all their commodities as required by WFP. This may be because of correct targeting during the beneficiary selection. Those who sell their rations have other priorities other than food. A collective 6% indicated that some households used the commodities otherwise. 3% indicated that they sold some commodities while 2% indicated that they paid debts.

**Challenges with voucher transfer modality**
- 81% of the households that received vouchers indicated that the modality is quite good but the issue of delays in the distribution was of concern. The process involves collection of the voucher distribution point (VDP), which involves verification of beneficiaries, and collection of the commodities from the approved retail outlets. In some cases there will be long queues in the shops.
- A total of 66% of the households indicated that the continuous power cuts experienced in the country was affecting the distribution and redeeming of vouchers. Power cuts affect internet connectivity.
- 33% of the participants indicated that in some cases they find no recommended commodities in the approved shops.
- Unlike cash, vouchers give beneficiaries limited choice. 19% of participants indicated that commodity voucher restrict them from acquiring other pressing needs such as soap.

**Distribution delays**
The research indicated that 42% of the households are usually delayed to collect their allocations due to late delivery of the assistance (in-kind, cash or voucher). Most delays were recorded by households that receive in-kind food. This could be attributed to transport challenges, namely poor road network, handling of commodities at the distribution points or breakdowns. Political interference, with 39% of the households was second highest delay recorded. A poor weather condition was however indicated by only 6%. A collective 9% selected ‘other’ as the cause of the delay. The indicated delays include poor systems, poor internet connectivity or power outages.

**Incidents that usually occur during distributions**
Of the 89 households, 47 indicated that they experienced some notable incidents during or at the distribution points. The other 42 indicated that they came across no significant incident, thus meaning that the distributions are mostly conducted smoothly. From the incidents recorded, the issue of theft was the most marked incidents. This issue was mainly raised by those who received in-kind food commodities. It was however very rare with cash and voucher modalities.

**Beneficiary preferences**
In-kind food distribution remains the most preferred modality, with 56%, compared to cash and voucher systems with 21% and 12% respectively.

**Justification of the preferred modality**
- **Cash transfer modality**
  - Cost-effectiveness - relatively low cost of transfer, administration and logistics.
Cash transfers provided to women can also lessen the risk of households resorting to negative coping mechanisms.

Reliable flows of income help poor households to diversify livelihoods.

A number of households indicated that cash improves the local market performance.

Cash transfers help households to access a wider range of foodstuffs, which can provide a more nutritionally balanced diet.

b. In-kind food distribution modality

- It increases local supply of food commodities, and have effects on the local prices as they fall.
- The in-kind transfers encourage consumption of particular goods, especially nutritionally approved commodities.
- It contributes to reducing hunger and food insecurity.
- Improves school enrolments, attendance, nutrition and children to learn better.

c. Voucher transfers modality

According to the preferred transfer modality indicated by the households, voucher had a least number of 13%. The reasons given by the 12 households include the following;

- Vouchers are more effective, compared to cash if the objective is to meet a particular goal, such as improving nutrition.
- There is visibility with vouchers as it is possible to collect information on where, when and how the beneficiary redeemed the voucher.
- Contrary to cash transfers, commodity prices do not respond to voucher injection because the partners agree to price ceiling.

Conclusions

This study was undertaken to evaluate World Food Programme’s food delivery modalities in Zimbabwe. The objectives of the study were to determine the appropriate transfer modality; examine the impact of each modality on beneficiaries’ livelihood, on economy and conflict dynamics; determine the cost effectiveness of each modality; determine the preferred modality as well as making recommendations on the best modality that suites Zimbabwean context.

The findings indicate that there is no one “right” transfer modality. The relative effectiveness of different modalities depends heavily on contextual factors such as the severity of food insecurity and the functioning of markets for grains and other foods. The three modalities have relatively larger impact on improving dietary diversity. The study also point to the need to pay increased attention to delivery costs: cash transfers were always significantly cheaper to deliver than food.

