

Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Program (Emergency response phase), Emergency Food Assistance in Nangarhar Province Implemented by Peace Winds Japan (PWJ)

Third Party
Project Evaluation
Report

March, 2023

Funded by the
Government
of Japan



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the responsiveness, and constructive engagement of the key informants consulted during this evaluation. Their insights have been valuable in shaping the report.

Above all, we acknowledge the informants and participants from the rural development department, YVO director, Focal point food cluster, district, and community level participants who provided insights during the interviews, and accommodated the research team's endless questions with candidness and patience and opened up about issues regarding implementation of project in four districts. This study regards the Japan Platform (JPF) in partnership with PWJ-YVO ultimate purpose to uplift the lives of Afghans and strengthen the existing systems. JPF funded the evaluation of Emergency food assistance distribution in Nangarhar Province and we are thankful for the opportunity to generate knowledge and evidence on the project to support the improvement of education systems and learning outcomes.

The findings within this document, however, are entirely the responsibility of the technical lead/author.

HPRO

March, 2023

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by HPRO for the named client, for services specified in the Terms of Reference and contract of engagement. The information contained in this report shall not be disclosed to any other party, or used or disclosed in whole or in part without agreement from the JPF/PWJ. For reports that are formally put into the public domain, any use of the information in this report should include a citation that acknowledges JPF, PWJ and HPRO

This confidentiality clause applies to all pages and information included in this report.

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures	iii
Abbreviations	iv
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Afghanistan Hunger and Food insecurity	1
1.3 Food insecurity in Afghanistan	1
1.4 Food security status in Nangarhar	2
1.5 NGOs working in Nangarhar providing Cash Assistance	3
1.6 Overview of Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Program (Emergency response phase), Emergency Food Assistance in Nangarhar Province	4
1.7 Purpose of the study	5
1.8 Structure of the report	5
2 Methodology	6
2.1 Study Design	6
2.2 Methods of data acquisition	6
2.2.1 Sampling	6
2.2.2 Tools for primary data collection	7
2.2.3 Secondary data collection	8
2.3 Data collection	8
2.3.1 Training and Field Testing	8
2.3.2 Data collection	8
2.3.3 Monitoring and Supervision for quality assurance	9
2.4 Data management and analysis	9
2.4.1 Transcription and Translation	9
2.4.2 Coding of quantitative data	9
2.4.3 Data analysis	9
2.4.3.1 Quantitative	9
2.4.3.2 Qualitative	10
2.4.4 Limitations	10
3 Key Findings	11
3.1 Objective 1: To verify and measure outcomes of the projects	11
3.2 Objective 2: To understand the beneficiary's satisfaction	13
3.3 Objective 3: To document project's achievements and challenges	15
3.4 Objective 4: To provide any possible indicatives for improving the projects for both JPF and member NGOs (Recommendations)	19

List of Tables and Figures

List of Tables

Table 1: Sampling methodology: stratified simple random sampling by district and size of the intervention.....	7
Table 2: Surveys and interviews conducted during the summative evaluation.	7

List of Figures

Figure 1: Summative evaluation data collection methodology.	6
Figure 2: Involvement of beneficiaries in the implementation process (incl. project steering committee) of JPF projects.	11
Figure 3: Involvement of beneficiaries in the needs assessment of PWJ food assistance program.	12
Figure 4: Involvement of beneficiaries in the monitoring process (incl. complaint mechanism) of JPF projects.....	12
Figure 5: Beneficiaries consideration if cash assistance sufficient to provide food for their families for one month.....	13
Figure 6: Satisfaction of beneficiaries regarding the location of the cash distribution.....	13
Figure 7: Satisfaction with the amount of time spent waiting.	14
Figure 8: Satisfaction with the respectfulness of the staff.	14
Figure 9: Satisfaction with the travel cost and time spent away from job to reach to location and receive cash.	14
Figure 10: Expenses in which the assisted cash was used.....	15
Figure 11: Beneficiary households by FCS category.....	16
Figure 12: Responses to the effect of cash assistance given to the households.....	17

Abbreviations

CDC	Community Development Council
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FIES	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
FSC	Food Security Cluster
FSAC	Food Security and Agriculture Cluster
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GPS	Global Positioning System
HPRO	Health Protection and Research Organisation
IDP	Internally Displaced Population
IS	Islamic State
ISK	Islamic State of Khorasan
INSO	International NGO Safety Organization
JPF	The Japan Platform
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFA	Log Framework
mCSI	Multisector Coping Strategy Index
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPCA	Multipurpose Cash Assistance
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OCHA	The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODK	Open Data Kit
PDC	Provincial Development Council
PHCC	Provincial Health Coordination Committee
PHD	Provincial Health Department
PMF	Performance Measuring Framework
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PWJ	Peace Winds Japan
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nation
WFP	World Food Programme
YVO	Your Voice Organization

I Introduction

1.1 Overview

Third-party project evaluations are essential accountability and learning initiatives that JPF regularly undertakes jointly with its member NGOs for quality improvement. This is more so in Afghanistan where JPF and the member NGOs have no access to the project sites due to restrictions on travel associated with the Japanese government funding. Local implementing partners/local offices remotely managed by the members NGOs implement project activities and are the forefront of daily communication with project stakeholders as well as project beneficiaries.

Given drastic situational changes in Afghanistan, JPF in consultation with the member NGOs, decided the third-party evaluation for five projects in Afghanistan funded by year 2021 budget to focus on assessing and documenting outcomes (immediate impact) rather than exhausting limited resource by conducting summative and/or programme evaluation. A request for proposals (RFP) was made to solicit proposals to conduct Third-party project final evaluation services for five JPF projects and Health Protection & Research Organisation (HPRO), a Kabul based NGO, was awarded to provide the service based on competitive selection process.

