



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**CONTEMPORARY MODALITY OF CASH AND VOUCHER
ASSISTANCE (CVA) IN HUMANITARIAN AID
CASE STUDY OF SYRIA**

Master's Thesis

Rahaf Alkhouri

Disaster and Humanitarian Aid Management

June 2023



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**CONTEMPORARY MODALITY OF CASH AND VOUCHER
ASSISTANCE (CVA) IN HUMANITARIAN AID:
CASE STUDY OF SYRIA**

Master's Thesis

Rahaf Alkhouri

Prof. Dr. Aslı Akay

Disaster and Humanitarian Aid Management

June 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was authored with great collaboration from humanitarian workers who participated in the qualitative analysis, generously sharing their valuable insights and experiences. Their firsthand knowledge and perspectives have greatly enriched the research, providing an essential understanding of the intricacies and challenges involved in CVA project design and community engagement.

Direct and indirect participation of all the individuals and communities affected by the Syrian crisis who have been at the center of this research. Their resilience, strength, and willingness to participate in humanitarian efforts were the key inspiration and motivation to delve deeper into this field and work towards more effective and sustainable interventions.

A significant contribution from the professor and academic supervisor, Prof. Dr. Aslı AKAY, through guidance, support, and invaluable feedback throughout the research process to shape this thesis and enhance its quality.

I would also like to acknowledge the academic community and the various organizations working in humanitarian assistance, whose research, reports, and publications have formed the foundation of this thesis. Their contributions have helped broaden my understanding of CVA and its role in addressing humanitarian needs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
ABSTRACT	III
ÖZET	IV
ABBREVIATIONS.....	V
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VII
LIST OF TABLES.....	VIII
INTRODUCTION	1
THE HISTORY OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE	4
CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT	8
THEORIES OF CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE MODALITY	10
THE SYRIAN CRISIS AND THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE THROUGH CVA	16
CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW	20
1. METHODOLOGIES AND THEORIES.....	24
1.1. ASSUMPTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS	27
1.2. SURVEY DESIGN	31
1.4. DATA COLLECTION	39
1.5. DATA ANALYSIS	45
2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	47
2.1. DESIGN & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OF CVA	49
2.2. BENEFICIARIES' EXPERIENCE WITH CVA AND ACTIVITIES	54
2.3. USAGE AND MODALITY PREFERENCE	58
2.4. EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT	65
2.5. RISK AND CHALLENGES	78
2.6. DONORS AND REGULATIONS.....	85
2.7. DIGITIZING HUMANITARIAN CVA	89
2.8. RECOMMENDATIONS BY BENEFICIARIES AND HUMANITARIAN WORKERS.....	92
3. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	96
3.1. OVERALL THESIS RECOMMENDATIONS	97
3.2. FUTURE OF THE CVA PROGRAMS	100
3.3. THESIS LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH	105
CONCLUSION	108
REFERENCES	112
ANNEXES	127
ANNEX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE QUANTITATIVE METHOD	127
ANNEX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE QUALITATIVE METHOD.....	134

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the design and community engagement of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects, focusing on disaster and humanitarian management point of view, in the Syrian context. The study utilizes qualitative analysis, gathering insights from humanitarian workers involved in CVA projects through interviews and surveys. The findings reveal key themes related to project design and community engagement, shedding light on the factors influencing project design, the level of community participation, and the challenges faced in achieving effective community engagement. Additionally, the study examines the significance of market considerations in project design and the integration of market-based approaches. The findings highlight the importance of incorporating beneficiary feedback, stakeholder engagement, and market dynamics in designing impactful CVA interventions. They also underscore the complexities of operating within the Syrian context, including donor requirements and logistical limitations, which present barriers to achieving full community participation. The study concludes by calling for further exploration and innovative solutions to overcome these challenges and ensure that localization principles are effectively applied in the design and implementation of CVA projects. By adopting a comprehensive approach that considers beneficiary preferences, community input, and market dynamics, CVA interventions can be designed to meet the needs of beneficiaries better and promote local economic resilience.

Keywords: Cash and Voucher Assistance, Cash transfer, Disaster and Humanitarian Management, Response, Risk and challenges, Syrian conflict.

ÖZET

Bu tez, afet ve insani yardım yönetimi bağlamında yapılan Nakit ve Kupon Yardımı (NKY) projelerinin tasarımını ve toplum katılımını, özellikle Suriye bağlamında incelemektedir. Çalışma, nitel analiz kullanarak, NKY projelerinde yer alan insani yardım çalışanlarının görüşlerini röportajlar ve anketler aracılığıyla toplayarak yapılmıştır. Bulgular, projenin tasarımını etkileyen faktörler, toplum katılımının düzeyi ve etkili toplum katılımının elde edilmesinde karşılaşılan zorluklar hakkında ana temalar ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma proje tasarımında pazar düşüncelerinin ve pazar odaklı yaklaşımların önemini incelemektedir. Bulgular, etkili NKY müdahalelerinin tasarımında, faydalı geri bildirimlerin, paydaş katılımının ve pazar dinamiklerinin dikkate alınmasının önemini vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, Suriye bağlamında faaliyet göstermenin karmaşıklıklarını, bağışçı gereksinimlerini ve lojistik sınırlamaları da dikkate alarak, tam bir toplum katılımının gerçekleştirilmesinde karşılaşılan engelleri ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek ve NKY projelerinin tasarımı ve uygulanmasında yerelleştirme prensiplerinin etkin bir şekilde uygulanmasını sağlamak için daha fazla araştırma ve yenilikçi çözümler gerektiğini belirterek sonuçlanmaktadır. Faydalı sahiplerin tercihlerini, toplum katılımını ve pazar dinamiklerini dikkate alan kapsamlı bir yaklaşım benimsenerek, NKY müdahaleleri faydalı sahiplerin ihtiyaçlarını daha iyi karşılamak ve yerel ekonomik dirençliliği teşvik etmek için tasarlanabilir.

Anahtar kelimeleri: Nakit ve Kupon Yardımı, Nakit transferi, Afet ve İnsani Yardım, Risk ve zorluklar, Suriye çatışması.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATC: Anti-Terrorism Check
BHA: Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
BNF: Beneficiaries
CaLP: Cash Learning Partnership
CARE: Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBI: Cash-Based Intervention
CBR: Cash-Based Response
CCCM: Camp Coordination Camp Management
CTP: Cash Transfer Programming
CVA: Cash & Voucher Assistance
DFID: Department for International Development
ECHO: European Commission Humanitarian Aid
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD: Focus Group Discussion
FSL: Food Security & Livelihood
FSP: Financial Service Provider
FWA: Frame Work Agreement
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
GoS: Government of Syria
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross
ID: Identifying Data
IDPs: Internally Displaced People
IFRC: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM: International Organization of Migration
LTA: Long-Term Agreement

MEB: Minimum Expenditure Basket

MEAL: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning

MPCA: Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières - Doctors Without Borders

NES: North-East Syria

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

NWS: North-West Syria

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

PDM: Post-Distribution Monitoring

PLW: Pregnant & Lactating Women

POS: Point-Of-Sale

PTT: Posta ve Telgraf Teşkilatı - Post and Telegraph Agency

PWD: People with Disabilities

SDF: Syrian Democratic Forces

SEA: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

S/NFI: Shelter/Non-Food Items

SOP: Standard Operating Procedures

SYP: Syrian Pound

TRY: Turkish Lira

TWG: Technical Working Group

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

USD: United States Dollar

VSLA: Village Savings and Loans Associations

WASH: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

WFP: World Food Programme

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Locations of the Research – Quantitative.....	42
Figure 2. Gender & Age Disaggregation of Interviewees – Quantitative.....	42
Figure 3. Gender Disaggregation of BNF Respondents.....	55
Figure 4. Frequency of Assistance.....	55
Figure 5. Average of CVA Value	56
Figure 6. CVA Activities and Purposes	57
Figure 7. Priority Sectors by Beneficiaries	59
Figure 8. Modality Preference by BNF.....	59
Figure 9. Reasons Behind Preferring In-kind Assistance	60
Figure 10. Reasons Behind Preferring CVA.....	61
Figure 11. Reasons Behind Preferring Cash Assistance	62
Figure 12. Reasons Behind Preferring Voucher Assistance	63
Figure 13. Impact of CVA	67
Figure 14. Is there any specific Impact of CVA on Women?.....	68
Figure 15. Is there any specific Impact of CVA on PWD?.....	68
Figure 16. Specific Impact of CVA on Women.....	70
Figure 17. Specific Impact of CVA on PWD	70
Figure 18. Disadvantages of Voucher Modality	72
Figure 19. Disadvantages of Cash Modality.....	72
Figure 20. Risks and Concerns of CVA.....	79
Figure 21. Illustration of Humanitarian Borders and Money Transfer	83
Figure 22. Recommendations by Beneficiaries for Future CVA Projects	94

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Interviewees Information – Quantitative 42

Table 2. Interviewees Information – Qualitative 44



INTRODUCTION

In the face of disasters and crises, humanitarian aid plays a crucial role in alleviating human suffering, protecting lives, and restoring communities. The concept of humanitarian aid embodies the four essentials of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, aiming to address the immediate and extended needs and gaps of affected communities (CHS Alliance, 2013). Humanitarian assistance encompasses a wide range of activities, and it operates within a complex ecosystem of different stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and local communities, all working together to deliver aid to those in need (Brown, 2009; DG ECHO, 2009, July 2). By upholding these fundamental principles, humanitarian aid seeks to uphold the dignity and well-being of individuals and communities in times of crisis and provide the necessary support for their recovery and resilience-building efforts (Gostelow, 1999). Humanitarian aid encompasses a range of activities and interventions to meet the needs of affected populations. These components include emergency relief, provision of basic necessities, healthcare services, protection, and support for recovery (Betts & Bloom, 2014, November 23). Emergency relief efforts often involve the provision of settlement, food, clean water, hygienic facilities, and healthcare. These immediate interventions aim to save lives, prevent further harm, and restore a sense of normalcy amidst the chaos (Finnemore & Katzenstein, 2015).

Disasters and crises often result in significant loss of life, displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and the breakdown of essential services. Humanitarian aid provides immediate relief and addresses the urgent needs of affected populations. It saves lives by providing essential services and supplies, including medical care, food, water, and shelter (Borton et al., 1996). Moreover, humanitarian aid supports early recovery and helps communities

rebuild and restore their livelihoods, contributing to long-term resilience (Borton et al., 1996). Additionally, humanitarian aid acts as a catalyst for international solidarity and cooperation. Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and communities come together to provide assistance and support to affected areas, transcending borders and political differences (Pan American Health Organization, 1999). Humanitarian aid serves as a vehicle for strengthening partnerships, fostering collaboration, and promoting a collective response to disasters and crises (Alameldeen, 2021). Accordingly, humanitarian aid plays a pivotal role in responding to disasters and crises, addressing the immediate needs of affected populations, promoting resilience, and facilitating recovery (Borton et al., 1996). Recognizing the significance of humanitarian aid in disaster response sets the stage for further exploration of specific modalities, including cash and voucher assistance, in achieving effective and efficient outcomes for affected populations (Borton et al., 1996; Hilhorst & Schmiemann, 2002).

Over the years, various interventions and modalities of humanitarian aid have been developed to effectively address the needs of affected populations worldwide (OCHA, 2013, October 14). One such modality is Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), so-called Cash Transfer Programming (CTP), Cash-Based Intervention (CBI), or Cash-Based Response (CBR). CVA has emerged as a contemporary humanitarian method and has been integrated across multiple sectors, including Shelter and Non-Food Items (S/NFI), Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), Early Recovery, Education, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Protection (DG ECHO, 2022, March 21). This modality has demonstrated its efficiency in providing life-saving relief and supporting development interventions to meet the needs of beneficiaries (DG ECHO, 2022, March 21; Castillo, 2021).

In recent years, CVA has garnered significant interest and support from global donors in the field of humanitarian aid. Donors such as USAID, ECHO, DFID, and other global donors have recognized the potential and effectiveness of CVA in addressing the needs of affected populations. USAID, through its BHA (Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance), has been at the forefront of promoting CVA as a key modality within its humanitarian programming. With its shift towards a more people-centered approach, USAID acknowledges the value of CVA in providing timely, dignified, and cost-effective assistance. Similarly, ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations) has shown a keen interest in CVA (Doocy & Tappis, 2017). ECHO recognizes the flexibility and efficiency of cash-based interventions in addressing immediate needs and supporting longer-term recovery efforts. By funding CVA projects and providing technical guidance, ECHO aims to ensure that assistance is targeted, accountable, and responsive to the diverse needs of impacted people (DG ECHO, 2022, March 21). DFID (Department for International Development) has also embraced CVA as an integral part of its humanitarian strategy. DFID recognizes the potential of cash and vouchers to empower individuals, promote local economies, and foster resilience in crisis-affected communities. By promoting the use of CVA, DFID aims to enhance the efficiency and accountability of humanitarian assistance. These global donors' interest and endorsement of CVA have influenced the broader humanitarian community (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24; Oxfam GB, 2006, January 2). Their commitment to integrating CVA into humanitarian programming has encouraged other stakeholders, including NGOs, and implementing partners, to explore and adopt this modality in their operations. This collective effort towards embracing CVA highlights the growing recognition of its potential to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24; DG ECHO, 2009, July 2).

Considering the historical context of humanitarian interventions and the development of aid and assistance types, as well as the recent expansion of the CVA modality and the interest shown by global donors, this thesis aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of global standards for CVA implementation. It will explore the main concerns of global donors, the necessary requirements, and regulations to overcome implementation obstacles and ensure effective delivery of CVA to the beneficiaries and affected populations. The thesis will delve into Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), risk mitigation strategies, and the standardization practices shared by the Cash-Based Response Technical Working Group (CBR TWG). Furthermore, the thesis will provide a detailed analysis of CVA programming in Syria, which currently presents one of the most complex contexts for humanitarian assistance after the civil war that started in 2011 and caused millions of immigrations and displacement internally and externally to various countries. Drawing from this case study and analysis, the thesis will shed light on the primary feedback and recommendations from beneficiaries, focusing on how the implementation of CVA activities can be improved to enhance quality, ensure efficient risk mitigation, and alleviate concerns. The findings aim to contribute to the development of CVA and shape a more promising future for humanitarian aid.

The History of Humanitarian Assistance

The beginning of humanitarian aid can be tracked down to ancient civilizations where concepts of compassion, mercy, and caring for the vulnerable emerged (Rysaback-Smith, 2015). However, the contemporary record of humanitarian assistance can be attributed to the establishment of the Red Cross Movement in the mid-19th century. Inspired by the vision of Henry Dunant, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was founded in 1863, marking the beginning of organized humanitarian efforts on an international scale (Forsythe, 2007).

The World Wars in the 20th century witnessed an unprecedented scale of human suffering and destruction, prompting significant advancements in humanitarian assistance (Borton et al., 1996). During World War I, humanitarian NGOs including the Red Cross played a major function in providing medical aid, supporting prisoners of war, and alleviating the suffering of civilians affected by the conflict. The Geneva Conventions, adopted in the aftermath of World War II, further solidified the legal framework for humanitarian action and the protection of victims of armed conflicts (Borton et al., 1996; Barnett & Weiss, 2011).