The appropriateness of vouchers, cash or food transfers hinges on a number of factors, including the robustness of markets and implementation capacities. Such instruments are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The variety of market conditions and capacities, even within a country, suggests possible complementarities. In addition, differences in food availability and prices at different times of the year suggest that vouchers, cash and food transfers could be combined seasonally.

In the context of high food prices and high transport costs, the provision of vouchers and cash transfers may be a way for WFP to mobilize assistance more cost-efficiently when international food prices (combined with transport costs) are higher than national and local prices. On the
implementation side, vouchers and cash transfers are often more cost-efficient than food transfer programmes – but only when local capacity exists and markets function adequately.

Urban areas are generally characterized by well-functioning markets and higher capacities for vouchers and cash transfers than remote rural areas. This offers a new range of opportunities to reinvigorate WFP’s programming in urban areas, and technical guidance materials on the matter have been produced recently. This is particularly relevant given that urban poverty is likely to be a growing phenomenon as a result of high food prices and rapid urbanization in developing countries. The use of vouchers and cash transfers in urban areas has received further attention in the context of WFP’s response to high food prices.

5.5 Recommendations
A recommendation to management was one of the objectives of this study. Based on the findings of this research, World Food Programme is recommended to:

- To carry out intensive market assessments in areas which are currently receiving in-kind food distributions? Due to the current multi-currency operating in the country, most businesses are fairly stable and can secure the required basic commodities for cash and/or voucher transfer modalities.
- There are small businesses in rural areas that have capacity to services cash and voucher systems. Such traders need capital to boost their operation and of course in the long run be part of WFP cash and/or voucher programmes.
- Enhance security on all the transfer modalities.
- To buy its food commodities preferably regionally (Zambia, Malawi and South Africa) or locally (local farmers) so as to cut on transport costs.

Areas for Future Research
The study offers several important findings to the literature. Yet, there are some limitations to the study. First, due to time constraints only the food assistance modalities were studied. There are developmental programmes which WFP is offering to the communities. These include Food for Assets (FFA) – This is also known as Food for Work (FFW) or Productive Asset Creation (PAC). WFP pay workers with food to start building a hunger-free future for their communities. The communities are getting food for rehabilitation of roads and irrigation systems (terracing, soil and water conservation).

Further, there is need to carry out the same research study with a larger beneficiaries sample to verify these results as the sampling frame used in this study was only a small part of the vulnerable group in Zimbabwe due to time and cost constraints. The researcher was limited to concentrating on a particular characteristic of the population that is beneficiaries that were easily accessible. The study can be extended to other stakeholders such as cooperating partners, traders, village heads and government officials.

Conclusion
The primary findings assisted the researcher in answering the research questions that were formulated for this study. It is clear from both the secondary and the primary findings that there is no one right transfer modality. The relative effectiveness of different modalities depends heavily on contextual factors such as the severity of food insecurity and the functioning of markets for food commodities. The three modalities have relatively larger impact on improving dietary diversity.
NOTE: This study was presented by the principal author to the Regent Business School, Durban, South Africa, in partial fulfillment for the award of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree in 2013. The study was supervised by Xolelwa Linganiso, researcher at the Regent Business School. The manuscript was edited by Professor Anis Mahomed Karodia for purposes of publication of the research as a journal article. Kindly note that the entire bibliography is presented and not only the references used in this edited version of the study. A full text copy is available on request to: akarodia@regent.ac.za

NOTE:
This article was extracted and compiled from the dissertation submitted by the principal author in 2013, to the Regent Business School, Durban, South Africa, in partial fulfillment for the award of the Master of Business Administration Degree (MBA). The dissertation was supervised by Xolelwa Linganiso, academic and researcher at the Regent Business School, Durban, South Africa. For publication purposes the manuscript was edited and assembled as a journal article by Professor Anis Mahomed Karodia of Regent Business School. The full bibliography is cited and the references applicable to this paper are within the full bibliography. If a copy of the full dissertation is required, kindly make an application to the following Email address indicating the reasons as to why the full dissertation is required. Email address: akarodia@regent.ac.za

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