1.2 Afghanistan Hunger and Food insecurity

Afghanistan has been subjected to decades of complex and protracted conflicts, combined with a changing climate, gender inequalities, rapid urbanization, underemployment and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over half of the country's population lives below the poverty line, and food insecurity is on the rise, largely due to conflict and insecurity cutting off whole communities from livelihood opportunities. 18.9 million people are identified as acutely food insecure, including hundreds of thousands who have been displaced by conflict since the beginning of the year 2021. Undernutrition is of particular concern in women, children, displaced people, and returnees, households headed by women, people with disabilities and the poor. Despite progress in recent years, undernutrition rates are now increasing and 2 million children are malnourished. Every year, some 250,000 people on average are affected by a wide range of environmental disasters including floods, droughts, avalanches, landslides and earthquakes. The impact of disasters and dependency on water from rain or snowmelt severely limit the productivity of the agricultural sector, which consequently affects the food security situation in Afghanistan¹

1.3 Food insecurity in Afghanistan²

Chronic food insecurity as a by-product of long-term emergencies, is a matter of concern as they disrupt livelihoods in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has lived through foreign interference, civil war, insurgency, and widespread insecurity for four decades (World Bank, 2019b). Severely disrupted Afghanistan's economic growth trajectory, and the level of chronic food insecurity is higher. Additionally, Afghanistan's residence consumption is not only an insufficient quantity but also qualitative inadequacy. In this country, over half of the residents have borderline food

¹ <https://www.wfp.org/countries/afghanistan>

² https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346696189_Assessment_of_Food_Security_Situation_in_Afghanista
[n](#)

consumption, which is higher among the rural population. Based on the word bank estimation, more than 30% of Afghan people have not consumed sufficient protein (per day per person 50 gr) in their foods. Hence insufficient quantity and quality of food are more and more severe on the nearly 1.4 million children under the age of five (World Bank, 2019).

Seasonal malnutrition is one of the common outcomes of food insecurity in Afghanistan. The cause of seasonal food insecurity in 2016-17 was more severe during the winter months. Compared to a yearly average of 37% of the population experiencing adequate food security, this drops to 17% (World Bank, 2019a). Afghanistan's food security has a clear seasonal character (World Bank, 2012) and the seasonality plays an important role in food security. With hot summers and cold winters, temperatures differ significantly across the season, and the climate in the highlands varies with elevation. In certain cases, extreme winter situations impact travel, and roads are frequently blocked throughout the cold season in high mountain areas due to the heavy snow accumulation (FAO, 2017). In specific in these places, households are compelled to rely solely on food supplies stored before winter. Therefore, a wide variance in the security of food outcome across the various seasons will be expected (World Bank, 2012).

1.4 Food security status in Nangarhar

Due to above-average cumulative precipitation from April to May 2020, rust in wheat and powdery mildew in vegetables are expected to have reduced wheat and vegetable output by an estimated 10 to 20 percent compared to its previous year. Due to the poor quality of harvested wheat, farm gate prices were below average according to field observations, which has adversely affected income of wheat producers in this province³.

Currently, harvesting of vegetables – such as onion, potato, tomatoes, and other seasonal crops – is ongoing. Due to the border closure with Pakistan through late June 2020, Pakistani vegetables could not enter Afghanistan through this province. As a result, there was high demand for domestically produced vegetables, both inside and outside of the province. This has led to increased income for vegetable and fruit producers in Nangarhar Province. In rural areas of Nangarhar, wheat and vegetables are the main source of income for rural households. Meanwhile, prices of key staple food commodities – including wheat flour, cooking oil, and beans – remain significantly above average.

In Jalalabad market, prices of wheat flour increased a further 4 percent between April and May, 2020 to reach levels 40 percent higher than last year and 50 percent higher than the three-year average. At the same time, wages for casual labor remained stable between April and May, though at levels 33 percent lower than the same time last year, and 17 percent lower than the three-year average. Significantly above-average food prices and below-average wages are constraining purchasing power among market-dependent households. In urban areas such as Jalalabad City, poor households are mainly dependent on daily labor and petty trade. In the summer months, skilled laborers typically migrate to Pakistan and earn enough income to meet their food and non-food needs back home. However, due to border closures this year, these laborers could not make it to Pakistan. This severely impacted the approximate 5 percent households who typically rely on skilled labor migration. In addition, levels of

³ https://fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/AFGHANISTAN_Food_Security_Outlook_FINAL.pdf

remittances from Iran and Pakistan have significantly decreased in this province, reducing poor households' income in both rural and urban areas.

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) reports that almost 28,000 individuals fled their homes due to conflict in the eastern region from January to May 2020, with the majority displaced to Jalalabad City. Of these, approximately 55 percent were assisted with either food packages or cash-for-food. These IDPs increased the number of people competing for scarce labor opportunities in Jalalabad, putting pressure on the already weak livelihoods of urban poor in this province.

1.5 NGOs working in Nangarhar providing Cash Assistance

WFP provided USD 36 million in cash-based transfers (CBT) to over 2.6 million people of Afghanistan throughout 2021 in support of emergency assistance, school-based programmes and resilience activities. In 2022, WFP is scaling up to reach nearly 6 million people per month from March to May with cash and voucher assistance - For the first time, urban households are suffering from food insecurity at rates similar to rural households - CBT supports existing markets and contributes to more equal purchasing power for women⁴.

WFP has partnered with several Financial Service Providers (FSPs) including local banks, mobile money operators (ABMMC, Etisalat), and remittance exchange companies (Western Union). All FSPs go through a strict due diligence process and are vetted against the UN sanctions list. WFP has partnered with Azizi Bank to offer a pre-paid card to beneficiaries which they can use to purchase commodities of their choice at WFP contracted retailers. Commodity vouchers are used in places with less access to markets and can be exchanged for a standard food basket [fortified wheat flour, fortified sunflower oil, pulses and salt]. WFP manages and contracts country-wide distributors and wholesalers who provide end-to-end⁵ solutions including commodities procurement, transportation, and last-mile distribution to communities

The Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM) is a rapid response facility funded by the Directorate-General for European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO) to provide immediate and life-saving assistance to shock-affected populations by delivering Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) of a maximum of 22,000 AFN, as well as protection and water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) assistance. The ERM is implemented across 33 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)-led consortium including ACTED, DRC, International Rescue Committee (IRC), and REACH, in coordination with Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR). The type of cash transfer was Unconditional.

