



RELEVANCE OF CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME ON PROMOTING NUTRITION SECURITY AMONG REFUGEES IN KAKUMA CAMP, KENYA

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Abstract: *Cash transfers in refugee camps globally were purposed to enable refugees face enhanced social wellbeing, social functioning and reduce reliance on negative coping strategy thereby realizing social development as emphasized by the social work principle of human dignity and self-reliance. The cash transfer programme in Kakuma camp was intended to help refugees realize improved social welfare but experience indicates that refugees continue to face a backlash when it comes to social development dimensions including food security. This study sought to examine the contribution of cash transfer programme on nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp, Kenya. Social systems theory, resilience theory and social development model guided the study. A convergent parallel mixed method design was adopted. The sample size was 400 comprising of 370 refugees selected using simple random, 5 key informants and 25 refugee community leaders selected purposively. Questionnaires, interviews and FGDs were used. SPSS version 27 analysed quantitative data while thematic analysis was for qualitative data. Tables, graphs, charts and verbatives were employed. Findings revealed that cash transfer programme had a strong positive significant correlation with nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp ($r = +0.75$ at $P = 0.043$). The study concluded that cash transfer programme contributed to nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp. Findings had professional implications to social policy and welfare social work practice as its focus was premised on the wellbeing among refugees. The study recommended an increase of cash transfer level by UNHCR and its humanitarian partners. Similarly, a consideration by GoK and UNHCR should be made to fully adopt unrestricted cash-transfers that enable refugees to access cash through banks or mobile phones for purchasing food. Refugees should be supported to engage in income generating projects to increase food consumption and sustainability levels. Likewise, emphasis should be placed on nutrition security education and planning in relation to cash transfer management.*

Key words: *Cash transfer, Camp, Nutrition security, Refugees*

1.1 Background to the Study

The issue of refugees is a global concern. UNHCR estimated that, by the end of the year 2020, the number of refugees globally was over 26.4 million of which eighty-four percent were hosted by developing countries including Kenya (UNHCR, 2020). Refugees in camps worldwide face social

development concerns which calls for social welfare attention. In Kenya, significant efforts of realizing nutrition security among refugees have been recorded through cash transfers in Kakuma and Daadab camps. According to Betts et al. (2018b) food assistance to refugees has been delivered through restricted cash transfers under the Bamba Chakula (meaning “get your food” in Swahili) programme. Every month, registered households receive electronic transfers (Mpesa) amounting to KES 1,400 per person (14 USD) to purchase food items at contracted shops. Since June 2019, World Food Programme has been piloting unrestricted modality of cash transfers for 1,050 households living in Kalobeyei (Delius, 2020). Aker (2018) established that cash transfer for food had significant effect on nutrition needs and social wellbeing of the needy among refugees. Given the legal infeasibility of direct cash assistance, Oka et al, (2019) recommend enhancing the ease and convenience of use of vouchers, primarily through increasing the value of the vouchers, expanding the number of voucher-accepting shops and diversification of diet.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The introduction of cash transfer programme among refugees was sort to be a liberation and mechanism to cushion refugees from adversities that camp life causes. Research conducted on the economic and social effects of cash transfers for refugees in Jordan revealed that cash transfers in refugee camps had the ability to enable refugees face improved nutrition security and can reduce reliance on negative coping strategy (Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017). However, this has remained a dream in the eyes of many refugees across the globe. This situation is not different in Kakuma refugee camp where the cash transfer programme was intended to help refugee realize nutrition security but experience indicates that refugees continue to face a backlash. Evidence continues to unfold the existence of certain challenges in realizing nutrition security. This inadequacy is attributed to the fact that cash transfer tends to propagate dependency because assistance is still predominantly short time with little potential to improve refugees’ social condition in the long term. The transfer of approximately 14 USD per refugee per month raises questions as to whether it can aid in realizing nutrition security. It is upon this backdrop that the study set out to examine the contribution of cash transfer programme on nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp, Kenya.

1.3 Research Objective

To examine the contribution of cash transfer programme on nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp

1.4 Research Question

In which ways has the cash transfer programme contributed to nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp?

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The independent variable was cash transfer programme within Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. This was measured by the following indicators: Expenditure on food, consumption frequency and sustainability and dietary diversity. These indicators aided the study to explore the extent to which the cash transfer has contributed to nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp. The dependent variable was Nutrition security among refugees among refugees which was measured by enhanced resilience and social wellbeing. The intervening variables were; Government of Kenya laws and policies, UNHCR agencies’ policies and scope, social environment and cultural factors. This was illustrated in figure 1.

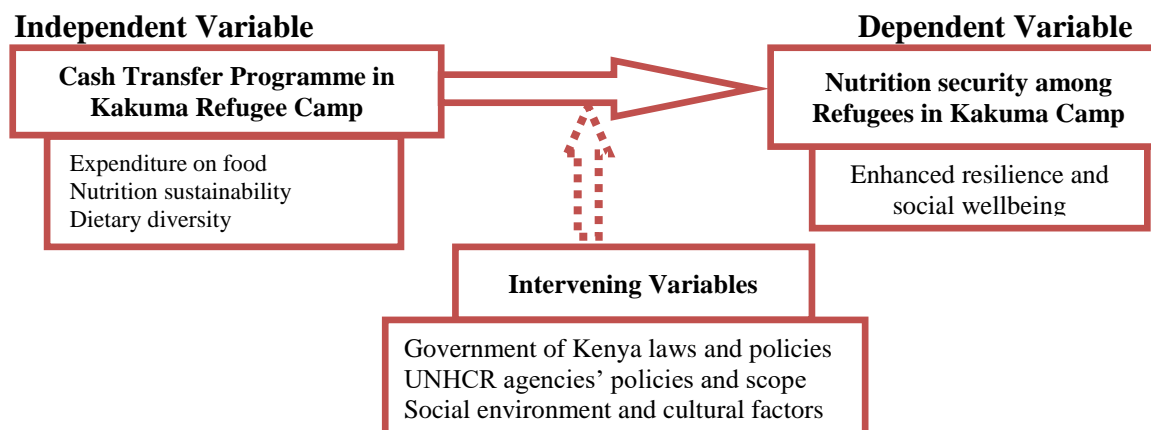


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between cash transfer programme and nutrition security in Kakuma refugee camp