The development of humanitarian principles has been a significant aspect of the history of humanitarian assistance. In 1968, the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence were enshrined in the Red Cross Code of Conduct, serving as a guide for humanitarian actors (Hilhorst et al., 2021). These principles have since become central to the performing of humanitarian aid, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing human needs, providing assistance without discrimination, and ensuring the autonomy and integrity of humanitarian action (Barnett & Weiss, 2011; Slim, 2016). It also guided the performing of humanitarian activities. While the principle of humanity emphasizes the inherent value of human life and the need to alleviate suffering without discrimination (Borton et al., 1996). Humanitarian actors strive to provide need-driven assistance, irrespective of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or political affiliation (Broussard et al., 2019). The principle of impartiality ensures that aid is distributed solely in line with the severity of need, ensuring equal access and fairness in the allocation of resources. Neutrality is another critical principle in humanitarian aid (CHS Alliance, 2013). Humanitarian actors must maintain independence from political, economic, or military interests to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of their operations (CHS Alliance, 2013). By remaining neutral, humanitarian organizations can gain access to affected populations and

navigate complex political environments more effectively, ultimately enhancing their ability to deliver aid (CHS Alliance, 2013). Independence is closely linked to neutrality and refers to the autonomy of humanitarian actors in decision-making and program implementation. Independent action allows organizations to prioritize needs, develop context-specific strategies, and respond effectively without undue influence or interference from external entities (CHS Alliance, 2013). This principle ensures the credibility, accountability, and sustainability of humanitarian aid (Hilhorst et al., 2021)

The latter half of the 20th century recorded a significant crossroad in the landscape of humanitarian assistance with the emergence and growth of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as key stakeholders on the ground. Alongside the NGOs, United Nations (UN) agencies also played a crucial role in shaping the humanitarian landscape (OCHA, 2013, October 14). Organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) - Doctors Without Borders, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), Oxfam, as well as UN agencies like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Programme (WFP), rose to prominence during this period (DG ECHO, 2009, July 2). These NGOs and UN agencies addressed critical gaps in humanitarian response and directly provided aid to affected populations (Brown, 2009). They not only delivered life-saving assistance but also advocated for policy changes and influenced the humanitarian sector as a whole (Brown, 2009). Through their advocacy efforts, they emphasized the importance of impartiality and adherence to humanitarian principles in the delivery of assistance. They championed the entitlements of the well-being of affected people, pushing for greater accountability, transparency, and ethical practices within the humanitarian community (Brown, 2009).

The growth and influence of NGOs and UN agencies transformed the landscape of humanitarian assistance, ushering in a new era of decentralized

and community-centered interventions (Brown, 2009). Their innovative approaches, commitment to local engagement, and advocacy for principled action have been instrumental in shaping the evolution and effectiveness of the humanitarian response (Betts & Bloom, 2014, November 23). By working closely with local communities and partnering with governments, NGOs and UN agencies have implemented contextually appropriate and sustainable interventions (Brown, 2009). They have played a vital role in building local capacity, fostering resilience, and empowering communities to take an active role in their recovery (Brown, 2009; Barnett & Weiss, 2011).

The collective efforts of NGOs and UN agencies have not only expanded the reach and impact of humanitarian assistance but have also raised awareness about the importance of humanitarian principles and the need for coordinated and effective responses (Borton et al., 1996). Their contributions have been instrumental in advancing the field of humanitarian assistance and have supported collaboration, innovation, and the pursuit of more inclusive and people-centered approaches (Brown, 2009).

Over the years, humanitarian assistance has encountered challenges that hinder its effective delivery, compromising the well-being of affected populations (Gelsdorf, 2010). One significant challenge is the politicization of aid, where assistance becomes entangled in political agendas, leading to restrictions, delays, or diversion of aid. Security risks pose another challenge, with humanitarian actors operating in volatile environments facing threats from armed groups and criminal organizations (Pusterla & Pusterla, 2021). Coordination issues among multiple organizations providing assistance can result in duplication of efforts and resource inefficiencies. Inadequate funding also presents a major obstacle to adequately responding to growing humanitarian needs (Gelsdorf, 2010; Pusterla & Pusterla, 2021).

While humanitarian assistance has faced significant challenges throughout its history, there is a growing recognition of the need for

localization, community engagement, and resilience-building approaches (Pusterla & Pusterla, 2021). Addressing issues such as politicization, security risks, coordination gaps, and funding shortfalls, the humanitarian community can strive towards more sustainable, effective, and impactful assistance that meets the needs of affected populations and contributes to their long-term well-being (Clarke & Ramalingam, 2008; Pusterla & Pusterla, 2021).

Cash and Voucher Assistance: Origins and Development

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has emerged as a transformative approach to humanitarian aid. It involves providing cash transfers or vouchers to affected populations, enabling them to meet their essential needs and make choices based on their unique circumstances (Doocy & Tappis, 2017). The use of CVA in humanitarian response can be traced back to the 1980s when it was employed in limited instances, such as food-for-work programs. However, it was in the 1990s, during the response to the Rwandan genocide and the Balkan wars, that CVA gained prominence (World Bank Group, 2016). Humanitarian agencies, recognizing the limitations of in-kind aid, started exploring CVA activities as a more efficient, dignified, resource-saving, and financially effective way of meeting the needs of affected populations (Oxfam GB, 2006, January 2; Doocy & Tappis, 2017).

The adoption of cash and voucher assistance gained momentum in the early 2000s as more humanitarian agencies recognized its potential benefits. The devastating impacts of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 and the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 highlighted the effectiveness of cash-based interventions in addressing immediate needs and supporting early recovery (Pearson et al., 2014, January 20). This led to growing pieces of evidence demonstrating the positive impacts of CVA on national economies, social dynamics, and the empowerment of affected individuals and communities (Oxfam GB, 2006, January 2; Fotta & Schmidt, 2022).

The institutionalization of Cash and Voucher Assistance within the humanitarian sector gained further traction with the publication of key guidelines and standards (Harvey & Bailey, 2011, June 7). The Sphere Handbook, first published in 2000, recognized cash transfers as a valuable assistance modality (DG ECHO, 2013, March 7). Additionally, the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement developed guidance and tools to support the implementation of CVA, ensuring its effective and accountable use in humanitarian programs (Sphere, 2018; Balmer et al., 2021).

In recent years, cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has experienced a remarkable shift from being a niche approach to becoming a mainstream modality of humanitarian aid (DG ECHO, 2013, March 7). This transformation can be attributed to the growing recognition of its numerous advantages and its positive impact on both recipients and the broader humanitarian system (Levine & Bailey, 2015, February 16). CVA is now widely integrated into various sectors, including food, shelter, education, and health, highlighting its versatility and applicability across diverse humanitarian contexts (IFRC, 2022, January 25; Doocy & Tappis, 2017).

One of the main elements contributing to the increased prominence of CVA is the advancement of technology. The emergence of mobile money and digital platforms has revolutionized the delivery of cash transfers, enabling greater efficiency, transparency, and cost-effectiveness. These technological innovations have facilitated the timely and secure transfer of funds reducing the administrative burden and ensuring that assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries in a more streamlined manner (Smith et al., 2012, January 1; Cohen & Salaun, 2017). Additionally, integrating CVA into multiple sectors has enhanced coordination and collaboration among humanitarian actors (Levine & Bailey, 2015, February 16). By leveraging the existing infrastructure and systems in place, such as local markets and financial

institutions, CVA enables a more sustainable and context-specific response. It empowers individuals and communities to make their own decisions, enabling them to prioritize their unique needs and allocate resources, accordingly, thereby fostering dignity and promoting self-reliance (ELAN, 2016).

The growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of CVA has further propelled its mainstream adoption. Numerous studies and evaluations have demonstrated the positive outcomes of cash-based interventions, including improved food security, increased access to essential services, and stimulating local economies (Heaslip et al., 2018a). This evidence-based approach has bolstered confidence in CVA among donors, humanitarian organizations, and policymakers, prompting greater investment and commitment to scaling up cash transfer programs (Rust, 2019, October 31). Overall, the shift towards CVA as a mainstream modality of relief aid reflects the progressing nature of the humanitarian response. Its integration across sectors, supported by technological advancements and evidence-based practices, has revolutionized the way assistance is delivered (FAO, 2013, April 20). As CVA continues to evolve and adapt to emerging challenges, it holds tremendous potential for addressing the diverse needs of affected populations and promoting a more efficient, dignified, and sustainable approach to humanitarian assistance (Kreidler & Reiger, 2022, December 5).

Theories of Cash and Voucher Assistance Modality

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has emerged as a transformative modality within the humanitarian aid sector, prompting extensive research and the development of theories that explore its principles and impacts (ICRC, 2007, August 4). As traditional aid approaches have faced limitations, CVA has gained recognition for its potential to deliver aid more efficiently, effectively, and in a manner that respects the agency and preferences of affected populations (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24).

These theories provide conceptual frameworks to better understand the dynamics and implications of CVA in humanitarian settings, informing the design, implementation, and evaluation of CVA programs (Harvey, 2005).

Cash Transfer Programming (CTP) theory emphasizes the provision of cash transfers as the primary mode of assistance in humanitarian response (Vogel et al., 2021). This theory asserts that distributing cash to affected beneficiaries directly allows them to exercise autonomy and make decisions based on their individual needs and priorities (Yıldırım & Smyrl, 2021a). By empowering beneficiaries to determine how best to allocate the cash, CTP aims to restore their sense of dignity and self-determination. (Doocy & Tappis, 2017). Proponents of this theory argue that cash transfers can achieve higher efficiency and effectiveness than in-kind assistance, as they enable individuals and communities to address their specific needs in a contextually appropriate manner (Oxfam GB, 2006, January 2; Tappis & Doocy, 2018).

The theory of humanitarian principles and cash explores the compatibility of cash and voucher assistance with the core principles of humanitarian action. It argues that cash-based interventions can align with principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and accountability (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24). Cash transfers empower affected populations by allowing them to choose and act according to their priorities (Borton et al., 1996). This theory emphasizes the ethical use of cash in humanitarian response, assuring that aid is delivered to those most in need and respects the dignity of beneficiaries (Harvey, 2005).

Market-based approaches to CVA recognize that humanitarian interventions take place within market systems. This theory contends that providing cash to beneficiaries stimulates local economies and supports local businesses. Cash transfers enable individuals to access goods and needed items from local shops in the markets, contributing to market recovery, stability, and resilience (CVA Risk Management Working Group, 2017, June

5). By strengthening local markets, market-based approaches aim to foster sustainable economic development, benefiting affected populations and the wider community (Yıldırım & Smyrl, 2021b).

Choice theory in CVA emphasizes the importance of giving beneficiaries the freedom to make decisions regarding their needs (ICRC, 2007, August 4). This theory posits that by offering cash transfers or vouchers, individuals can choose how to allocate resources based on their specific circumstances and preferences (DG ECHO, 2013, March 7). By enabling beneficiaries to select commodities that meet their unique priorities, choice theory supports the idea of individual empowerment and recognizes the importance of tailoring assistance to local contexts (Fabre, 2017, May 3).

Innovation and technology theory in CVA explores the transformative potential of new technologies and digital platforms in enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of cash and voucher assistance (Electronic Cash Transfer Learning Action Network, 2016, February 2; Monich et al., 2023). This theory recognizes the role of innovations such as mobile money, digital payment systems, and biometric identification in expanding the reach, speed, and transparency of cash transfers (Coppi et al., 2021). By harnessing technological advancements, CVA interventions can overcome logistical challenges, reduce transaction costs, and ensure the secure and timely delivery of aid (Heaslip et al., 2018b; Pinter et al., 2022).

Localization theory in CVA emphasizes the importance of engaging local actors, including local governments, communities, and organizations in the preparedness, implementation, and management phases of CVA programs (ICRC, 2007, August 4). This theory recognizes the value of local knowledge, networks, and resources in effectively delivering aid (ICRC, 2007; Rust, 2019, October 31). By involving local actors, CVA interventions can be more contextually appropriate, responsive, and sustainable (FAO, 2018, November 15). Localization theory aims to shift the power dynamics in humanitarian

response, promoting greater partnership between international and local actors (DG ECHO, 2022, March 21)

Risk and vulnerability theory in CVA examines how cash and voucher assistance can address the underlying risks and vulnerabilities faced by affected populations (Tschunkert & Vogel, 2022). This theory recognizes that crises often exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and create new risks. Cash transfers can help individuals and communities mitigate these risks by providing them with the means to access essential goods and services, diversify income sources, and build resilience (Kreidler & Reiger, 2022, December 5). By focusing on risk reduction and vulnerability mitigation, this theory highlights the potential of CVA to address both immediate needs and long-term vulnerabilities (Harvey, 2005; Longhurst et al., 2020, April 20).

The theory of economic resilience posits that cash and voucher assistance can contribute to the long-term economic resilience of affected populations. By providing cash support, individuals and communities can cope with shocks and stresses, maintain their livelihoods, and recover from crises more effectively (ICRC, 2019, July 7). Cash transfers offer beneficiaries the opportunity to invest in income-generating activities, rebuild assets, or diversify their sources of income. Strengthening economic resilience reduces dependency on external aid and promotes sustainable recovery and development (ICRC, 2019, July 7).

Social protection theory emphasizes the role of CVA in providing social protection to vulnerable populations. Cash transfers help mitigate poverty, reduce inequality, and improve access to basic services (WFP, 2016). By providing a reliable opportunity for income, cash assistance supports individuals and households in meeting their needs, such as healthcare, education, and nutrition (DG ECHO, 2022, March 21). This theory highlights the importance of addressing social protection gaps and promoting social inclusion and well-being through CVA (Longhurst et al., 2020, April 20).

Gender theory in CVA examines the diverse influence of cash and voucher assistance on women, men, girls, and boys (FAO, 2018). This theory recognizes that gender dynamics influence access to resources, decision-making power, and vulnerability to risks during crises (Boyer & Deubel, 2016). CVA interventions guided by gender theory strive to address gender disparities, empower vulnerable groups, and foster gender equality (WFP, 2016). This includes ensuring that cash transfers are sensitive to gender-specific needs, promoting women's rights, and addressing GBV and discrimination cases (WFP, 2016; Center for Global Development, 2015).

The Theory of Change in CVA recognizes that providing cash transfers alone is insufficient to bring about lasting change (Sandvik, 2017). It refers to the importance of identifying and considering the underlying reasons for vulnerability and poverty (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24). By mapping out the theory of change, practitioners can identify the key inputs, activities, and outputs required to bring about the desired outcomes (Mountfield, 2013, June 26). Theory of Change also seeks to empower beneficiaries and enhance their resilience by addressing the underlying structural and systemic factors that perpetuate poverty and vulnerability (ICRC, 2019, July 7). It goes beyond short-term relief and aims to foster long-term positive change by supporting livelihoods, promoting economic empowerment, and strengthening social protection systems (Longhurst et al., 2020, April 20). By using the Theory of Change in CVA, practitioners can develop a comprehensive understanding of the inputs, processes, and outcomes of their interventions (Sandvik, 2017). This enables them to make informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and adapt their strategies to maximize the impact of CVA. It also promotes transparency and accountability, as the Theory of Change helps stakeholders clearly articulate their objectives and assumptions, facilitating dialogue and collaboration among different actors involved in the delivery of CVA (Sandvik, 2017).