Cordaid is an internationally operating value-based emergency relief and development organisation, working in and on fragility. Cordaid has resumed its humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, after the regime shift in August. It distributed Humanitarian Aid In Daikundi, Ghor, Herat, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Urozgan, The assistance will allow them to

⁴ <https://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp292208.pdf>

⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/cash-based-transfers-afghanistan-january-2022>

⁶ <https://www.fao.org/3/cb8431en/cb8431en.pdf>

repair their homes and protect themselves against severe weather conditions. From January – September 2021, 29,504 people received cash assistance for food by CORDAID.

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) initiated a project named, ‘Safeguarding Food And Livelihoods Security Through Unconditional Cash Transfer And Emergency Livestock’.

The common objective of this project along with the ongoing humanitarian response projects is to protect food and nutrition security by boosting the livelihoods and productive capacities of poor, vulnerable men and women in these at-risk communities during the La Niña induced drought months. The budget for this project was USD 8.2 million and it was implemented between 01-Apr-2021 - 30-Sep-22. The activities included Wheat Cultivation, Livestock protection, home gardening, Unconditional Cash transfers, Training, Covid 19. In this project, FAO did 156 100 Cash transfers throughout targeted provinces.

1.6 Overview of Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Program (Emergency response phase), Emergency Food Assistance in Nangarhar Province

The Emergency cash-based food assistance distribution in Nangarhar Province

The projects “Life-saving food assistance for vulnerable households in Nangarhar Province” implemented from August 10, 2021 to May 9, 2022 [273 days], and “Urgent winter period food assistance for vulnerable households in Nangarhar Province” implemented from 1st February 2022 to 20 July 2022 [170days] by Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) in partnership with Your Voice Organization (YVO), funded by JPF. The aim was to provide life-saving and urgent winter period food assistance for vulnerable people suffering from severe socioeconomic conditions and to maintain livelihoods in the three districts of Nangarhar Province. Thereby, enabling households in three districts of Nangarhar province (Chaparhar, Khogyani, and Rodat) to purchase food for survival by providing cash transfers to vulnerable people suffering from severe socioeconomic conditions due to multiple factors such as conflict, harsh winter, limited humanitarian access, disasters, and COVID-19. Under the first project (JPF5), 8100 AFN equivalent to approximately US\$90 in cash was provided each month for five months for purchasing of the minimum food required for vulnerable people in severe socioeconomic conditions in the three districts of Nangarhar Province (Chaparhar, Khogyani and Rodat). A total of 517 vulnerable households suffering from severe socioeconomic conditions (estimated to have an average of 7 persons per household) was provided assistance through the project. The urgent winter period food assistance project (JPF6) provided two (8100 and 16200 AFN) cash distributions to 700 vulnerable beneficiaries and one-time cash distribution to additional 20 vulnerable beneficiaries in the same districts.

Indicators and targets for the main objective stated in the project logframe at outcome level are the blow two:

- Ratio of cash received to food purchases: 90% or more
- Percentage of beneficiary households that perceive assistance to have improved access to necessary food: more than 90%

Post distribution monitoring under the emergency cash-based food assistance

Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was conducted through a quantitative assessment administered to all the beneficiaries after each distribution using a questionnaire. Respondents were normally the household heads, female household heads, or an adult household member who was well-informed to respond to questions on the cash context and processes.

For JPF5, a total of 5 times and for JPF6 a total 2 times of Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) were conducted in 3 districts since its inception. The Post distribution monitoring reports showed that the cash distribution assisted the households during the crisis. A higher percentage of beneficiaries were found to use the cash received from YVO to purchase foodstuff for the households. In total, in three districts 100% of the beneficiaries responded that PW/YVO assistance improved their accessibility to the food item for both JPF5 and JPF6, and 98.89% and 99.05% of the provided cash was used to purchase food items respectively. The reports state that the respondents were also fully aware of the cash distribution process and the cash amounts which they would receive. The reports found that the amount of cash was distributed in a timely manner and during the time when they were in dire need and they were not made to wait in line for a couple of hours.

1.7 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the evaluation is to accurately capture information and analyse data on these project outcomes. The specific objectives of final evaluation are:

- To verify and measure outcomes of the projects;
- To understand the beneficiary's satisfaction;
- To document above achievements and challenges;
- Within the scope of the above evaluation, to provide any possible indicators for improving the projects for both JPF and member NGOs.

1.8 Structure of the report

This report represents the synthesis of a number of different streams of analysis and associated reports, including a set of case studies. The main body of the report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2: Methodology

Chapter 3: Findings

Chapter 4: Recommendations

2 Methodology

2.1 Study Design

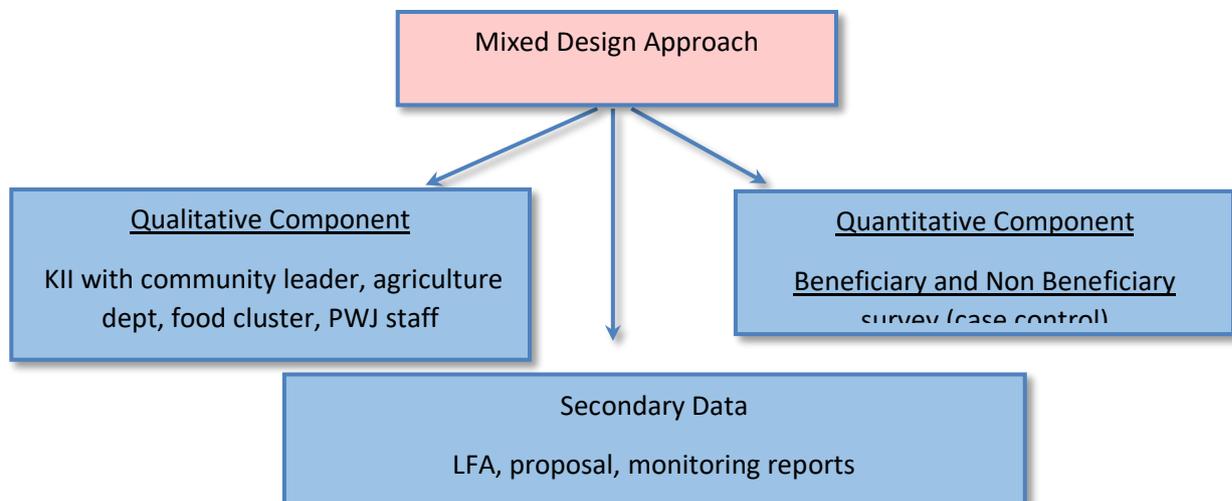
The design of Emergency food assistance in Nangarhar Province made it imperative to use mix methods – quantitative and qualitative methods, and different streams of analysis- for the study. The design of the evaluation was very much informed by the overarching food assistance project outcomes. The outcomes stated in the project logframe were two:

- Ratio of cash received to food purchases: 90% or more
- Percentage of beneficiary households that perceive assistance to have improved access to necessary food: more than 90%

2.2 Methods of data acquisition

In line with the above mentioned objectives, a mixed design approach was adopted for the evaluation. As a method, this research design focused on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a better understanding of study objectives. Evaluation design was based on triangulation of primary and secondary information collected during the study. A case-control methodology was adopted for impact evaluation in consultation with the JPF and PWJ to provide a scientific rigor to the evaluation. In this case-control method participants from both the intervention (76 HH) and the control group (25 HH) were purposely selected through matching by socioeconomic indicators. The impact assessment was measured using project outcome indicators.

Figure 1: Summative evaluation data collection methodology.



2.2.1 Sampling

In this case-control method participants from both the intervention (76 HH) and the control group (25 HH) were selected through matching by village type. The impact assessment was measured using project outcome indicators.

Case-control sampling methodology: stratified simple random sampling for selection of 76 beneficiary HH were adopted and 25 non-beneficiary HH from control cases. The criteria for selection of controls were HH from the same villages and that had a similar vulnerability &

demographic profile according to the HEAT database of the treatment cases, with the exception that cash for food distribution was not conducted from the JPF project nor from any other organisation.

Table 1: Sampling methodology: stratified simple random sampling by district and size of the intervention.

District	Village	Sampled Beneficiary HH	Non Beneficiary HH	Percentage (Beneficiary)
Chaparhar	Gul dara	4	2	5.3%
	Hedya khail	15	4	19.7%
	Lawangapor	3	2	3.9%
Khogyani	Bar bahar	2	1	2.6%
	Chamtalah	6	2	7.9%
	Koz bahar	17	5	22.4%
Rodat	Baro	5	2	6.6%
	Hesarak	23	6	30.3%
	Zakhil	1	1	1.3%
Total		76	25	

Table 2: Surveys and interviews conducted during the summative evaluation.

Respondents	Chaparhar	Khogyani	Rodat	Total
Beneficiary survey	22	25	29	76
Non beneficiary survey	8	8	9	25
FGDs with beneficiaries (Male & Female)	2			2
KII with the Head of the Rural development department	1			
KII with Senior M & E Manager at NGO	1			
KII with In charge of the United Nations FAO office in the Eastern Zone and In charge of Food Security Agriculture Cluster in the East	1			
KII with YVO	1			

2.2.2 Tools for primary data collection

- Beneficiary survey: to gather information on food assistance through cash.
- Non-Beneficiary survey to assess the counterfactual scenario
- KII with Your Voice Organization (YVO) team members on project management
- KII with Food security cluster chairperson/co-chair/coordinator on coordination, project outcomes

- KII with rural department representatives on coordination, sustainability and outcomes
- KII with NGO representative to understand coordination and project implementation
- FGDs with the beneficiaries to explore their experiences and challenges

2.2.3 Secondary data collection

Desk Review: Prior to starting, review of documents regarding the project, introductory meetings were held with the PWJ team on the project. Post meeting, a comprehensive review of secondary documents related to the project was conducted. This involved:

- Monthly Reports
- Project Implementation Plan
- PDM monitoring reports
- Review of implementation plan, PDM monitoring tools: primarily to analyse the processes, output as per LFA

Literature review was first conducted during the tool development. The documents received from projects such as application, monthly reports were critical for understanding the context for emergency food distribution evaluation. The gathered information was used to inform our data collection tools. Evaluator also reviewed existing peer reviewed journals on the internet for developing the tools. We used the key words (“cash transfer for food” or “Nangarhar food insecurity assistance ” or “food insecurity”) and (“tools” or “questionnaires”) and (“Afghanistan” or “Pakistan” or “India” or “Iran” or “developing countries” or “low- and middle income countries”). Where possible, evidence was triangulated. However, sometimes analyses were constrained by the availability of secondary data.

2.3 Data collection

2.3.1 Training and Field Testing

The training of provincial supervisor and enumerator for PWJ-YVO project in Nangarhar province conducted successfully on July 24-25, 2022 in Health Protection and Research Organization (HPRO) office, Kabul. The training was facilitated by HPRO technical team. Two participants one male and one female participated in this training. The methods used in the training were interactive presentations and group discussions, individual and group exercises, feedback from participants and facilitators, daily reflections from participants and role plays facilitated by investigators. In addition, the data collection tools presented separately to the participants and practically worked on the tools in Smart Phones using ODK system. Different methods, such as presentation, group work, questions and answers and practical work were conducted. Finally, the feedback was given by the facilitators regarding filling out the questionnaires and using ODK properly.

2.3.2 Data collection

Data collection was conducted from July 28 until August 11, 2022. An ODK based cloud mobile data collection platform “Kobotoolbox” was used for the data collection and storage. Digital data collection tools were designed in a manner that ensured receipt of quality data to the system, all possible validation measures were taken into account while designing the tool. Data collectors were popped up with alerts while submitting invalid data and they wouldn’t be able to submit incomplete or invalid data.

2.3.3 Monitoring and Supervision for quality assurance

A monitoring team from HPRO Kabul office performed spot checks of interviews as soon as that data was uploaded in HPRO ODK. The study supervisor also conducted monitoring of the data collection process on ODK. Besides taking such quality control measures in the data collection application, a data quality assurance officer was assigned to regularly check the data for validity and communicated the data related issues with the data collectors. Incorrect records were rectified or eliminated from the database. To ensure confidentiality instead of collecting names of respondents, the application generated an auto number for each respondent formatted as (Province Code, District Code, First three letters of village name, 4 digit random number).

All qualitative data collection events were audio recorded. The quality assurance manager conducted quality checks on transcribed interviews and second quality assurance check was conducted on translated interviews.