Source: Own conceptualization, 2021

1.6 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Nutrition security among refugees and Cash transfer programme

The goal of humanitarian cash transfers especially in refugee camp is to meet basic needs, primarily nutrition needs. Indeed, cash is increasingly considered by donors as a form of food assistance (Harvey et al., 2019). However, it is worth noting that Oka et al., (2019) in their study found that 52.6% of refugees mentioned that *Bamba Chakula* value was very low and was not enough for them to survive, necessitating credit from shop, dependence on remittances, and/or selling relief food into the black market. Looking at the possible ways in which cash transfer might influence food security, it seems clear that cash transfer could be used to protect, and potentially improve nutrition status amongst the refugees in camps. Cash transfers might directly impact food consumption in various ways. This is strengthened by Sloane, (2019) who state that refugee households might use the additional income from the cash transfer to improve the quantity, quality and diversity of food that they consume. On the same note, Harvey et al., (2019) observed that cash transfers might prevent or mitigate negative responses to food insecurity, such as skipping meals. A monitoring exercise done by WFP, (2020) found little divergence in Kakuma camp between refugee households receiving cash and those receiving food aid where by the former ate slightly more sugar and less fresh food. On the same note Hoddinott et al., (2019) established that in Niger, refugee households receiving cash opted to buy ‘cheap’ calories through the bulk purchase of staple grains. This was seconded by another study done by Bastagli et al., (2019) in Uganda refugee camps who found that cash increased children’s consumption of starches by 66%, meat by 100% and eggs. This meant that cash transfer had positive impact on the nutrition security among refugees. All this considered, there emerged a necessity to examine the contribution of cash transfer programme on nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp.

Theoretical Framework

This study was conceptualized and theorized in accordance to explanations given by social systems theory (Von Ludwig Bertalanffy, 1968), resilience theory (Aoron Antonovsky, 1979) and the social development model expounded (Dominelli, 1997 and Midgley, 1995).

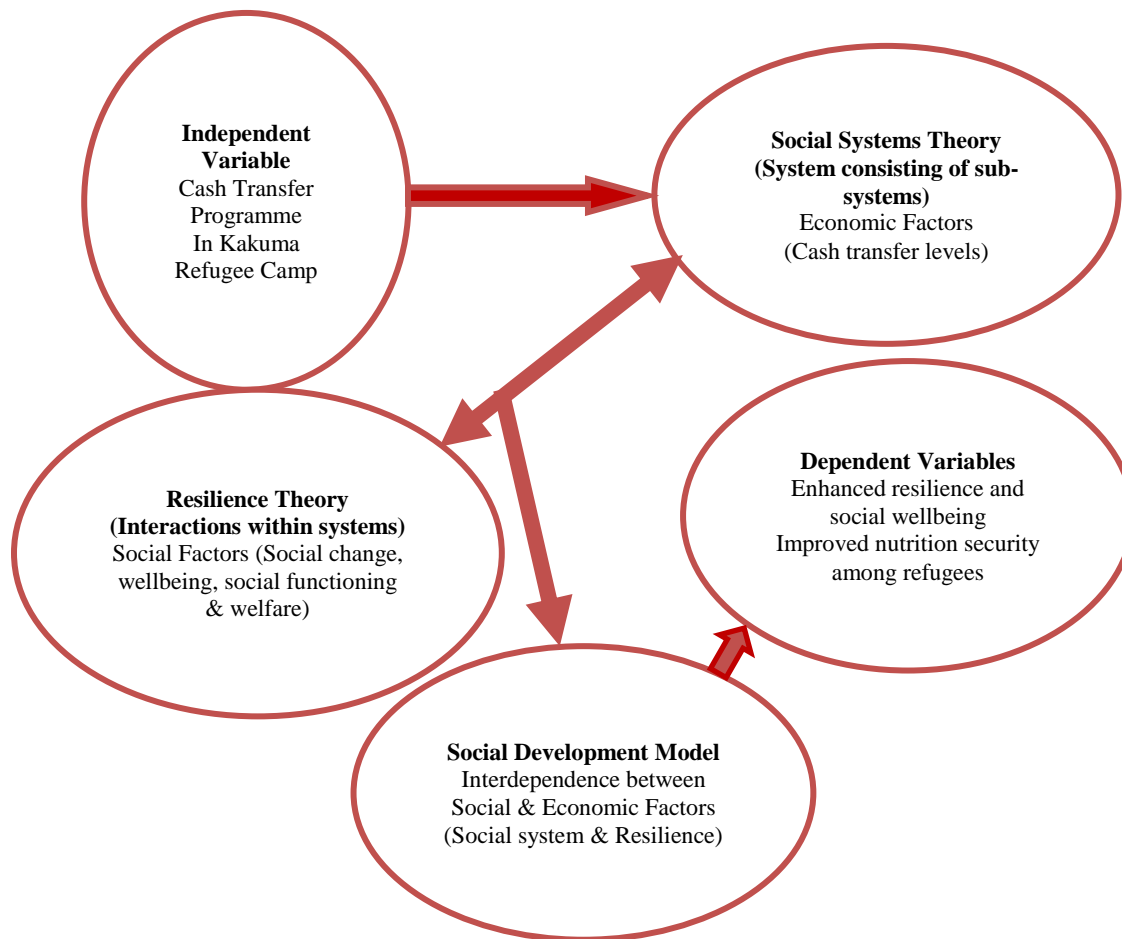


Figure 2: Conceptualized interplay between Social Systems Theory, Resilience Theory and Social Development Model

Source: Own conceptualization, 2021

1.7 Research Methodology

Research Design

This was a convergent parallel mixed method study that adopted quantitative and qualitative research design during the research objective construction, questions formulation, data collection, analysis and interpretation. This study employed a pragmatism worldview.