The utilization of these theories in designing CVA programs is of paramount importance. They provide a solid foundation and guidance for practitioners, policymakers, and humanitarian organizations involved in CVA interventions (Doocy & Tappis, 2017). By drawing on various theories, stakeholders can design and implement more effective, efficient, and impactful CVA programs. Theories offer valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms and dynamics in humanitarian contexts (Oxfam GB, 2006, January 2). They help practitioners understand the complex social, economic, and political factors that influence the effectiveness of CVA interventions (Harvey & Bailey, 2011, June 7). Theories enable a deeper analysis of the needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities of affected populations, allowing for more tailored and specific program designs (Harvey & Bailey, 2011, June 7).

Moreover, theories provide a framework for understanding the relationships between actors, systems, and processes within the humanitarian landscape. They offer a systematic approach to address challenges, identify opportunities, and mitigate risks associated with CVA implementation. Theories help practitioners anticipate potential outcomes, unintended consequences, and trade-offs, enabling them to make informed decisions throughout the program cycle (DG ECHO, 2022, March 21). Additionally, theories facilitate the evaluation and learning process in CVA programs. By having a clear theoretical framework, practitioners can measure the impact and effectiveness of their interventions. Theories provide indicators and criteria for assessing program outcomes and help identify factors contributing to success or failure (FAO, 2013, April 20). The theories also contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of best practices in CVA. They provide a common language among practitioners, allowing for better communication and coordination. Theories foster innovation and creativity by encouraging practitioners to think critically, challenge assumptions, and explore new approaches in their CVA programs (Doocy & Tappis, 2017).

The Syrian Crisis and the Humanitarian Response through CVA

The Syrian civil war began in 2011 and has had far-reaching consequences on millions of Syrians' lives and existence (Mariwala, 2014, January 17). The crisis was sparked by a wave of protests demanding political reform but quickly escalated into a full-blown civil war (Kizilkaya et al., 2021, March 15). The Syrian conflict has been marked by an intricate network of actors, including the Government of Syria (GoS) led by President Al-Assad, rebel groups, radical organizations, foreign interventions, and Kurdish forces also known as Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). This multifaceted nature of the conflict has led to widespread violence, displacement, and humanitarian suffering (Robert, 2019, April 25; Muzzall et al., 2021).

One of the most significant impacts of the Syrian crisis has been Syrians' mass migration and displacement (Mariwala, 2014, January 17). Millions of people have been forced to flee their homes, seeking safety both within Syria and across its borders. This has placed an immense burden on surrounding countries, such as Türkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, which have shouldered the responsibility of hosting millions of refugees (Akesson & Coupland, 2018; Tan, 2015, February 26). The humanitarian needs resulting from the crisis have been immense, with affected populations facing challenges in accessing necessities, including food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education (Big-Alabo & Okechukwu, 2019).

In response to the crisis, the United Nations and international organizations have been at the forefront of humanitarian interventions to provide aid and support to affected populations (Hall & Todman, 2021). Different response hubs have been established to coordinate and deliver assistance in various parts of Syria. These hubs include the Government of Syria (GoS), North-West Syria (NWS), and North-East Syria (NES) (Faiz, 2022; Duclos et al., 2019).

The Government of Syria (GoS) hub operates in areas controlled by the Syrian government, where access to humanitarian organizations is heavily regulated and restricted (Mariwala, 2014, January 17). At the same time, the East-West Syria hub is mainly managed by Iraq and some organizations in East Türkiye as a cross-border program (Falb & Annan, 2021).

The North-West Syria hub is managed by Türkiye as a cross-border program and has been a critical lifeline for millions of people in opposition-controlled areas (Big-Alabo & Okechukwu, 2019). This hub has allowed for the delivery of essential aid, including food, medical supplies, and shelter materials. Humanitarian organizations, including UN agencies and NGOs, have utilized the CVA modality as a key method to provide humanitarian aid in this hub (Duclos et al., 2019). CVA has offered flexibility and choice to affected populations, enabling them to meet their most pressing needs and support local economies (Duclos et al., 2019).

In North-West Syria, multiple organizations have been at the forefront of implementing cash and voucher assistance (CVA) activities to address the urgent needs of affected populations (Doocy et al., 2016). These organizations include the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), CARE, GOAL, and various international and local organizations (Tokmajyan, 2021, January 11).

WFP, as one of the leading humanitarian agencies, played a critical role in delivering CVA interventions in the region (WFP, 2023, January 23). Through its electronic voucher system, WFP has provided vulnerable households with e-cards loaded with funds, allowing them to purchase essential food items from selected local shops (WFP, 2023, January 23). This approach not only ensures access to nutritious food but also stimulates local markets, supporting local traders and farmers (WFP, 2023, January 23).

IOM has been actively involved in implementing CVA programs to address the shelter and non-food items (SNFI) needs of displaced populations (IOM, 2022, December 15). By providing cash grants and vouchers, IOM enables families to acquire essential items such as blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits, and other necessary supplies. This approach empowers beneficiaries to make choices that best suit their needs and preferences, promoting their dignity and well-being (IOM, 2022, December 15).

UNHCR, the UN agency responsible for refugee protection, has also integrated CVA into its response in North-West Syria (UNHCR, 2023, January 24). Through direct cash transfers and vouchers, UNHCR assists vulnerable refugee families in meeting their basic needs, including shelter, healthcare, education, and livelihood support (UNHCR, 2023, January 24). This approach allows refugees to prioritize their needs and supports their integration within local communities (UNHCR, 2023, January 24).

CARE, an international humanitarian organization, has been actively engaged in providing CVA interventions to support livelihoods and economic recovery in the region (CARE, 2022, August 17). By delivering cash transfers and vouchers, CARE International enables vulnerable individuals and households to invest in income-generating activities, start small businesses, or rebuild their livelihoods; In addition to focusing on the integration between the CVA and protection program, including the prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). This approach promotes self-reliance and resilience among affected communities (CARE, 2022, August 17).

GOAL Global, another prominent organization in North-West Syria, has implemented CVA programs to address multiple sectors, including food security, water and sanitation, and livelihood support (GOAL, 2020). By providing cash transfers and vouchers, GOAL Global facilitates access to essential goods and services, promotes self-sufficiency, and supports community-led initiatives for sustainable development (GOAL, 2020).

In addition to the presence of international organizations, the involvement of local organizations has been instrumental in the implementation of the CVA activities in the North-West Syria hub (Robson et al., 2022). These local organizations have deep-rooted connections within the communities they serve, granting them valuable insights into the local dynamics and needs. Their close proximity to the affected populations enables them to establish strong relationships and engage in meaningful dialogue (Doocy et al., 2016). By working closely with community members, these organizations ensure that cash transfers and vouchers are delivered effectively, considering the local communities' specific contexts and cultural sensitivities (Doocy et al., 2017). Their local knowledge and understanding greatly contribute to the success and impact of CVA interventions as they tailor their assistance to address the unique challenges and requirements of the affected populations (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24).

Effective implementation of CVA programs in the North-West Syria hub relies on collaboration and coordination among international and local organizations. Recognizing the interconnectedness of their efforts, these organizations have established robust systems for monitoring and evaluation (Tokmajyan, 2021, January 11). Through joint efforts, they have created mechanisms to track the delivery of cash transfers and vouchers, ensuring transparency and accountability in aid distribution. Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms are in place to gather insights and input from the affected populations, enabling continuous improvement and adaptation of CVA interventions (WFP, 2023, January 23). This collaborative approach fosters shared learning, enables knowledge exchange, and enhances the overall effectiveness of the humanitarian response. By working together, these organizations maximize the impact of CVA programs, address gaps in assistance, and respond efficiently to the evolving needs of the affected populations (Center for Global Development, 2015, September 24).

CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have made significant contributions to the understanding and developing theories related to Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). They have examined the various dimensions of CVA, including its effectiveness, impact, implementation strategies, and ethical considerations. Scholars have drawn on theories such as market-based approaches, gender and social protection, dignity and flexibility, and resilience-building to provide conceptual frameworks and tools for studying CVA programs (Mendelson & Rhys Kesselman, 2020). Their research has helped shape the design, implementation, and evaluation of CVA interventions, providing insights into the underlying principles, challenges, and opportunities associated with this humanitarian modality. By exploring these theories, scholars have enriched our understanding of CVA and guided practitioners and policymakers in delivering effective and inclusive assistance to affected populations.

Numerous studies have examined the utilization of CVA across various sectors to design effective responses for populations affected during conflict and post-conflict situations, encompassing both relief and development interventions. Susantyo et al. (2023) explored the implementation of CVA in Indonesia, and Hidrobo et al. (2014) focused on Ecuador; Both studies highlighted the effectiveness of CVA in providing cash for food to affected individuals in crisis aftermaths. The findings consistently demonstrated that CVA enhances food security outcomes by expanding households' access to diverse and nutritious food choices that align with their preferences and cultural norms. Hidrobo et al. (2014) also shed light on how CVA stimulates local economies and markets, fostering sustainable food systems. This approach empowers individuals and households, promoting their dignity and autonomy in fulfilling their food needs.

Similarly, as part of the recent global response to the global pandemic of COVID-19, CVA has been used as an efficient modality to build people's resilience during the outbreak worldwide. Studies such as Tiberindwa (2023) in Uganda and Da Silva E Silva (2023) focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean have highlighted the effectiveness of CVA in providing timely and targeted support to affected individuals and communities. Both articles demonstrated how CVA could be crucial in providing timely and targeted support to affected individuals and communities. CVA enabled the beneficiaries to cover their life-saving needs, including food, hygiene items, and essential supplies. The author in Da Silva E Silva (2023) examined the flexibility of CVA that allowed the adaptation to rapidly changing circumstances and specific needs, making it an effective tool in responding to diverse challenges. The modality also contributed to addressing the urgent needs of individuals and promoting their resilience during these challenging times posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

Other studies also emphasized the diverse purpose of the CVA modality and how it can be useful in different emergency settings. Asfaw et al. (2017), in their article, studied the evidence of CVA efficiency in responding to weather shocks and how it contributed to the community's resilience in Zambia. Likewise, another study by Asfaw & Davis (2018) deeply analyzed the high efficiency of using the CVA modality to promote households' resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa. In both articles, CVA has been proven to be an efficient approach to building the resilience of affected populations. By providing direct financial support, CVA enables individuals and communities to have agency and autonomy in meeting their needs. The flexibility of cash transfers and vouchers allows beneficiaries to prioritize their most pressing requirements, whether it is food, shelter, education, or healthcare. This tailored support empowers individuals and communities to make informed decisions and adapt to their unique circumstances, promoting their self-

reliance and resilience. By bolstering the economic capacities of affected populations, CVA contributes to long-term resilience, enabling individuals and communities to recover, rebuild, and thrive in the face of adversity. Moreover, CVA stimulates local economies and markets, creating opportunities for livelihoods and income generation. This point is cross-cut with another article by Yusuf & Yusuf (2023) that analyzed the impact of the CVA on the markets in Somalia. Different impacts were noticed within the market as a result of the CVA program; The positive impact can be shown in empowering the local market and the economy during the project life, and support for local trading and small trading shops as in-direct beneficiaries of the program. While the negative impact was reflected by the uncontrolled price increase of products, accordingly this caused harm to the beneficiaries and more harm to non-beneficiaries. Yusuf & Yusuf (2023) in their study addressed these risks and how usually during the design phase of the project a list of the mitigation measures is set to avoid such behavior and increase quality control throughout the implementation.

Social protection and gender integration in CVA are some of the main studies by scholars in order to examine the effectiveness of the CVA modality. Doocy et al. (2020a) and Doocy et al. (2020b) talked about how CVA can be a powerful tool for promoting social protection measures, particularly for vulnerable populations such as women and children. The incorporation of social protection mechanisms into CVA ensures that the most vulnerable individuals receive adequate support and are protected from further harm. Additionally, gender integration in CVA programs recognizes the unique needs and concerns encountered by women and girls in crises. It aims to address gender inequalities and empower females by supporting their contribution to decision-making, enhancing their accessibility to resources, and helping them with better knowledge and capacities for economic empowerment. CVA effectively contributes to more inclusive and equitable

humanitarian responses, fostering social cohesion and sustainable development.

Studies about the CVA in response to the Syrian crisis had different concepts based on the context and the operating areas. Some studies focused on the CVA as a response to the refugees, which also differs depending on the country of study, such as Lyles et al. (2021) talking about the CVA response to the refugees in Lebanon, Lyles et al. (2022) and Ulrichs et al. (2017) talking about the CVA response to the refugees in Jordan. These two articles showed how the host community affects and is affected by the implementation of the CVA program due to the different circumstances such as the economic situation, the market functionality, the purchasing power, and the value of money. Similarly, Robson et al. (2022), the author studied the multidimensional effect of the CVA programs on the multifaceted needs and vulnerability of refugees in Türkiye. The article showed that CVA reduced the poverty level among the beneficiaries, which was demonstrated through improving food security, living standards, and education opportunities.

Differently, other studies like Doocy et al. (2017) and Falb & Annan (2021) studied the impact of the CVA modality through the cross-border response to the Syrian IDPs in the Northwest and Northeast of Syria. In this case, the management of the CVA projects has significant security challenges due to the remote implementation from Türkiye and Iraq. Usually, these projects face interference from the local authorities and the possibility of aid diversion and corruption. These considered as main concerns of global donors and humanitarian organizations while implementing cash activities. Although the remote implementation of CVA has higher risks and concerns, this modality as a contemporary method of humanitarian response is still a subject of study and development by global organizations; particularly, the development and standardization led by CaLP, the Cash Learning Partnership overall the world within different contexts and circumstances.

1. METHODOLOGIES AND THEORIES

This chapter presents the exploration of the design and community engagement of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects within the complex milieu of the Syrian crisis in Northwest Syria (NWS) that necessitated the establishment of certain foundational assumptions and hypotheses. These intellectual cornerstones served as the lens through which the multifaceted interplay between humanitarian interventions, contextual dynamics, and community participation was examined. Delving into these assumptions and hypotheses not only elucidates the conceptual underpinnings of the research but also sheds light on the intricacies of humanitarian operations in a challenging environment. Furthermore, in this chapter, a detailed exposition is provided regarding the central challenges that form the focal point of analysis in this thesis. These challenges are intricately connected to the outcomes and findings of the research. Through a comprehensive exploration of these challenges, the subsequent chapters of the thesis delve into a thorough investigation of their underlying causes, implications, and potential solutions. This framing enables a holistic understanding of the issues at hand and paves the way for a nuanced exploration of the research problem.