2.4 Data management and analysis

2.4.1 Transcription and Translation

Transcription of field notes started as soon as the data arrived in the database. The quality assurance officer reviewed field notes for completeness and made additions to the notes after listening to the audio-recorded interviews. To get an accurate account of data from the interviews, the quality assurance officer, data manager and field supervisor had to review notes and make additions to the field notes. One translator was solely responsible for translating transcripts from Farsi/Pashto to English. The quality assurance officer translated quantitative information. Verbatim transcripts were created from the recordings using a standardized transcription protocol. Transcripts were translated into English, and used for analysis.

Some identifiers such as KII interview name used in the study were put in hidden folders since we no longer needed that information as we wanted to eliminate the possibility of linking responses on the electronic file to individuals. The field notes and transcribed interviews were organised by respondents and type of data collection method (KII). Data was organised by main folder and sub folders and then started coding of data.

2.4.2 Coding of quantitative data

The data files were cleaned for errors. The data manager checked the data file to ensure that all responses are within the valid range. Invalid entries were rechecked with the electronic database and based on consensus within the team, observations were replaced with valid numbers. Once questionnaire data was coded, the data was imported into a data analysis software program.

2.4.3 Data analysis

2.4.3.1 Quantitative

For quantitative data analysis, data was first run for missing values, double entries in STATA 14. Data was recorded for certain values and new variables were generated. During data analysis of quantitative data, data issues of type I and type II errors were assessed. The quantitative information was compiled to generate ratios and figures. In this study only univariate analysis was conducted, mainly in the form of frequencies and percentages. Later, pivot tables were generated using Ms Excel to segregate the values as per sub-groups.

2.4.3.2 Qualitative

A deductive thematic analysis was conducted with the transcripts using the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti version 1.0.50 (282). The research objectives and research questions guided data coding for qualitative data. For the coding process, first a priori codes were developed based on the existing themes. Prior codes provide a general framework for major themes and subthemes that were generated later through an iterative process. These priori codes guided the categorization of the data. As new sub-themes emerged, those were coded as new codes. The quality assurance officer and field coordinator team looked for similar views and opinions and group them together to support a particular theme.

To ensure a link is established between major and sub themes, several analytic themes were grouped under one major theme. Grouping of sub themes took place by reviewing their meaning in relation to the major themes. Sub themes were generated under each major theme based on the objectives stated in ToR. The purpose was to group themes in a hierarchical structure. Sub themes were placed under each major theme in a way that supports the major theme. Eventually, a core set of codes was prepared and used to further support analysis and interpretation of data. Systematic analysis and interpretation of qualitative data followed the analysis process. In addition, when reading text under the themes and adding thoughts and ideas about a particular theme, evaluators tried to identify and assess the relationship between different variables. Similarities and differences between the themes and determining how they interact with each other was assessed. In addition, while presenting views from different respondent groups, “Verbatim” quotes were added to further support a particular theme or argument.

2.4.4 Limitations

There were various limitations to this study, which can be divided into, challenges of field, and evaluation scope. The scope of evaluation was broad considering the interventions in three districts. The evaluation team in consultation with the PWJ field team tried to select control groups as close to the beneficiaries as possible so there is close matching guided by the HEAT database with both beneficiaries and no beneficiaries. However, there were challenges at field level and the selected households as control are better off as compared to the beneficiaries. This limited the exercise of comparing results between beneficiaries and control groups of the Food Consumption Score (FCS), the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) and the Coping Strategy Index (CSI). As consequence, it is only presented the FCS from a descriptive perspective to complement the second outcome indicator stated in the logframe (percentage of beneficiary households that perceive assistance to have improved access to necessary food)

3 Key Findings

Sections 3.1 to 3.4 present the findings of analysis under three thematic areas. Reference was also made to link the findings with the project's stated outcome. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Methodology), the findings were drawn primarily from the in-depth analysis performed through an extensive review of policies around cash assistance for food, project documents and primary data generated from the field.

This section presents the findings under four large themes followed by sub thematic areas. Headline findings are presented as bold (and numbered) statements and the supporting findings are presented as subsections with additional paragraphed text.

3.1 Objective 1: To verify and measure outcomes of the projects

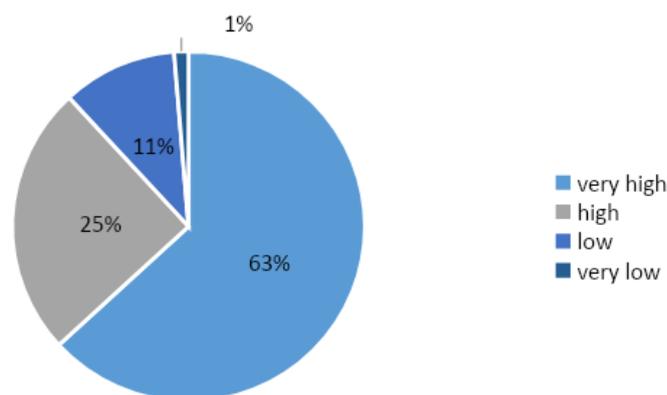
3.1.1 Beneficiary enrolment

The study findings based on a sampling plan showed that 57% beneficiaries were enrolled for the period of 5 months and received 2 payments since March 2022 (JPF6) and 43% for the period of 10 months and received 5 payments since October 2021 (JPF5), at the time of the survey. Consequently, it took 32 minutes on average for beneficiaries to get to the distribution point. Once at the distribution point, it took 1 hour and 54 mins and it cost on average 82.36 AFN (nearly 1 dollar).

3.1.2 Beneficiary participation and involvement

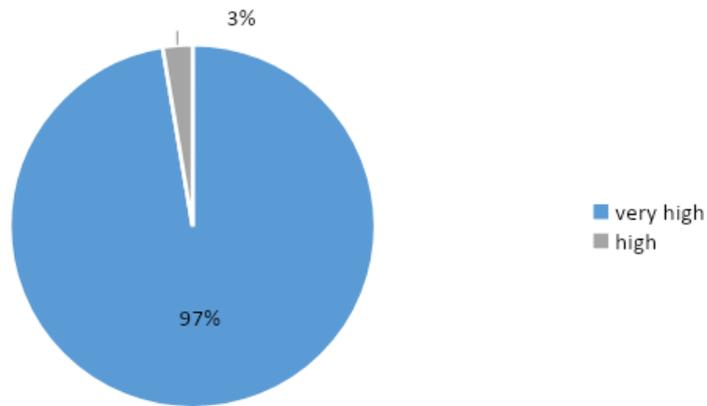
Most of the beneficiaries (63%) perceived a very high involvement in the implementation process. In total 88% felt a high or very high degree of involvement in the implementation process of the project.