Site Description

The study site was Kakuma refugee camp. Kakuma Camp is located in Kakuma town, Turkana West in Turkana County of the north western region of Kenya, 120 kilometres from Lodwar county headquarters and 95 kilometres from the Lokichogio Kenya-Sudan border. This is the site of a UNHCR refugee camp, established in 1969. Kakuma camp is separated into four sub-camps - Kakuma I, II, III, IV and Kalobeyei settlement. Kakuma refugee camp is situated around 500 metres from Kakuma Town in Turkana West Sub-County. Kakuma refugee camp was built in 1991 for Sudanese refugees fleeing the Sudan conflict. The Kakuma area has since grown to accommodate over 185,000 refugees and asylum seekers from across East and Central Africa. The bulk of registered refugees in Kakuma Camps 1-4 (147,822) hail from South Sudan (55%), Somalia (22%). The rest of the residents

of Kakuma come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC: 7.2%), Sudan (6.4%), Burundi (5%), Ethiopia (4%), followed by Eritrea, Uganda, and Tanzania (UNHCR Kakuma, 2020). In 2012, the Kakuma camp surpassed its capacity of 100,000 refugees. In 2015, UNHCR and the Government of Kenya agreed to pilot a new approach by developing a settlement at Kalobeyei, 20 km from Kakuma. UNHCR estimates that Kalobeyei will eventually host a local population of 20,000 and a refugee population of 60,000 (Oka et al, 2019). In this study, “Kakuma refugee camp” refers to Kakuma camp as well as Kalobeyei settlement.

Study Population and Target Population

The study population entailed refugees enrolled in the cash transfer programme and were being served by humanitarian agencies within Kakuma refugee camp, refugee community leaders, GOK department and humanitarian agencies engaged in the cash transfer programme and nutrition security among refugees within Kakuma camp. According to UNHCR, (2020) Kakuma refugee camp is divided into four sections; Kakuma I-IV and Kalobeyei settlement (In this study, the sections and settlement were referred to as the sub-camps. Thus, Kakuma refugee camp has 5 sub-camps). UNHCR, (2020) note that Kakuma refugee camp host around 185,615 refugees who are spread in administrative blocks. Therefore, Kakuma camp is composed of sub-camps, a sub-camp is composed of zones while a zone is composed of blocks which host the refugee households. However, Kalobeyei settlement is made up of villages, a village is composed of neighbourhoods, a neighbourhood is composed of compounds while a compound is made up of households. All these administrative units are led by appointed community leaders among the refugees who act as a link between UNHCR and RAS as they implement projects and provide services to refugees. It is for this informative and knowledge base reason that this study purposed to use these administrative communal leaders and refugees enrolled in the cash transfer programme as the central target population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The target sample for this study was determined using a statistical formula by Yamane (1967), as shown in equation 1.

$$n = N/(1+Ne^2) \dots\dots\dots \text{equation 1}$$

Where,

n = Corrected/desired sample size,

N = Population size (185,615 refugees including their leaders,10 UNHCR partners & GoK),

1 = Constant value

e = Margin of error (e = 0.05 at confidence level of 95%).

Thus, $n = 185,626/(1 + 185,626*0.05^2)$ giving a sample size of 400 as the minimum.

In order to take care of any losses due to spoilage and lack of response, a 10% (40 respondents) attrition was added to the sample size making it 440 as guided by Hair et al, 2010 rule of the thumb.

Table 1**Summary of the sampling matrix of respondents by study population units**

Study population units	Estimated number of target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Refugees in Kakuma camp	185,615 refugees (UNHCR, 2020)	-Kakuma 1 - (74) Refugees Kakuma 2 - (74) Refugees -Kakuma 3 - (74) Refugees -Kakuma 4 - (74) Refugees -Kalobeyei - (74) Refugees (Sub-total = 370 Refugees)	- Simple Random sampling Used Questionnaires
Refugees' community leaders in Kakuma camp	Refugees' community leaders spread in 4 sub-camps, 11 zones, 154 blocks, 3 villages, 96 neighbourhoods and 768 compounds (UNHCR, 2020)	-Kakuma 1 - (8) Zone Leaders Kakuma 2 - (4) Zone Leaders -Kakuma 3 - (6) Zone Leaders -Kakuma 4 - (4) Zone Leaders -Kalobeyei - (3) Village Leaders (Sub-total = 25 Leaders)	- Purposive sampling Used FGDs
Government Authority	Refugee Affairs Secretariat (GoK, 2021)	1 Key Informant from the social development section (Sub-total = 1)	Purposive sampling Used Interviews
Humanitarian Agencies	10 UNHCR affiliated agencies operating in Kakuma camp (UNHCR, 2020)	1 Key Informant each from 4 agencies handling nutrition security, health care, education and income of refugees enrolled in cash transfer programme (Sub-total = 4)	Purposive sampling Used Interviews
Total (N) = 185,626		Total Sample (n) = 400	

Source: Field data, 2020

Methods of Data Collection

Relevant data for this study was collected through primary and secondary methods. The data protection Act of Kenya (2019) guided the data collection procedures. To effect primary data collection, three instruments were used; interview, questionnaires and FGDs. Utilization of these methods of data collection enhanced validity and reliability of the study findings. The researcher enlisted the services of research assistants who underwent a two-day training on basic research techniques. The researcher collected secondary data from a variety of relevant sources to the study scope. This included UNHCR and affiliated humanitarian agencies library books, publications and articles, information from refereed journals and the GoK department of refugee affairs documents to complement primary data.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure reliability of the collected data by questionnaires, FGDs and interviews, triangulation was conducted. The content validity of the tools was based on the research objective. Validity was also verified by comparing the results obtained through content analysis of the three instruments. The content validity was further examined by supervisors of the study and other scholars of the department of social sciences of Catholic University of Eastern Africa where suggestions were made and adjusted accordingly. The researcher conducted a two-day training to take the research assistants through

aspects of research and the tools while undertaking the study. The alpha coefficient for the reliability index was .839.

Pilot Study

The researcher carried out a pre-test of instruments within Lodwar town amongst refugees living with friends and relatives in Lodwar. The researcher used 37 refugees, 1 GoK staff and 2 NGO staff respondents in the pilot study because this made 40 (10%) of the sample size (400) as guided by Hair et al (2010) rule of the thumb.