This chapter also presents the methodologies and theories employed in this thesis to investigate the effectiveness and implementation of the CVA programs in Northwest Syria (NWS). The research draws upon a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches, offering a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of CVA beneficiaries and the perspectives of humanitarian workers involved in CVA implementation. The chapter begins by outlining the rationale behind the choice of methodologies and their suitability for addressing the research objectives, in addition to using different

CVA theories to find out the reflection of these theories into the Syrian context and the areas of research. The utilization of both quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a nuanced exploration of the various dimensions of CVA in Northwest Syria, capturing the perspectives of both the targeted beneficiaries and the humanitarian NGOs on the ground.

The quantitative component of the research involves a survey conducted with residents in Northwest Syria with a focus on CVA beneficiaries. This sample size provides a robust representation of the target population and enables the analysis of key indicators related to the effect of CVA on food, securing essential needs and services, and overall well-being. By employing statistical analysis techniques, the quantitative data provides quantitative insights into the efficiency of CVA interventions in covering the gaps of beneficiaries. Furthermore, different CVA theories were used to design the research objectives of the quantitative method.

Complementing the quantitative approach, the research also incorporates qualitative methods to gain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and challenges humanitarian workers face in CVA implementation. Online and face-to-face interviews were conducted with diverse stakeholders, including field staff from different humanitarian organizations operating in Northwest Syria and CVA advisors at the global level. These interviews offer valuable perspectives on the operational aspects, coordination challenges, and best practices in CVA implementation.

The consolidation of quantitative and qualitative methods enhances the comprehensiveness and validity of the findings, allowing for triangulation of data from multiple sources. It provides a better all-inclusive illustration of the blurring dynamics and nuances of CVA in Northwest Syria and contributes to the broader discourse on humanitarian assistance and the effectiveness of CVA modalities. It also offers valuable insights for better design, performance, and impact of CVA programs in Northwest Syria and beyond.

The research methodology chosen for this thesis has been carefully tailored to ensure accuracy and reliability, given the intricate nature of the study's environment and objectives. The inherent complexities of the study locations, combined with the challenges of conducting research in conflict-affected areas, led to the deliberate selection of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This comprehensive approach aimed to provide a holistic view of the topic.

The qualitative methods, comprising interviews and surveys, facilitated an in-depth exploration of the experiences and perspectives of humanitarian workers engaged in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects. By engaging with key informants directly involved in the field, these methods captured nuanced insights into project design, community engagement, and contextual nuances. The qualitative analysis yielded rich and detailed narratives, uncovering the intricate challenges and dynamics of delivering aid in an ongoing conflict scenario.

In parallel, the quantitative methods introduced an element of empirical validation to the findings. While qualitative insights illuminated the individual stories, quantitative data illuminated broader trends and correlations. The fusion of these methods through rigorous analysis allowed for cross-verification of findings, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research outcomes.

Furthermore, the integration of established theories of CVA provided an additional layer of reliability. These theories, informed by years of research and practical experience, offered a conceptual framework through which to interpret the collected data. By combining the qualitative and quantitative methods with well-grounded theoretical perspectives, the research approach not only ensured robustness in analysis but also contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in delivering humanitarian aid in the complex context of the Syrian crisis.

The consecutive parts of this chapter delve into the specifics of the survey design and its alignment with the different theories utilized in the study. It provides a comprehensive explanation of how the survey was designed to capture relevant data and insights regarding the CVA in Northwest Syria. This includes ensuring that ethical guidelines and standards are followed throughout the data collection process. The chapter further explores the data collection process, outlining the methods and techniques used for both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the thesis. It discusses the sampling techniques employed to ensure a representative sample of CVA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in Northwest Syria. Moreover, the interview protocols utilized for online video calls and face-to-face interviews with humanitarian workers and global CVA advisors, emphasize the open-ended nature of the questions to elicit comprehensive responses. Ethical considerations are a vital aspect of any research, and this chapter addresses the measures taken to guarantee the validity and reliability of the gathered data. It discusses ethical guidelines that were considered to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the interviewees informed consent procedures and safeguards to maintain the integrity of the data throughout the research process.

1.1. Assumptions and Hypothesis

As any comprehensive study endeavors to unearth the intricacies of its subject matter, it does so by building upon a framework of assumptions and hypotheses that provide structure and direction. These intellectual bedrocks acted as the interpretative framework through which the multifaceted interaction between humanitarian initiatives, contextual intricacies, and community involvement was scrutinized. Delving into these hypotheses not only unveils the conceptual keys of the research but also illuminates the nuances of humanitarian endeavors in a challenging environment.

Throughout the development of this research, a set of fundamental assumptions and hypotheses was established, forming the bedrock upon which the entire study was built. Central among these assumptions was the recognition that humanitarian endeavors, such as Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects, are profoundly influenced by the context within which they operate. It was assumed that the Syrian context, marked by the intricate web of conflict-related dynamics, would inherently shape the design and community engagement strategies of CVA initiatives. Moreover, it was acknowledged that while the principles of community engagement and beneficiary-centered design are widely endorsed, their actual implementation can be intricate due to practical challenges and donor imperatives.

Embedded within this study were several hypotheses that aimed to explore the dynamics of CVA projects in the Syrian context. It was hypothesized that by prioritizing beneficiary feedback, stakeholder collaboration, and the dynamic realities of local markets during project design, the resulting interventions would be more effective, responsive, and aligned with the needs of the communities they serve. This conjecture assumes that incorporating the perspectives and preferences of beneficiaries and engaging local stakeholders can lead to contextually appropriate interventions. Additionally, the study ventured the hypothesis that the multifaceted challenges posed by the Syrian context might hinder full and direct community engagement during the design phase. This assertion was grounded in the understanding that conflict-related constraints, logistical hurdles, and the pressing urgency of humanitarian response can sometimes limit the real-time inclusion of community input.

These assumptions and hypotheses collectively formed the intellectual scaffolding for this research. They guided the selection of research methods, informed the crafting of interview questions, and steered the analysis of qualitative data. Throughout the study, these foundational elements were

critically examined and evaluated against the empirical findings, offering insights into the intricate interplay between the environmental intricacies of the Syrian crisis, the design of CVA projects, and the potential challenges to achieving meaningful community engagement.

At the core of this thesis lies a comprehensive problem analysis, delving into the intricacies of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) project design and community engagement within the backdrop of the protracted Syrian crisis. This crisis, now extending over twelve years, has engendered a highly complex and multifaceted humanitarian landscape, characterized by the convergence of geopolitical tensions, internal strife, and a vast array of stakeholders operating within the region. The main problem underpinning this study stems from the critical question of how to efficaciously implement CVA interventions in such a challenging context.

Challenges on the Ground: The Syrian crisis has cast a long shadow over the country's infrastructure, economy, and social fabric. Communities have been uprooted, livelihoods shattered, and vital services compromised, leaving a trail of devastation in its wake. The prolonged conflict has given rise to an economy grappling with immense challenges, resulting in widespread poverty and a dearth of sustainable livelihood opportunities. Amidst this poor economic situation that has persisted since the conflict was flamed, communities in Northwest Syria are compelled to seek avenues that enhance their resilience and resuscitate their economic prospects. CVA interventions have emerged as a beacon of hope, offering a potential lifeline to these communities in their pursuit of economic stability.

Preference for CVA Intervention: Against this backdrop, affected communities have exhibited a growing preference for CVA interventions, recognizing the potential to not only augment their economic well-being but also to foster resilience amidst adversity. The ability to receive cash or vouchers provides them with the agency to make choices that align with their

immediate needs and aspirations. This preference stems from a growing awareness that CVA programs can serve as catalysts for positive change, potentially breaking the cycle of dependence on aid by bolstering self-reliance and empowering local economies.

Constraints and Risks of Cash: However, the pursuit of CVA interventions in the Syrian context is beset with a host of risks. Security concerns, administrative challenges, and logistical bottlenecks are just a few of the impediments that obstruct the seamless implementation of CVA projects. Additionally, the risk of funds being misappropriated or diverted poses a complex ethical dilemma. Striking the balance between delivering assistance efficiently and ensuring it reaches the intended beneficiaries unscathed becomes a delicate task within this challenging landscape.

Donors' Concerns: Amidst this intricate scenario, the donors supporting CVA programs find themselves confronting a twofold challenge. On one hand, they must navigate the fine line between maintaining stringent accountability and ensuring the successful delivery of funds in an environment marked by inherent uncertainties. On the other hand, they must heed the clarion call for interventions that are not only efficient but also contextually attuned to the evolving needs of the affected communities. In this dance of priorities, donors are driven to optimize the impact of their contributions while simultaneously addressing the complex realities of the crisis.

In summary, the problem analysis encapsulates the intricate tapestry of challenges rooted in the economic struggles of Northwest Syria since the initiation of the conflict, the inclination of communities towards CVA interventions to elevate their resilience and economic prospects, and the manifold constraints and concerns faced by donors within the evolving humanitarian landscape. By untangling these complexities, the study not only identifies the core issue but also endeavors to propose nuanced insights that pave the way for effective solutions within the realm of CVA interventions.

1.2. Survey Design

The survey design for the quantitative component began with an introduction that clearly communicated the purpose and objectives of the thesis. This introduction pursued to establish a sight of transparency and trust with the respondents, ensuring they understood the significance of their participation and how their responses would contribute to the study's findings.

Before proceeding to the survey questions, participants were asked for their consent to participate. This step emphasized the voluntary nature of their participation. Respecting ethical guidelines, the participants' consent was sought to ensure their rights and privacy were protected throughout the survey process. To encourage transparency, the survey was designed to be anonymous. No personally identifiable information was collected, and respondents were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. This anonymity created a safe conversation for interviewees to express their opinions, and concerns without fear of repercussions. The survey design took cultural and contextual considerations into account. A total of 29 questions (Annex 1) were carefully crafted to align with the cultural norms and values of the target population. Language and terminology were chosen thoughtfully to ensure clarity and avoid any potential misunderstandings. Additionally, the survey design aimed to include diverse cultural backgrounds, ensuring that respondents from different communities or regions within the research context felt represented and able to provide their perspectives.

The survey included a series of specific questions that explored various dimensions of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), such as its perceived effectiveness in meeting beneficiaries' needs, the extent of its usage within the target population, the pros and cons experienced by beneficiaries, and the specific concerns, feedback, and recommendations shared by participants. This comprehensive approach aimed to capture a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding CVA.

Recognizing the importance of gender dynamics, the survey design incorporated gender-sensitive questions. These questions sought to capture any gender-specific variations in experiences, challenges, or opportunities related to CVA. By considering gender as a key factor, the survey aimed to address potential gender disparities and ensure that the findings accurately represented the diverse perspectives of both men and women.

Through this survey design, the research team aimed to collect robust and reliable quantitative data on CVA while upholding ethical principles and respecting the participants' rights. The combination of an online platform, an introductory explanation, consent seeking, anonymity, cultural sensitivity, direct questions, and gender-sensitive approaches aimed to create a comprehensive and inclusive survey that would generate valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of CVA in the target population.

The qualitative method involved a combination of online video calls and face-to-face interviews with selected participants who held key positions as humanitarian workers and global Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) advisors. These individuals were specifically chosen for their extensive experience in managing CVA projects and their deep understanding of the Syrian context. This ensured that the insights and perspectives gathered were highly informed and representative of the challenges and nuances of implementing CVA in the specific context of Syria.

At the beginning of each interview, a comprehensive introduction was provided to set the stage for the survey. This introduction clearly outlined the purpose and objectives of the research, emphasizing the importance of gathering first-hand experiences and perspectives to enhance understanding and inform future CVA interventions. This ensured that the interviewees had a clear understanding of the survey's goals and the value of their contributions.

Before commencing with the interview questions, the interviewees were asked to provide their explicit consent to participate. This step was crucial in

adhering to ethical research practices and respecting the autonomy and privacy of the participants. By obtaining informed consent, the research team ensured that the interviewees were fully aware of their involvement in the survey and the potential use of their responses for analysis and reporting. Conducting the interviews anonymously allowed the interviewees to provide their perspectives without the fear of personal identification or potential repercussions. By ensuring confidentiality, the research team created a private scope for the interviewees to express their opinions, experiences, and insights freely, thereby enabling a more open and transparent dialogue.

A total of 15 questions were designed to be open-ended (Annex 2), enabling the interviewees to provide detailed and nuanced responses. The questions focused on exploring various aspects of CVA, including its advantages and disadvantages from the workers' perspective, both programmatically and operationally. The interviewees were encouraged to share their experiences and insights on the main concerns of global donors regarding CVA, the perceived risks associated with CVA implementation, the mitigation measures in place to address these risks, and their views on the prospects of CVA in humanitarian response. Additionally, the interviewees were asked to provide recommendations based on their expertise and experiences, highlighting potential areas for improvement and best practices.

By engaging with knowledgeable humanitarian workers and global CVA advisors, this survey design aimed to capture diverse perspectives and experiences related to CVA implementation in the Syrian context. The insights gathered through the qualitative method would contribute to an extensive understanding of the challenges, successes, and issues for development in the field of CVA, ultimately informing future interventions and enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian response in Northwest Syria.

1.3. Utilization of the Theories in the Research

The utilization of theories of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) in the questionnaires of both the quantitative and qualitative methods serves as a crucial aspect of this research. By incorporating these theories, the study aims to examine their applicability in the Syrian context, identify areas of similarity and difference between global theories, and assess their practical implications. Furthermore, the objective of the thesis is to support an extensive analysis of these theories, contributing to their development and potentially uncovering new ones.

One of the key theories explored in the research is the “Effectiveness and Efficiency of CVA theory.” This theory focuses on understanding the extent to which CVA programs are useful and effective in meeting the needs of beneficiaries. To address this theory, specific questions have been integrated into both the quantitative and qualitative questionnaires. These questions aim to gather insights on the usefulness of CVA, the ways in which it has been implemented, and the main advantages associated with its utilization. By including these questions, the research seeks to evaluate the practical outcomes and effects of CVA in the Syrian context. Through the data collection process, a comprehensive analysis can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of CVA interventions, providing valuable insights for program design, implementation, and improvement. Moreover, this examination of the effectiveness and efficiency theory contributes to the broader understanding of CVA modalities and their relevance in humanitarian settings.

Another important theory explored in the research is the “Choice theory.” This theory delves into the decision-making process of beneficiaries regarding how they choose to spend the received cash or redeem the provided vouchers. To examine this theory, specific questions related to choice and

decision-making have been incorporated into the quantitative survey. The quantitative method allows for a systematic exploration of beneficiary perspectives on decision-making regarding the utilization of CVA. The survey collects data on how beneficiaries made decisions about spending the cash or redeeming the vouchers, shedding light on their priorities, preferences, and considerations. Additionally, the survey seeks to identify the sectors in which beneficiaries utilized this type of assistance, providing insights into the areas of need addressed by CVA interventions. By incorporating questions related to the choice theory exclusively in the quantitative method, the research aims to gather quantitative data that can be analyzed to derive meaningful insights. This quantitative analysis offers a broader perspective on beneficiary decision-making patterns, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of the choice theory within the context of CVA programs in Northwest Syria.