Figure 2: Involvement of beneficiaries in the implementation process (incl. project steering committee) of JPF projects.



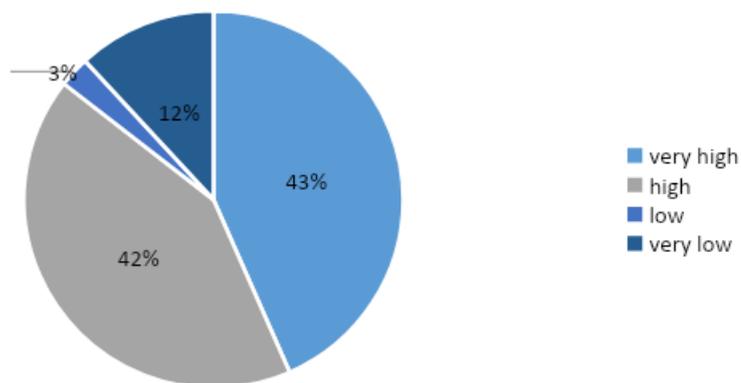
In the case of the involvement of beneficiaries in the need assessment of the food assistance project, almost every beneficiary felt very highly involved (97%). The remaining 3% felt that was highly involved.

Figure 3: Involvement of beneficiaries in the needs assessment of PWJ food assistance program.



The majority of beneficiaries felt very highly involved in the monitoring mechanisms of the project (43%). Additionally, 42% of the beneficiaries felt highly involved in the mechanism.

Figure 4: Involvement of beneficiaries in the monitoring process (incl. complaint mechanism) of JPF projects.



3.1.3 Complaint mechanism and grievance redressal system

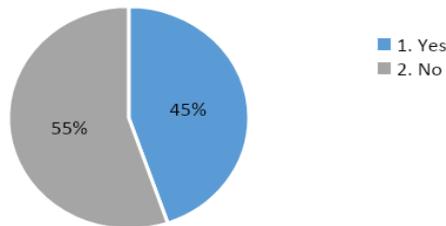
All beneficiaries recognized the complaint/feedback mechanism of the project. In addition, all of the sampled beneficiaries have used that mechanism and have had their problems solved in a timely manner.

Furthermore, all beneficiaries reported to have noticed improvements in the cash distribution after their complaints were resolved.

All beneficiaries reported to have received the full amount of their cash on time and have reported to have been treated courteously.

All beneficiaries consider that the food distribution program is fair and is helpful for their families and are willing to continue receiving cash as part of program.

Figure 5: Beneficiaries consideration if cash assistance sufficient to provide food for their families for one month.



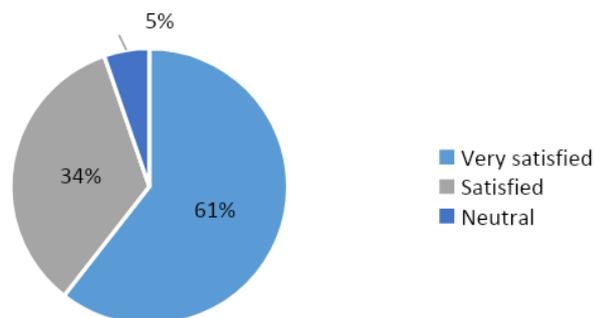
While PWJ followed the FSAC recommendations for the amount of cash assistance provided to each household, most of the beneficiaries consider that the cash assistance is not sufficient to provide food for their families for one month. The main reason for this is that the things are expensive. Other reasons that were mentioned are the size of their families, the lack of a breadwinner or jobs and having ill family members or people with disabilities.

3.2 Objective 2: To understand the beneficiary’s satisfaction

All beneficiaries reported to be very satisfied with the cash distribution system. The vast majority of beneficiaries (97%) said that they were highly satisfied with the way PWJ had informed the process, only 1% remained neutral to this subject and also 1% showed dissatisfaction regarding this aspect. All beneficiaries were either satisfied or very satisfied with the ease of getting the cash.

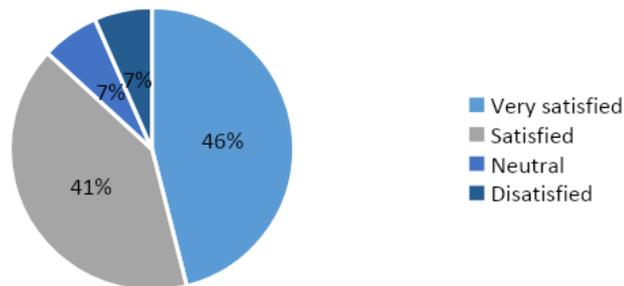
Regarding the location of the cash distribution, most of the beneficiaries were either satisfied or very satisfied.

Figure 6: Satisfaction of beneficiaries regarding the location of the cash distribution.



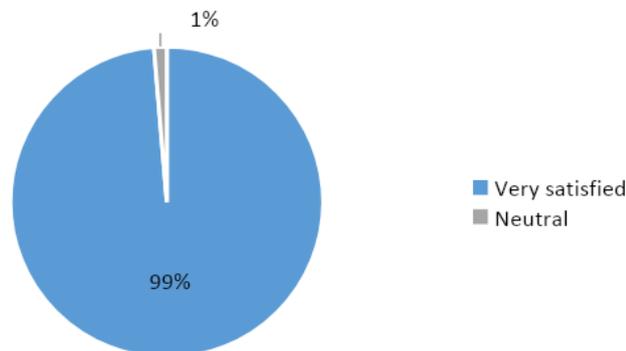
In relation to the time spent waiting, almost 87% of the surveyed beneficiaries were either satisfied or very satisfied. The 6% of them remained neutral and the 7% was dissatisfied.