Data Analysis Procedures

The study adopted a mixed methods design in an attempt to answer the stated objective and to complement insights discovered. The data protection Act of Kenya (2019) guided the data analysis procedures. SPSS version 27 was adopted to help in quantitative data analysis. This quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, the descriptive included frequencies, percentages and mean. Whereas the inferential entailed the Pearson's correlation analysis. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis that entailed coding, transcribing, categorization, voices analysis and narrative analysis.

Ethical Considerations of the Study

The researcher was guided by the Kenya data protection Act (2019). In reporting verbatives for qualitative data, the study utilized pseudonyms for participants who appended their acceptance to participate in the study through a consent form. The researcher sought authority to research from the Directorate of graduate studies of Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The researcher sought a research licence from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), Turkana County Commissioner and Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS) permission so as to allow data collection in Kakuma refugee camp. The questions that were asked had no information of personal or political nature. An introduction caption and University student identification card by the researcher was used for self-identification and the study purpose clearly indicated to the respondents. The respondents were not obliged to write their names on the questionnaires. As a mechanism to curb any psychological harm that may arise in the event of interview or data collection, this study adhered to the social work code of ethics, principles and values.

1.8 Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Contribution of cash transfer programme to nutrition security among refugees

Nutrition security is a key component of social development. This meant that if refugees had high level of nutrition security, then their social development is enhanced. Equally, if their nutrition security was low, then their social development is compromised. On this premise, it was imperative for the researcher to establish if the cash transfer programme contributed to nutrition security among refugee beneficiaries in Kakuma camp. To ascertain this, the researcher asked the respondents if the cash transfer programme had enabled them to meet their nutrition needs. The responses were presented in figure 3.

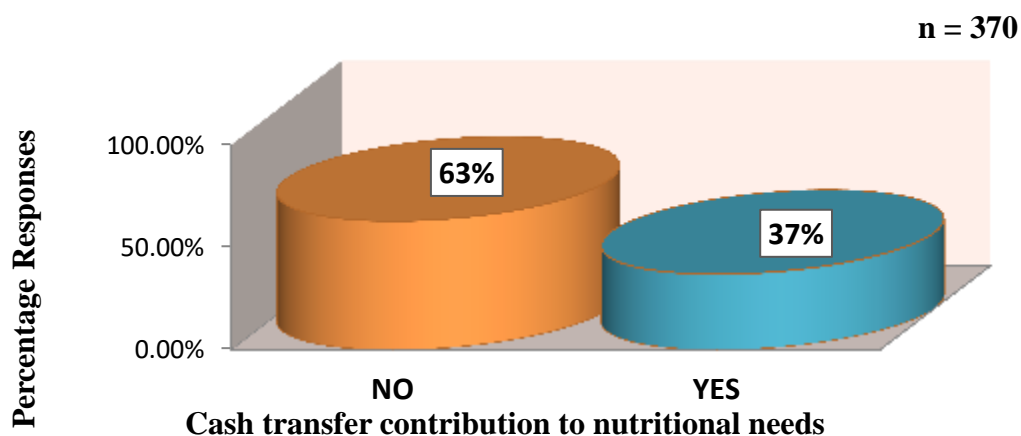


Figure 3: Cash transfer contribution to nutrition security among refugees

Source: Field data, 2021

Findings of the study as shown in figure 3 revealed that 135 (37%) of the enrolled respondents accepted that the cash transfer programme contributed to their monthly nutrition needs. This was resonated with the fact that food being a human basic need is necessary for survival thus the *Bamba Chakula and Bamba Chapaa* projects deemed essential in meeting this need. Contrarywise 245 (63%) of the enrolled refugees failed to accept that the cash transfer programme was helped them to meet their monthly nutrition needs. This response was attributed to the amount of cash transfer which seemed less as compared to the nutrition needs of refugees especially those with no any other income or support. To append on this, interview with key informant 03 from a humanitarian agency in Kakuma camp confirmed that, the cash transfer programme had enabled refugees overcome observable health conditions like malnourishment. The interviewee noted that the cash transfer had enabled refugees especially children to manage attending school because they ate at least something home. Likewise, key informant 04 observed that their office had received numerous complements from registered refugees (especially new entrants) who praised the *Bamba Chakula and Bamba Chapaa* for having made it possible for them to afford a meal.

During a FGD with the zonal leaders, the researcher established that food from WFP provided at the distribution points and sandwiched with a cash transfer token wasn't enough as it couldn't help feed a family for one month hence many refugees had to starve. One zonal leader remarked that "Just imagine, for instance a size-1 family receives 1 kg rice at the distribution centre and Ksh.500 monthly. Can this surely feed one for one month?" Through the FGD, the study also established that the food stuff issued at the distribution centre was not a variety because the refugees who are the clients were not consulted. one zonal leader emphasized that "Sadly, Bamba Chakula is restricted cash workable in BC shops that sell mostly rice and other cereals thus buying vegetables and fruits isn't easy". This statements from the FGDs with zonal leaders portrayed a huge discrepancy between food rations and food vouchers which in turn compromised social development among refugees.

In contrast, UNHCR (2020) report argued that cash transfer was relevant on nutrition security. For example, in the case of dietary intake, there have been efforts to compare types of transfers, vouchers, cash and in-kind, and their relative impact on consumption among refugees. Global acute malnutrition (GAM) measure showed that in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya moved from 11.4% to 7.3% due to the cash transfer programme (UNHCR, 2020). At the same time, in Niger camps the provision of unconditional cash transfers to refugees, coupled with nutrition education and food distributions, were followed by an initial decline from 21.3% to 13.6% GAM. Equally, a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of food assistance modalities in refugee settlements in

Uganda (Rhino, Adjumani and Kiryandongo) established that more than 77% of households were food secure based on the food security index that combined food consumption, household expenditure and livelihood coping analyses (WFP, 2020).