Furthermore, the research incorporates the “Gender and Social Protection theory” to examine the gendered aspects of CVA and its impact on social protection outcomes. This theory recognizes the importance of understanding how CVA programs address gender dynamics and contribute to the social protection of vulnerable groups. To explore this theory, specific questions about gender and social protection have been included in the quantitative survey. Through the quantitative method, the research investigates how decision-making regarding using CVA is made among different family members. By examining the distribution of decision-making power and resources within households, the study seeks to understand the gendered dimensions of CVA implementation.

Additionally, the survey explores the specific advantages of CVA for women, considering their unique needs and vulnerabilities. It also investigates the advantages of CVA for individuals with vulnerabilities, including disabled people, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups, acknowledging the importance of inclusive social protection. By focusing on the gender and

social protection theory within the quantitative survey, the research aims to identify the ways in which CVA interventions address gender disparities and contribute to the overall social protection of vulnerable groups in Northwest Syria. The data collected through the survey provides insights into decision-making dynamics, the empowerment of women, and the inclusivity of CVA programs for individuals with specific needs. The inclusion of questions related to the gender and social protection theory in the quantitative survey allows for a systematic analysis of gender dynamics and social protection outcomes within the context of CVA. It facilitates an understanding of how CVA programs can be designed and implemented to ensure equitable outcomes and enhance the social protection of vulnerable groups. By examining the experiences and perspectives of beneficiaries through the quantitative survey, the thesis contributes to the broader understanding of the gendered implications of CVA and its role in promoting social protection. The findings can inform programmatic interventions, policy development, and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing gender disparities and improving the effectiveness of CVA programs in achieving social protection goals.

The “Economic Resilience Theory” is a crucial framework incorporated in the quantitative survey to examine the role of CVA in building economic resilience among beneficiaries in Northwest Syria. This theory acknowledges that CVA programs can have a transformative impact on the economic well-being of individuals and households affected by crises. The survey includes specific questions designed to explore how CVA contributes to building resilience. It investigates how CVA enables beneficiaries to improve their financial situation by saving money or establishing small businesses to generate income. Additionally, the survey seeks to understand how CVA interventions contribute to long-term sustainability by supporting beneficiaries in achieving greater economic stability and self-reliance. By analyzing these aspects, the study proposes to present insights into the effectiveness of CVA

in promoting economic resilience and sustainable livelihoods among the affected population in Northwest Syria.

The “Localization theory” is a significant framework that informs the qualitative inquiry in this research, focusing on understanding the extent to which CVA) projects in Northwest Syria adhere to principles of localization. This theory emphasizes the importance of engaging local actors and communities in the design and implementation of humanitarian projects, promoting local ownership, and enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. In the qualitative interviews, specific questions are incorporated to explore how CVA projects are typically designed and how various stakeholders are involved in the process. The aim is to gain insights into the level of local participation, decision-making power, and representation in CVA program design. By examining these aspects, the study aims to assess the extent to which CVA initiatives in Northwest Syria align with principles of localization and identify opportunities for further strengthening local engagement and ownership in future CVA interventions.

The “Market-Based Approach” theory is incorporated into the qualitative component of this research to explore how CVA projects in Northwest Syria consider market dynamics in their design and implementation. This theory recognizes the importance of understanding local markets, supply chains, and economic systems when designing effective CVA interventions. In the qualitative interviews conducted with humanitarian workers and global CVA advisors, specific questions are included to examine the considerations of markets in the design of CVA projects. These questions aim to capture insights into how market assessments are conducted, how market information is utilized to inform decision-making, and what concerns or challenges arise in implementing market-based approaches. By exploring these aspects, the study seeks to understand the extent to which CVA projects in Northwest Syria take into account market dynamics, identify best practices,

and uncover potential areas for improvement in leveraging market-based approaches to maximize the impact of CVA interventions on local economies.

The “Risk and Vulnerability theory” is integrated into the qualitative component of this research to investigate the concerns, risks, and challenges associated with CVA project implementation in Northwest Syria. In the qualitative interviews conducted with humanitarian workers and global CVA advisors, specific questions are included to explore the main concerns of global donors regarding the CVA modality. These questions aim to define the risks and challenges that occur during the implementation of CVA programs and to understand the mitigation measures that are typically employed to reduce these concerns. By delving into these aspects, the study aims to uncover the vulnerabilities and potential pitfalls in the plans and implementation of CVA activities and to shed light on strategies and measures employed to mitigate risks. This exploration contributes to a deeper understanding of how the risk and vulnerability theory intersects with CVA programs in the Syrian context and provides insights for enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and resilience of CVA initiatives.

The “Innovation and Technology theory” is examined within the qualitative component of this research to explore the role of e-techniques and innovations in CVA projects. Through interviews conducted with humanitarian workers and global CVA advisors, specific questions are included to delve into the use of technological advancements and innovative approaches in CVA interventions. The aim is to gather insights on the current e-techniques and innovations employed in CVA projects and to understand their impact on program effectiveness, efficiency, and beneficiary satisfaction. Additionally, the interviews seek to identify areas for improvement and explore potential avenues for enhancing the use of technology in CVA initiatives. By focusing on this theory, the research aims to uncover best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for leveraging innovation

and technology to optimize CVA programs in the Syrian context. Ultimately, this exploration contributes to advancing the understanding of how innovation and technology intersect with CVA implementation and provides valuable insights for enhancing the design and delivery of CVA projects to effectively meet the evolving needs of targeted beneficiaries in crises.

The “Theory of Change” is an important framework employed in the qualitative component of this research to understand the impacts and long-term effects of CVA projects. Through interviews with humanitarian workers and global CVA advisors, specific questions have been designed to delve into the theory of change underlying CVA interventions. These questions aim to explore the objectives of CVA projects, how they contribute to building resilience among the affected population, and their potential for generating long-term positive impacts. By examining the theory of change, the research seeks to uncover the intended outcomes of CVA programs, understand the pathways through which these outcomes are expected to be achieved, and assess the alignment between the theory of change and the observed impacts on the ground. This analysis provides insights into the effectiveness and sustainability of CVA and contributes to the ongoing refinement and development of the theory of change in the context of humanitarian assistance.

1.4. Data Collection

The data collection procedure for this thesis was conducted with meticulous attention to detail and thoroughness. To maintain ethical standards, the necessary approval from the ethical board of Ankara Social Science University was obtained. This step ensured that the research adhered to established guidelines and protected the rights and privacy of the interviewees. By obtaining ethical approval, the study showcased a dedication to conducting research with a strong ethical and responsible approach.

Recognizing the importance of language proficiency and comprehension, the questionnaires were translated into Arabic, the local language. This translation aimed to remove any language barriers and enable participants to understand the survey questions fully, thus facilitating accurate and meaningful responses. The translated questionnaires were carefully reviewed to ensure clarity and accuracy in conveying the intended meaning.

The quantitative survey was developed using the KoBo toolbox, a widely recognized and reliable online survey platform. This platform provided a user-friendly interface that facilitated the creation of a comprehensive and well-structured survey. The survey design considered the research objectives and incorporated the theories under investigation, ensuring that the questions were aligned with the desired outcomes and theoretical frameworks.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of data collection, a proficient field team was formed, consisting of two male and two female members for each study location, namely Idleb and Northern Aleppo. These team members were selected based on their prior experience in the humanitarian sector and data collection within the specified regions. Prior to data collection, the team underwent rigorous training conducted by the researcher, equipping them with the necessary skills in survey methodology, ethical considerations, and interview techniques. This training ensured a consistent and effective approach to data gathering. The team's familiarity with the local context and their adeptness in engaging with communities contributed to building trust and obtaining candid responses from participants. This collaborative effort between the researcher and the field team upheld the research's reliability and ethical standards.

The sample size for the quantitative component was initially planned as around 300 surveys with the internally displaced people (IDPs) and some of the host families, distributed across two distinct regions. This included more or less 180 surveys in the Idleb governorate and West Aleppo, which are areas

under the control of rebel groups and host the highest population of 3.1 million people, and 120 surveys in Northern Aleppo, the Turkish government-controlled areas that host 1.3 million people (OCHA, 2022, May 25).

To ensure a comprehensive and representative sample, a meticulous sampling approach was undertaken, considering various crucial factors. Random sampling techniques were deftly employed to encapsulate the diversity present within the study locations. This approach was particularly essential given the unique context of the Syrian crisis, where the population is characterized by a wide array of experiences, needs, and perspectives. Careful attention was paid to gender balance within the sample, recognizing the importance of capturing voices from both male and female participants. Moreover, participants who had been previously targeted by CVA interventions were specifically chosen. This deliberate selection aimed to ensure that the feedback garnered would be more accurate, informed, and effective, given their prior experience with CVA initiatives. The sampling methodology also prioritized the inclusion of both IDPs and host community members, recognizing that these two groups have distinct needs, perspectives, and experiences with regard to CVA. This approach was taken to provide a holistic understanding of the nuances surrounding CVA interventions and how they impact different segments of the affected population. Overall, this meticulous sampling strategy served as the bedrock of the research's credibility and effectiveness, capturing a breadth of experiences and opinions within the target population, and reflecting the complexity of the Syrian crisis. The actual number of interviewees reached 334 people, 193 in Idleb and Western Aleppo and 141 in Northern Aleppo during the period between 09 and 14 June 2023. Additionally, efforts were made to achieve gender balance among interviewees reaching out to 169 females (50.6%) and 165 (49.4%) males. While 72.6% of the interviews were conducted with IDPs and 27.8% with host families. Figure 1, Figure 2, and Table 1 show the areas where the

interviews were conducted and the demographic information of the interviewees.



Figure 1. Locations of the Research – Quantitative

Location	Gender		Residency		Grand
	Females	Males	IDPs	Host	
Idleb and Western Aleppo	109	84	148	45	193
Northern Aleppo	60	81	93	48	141
Sub-Total	169	165	241	93	334

Table 1. Interviewees Information – Quantitative

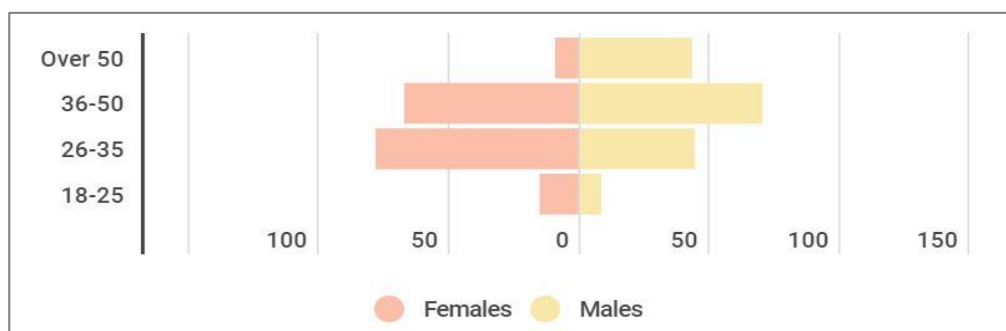


Figure 2. Gender & Age Disaggregation of Interviewees – Quantitative

In the qualitative component, a total of fourteen interviewees participated in both online video calls and face-to-face interviews between 09 and 12 June 2023, providing various areas of perspectives and experiences. Each interview session lasted, on average, for approximately 20 minutes. The researcher, who also serves as the author of the thesis, personally conducted

all the interviews. This hands-on involvement allowed for a deeper level of engagement with the interviewees, fostering in-depth discussions and enabling the exploration of nuanced perspectives.

The examiner's expertise in the field of CVA projects, coupled with their extensive knowledge of the research context, played a vital role in conducting effective and meaningful interviews. This expertise enabled the researcher to understand the nuances of the subject matter, ask probing follow-up questions, and create a comfortable environment for interviewees to express their thoughts and perspectives openly. The researcher's familiarity with the topic also facilitated a deeper level of understanding of the interviewees' responses and allowed for more nuanced interpretations of the data collected.

Overall, the qualitative component of the data collection process was designed to capture detailed and context-specific insights into the research topic. The use of open-ended questions, the personal involvement of the researcher, and the researcher's expertise in the field ensured that the interviews provided valuable and in-depth information. This qualitative data, when combined with the quantitative data from the survey, contributed to a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis of the effectiveness and implementation of CVA programs in the specified context.

The selection of the 14 key informants for this study was meticulously carried out, prioritizing individuals with a comprehensive understanding of CVA programs, bolstered by their extensive experience in various aspects of humanitarian work. These informants were purposefully chosen based on their rich background in CVA, gained through roles encompassing program management, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL). Their collective expertise extended to advisory and consultancy positions, adding a dimension of strategic insight to the research. Importantly, their experience spanned the complexities of the Syrian context, contributing to a

nuanced perspective on the challenges and dynamics of implementing CVA projects in this crisis-stricken environment.

These key informants were drawn from a diverse spectrum of humanitarian actors, including local and international organizations, as well as United Nations agencies. Their roles within these entities encompassed a wide range of specialization areas such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), adding further depth and insight to the research findings. Their participation brought forth a wealth of first-hand knowledge, anecdotes, and on-the-ground experiences that enriched the study's comprehensiveness. Collectively, their varied backgrounds and perspectives enriched the qualitative analysis, providing a well-rounded understanding of the intricacies and implications of CVA interventions within the Syrian context. Table 2 shows more details about the information of the participants in the qualitative interviews.

Country	Gender	Roles	Years of experience
Syria	Male	CVA Project Management / NGO	6
	Female	CVA MEAL / NGO	5
	Female	Monitoring Consultant / INGO	4
	Male	Technical Consultant / INGO	6
Türkiye	Male	CVA Project Management / UN	8
	Male	CVA MEAL / INGO	4
	Male	CVA Global Advisor / INGO	10
	Female	CVA Project Management / INGO	3
	Female	CVA in GBV / NGO	4
	Male	CVA MEAL / UN	6
USA	Female	CVA Advisor / INGO	8
UK	Female	CVA Advisor / INGO	8
Ukraine	Female	CVA knowledge & learning / INGO	4
Jordan	Male	CVA in GBV / UN	7

Table 2. Interviewees Information – Qualitative

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in this data collection approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The use of trained field teams and adherence to ethical considerations contributed to the reliability and validity of the data. The quantitative

component involved a skilled team administering surveys to a planned sample size, while the qualitative component involved the researcher conducting in-depth interviews. This approach facilitated a multifaceted exploration of the research topic and ensured high-quality data collection.

1.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis process for the quantitative component involved utilizing Power BI, a powerful data visualization and analysis tool. The collected survey data was first cleaned and adjusted to guarantee reliability and validity. Descriptive statistics like frequencies and percentages were then generated to summarize the key variables and indicators related to the survey questions related to the CVA programs.

In parallel, the qualitative data analysis focused on conducting a detailed textual analysis of the interview transcripts and identifying emerging themes and patterns. The analysis involved coding the data, categorizing information, and identifying key concepts and recurring ideas. Through a systematic and iterative process, the researcher gained a comprehensive understanding of the qualitative findings, identifying commonalities and discrepancies within the data.

To establish the convergence and divergence between the quantitative and qualitative data, a comparative analysis was conducted. This involved examining the findings from both data sets to identify areas of agreement, where the quantitative and qualitative findings aligned and provided consistent insights. It also involved identifying areas of divergence where discrepancies or contradictions emerged between the two data sources.