Figure 7: Satisfaction with the amount of time spent waiting.



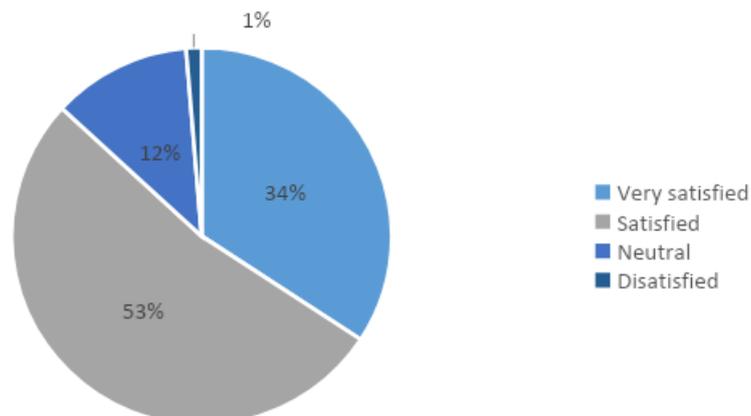
Almost all beneficiaries (99%) were very satisfied with the respectfulness of the staff.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the respectfulness of the staff.



More than half of the sampled beneficiaries (53%) claimed to be dissatisfied with the travel cost and time spent away from job to receive the cash. The 35% of them were either very satisfied or satisfied with that issue.

Figure 9: Satisfaction with the travel cost and time spent away from job to reach to location and receive cash.



All beneficiaries felt very satisfied with the overall cash assistance program.

During FGD with local community , respondents cited their satisfaction with the process of distribution of tokens and reported that they receive the tokens on time. They were found

to be very impressed and satisfied with the department and the system (government). One of the respondents mentioned that they receive calls for the date of the distribution and they come on that day. Another respondent added that the cash they receive helps them in many ways. For example, they can buy medicines and food, whichever is required by them. There was also a mention of a complaint paper by one of the respondents, that they can make a complaint with that paper, however, it was never used, the respondent added. All the respondents reported that they have received the promised amount and there were no complaints. Two respondents even mentioned the cash received as 8100 Afghanis.

3.3 Objective 3: To document project's achievements and challenges

Achievements

Impact Evaluation: Improved access to food

Indicators and targets for related to the main objective stated in the project logframe are two:

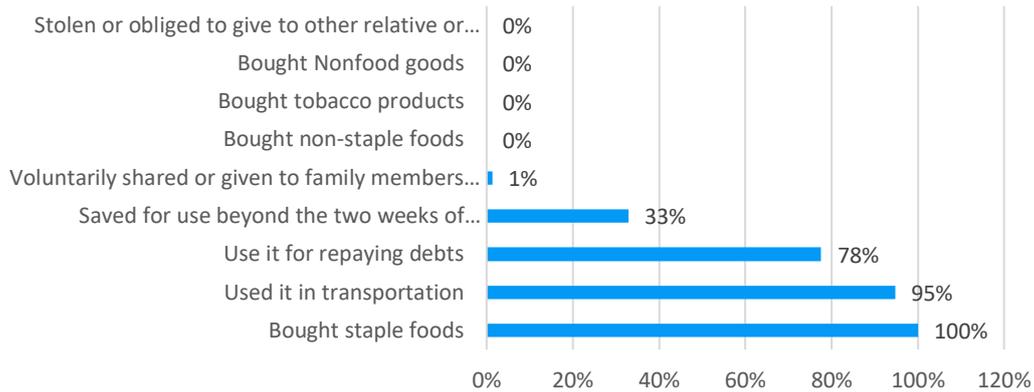
- Ratio of cash received to food purchases. Target: 90% or more
- Percentage of beneficiary households that perceive assistance to have improved access to necessary food. Target: more than 90%

The below findings depict the positive impact of the cash transfer in terms of access to food, overall wellbeing in terms of mental peace beneficiaries achieved through secure food access, and the improved health of the children and women. It is also important to note that not only the quantity but also the quality of food consumed improved.

Ratio of cash received to food purchases

There is a limitation in measuring this indicator; i.e. the tool did not include a question to ask about what proportion of the cash was used to purchase food. Beneficiaries were asked about what they did with assisted cash using a multiple response question; 100% responded they purchased staple food, 95% paid for transportation to come and collect the assistance, 78% used it to repay the debt, 33% saved that beyond the two weeks after receiving the aid. One percent (1 beneficiary) also reported to have given that to a family member outside the household. None of beneficiaries used the cash to purchase non-staple food, tobacco product, non-food goods or money being stolen. It can be concluded that 100% of the beneficiaries purchased staple food with the cash assistance they received from the project.

Figure 10: Expenses in which the assisted cash was used.



Percentage of beneficiary households that perceive assistance to have improved access to necessary food

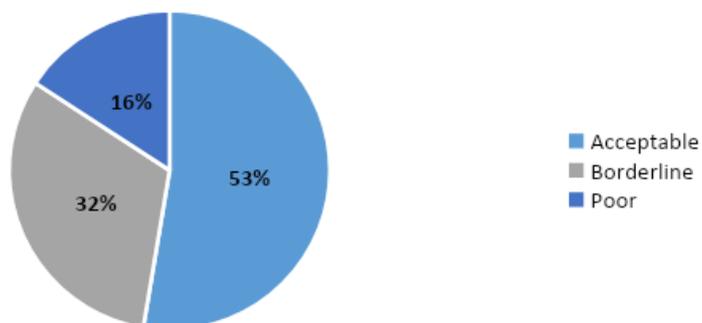
The operationalization of the access to food of beneficiaries of the second target will be made through the indicator “Utilization of cash assistance by beneficiaries”, and complemented with the indicators:

- Food Consumption Score.
- Beneficiary response on cash assistance for food

Food Consumption Score (FCS): is an index that was developed by the World Food Programme. The FCS aggregates household-level data on the diversity and frequency of food groups consumed over the previous seven days, which is then weighted according to the relative nutritional value of the consumed food groups.