In a divergent perspective, FAO (2021) averted that food vouchers, when used to ensure an adequate diet, have been justified over the use of cash transfers when agencies want to limit the range of food products that beneficiaries can buy, sometimes on the assumption that beneficiaries might have other priorities if given cash Vouchers have been used to encourage the purchase of animal-source foods (meat, dairy and eggs) and other fresh foods (fruit and vegetables) when these are at risk of being eliminated from the diet (Nisbet et al., 2022). Fresh food vouchers (FFV) have been used to improve micronutrient consumption among refugees in the Dadaab camps in Kenya. These interventions in turn improve nutrition status of refugees (Nisbet et al., 2022). Having established that 135 (37%) of the enrolled refugees accepted that the cash transfer programme had the ability to meet their monthly nutrition needs, the study went ahead to determine the monthly expenditure of refugees enrolled in the cash transfer programme on buying food in Kakuma camp as displayed in table 2.

Table 2: Monthly expenditure of refugees enrolled in the cash transfer programme on buying food in Kakuma camp

Below Ksh.1500	50	37
Ksh.1501 - 3000	25	19
Ksh.3001 - 4500	35	26
Ksh.4501 - 6000	10	7
Above Ksh.6001	15	11
Total	135	100

Source: Field data, 2021

Results indicated that out of the 135 refugee beneficiaries of cash transfer programme interviewed, 50 (37%) spent below Ksh.1500 monthly on buying food hence representing the highest percentage. This could be alluded to the family size of 1-3. For instance, in Kalobeyie settlement size-1 family receive Ksh,1500 while in Kakuma 1-4, size-3 family would receive Ksh.500 by 3 equating it to Ksh.1500 monthly. In addition, 25 (19%) spent between Ksh.1501-3000, 35(26%) utilized Ksh.3001-4500 on food. The lowest score of 10 (7%) affirmed to have used Ksh.4501-6000 monthly because of their medium family sizes while 15 (11%) confirmed an expenditure of above Ksh.6001 monthly on buying food in Kakuma camp.

The study findings coincided with the 3 out of 4 key informants from UNHCR implementing partners who agreed that, averagely refugees incur an expenditure of approximately Ksh.4501-6000 monthly on food. According to a field officer of one of the humanitarian agencies working in the camp, the monthly expenditure totally depended on the household size. The bigger the size, the more the cash transfer the more the expenditure on food. It was sad to note that some refugees ate on credit of even 2 months before disbursement while others spent the income to buy alcohol and tobacco, they opted for credit.

In line with these findings, an interview participant pronounced that;

Am enrolled in the cash transfer programme in Kakuma 4. I generally meet my family nutrition needs with my *Bamba Chakula* line. But sometimes, I want to buy vegetables or goat meat. These I cannot get at my BC shop, so because I know the trader, he gives me 100, 200 cash,

and I can go and buy fresh foods. The amount is deducted from my BC line and combined with my other purchases. But I only use the cash for food (**P 85, 11/2021**).

These findings were in concurrence with the work of Alhabas et al., (2021) who observed that when provided with cash transfers, refugee households typically increased the total amount of money they spent on food. In the evaluations reviewed in Kakuma and Daadab refugee camps, households who received cash spent 45-90% of the money on food (less when the cash is accompanied with a food ration). Meal frequency also increased in several projects compared to before the intervention (Alhabas et al., 2021). In Malawi, dietary diversity for children in refugee camps increased at the same time that self-reported hunger decreased dramatically for 'cash and food' recipients (from 70% to 22%) compared to 'food only' recipients (from 79% to 61%) (Verme et al., 2021). Cash-based interventions that seek to improve nutrition through improved dietary intake and access to food should be more consistent in monitoring indicators of food security, food intake and malnutrition. Coupled with a sound nutrition causal analysis, this would help to demonstrate a stronger link between cash transfers and nutrition (Verme et al., 2021). It emerged that Omata (2020) tend to disagree with these findings. In his study he established that the median cash equivalent consumption expenditure in Kakuma camp was 7.4 Ksh per capita per day. This was below 4 Ksh for households in Kakuma 4, South Sudanese and new arrivals, and 16 Ksh for Somalis and 18 Ksh for Ethiopian refugees. Although not all households in the camp have the same level of vulnerability, only a small proportion (4.2 percent) would be able to sustain themselves without any assistance (valued at 77 Ksh/capita/day for a healthy food basket and essential NFIs (Omata, 2020). In essence, these findings drew a picture of a struggling refugee to put food on the table as much as they receive support from the cash transfer henceforth compromised social development.

Number of meals taken per day by refugees enrolled in the CT Programme

Food Consumption Score is an important measure to ascertain nutrition accessibility in households. WFP (2020) guides that in order to measure food intake, a researcher ought to use the Food Consumption Score (FCS), which is a composite score that aggregates information on dietary diversity, food frequency, and the relative nutritional importance of food items. The food consumption score is defined as the sum of the weighted frequencies. The resulting FCS ranges from 0 to 112 of which WFP (2020) suggests a threshold of 35 and above as the acceptable food intake. For the purposes of this study, 50% and above was considered an acceptable score for the FCS dimensions. Thus, in an attempt to determine the nutrition accessibility among refugee beneficiaries, the researcher was interested in establishing the number of meals refugees enrolled in the cash transfer programme are able to take per day in Kakuma camp as displayed in figure 4.