By triangulating the quantitative and qualitative findings, a comprehensive and robust understanding of the research topic was achieved. The use of Power BI for quantitative data analysis enabled efficient data

exploration and visualization, while the detailed textual analysis of the qualitative data provided rich insights and contextual understanding. The comparison of findings from both data sets permitted a detailed analysis of the research questions and a more nuanced interpretation of the data.



2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter illustrates the thesis findings and analysis obtained through a detailed exploration of the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programs in Northwest Syria. The chapter is structured into multiple sections that delve into various aspects of the CVA implementation, effectiveness, impact, challenges, and future considerations. Through the integration of quantitative and qualitative data, this chapter aims to present a deep understanding of the experiences and perspectives of both beneficiaries and humanitarian workers involved in CVA projects.

The first section focuses on the Design and Community Engagement of CVA programs. It examines the processes involved in designing and developing CVA initiatives, including the engagement of local communities and stakeholders. The section sheds light on the key considerations, approaches, and strategies employed in designing effective CVA programs that align with the perspectives and preferences of the targeted beneficiaries.

The subsequent section explores the Beneficiaries' Experience with CVA and the Activities. It delves into the specific activities implemented under CVA interventions and their alignment with the identified needs of the beneficiaries. It examines the reach, coverage, and targeting mechanisms employed to ensure that assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries equitably and efficiently.

Furthermore, the Usage and Modality Preference section delves into the preferences of both beneficiaries and humanitarian workers regarding the CVA modality. It explores the reasons behind their preferences, the advantages perceived, and the challenges encountered. This section provides valuable insights into the stakeholders' perspectives on the suitability and relevance of CVA as a preferred form of assistance.

The section on Effectiveness and Impact investigates the outcomes and impacts of CVA programs in Northwest Syria. It examines the scope to which CVA interventions have been effective in addressing the identified gaps and improving the well-being of the beneficiaries. This section explores indicators such as food security, access to essential services, and overall socio-economic conditions to assess the advantages and effects of CVA interventions.

The Risks & Challenges section examines the inherent risks and challenges associated with CVA implementation in the Syrian context. It explores the vulnerabilities and obstacles encountered, including security concerns, logistical difficulties, and coordination challenges. Additionally, it discusses the mitigation measures adopted to address these risks and ensure the smooth implementation of CVA programs.

The Donors & Regulations section focuses on the perspectives and expectations of global donors regarding the CVA modality. It sheds light on their concerns, priorities, and regulatory frameworks governing CVA funding and implementation. This section highlights the evolving landscape of donors and its implications for the design and implementation of CVA programs.

Digitizing Humanitarian CVA explores the potential of E-techniques and the future of CVA. It discusses the role of technological innovations, digital platforms, and information systems in advancing CVA programs. It examines the opportunities and challenges associated with the integration of technology and provides insights into the future prospects and trends in the field of CVA.

Finally, the chapter concludes with the Recommendation and Advocacy section. It synthesizes the research findings and presents actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and impact of CVA programs in Northwest Syria. These recommendations are aimed at informing future program design, policy development, and advocacy efforts to improve the overall quality and relevance of CVA interventions.

2.1. Design & Community Engagement of CVA

In the qualitative analysis of the Design & Community Engagement section, insights were gathered from 14 key informants, comprising humanitarian workers involved in CVA projects. Their responses shed light on the design of these projects and the measures taken to ensure community engagement during this phase. Several key themes emerged from the analysis based on the responses of the humanitarian workers listed as follows:

- i. The design of CVA projects often stems from context monitoring, analysis, and needs assessment. This involves gathering information from various sources, including secondary data and reports from organizations such as humanitarian clusters and OCHA need reports. This data helps in identifying the needs, gaps, and potential locations for targeted interventions.
- ii. The design of CVA projects is influenced by both donor requirements and best practices from former interventions. The informants highlighted the importance of learning and knowledge management, feedback mechanisms, and best practices from previous CVA initiatives in shaping project design. This indicates an emphasis on continuous improvement and adapting to the evolving needs and challenges on the ground.
- iii. Community participation during the design phase is very limited, while greater engagement is emphasized during the implementation stage. Community representatives, leaders, local authorities, and other relief actors were involved in the beneficiaries' selection committee, enabling their input and representation in decision-making processes. However, the informants noted that community engagement during the design phase mainly relied on feedback from beneficiaries of previous projects, rather than real-time engagement.

- iv. Interestingly, some respondents highlighted instances where the design phase primarily revolved around donor requirements, with limited consideration for community engagement. One specific example provided by the respondents pertained to a commodity voucher project for winter. In this case, the project aimed to distribute a booklet of paper vouchers to beneficiaries, which could be redeemed for specific winter items such as blankets, mattresses, winter clothes, and heaters from contracted vendors. However, the design of this project did not sufficiently consider the preferences and needs of the beneficiaries. Several factors contributed to the project's limited effectiveness and lower preference among the beneficiaries. Firstly, there were restrictions on the eligible items that could be redeemed with the vouchers. Fuel and heating materials, which are crucial for combating the harsh winter conditions in the Syrian context, were not added to the list of allowed goods. This omission severely limited the utility of the vouchers in meeting the practical needs of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, the absence of a reliable electronic system for voucher redemption added to the challenges. Without an efficient e-system in place, monitoring and managing the redemption process became more complex and prone to potential issues such as corruption or misuse of vouchers. As a consequence of these limitations, beneficiaries found the commodity voucher project less preferred compared to receiving cash assistance. The restrictions on eligible items and the inability to address essential needs like fuel forced beneficiaries to seek alternative solutions. Some individuals resorted to selling the vouchers at a lower value in exchange for cash, enabling them to have greater flexibility in purchasing a wider range of items that were not covered by the project's limitations. Despite the evident shortcomings and the feedback provided by beneficiaries and humanitarian workers involved

- in managing the project, efforts to advocate for changes in the project's modality were disregarded by the donor. This lack of consideration for beneficiary feedback and stakeholder engagement resulted in the project continuing with the same design and modality, despite its inefficiencies and a higher likelihood of corruption. This example underscores the significance of incorporating beneficiary feedback and engaging stakeholders throughout the design phase of CVA projects. By considering the preferences, needs, and contextual realities of the beneficiaries, project designers can ensure greater effectiveness, alignment with the local context, and improved overall outcomes. It highlights the importance of striking a balance between donor requirements and the practical considerations of the communities being served, ultimately leading to more impactful CVA interventions.
- v. Furthermore, the exploration of the qualitative data shed light on the design process of cash for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) activities. Some key informants, who specialize in this area, provided valuable insights into the design of such interventions. According to their responses, the design of cash for GBV activities commenced in late 2021, indicating that it was a relatively recent initiative. The findings revealed that the design phase of cash for GBV activities involved extensive coordination and discussions with main donors and GBV clusters. This collaborative approach underscored the importance of engaging relevant stakeholders and drawing on their specialized knowledge in addressing the specific needs and challenges associated with GBV. By involving key stakeholders in the design process, such as donors and GBV clusters, the project designers aimed to ensure that the interventions were tailored to the unique requirements of addressing gender-based violence. This collaborative and consultative approach allowed for the integration of diverse perspectives, expert

input, and lessons learned from previous initiatives. It signifies a commitment to designing interventions that are informed by the experiences and expertise of those working directly in the field of GBV. The inclusion of specialized stakeholders in the design process reflects the recognition of the complex and sensitive nature of GBV issues and the importance of addressing them effectively.

The findings from the qualitative data analysis align closely with the principles of the Localization theory, which emphasizes the significance of engaging local communities throughout the project cycle of CVA activities (FAO, 2018, November 15). The responses from the key informants underscored the importance of community engagement, particularly in the design phase. They highlighted the use of context monitoring, needs assessment, and feedback mechanisms to ensure the projects are responsive to the specific needs and preferences of the communities. This supports the theory's emphasis on designing interventions based on local context.

However, the complex Syrian context presents obstacles to achieving full community engagement in practice. The limited participation of the community in the design phase, as mentioned by some respondents, reveals challenges in obtaining real-time and direct community input. Factors such as donor requirements, logistical constraints, and the absence of reliable E-Systems can hinder the integration of beneficiary feedback into project design. The example of the commodity voucher project for winter illustrates how a lack of flexibility and failure to consider beneficiary preferences resulted in a less effective and less preferred modality. These obstacles highlight the complexities of operating within the Syrian context and the need for adaptive approaches to overcome them in the circumstances of emergencies.

In summary, while the findings support the Localization theory by emphasizing the importance of engaging local communities in the design, implementation, and management of CVA activities (ICRC, 2007, August 4),

they also highlight the challenges that arise in practice. The Syrian context's complexities, including donor requirements and logistical limitations, present barriers to achieving full community participation. These findings call for further exploration and innovative solutions to ensure that localization principles are effectively applied in the design and implementation of CVA projects, despite the contextual challenges.

The qualitative analysis revealed a strong consensus among the respondents regarding the importance of market consideration in the design phase of CVA projects. Two different perspectives were raised as follows:

- i. The critical role of conducting market assessments and price monitoring is to inform decision-making. Ensuring the safety, accessibility, and functionality of the markets, as well as the availability of various items for beneficiaries, were highlighted as key considerations. The distance to the market was also mentioned as an important factor to prevent any potential harm to beneficiaries. Additionally, assessing the capacity of vendors to meet project requirements and ensuring reasonable prices were highlighted as crucial factors. The respondents also emphasized the need to avoid any negative impact on market prices or harm to non-beneficiaries.
- ii. As highlighted by the GBV specialists, market consideration was insufficient in project design. This was attributed to various factors, such as the novelty of the projects, limited technical experience with cash-based interventions, and the small number of beneficiaries. These challenges underscore the need for increased attention to market dynamics and a more comprehensive understanding of market considerations during the design phase of CVA projects.

The findings align with the market-based approach theory, emphasizing the importance of market assessment and monitoring in the design of CVA projects. The recognition of market dynamics and the consideration of local

market conditions are essential for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of CVA interventions (WFP, 2016). By incorporating market considerations, such as the safety and accessibility of markets, vendor capacity, and reasonable prices, CVA projects can be designed to align with the functioning and availability of local markets. However, the challenges identified in the findings, highlight the need for further development of technical expertise in market-based approaches. Overcoming these challenges requires collaboration with market actors and building partnerships to strengthen market engagement and ensure that CVA projects maximize benefits for beneficiaries while minimizing any potential negative consequences for markets and non-beneficiaries (Yıldırım & Smyrl, 2021b). The integration of market-based approaches into the design of CVA projects is crucial for achieving sustainable outcomes and promoting local economic resilience. By adopting a market-driven perspective, CVA interventions can effectively address the needs of beneficiaries while also considering the broader market context.

2.2. Beneficiaries' experience with CVA and Activities

This section presents the statistical results derived from the quantitative data analysis, focusing on the experiences of the respondents with Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programs as part of the humanitarian response. The data provides insights into whether the respondents have been targeted by any CVA interventions, the specific activities covered by these programs, the frequency of receiving CVA, and the average value of money received. These findings offer a comprehensive understanding of the extent and nature of CVA interventions in covering the gaps of the affected people by disasters. By examining the activities, frequency, and value of money, we gain valuable insights into the tangible impact of CVA on the beneficiaries before moving to

understand the effectiveness of these interventions in meeting their needs and the in-depth analysis of the role and effectiveness of CVA as a vital component of humanitarian aid modalities.

Out of the 334 interviewees, a significant majority of 316 respondents (94.6%) reported being targeted by Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) activities at least once. Gender distribution among the CVA beneficiaries revealed that 91.7% of the female interviewees (155 out of 169) and 97.6% of the male interviewees (161 out of 165) had benefited from CVA interventions. This disparity may reflect certain contextual norms, such as the traditional role of males as the heads of households and direct recipients of humanitarian assistance. When considering the frequency of CVA assistance, the majority of respondents (52.85%) reported being targeted only once, while 40.51% received CVA assistance twice. A smaller proportion of respondents (1.58%) received CVA assistance three times, and 5.06% reported being beneficiaries for six rounds of cash for food. These findings are visually represented in Figure 3 and Figure 4, providing a clear overview of the distribution of CVA beneficiaries and the frequency of assistance received.

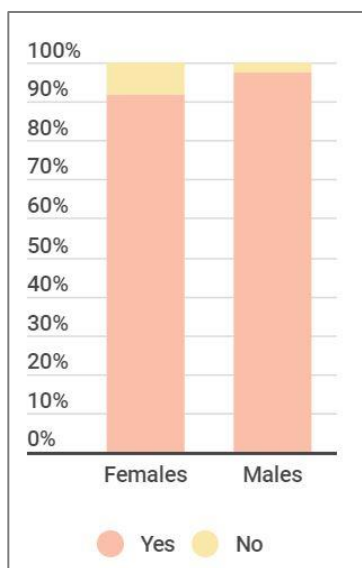


Figure 3. Gender Disaggregation of BNF Respondents

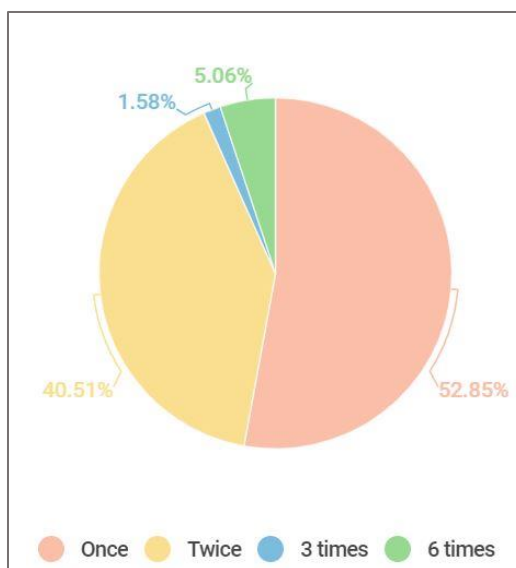


Figure 4. Frequency of Assistance

Regarding the average value of money received through Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), it is worth noting that most respondents (79.7%) reported receiving an average CVA value of \$150. This indicates a consistent trend in the amount provided to beneficiaries. However, it is important to acknowledge that a smaller percentage of respondents reported varying average amounts, such as the value of \$100 which was mentioned by (8.23%) of respondents, \$60 was mentioned by (6.65%), \$140 mentioned by (2.53%), \$120 was mentioned by (1.58%), and \$200 was mentioned by (1.27%). These findings highlight the diversity in the financial support provided through CVA, catering to the specific needs and circumstances of different individuals. The visual representation in Figure 5 offers a comprehensive overview of the distribution of average CVA values reported by the respondents, allowing for a better understanding of the range and frequency of monetary assistance provided.