Food Consumption Score: It is determined the household's food consumption status based on the following thresholds: 0-21: Poor; 21.5-35: Borderline; >35: Acceptable. As follows, the average score for beneficiaries is 36, so on average they have an acceptable household caloric availability and dietary diversity. However, 53% of the beneficiary households present an acceptable food consumption score.

Figure 11: Beneficiary households by FCS category.

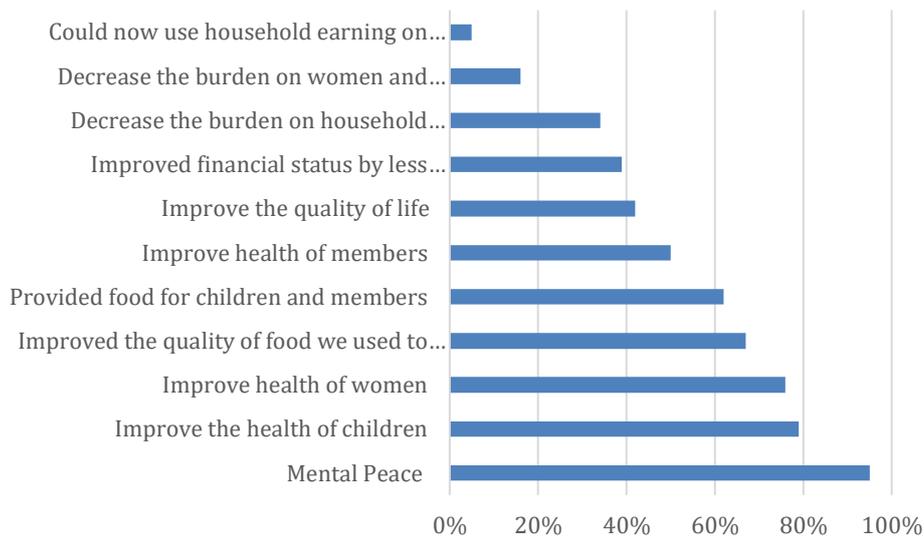


Beneficiary response on cash assistance for food: Almost all beneficiaries reported that the cash assistance has helped their households to improve their mental peace (95%). In second place, 76% of

the households stated that the aid has improved the health of the children. In third place, 76% reported that it has helped to improve women's health.

Additionally, 67% of the beneficiaries detected that the program has improved the quality of food they used to eat and 62% said that it provided food for children and members of the household.

Figure 12: Responses to the effect of cash assistance given to the households.



Challenges

General challenge of cash assistance under emergency response

Some of the challenges from the findings appear to be around the amount of cash delivered, which in some cases is not enough to fulfil the family needs. The expenditure of families has been sustained through cash assistance although discontinuation of the program, it could drop drastically, affecting the food consumption and other aspects of wellbeing.

Program Management

Challenges under program management

Two-fold issues were cited by KII and FGD respondents chiefly identifying the right beneficiary based on national ID's and coverage of the assistance. Ascertaining the authenticity of beneficiary through national ID's has posed challenge to the program team due to prevalence of fake ID's in Afghanistan. The program team has to adopt various measures of crosschecking to overcome that. This invariably also involves coordinating with other NGO's working in same geographical area or working in food security sector. For example, the PWJ and VYO shared all surveyed HHs information with FSAC cluster and other NGOs working in same area for cross check and excluded duplicated names from the list of beneficiaries.

The second most pressing issue is high demand for cash assistance for food. The expectation to cover large proportion of households along with increased amount of assistance was repeatedly raised by local government authorities and was also apparent from the complaint redressal system. The member NGO adopt various measures to address this within the ambit

of resources by increasing the number of rounds of assistance, fundraising to other donors and at times crowdfunding for generating additional resources.

Fund allocation and administrative management

KII interview with PWJ and YVO highlighted that indirect cost within PWJ projects vary across projects, under JPF 5 and JPF6 indirect cost was 20-25 percent whereas seventy-five to eighty percent was allocated for operational cost.

Allocation of funds under capacity development was limited as there is no specific training plan or training imparted. PWJ believes that this was the Emergency project which normally does not include capacity development. It could be argued that the localization initiative focusses on building local capacities.

The KII interviews signalled close coordination between member NGO and local NGO through weekly, monthly meetings and reporting through different mediums.

In terms of coordination with local authorities, a series of hierarchy is followed from introduction to provincial MRRD to local authorities at the beginning of the project. Thereafter at the implementation level, district administration is involved in monitoring of activities under the project. Similarly, NGO has close coordination with FSAC through monthly meetings, however KII participant cited limited coordination with other line departments such as department of economics. Coordination with NGO's working in similar sector, area or location was also mentioned by KII participants at different stages of the program, such as beneficiary selection, etc. While this is a statement from one KII, it could be argued that when the project is coordinated with FSAC then all relevant NGOs who are part of the FSAC should know about the project. In addition, the Ministry of economy has recently enforced measures to get control over all activities of the NGOs and no one NGO can implement a project without coordination with and permission from the ministry of economy and other relevant sectoral ministries. Newly established NGOs that are yet to be FSAC members may have been excluded from the coordination.

3.4 Objective 4: To provide any possible indicatives for improving the projects for both JPF and member NGOs (Recommendations)

Conducting a Baseline survey

Baseline plays a contributory role in measuring impact in evaluation studies. The relevance of baseline statistics of the beneficiaries is of larger importance while capturing theory of change over the course of intervention and thus evaluation becomes more substantial. This would be due to a considerable difference in the conditions of the beneficiaries, pre and post intervention. Moreover, it would be easier to present the outcomes of the project. Hence, it is advised/suggested to conduct a baseline survey in order to gather more comparable information

Improvising the outcome indicators of the project

Throughout the evaluation, a significant inference was drawn, that the outcome indicators incorporated under LFA are too ambitious for this short-term intervention. It is evident that the socio-economic conditions of the people of Afghanistan are deteriorating, hence provisioning of a short-term cash assistance would not make significant improvement in their food security conditions. This type of cash assistance can improve their food consumption for limited period but still can't provide a sustainable solution to their food security problems. Hence, it is suggested that to measure the outcome of the project, the present outcome indicators should be made simpler, realistic and achievable ones. In addition, we recommend some long terms projects that can improve resilience of the communities through improved livelihood opportunities for both men and women.