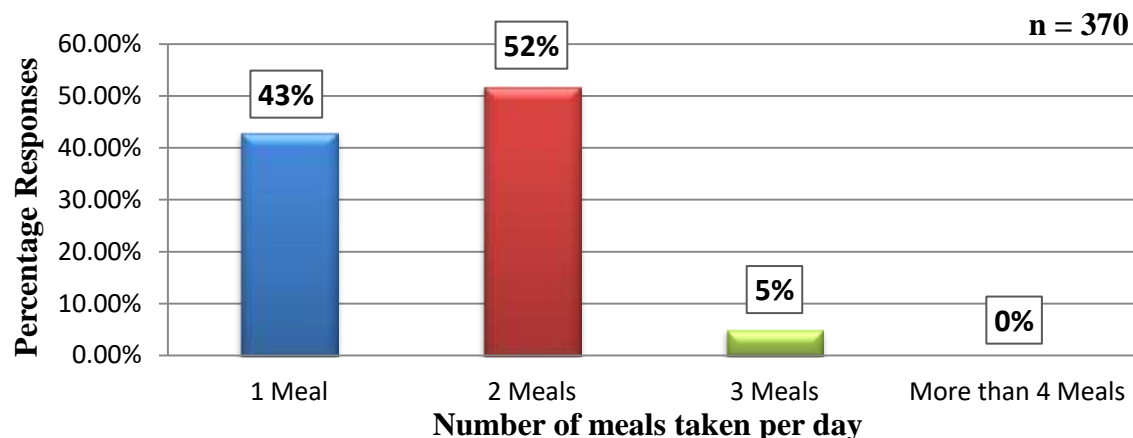


Figure 4: Number of meals taken per day by refugees enrolled in the CT programme

Source: Field data, 2021

Results in figure 4 unveiled that out of the 370 respondents those who were able to take one meal per day were 160 (43%), those who took two meals per day were the majority of 195 (52%). This meant that in terms of food frequency, the respondents had access to the acceptable Food Consumption Score of above 50%. Though, respondents attributed the two-piece meal to insufficiency of food which forced them to forego lunch. Simultaneously, those who managed at least three meals in a day were 15 (5%). As a matter of big family sizes and less cash transfer amounts, none of the respondents indicated that the household was able to afford more than four meals in a day in Kakuma refugee camp. As compared to the Kenyan national levels of food security, Food and Agriculture Organisation for the United Nations. FAO (2020) stated that 46 per cent of the Kenyan population lived on less than 1 USD a day, 36.5 per cent were food insecure and 35 per cent of children under five were stunted (chronically malnourished). FAO also noted that most individuals and households had a typical pattern of two meals per day while meals more likely to be eaten outside the home were breakfast and lunch (FAO, 2020).

These findings were reinforced by a participant who stated that;

Although the cash transfer programme has really helped me get my daily food, but the truth is that I hardly manage 3 meals in a day. I mostly forego lunch so as to save for a heavy early supper. My children survive on lunch provided at school. However, during weekends when children aren't in school, I try making a light lunch for them (**P 2, 11/2021**).

On the other hand, interviews with 4 humanitarian agencies key informants confirmed that most refugees afforded 2 meals per day (breakfast and supper). The reason for missing lunch is that during daytime children were in school where LWF provided lunch thus parents at home saw no point of making lunch that could strain the quantity and quality of dinner/supper which was bought using the limited resources provided through the cash transfer programme. However, key informant 05 observed that the size ones (1 member family) do sometimes afford a balanced diet of 3 meals per day because they have no or less competition over the provided food and the cash transferred. Consequently, the size 10 and above families mostly afford 1 meal per day which is often unbalanced.

In consensus, research conducted by ReDSS (2020), in Kakuma refugee camp agreed that the majority of households (almost 60%) had either poor or borderline food consumption. Equally in Dadaab, assessments found that more than 80% of respondents reported that their main food source 7 days prior to the assessment was humanitarian agencies, and half of the households perceived not having had sufficient access to food (REACH & NRC, 2018). Food security is a challenge for many refugees because most refugees only afford to eat about 2 meals per day on average and their diet is

much less diverse, with many not being able to afford meat even once a week (Betts et al., 2018b). Similarly, UNHCR (2020) observed that refugees in the camps often sell some of the food items distributed by the UN in shops, both within and outside the camps, and some also trade their in-kind goods with the host community, receiving cash or other resources such as firewood and charcoal.

To add on, a household survey conducted in Dadaab camp (REACH & NRC, 2018) found an even higher percentage reporting humanitarian agencies as their main source of food in seven days. In addition, 50% of assessed households perceived not having access to sufficient food in one week prior to the assessment. Though households have been observed to pool their rations through 'fictive households', the literature asserted that refugees haven't been able to develop strong nutrition security strategies. Therefore, *Bamba Chakula*, the cash transfer programme that allows refugees in Kakuma, Kalobeyei, and Dadaab to buy food from local traders with cash from their mobile phones, accounted for the main source of income and food for refugees in Kakuma camp (IFC, 2020).

Cash transfer contribution to nutrition sustainability and dietary diversity

As reinforced by World Food Programme (2020) the concept of nutrition sustainability and dietary diversity is one of the key parameters of measuring food security. This entail the ability of an individual or a household to access food now and be able to preserve some for future use. Therefore, this study purposed to examine if cash transfer contributed to the purchase of food for future use and if it ensured dietary diversity among enrolled refugees in the cash transfer programme in Kakuma camp. Responses are as depicted in figure 5.

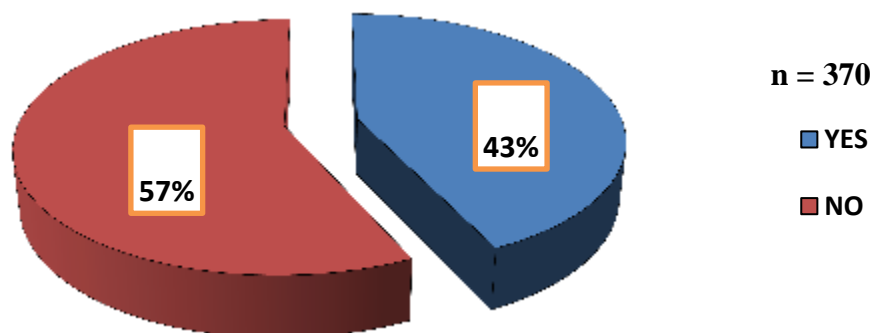


Figure 5: *Cash transfer contribution to purchase of food for future use*

Source: Field data, 2021

The study findings revealed that 160 (43%) of the respondents accepted that the cash transfer programme contributed to the purchase of food for future use. This scenario was ascribed to the nature of *Bamba Chakula* programme which was meant to be used within a month. In contrary 210 (57%) of the enrolled refugees failed to accept that the cash transfer programme contributed to the purchase of food for future use in Kakuma refugee camp. This stand was attributed to the amount of cash transfer transferred which seemed dismal as compared to the fluctuating market prices and large family sizes. On the other side of the coin, four humanitarian staff revealed that since cash transfer is provided monthly it has aided refugees to purchase food for at least one month as they wait for the next disbursement. Thus, this went along way to promote social development among refugees while in Kakuma camp. In a divergent view the camp zonal and village leaders pronounced that cash transfer was not relevant in helping enrolled refugees purchase food for future use because the amount disbursed was less to sustain purchase of food for more than a month. Besides some families are too

big to manage the purchased food for long which forces them to opt for credit as a survival strategy. Surprisingly, one community leader averred that some refugees collude with *Bamba Chakula* shop agents to pick non-food items like cloths instead of food thus end up suffering for the whole month or depending on friends, relatives and perhaps good neighbours to get what to eat.