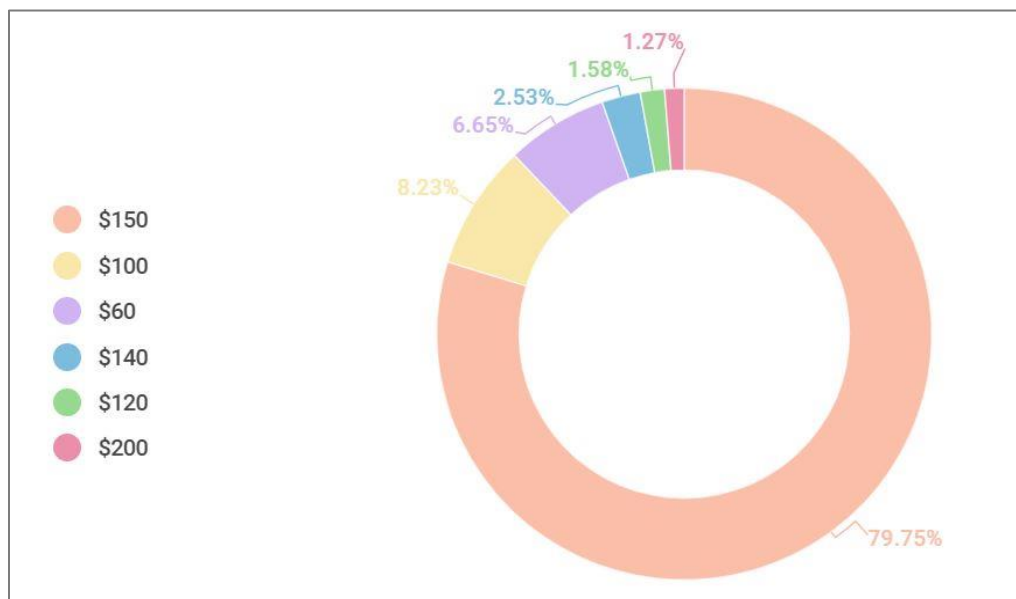


Figure 5. Average of CVA Value

Regarding the types of interventions and purposes of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) provided to the interviewed beneficiaries, the findings revealed two main modalities: Cash and vouchers, each serving different

objectives. Among the respondents, cash interventions were more prevalent, with a total of 412 reported activities. The most reported cash modality was multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), mentioned by 173 respondents (55%) out of the 316 beneficiaries of CVA. Cash for food was reported by 114 respondents (36%), cash for rent by 71 respondents (22%), cash for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) by 31 respondents (10%), and cash for work by 23 respondents (7%). On the other hand, voucher interventions accounted for a total of 174 reported activities. The specific voucher activities included vouchers for fuel, reported by 46 out of 316 respondents (15%), vouchers for winter by 43 respondents (14%), vouchers for clothes by 37 respondents (12%), multi-purpose vouchers by 24 respondents (8%), vouchers for hygiene items by 16 respondents (5%), and vouchers for non-food items (NFI) by 8 respondents (3%). A visual representation of these findings can be seen in Figure 6, which provides an overview of the distribution of cash and voucher modalities and their respective purposes among the beneficiaries.

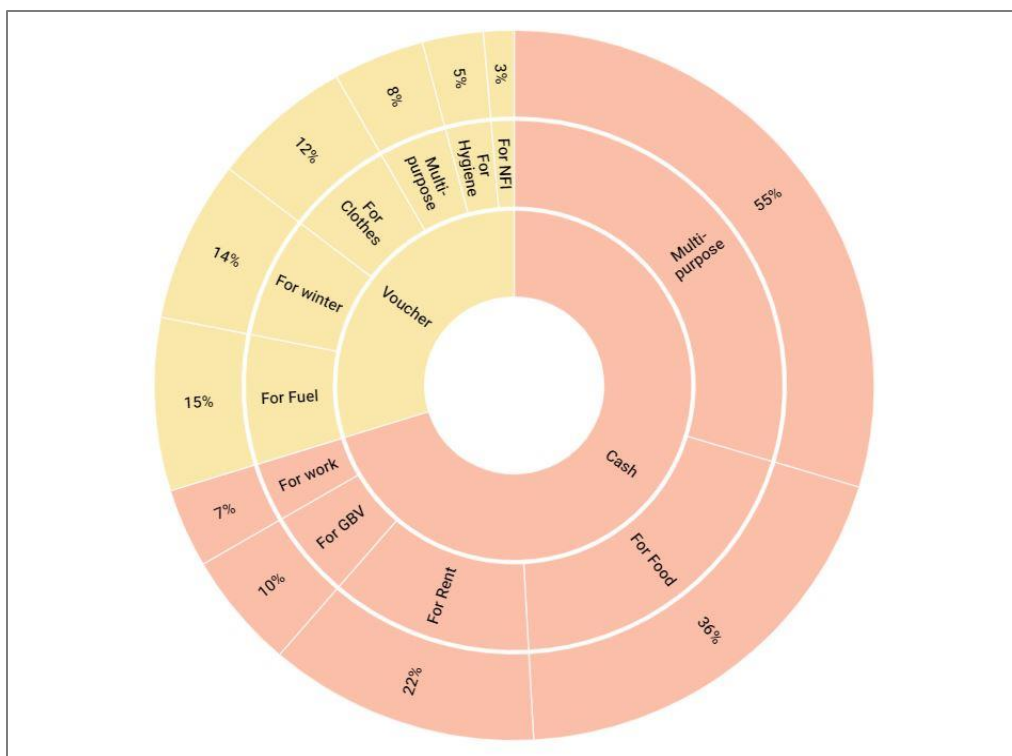


Figure 6. CVA Activities and Purposes

2.3. Usage and Modality Preference

The following section delves into the utilization patterns of beneficiaries regarding the multi-purpose Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) they receive, along with an examination of the sectors in which these grants are commonly allocated. Additionally, this section provides an integrated analysis of the modality preference, shedding light on the underlying reasons behind beneficiaries' preferences, as reported by quantitative, and how it was supported by the key informants' points of view as part of the qualitative data. The discussion in this section establishes a connection with the theory of choice, as it explores the decision-making processes and factors influencing beneficiaries' selection of specific CVA modalities. Through this comprehensive analysis, a deeper understanding of how CVA is utilized and preferred by beneficiaries will be attained, illuminating the interplay between their needs, preferences, and available options.

Analyzing respondents' utilization of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) across various humanitarian sectors revealed insightful patterns. Among the top five sectors where CVA was primarily directed, food emerged as the most prominent area, with 215 (68.47%) out of 314 respondents who received CVA indicating its usage. Livelihood support followed closely, with 140 respondents (44.59%) utilizing CVA for this purpose. Non-food needs were addressed by 137 respondents (43.63%), while 125 respondents (39.81%) allocated CVA towards shelter-related expenses. Additionally, 112 respondents (35.67%) utilized CVA for protection initiatives, and health has 100 responses (31.85%), 77 responses (24.52%) for education, 30 responses (9.55%) for WASH services, and 29 responses (9.24%) for agriculture. These findings, visually represented in Figure 7, shed light on the priority sectors where beneficiaries choose to allocate their CVA, offering valuable insights for programmatic decision-making and resource allocation in interventions.

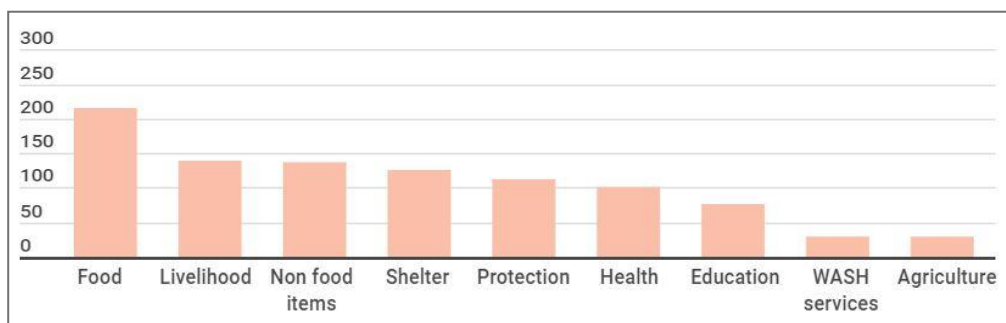


Figure 7. Priority Sectors by Beneficiaries

The modality preference of beneficiaries was examined through respondents feedback. Out of the total 334 respondents, a small percentage of 24 individuals (7.19%) indicated a preference for In-kind assistance. Conversely, the majority of 310 respondents (92.81%) expressed a preference for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). Among those who favored CVA, a significant proportion of 285 respondents (91.94%) specifically mentioned Cash as their preferred modality, while a smaller group of 25 respondents (8.06%) preferred vouchers. These findings, visually represented in Figure 8, highlight the overwhelming preference for CVA, particularly the use of cash, as the preferred modality by beneficiaries.

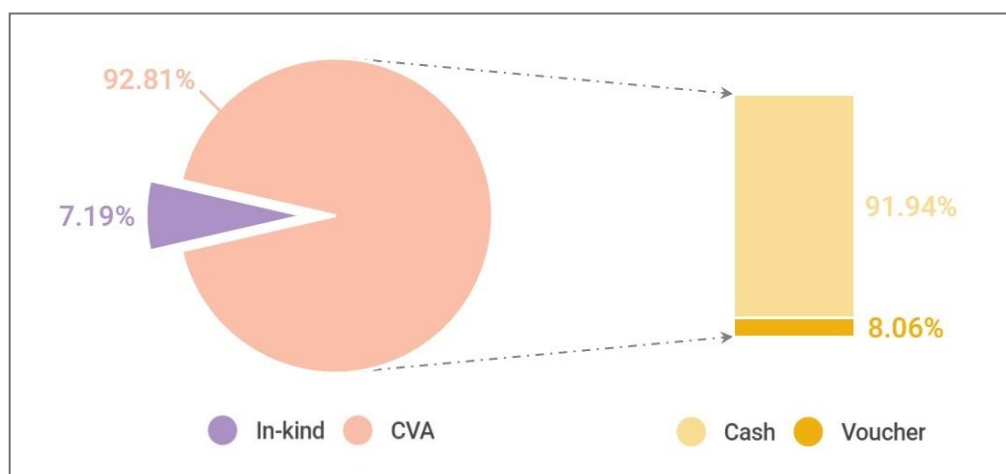


Figure 8. Modality Preference by BNF

The 24 respondents who expressed a preference for in-kind assistance were asked to provide reasons behind their choice. The analysis of their responses revealed several factors influencing their preference. Among the

reasons cited, ten respondents (41.67%) mentioned that the absence of the need to go to the market was a significant advantage. Moreover, 13 respondents (54.17%) highlighted the challenge of long distances to the market as a factor contributing to their preference. Five respondents (20.83%) expressed concerns about the non-functioning of the market, while nine respondents (37.5%) mentioned the desire to avoid potential arguments on how to spend the CVA. Additionally, 10 respondents (41.67%) emphasized that in-kind assistance is specifically designed to cater to family needs, and 11 respondents (45.83%) highlighted the specific objectives associated with in-kind assistance. Lastly, 14 respondents (58.33%) mentioned that in-kind assistance helps prevent price increases in the market. These findings, presented in Figure 9, provide insights into the various reasons behind the preference for in-kind assistance among this subgroup of respondents.

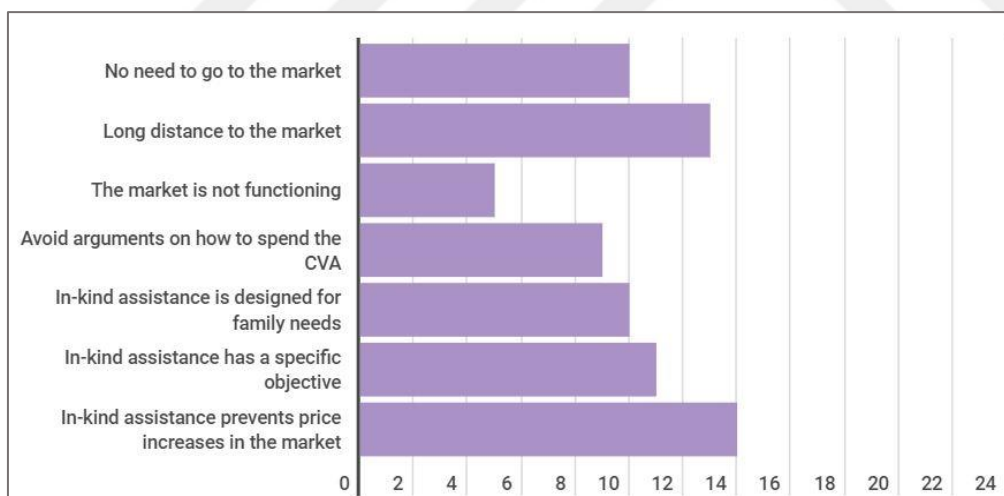


Figure 9. Reasons Behind Preferring In-kind Assistance

The 310 respondents who preferred Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) were asked to provide reasons behind their choice. Their responses shed light on the factors influencing their preference for CVA. Among the reasons cited, 185 respondents (59.67%) emphasized the better flexibility that CVA offers. Additionally, 106 respondents (34.19%) highlighted the role of CVA in strengthening local markets, while 137 respondents (44.19%)

mentioned the advantage of avoiding the loss associated with in-kind assistance when people prefer to sell the items to get money instead of some useless items for them. Furthermore, 113 respondents (36.45%) appreciated the fact that CVA does not require extensive logistical efforts. Rapid response was mentioned by 58 respondents (18.8%) as a benefit of CVA.

Moreover, 123 respondents (39.67%) expressed that CVA helps preserve people dignity, while 86 respondents (27.74%) highlighted the absence of transportation efforts required for CVA compared to in-kind assistance. Lastly, 125 respondents (40.32%) pointed out that CVA provides more resilience for beneficiaries. These findings, presented in Figure 10, highlight the various reasons behind the preference for CVA among the surveyed respondents, underscoring its flexibility, market support, avoidance of losses, logistical advantages, rapid response, preservation of dignity, convenience in transportation, and resilience for beneficiaries.

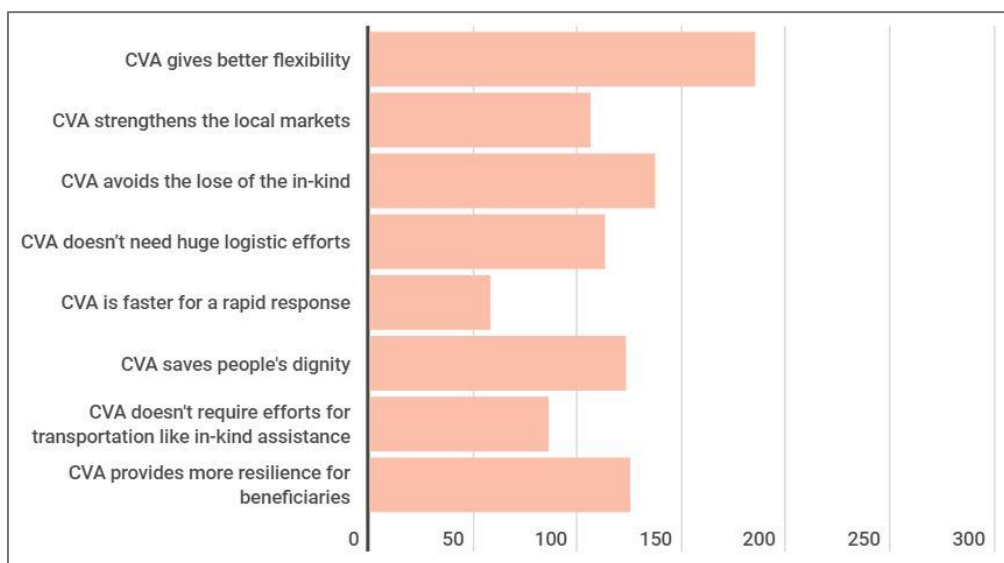


Figure 10. Reasons Behind Preferring CVA

To have a detailed knowledge of the preferences between cash and vouchers, respondents were asked about the reasons behind their choices. Among the 285 respondents who preferred cash, several reasons were highlighted. The majority, 174 respondents (61.05%), emphasized that cash

provides more flexibility than vouchers. Additionally, 109 respondents (38.25%) mentioned that cash can be used for multiple purposes across various sectors. Furthermore, 154 respondents (54.04%) believed cash increases beneficiaries resilience more effectively than vouchers. Another important reason cited by 135 respondents (47.37%) was the ability to use cash whenever the family needs to arise.