One of the participants explained that;

We as refugees in Kakuma camp know what we eat, how much, and when. *Bamba Chakula* makes it hard, because the amount they give for food is not adequate. More so, we are encouraged to buy wheat flour from BC shops which is mostly available. Therefore, what I usually do is to buy the wheat flour with my BC, and resell it. I can then use the cash to buy maize, sorghum, and beans in the black market, in town (P 13, 11/2021).

These findings were in a similar inclination with a study conducted by WFP (2021) on *Bamba Chakula* cash assistance and food consumption. In this research, households were asked whether they had consumed a range of 52 food items covering the main food groups (cereals, pulses, fruit, vegetables, meat/fish/eggs, dairy, sugar and oil) over the previous week as aided by the cash transfer programme and food rations. The study established that in the past week, 51 % of households consumed nothing beyond the items included in the following list: maize, sorghum, wheat flour, rice, porridge, green grams, other pulses, onions, milk products, sugar, and oils and fats. This was a highly limited diet with no fruit and no vegetables aside from onions. However, this limited diet was most prevalent among households in Kakuma 4 (78 %), South Sudanese (72 %) and Sudanese (60 %), and new arrivals (72 %). The remaining 49 % of the population were consuming at least one other food item. For example, 16 % reported consuming animal proteins (goat, camel, beef, chicken, other meat, liver, kidney, tilapia, omena, tinned tuna, other fish or eggs).

Correspondingly, OKA et al., (2019) study revealed that 50.3% of refugees (n=87, 36% of total sample) mentioned that *Bamba Chakula* did not allow them to choose specific brands or foods they wanted, and they felt they could not complain while 20.2% of respondents (n=35, 14.5% of total sample) mentioned that *Bamba Chakula* goods were often overpriced but they could not complain or go to other shops because the other shops did not have *Bamba Chakula*. In addition, 87 respondents (50.3% of the respondents who listed issues and 36% of the total number of respondents) mentioned that recipients are generally not given a choice when it comes to the food, they want by the BC traders. Further, OKA et al., (2019) added that when compared, the population of those who had relationships with the BC traders, 87 respondents complained of no choice for type of food while 64 (73.6%) who had no relationships with the BC traders had an extent of choice. So many *Bamba Chakula* traders, especially those not skilled or experienced with maintaining business and customer relations gave items of lower quality or non-desired brands to the unknown customers and the recipients felt they cannot complain. This in turn compromised the nutrition security of refugees in Kakuma camp henceforth poor social development.

Period taken by refugees to utilize the purchased food

In relation to the purchased food by refugee beneficiaries of cash transfer programme, the researcher went a notch higher to examine the period taken by refugees to utilize the purchased food in Kakuma camp. This was attained by interviewing the 160 (43%) respondents who had accepted that the cash transfer programme contributed to the purchase of food for future use as displayed in figure 6.

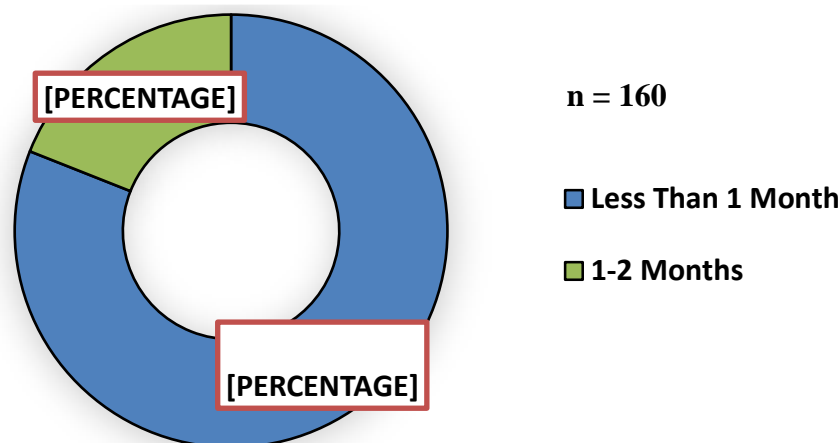


Figure 6: Period taken by refugees to utilize the purchased food

Source: Field data, 2021

Results in figure 6 portrayed that 130 (81%) of the 160 (43%) respondents who had accepted that the cash transfer programme contributed to the purchase of food for future use went ahead to affirm that the purchased food only lasted them less than one month because if they don't use the money in the ATM or BC line it depletes after one month while 30 (19%) attested that the purchased food lasted them 1-2 months because they supplemented the cash transfer with business income and remittances from friends and relatives staying abroad or urban cities. These findings coincided with the position of key informant 03 who affirmed that most refugees take less than one month with the purchased food. "The cash transfer disbursed to the enrolled refugees is given monthly to support them buy food within one month only as purposed by the cash transfer programme. In fact, if the refugee doesn't utilize the money in his/her *Bamba Chakula/Chapaa* Sim card/ATM within the targeted month, the money therein expires and can't be redeemed. Consequently, this situation worsens for refugees who lose or temper with their BC cards/ATMs in the midst of the month.

On a strengthening statement, an interview participant narrated that;

Even though we may buy a lot of food to last us for a little while, for example a sack of rice for 2200 [KES] to last for 2 months in a size 8 family, but we can't hold the rice in our hands to cook it. We need pots, fuels and dishes too. So, we take part of the BC money and purchase these items. How I wish UNHCR could have factored this in the cash transfer programme (P 11, 11/2021).

During the FGDs with the selected community leaders (zone and village leaders) in Kakuma camp the researcher established that refugees experienced some challenges in realizing nutrition security. The challenges as put forward by the community leaders during FGDs were as follows; cash transfer income was limited to cater for food items only which are sometimes scarce in Kakuma, refugees experienced inadequate dietary diversity and low food quantities due to low purchasing power, there was inadequate space for kitchen garden in the camp which was triggered by poor climatic conditions, there was delayed food monthly ration which corresponded to delayed cash transfer disbursement, in most cases cash transfer was only restricted for particular food items which were mostly cereals found in selected Bamba Chapa (BC) shops, food items in selected BC shops were mostly expensive as compared to income from cash transfer programme, in most cases vegetables and fruits in the shops were not fresh and some were rarely found in the camp shops and lastly most households had a tendency to shift income meant for food to non-food items like medicines and books which eventually compromised the nutrition security among refugees. On the other end, the FGD participants noted that cash transfer enabled refugees in Kakuma camp to meet their food and nutrition needs in the sense that it promoted some choice of preferred food types. They added that the cash

transfer promoted balanced diet in households and helped to supplement food ration given at the WFP food distribution centre.

Strategies to enhance nutrition security among refugees

In order to assess the relevance of cash transfer programme on social development it was vital for this study to advance and collect suggestions from enrolled and benefitting refugees on how nutrition security can be enhanced by the cash transfer programme in Kakuma refugee camp. These suggestions were illustrated in table 3.

Table 3: Strategies to enhance nutrition security among refugees

Strategy		
Increase the cash transfer amount to enable nutrition diversity and quantity	238	64
Regulate food prices in Bamba Chakula shops and markets to enable affordability	76	21
Support kitchen gardens and small-scale farming in the camp through initiatives like Bamba Chapa	42	11
The process of disbursement of monies should be timely and effective to allow nutrition planning	14	4
Total	370	100

Source: Field data, 2021

Strategies in table 3 were in tandem with those of 25 community leaders whom during the FGDs, they agreed that an increase of the cash transfer income was necessary to help enhance the nutrition security among refugees. Nevertheless, the community leaders resonated that transformation of food vouchers into cash through bank or mobile phones to allow refugees purchase food of their choice and attain balance diet and dietary diversity was essential. The leaders equally emphasized that awareness creation on diet planning in relation to cash transfer management could help improve the nutrition security of refugees in Kakuma.

The researcher was motivated to establish the suggestions of the humanitarian agencies officials on how nutrition security can be enhanced by the cash transfer programme in Kakuma refugee camp. Their responses were as follows; the refugees especially the new arrivals should be educated thoroughly on the utilization, planning and management of the cash transfer. They also added that the registered BC shops should be supervised closely not to collude with beneficiaries to pick illicit items like tobacco and alcohol instead of food. The *Bamba chapaa* project should be extensive to cater for non-food items among the refugees. Additionally, the officials admitted the fact that the disbursed amounts were less in relation to the rising cost of living hence a need to request donors and stakeholders to consider increasing their sponsorship towards the cash transfer programme in Kakuma refugee camp.

This was reinforced by a respondent who affirmed that;

If the cash transfer amount is increased for instance from Ksh.1500 to Ksh.3500 per month, it will definitely help me to purchase different types of foods in good quantities and quality. Because I understand that balance diet is very important for an individual's health (P 14, 11/2021).

Relationship between cash transfer programme and nutrition security

So as to understand the relationship between cash transfer programme (independent variable) and nutrition security as a measurable parameter of social development (dependent variable) the researcher undertook a hypothesis testing using the Pearson's correlation coefficient and Analysis of variance. The following hypothesis was formulated;

H₀: There is no significant relationship between cash transfer programme and nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma Camp.

H₁: There is significant relationship between cash transfer programme and nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma Camp.

The data was entered into SPSS V27 software and the results were presented in table 4.

Table 4: Correlation between cash transfer programme and nutrition security

	Cash transfer programme	Nutrition Security
Pearson Correlation	1	0.75**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.0430
Cash transfer programme		
N	370	370
Pearson Correlation	0.75**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.0430	
Nutrition security		
N	370	370

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results from table 4 shows that the correlation between cash transfer programme and nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp is ($r = + 0.75$) at P- value of 0.043. As guided by Creswell (2007), the closer the correlation is to value '0', the weaker it is. Whereas the closer the correlation is to +/-1, the stronger it is. Thus, in this case, the correlation is a strong positive since 0.75 is closer to +/-1. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between cash transfer programme and nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp. To this extent, it implies that if the value of cash transfer in Kakuma camp would increase then nutrition security among refugees would increase as well hence improved social development. These inferential findings were in agreement with the study on influence of cash transfer programming on food security in Turkana north sub-county, conducted by Edapal (2021) who found out that cash transfer programme had significant correlation with food security. Regression results by Edapal (2021) showed that cash transfer had significant influence to food security ($\beta_1 = 0.074$, $p = 0.225$). Correlation findings also showed that there existed a significant correlation between voucher system and food security. Whereby, regression results indicated that voucher system had influence to food security as shown by ($\beta_4 = 0.435$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). In another study, results from a baseline survey conducted by UNHCR (2020) in Oruchinga refugee settlement, Uganda indicated a significant relationship ($r = 0.38$, $p = 0.000$) between cash transfer and food security (UNHCR, 2020).

1.9 Conclusion

Evidence from the study findings authenticated that, the cash transfer programme in Kakuma camp, tend to increase refugees' accessibility and ability to meet their nutrition needs. This is so because cash transfer promotes purchase of preferred food types, increases number of meals consumed and help to supplement food rations. However, refugees experience inadequate dietary diversity, low

food sustainability and compromised nutrition quantities due to their low purchasing power resulting from limited cash transfer levels and commodity market price fluctuations. Conclusively, cash transfer programme had a strong positive significant correlation with nutrition security among refugees in Kakuma camp.

1.10 Recommendations

This study recommends an increase of cash transfer level by UNHCR and its humanitarian partners. Similarly, a consideration by UNHCR should be made to fully adopt non-conditional/unrestricted cash-transfers that enable refugees to access cash through banks or mobile phones for purchasing food. Households receiving cash assistance should necessarily be supported to engage in income generating projects in order for them to increase food consumption and sustainability levels. Likewise, emphasis should be placed on nutrition security education and planning in relation to cash transfer management.

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