Moreover, 74 respondents (25.96%) mentioned that cash requires less effort to use compared to vouchers. Additionally, 32 respondents (11.23%) pointed out that cash transfers do not necessarily require an electronic system compared with voucher projects that require an E-system for better implementation. Other reasons highlighted by the respondents included the prevention of vendor monopoly (75 respondents or 26.32%) and the strengthening of the entire local market, not just limited vendors (91 respondents or 31.93%). On the other hand, among the 25 respondents who preferred vouchers, 14 (56%) stated that vouchers are safer than cash, while 20 (80%) believed that vouchers are better suited for implementing purpose-driven projects. These findings, presented in Figures 11 and 12, provide valuable insights into the factors influencing the preferences for cash or vouchers among the respondents, highlighting flexibility, multi-purpose use, resilience-building, convenience, and market dynamics.

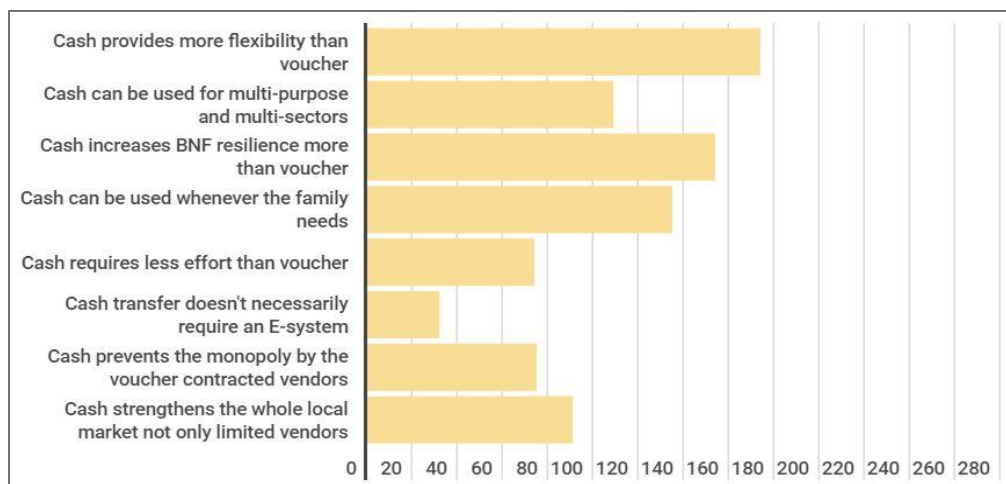


Figure 11. Reasons Behind Preferring Cash Assistance

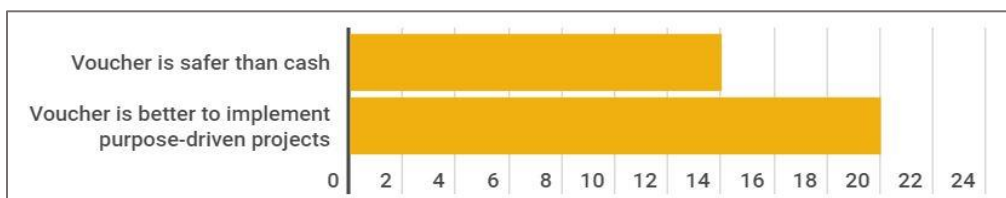


Figure 12. Reasons Behind Preferring Voucher Assistance

The insights provided by the interviewed humanitarian workers confirm that CVA is the preferred modality over in-kind assistance, with cash being the most favored option. These perspectives were gathered through various sources, including post-distribution monitoring (PDM) reports, feedback, and focus group discussions (FGDs).

From the beneficiaries' viewpoint, cash offers greater flexibility as it enables families to make decisions and select what they specifically need across different sectors. It was noted that cash is typically designed based on the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), which calculates the quantity of money necessary for a family of five to meet their basic needs for a month. These needs encompass multiple sectors including FSL, NFI, WASH, education, and health, with the MEB value adjusted to align with market prices. This personalized approach is considered appropriate and aligned with the families' requirements for effective humanitarian assistance. Additionally, cash assistance promotes dignity among the affected population and contributes to their resilience against disasters, conflicts, and emergencies, thereby reducing vulnerability. It also improves the economic situation of beneficiaries and can be received easily, eliminating the burden of carrying heavy kits associated with in-kind assistance. Cash can be utilized whenever families require it and can even support savings, small businesses, and livelihoods, particularly through multi-round cash distributions. Moreover, cash injections help strengthen local markets and enhance the overall economic conditions of targeted areas.

From an operational standpoint, key informants highlighted several critical points. They emphasized that cash assistance requires fewer logistical

efforts compared to in-kind assistance. Establishing a contract with a financial service provider (FSP) is sufficient to execute the project, eliminating the need for extensive procurement and shipping of physical items to distribution points. This is particularly significant in the context of Syria, where procurement processes occur in Türkiye, and items are subsequently transported to Syria, requiring additional logistical resources. NGOs often establish Long-Term Agreements (LTA) or Framework Agreements (FWA) with FSPs, ensuring an annual contract for money transfers that can be utilized for various projects as part of preparedness planning, eliminating the need for contract renegotiation at the start of each project. Moreover, cash assistance proves to be cost-efficient as it reduces the resources required for logistics and minimizes instances of beneficiaries selling the distributed kits. In the Syrian context, it is common for beneficiaries to sell items they deem unnecessary at a lower value, resulting in wasted effort and funds. Thus, cash assistance emerges as a time, cost, and resource-efficient modality that aligns with high beneficiary preferences.

However, it is worth noting that cash distribution may not be suitable for all locations or beneficiaries. In areas where nearby markets are lacking, cash may be useless and potentially harm the beneficiaries. Similarly, distributing cash to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors without considering the potential for increased violence and harm requires careful evaluation, as explored in further detail later in this chapter.

The strong preference for cash by the beneficiaries aligns closely with the theory of choice, as it empowers individuals with the ability to select what they need and provides greater flexibility in decision-making. The figures obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data in this thesis support this theoretical assertion. The quantitative data revealed that out of the 310 respondents who preferred CVA, 285 specified cash as their most preferred modality. This highlights the beneficiaries' desire for autonomy and control

over their needs and priorities. The qualitative data further emphasized the significance of cash in enabling families to make decisions based on their unique circumstances and diverse sectoral requirements. The ability to select from a diversity of goods and services across different sectors empowers them to address their specific needs effectively. This integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence substantiates the choice theory and affirms that cash, by providing the freedom to select what people need and offering greater flexibility, is a preferred modality for CVA recipients.

2.4. Effectiveness and Impact

The forthcoming section is dedicated to conducting a comprehensive analysis of the long-term and short-term impacts of CVA while evaluating its overall effectiveness. By leveraging a robust combination of quantitative and qualitative data, this section aims to provide an understanding of the outcomes associated with CVA, encompassing both positive and negative effects. It will also uncover specific insights regarding the impact of CVA on women and People with Disabilities (PWD), recognizing the unique experiences and consequences faced by these vulnerable populations. This section will establish strong connections with key theories in the field of CVA. The Effectiveness and Efficiency of CVA theory will be utilized to assess how CVA achieves its intended objectives and maximizes its impact. Gender and Social Protection theory will be employed to examine the gendered dimensions of CVA and its implications for promoting gender equality and addressing social inequalities. The Theory of Economic Resilience will shed light on how CVA contributes to enhancing the economic well-being and adaptive capability of beneficiaries against adversity. Additionally, the Theory of Change will be utilized to understand the causal pathways through which CVA interventions bring about meaningful and sustainable change.

By applying these theoretical frameworks and analyzing the evidence gathered, this section aims to deepen our understanding of the transformative potential and limitations of CVA. The insights gained will not only contribute to the existing knowledge in the field but also provide valuable guidance for future programming and policy decisions in the realm of humanitarian interventions. Ultimately, this section seeks to inform and strengthen the effectiveness of CVA, ensuring that it remains a vital tool in meeting the diverse needs of crisis-affected populations and advancing their well-being.

When asked about the general impact of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) distribution, all 334 respondents provided valuable insights. A significant proportion of the respondents, 203 individuals (60.78%), highlighted that CVA played a crucial role in supporting the payment of debts and offering relief from financial burdens. Additionally, 177 respondents (52.99%) reported that CVA enabled them to save money, providing a sense of economic security and the ability to plan for the future. The distribution of CVA also had a substantial impact on securing various basic needs, as emphasized by 242 respondents (72.46%). This includes basics, for instance, food, shelter, clothing, and hygiene items, reinforcing the notion that CVA contributes to meeting the fundamental requirements for a dignified life.

Moreover, 147 respondents (44.01%) expressed that CVA supported paying rent, addressing one of the critical aspects of housing stability. Furthermore, CVA was found to have a positive impact on supporting all family members, as stated by 175 respondents (52.40%), ensuring that the assistance reached the entire household and catered to their diverse needs. While the impact on healthcare and medication expenses was relatively lower, 75 respondents (22.46%) acknowledged the importance of CVA in helping them cover these costs. Additionally, a subset of respondents, 66 individuals (19.76%), reported that CVA supported their livelihood and small businesses, empowering them economically and enhancing their resilience. Lastly, 50

respondents (14.97%) emphasized the role of CVA in supporting agriculture businesses, contributing to food security, and sustainable agricultural practices. These findings, visually represented in Figure 13, highlight the multifaceted impact of CVA across various dimensions of beneficiaries' lives, underscoring its significance in addressing immediate needs, fostering economic empowerment, and promoting overall well-being.

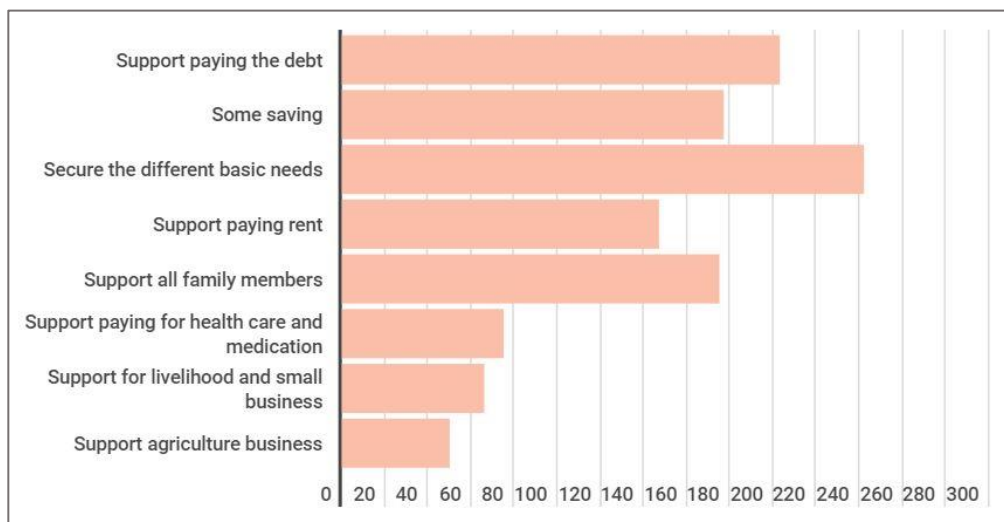


Figure 13. Impact of CVA

In order to gain insights into the specific impact of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) on women and People with Disabilities (PWD), respondents were asked for their opinions. Out of the total 334 respondents, 136 (40.72%) stated that they perceived no special impact of CVA for women, considering that the entire family primarily experienced the benefits. However, a majority of 198 respondents (59.28%) acknowledged that CVA does have specific impacts on women, indicating that women's experiences and outcomes differ within the context of CVA.

Similarly, regarding the impact of CVA on PWD, 88 respondents (26.35%) expressed that they did not perceive any specific impact for this group. Meanwhile, a significant majority of 246 respondents (73.65%) affirmed that CVA indeed has some special impact on PWD. These findings, as depicted in Figures 14 and 15, provide valuable insights into the

perceptions and observations of the respondents regarding the differential effects of CVA on women and PWD. These results highlight the varying perspectives on the impact of CVA, with a substantial proportion of respondents acknowledging the distinct effects on women and PWD. This supports the need for further exploration and analysis of the special dynamics and outcomes faced by these vulnerable individuals within the context of CVA. Understanding the nuanced impacts on women and PWD is essential for designing targeted interventions that address their unique needs, promote inclusivity, and ensure the full realization of their rights and potential within humanitarian responses.

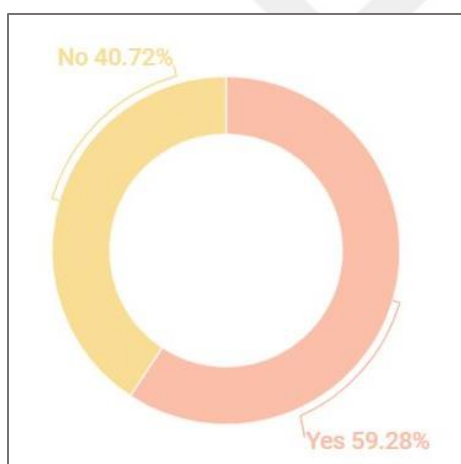


Figure 14. Is there any specific Impact of CVA on Women?

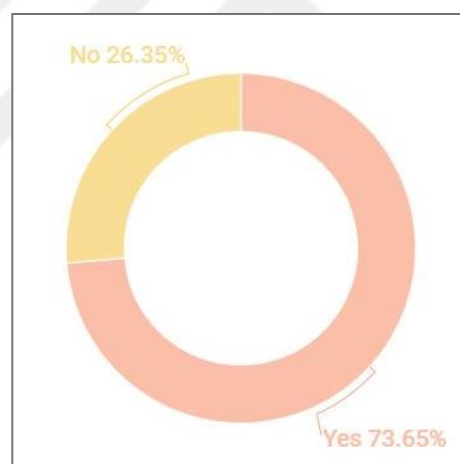


Figure 15. Is there any specific Impact of CVA on PWD?

Further analysis was conducted to explore the specific impacts of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) on women and People with Disabilities (PWD) based on the responses of the participants who acknowledged these effects. The insights provided valuable perspectives on how CVA influences the lives of these vulnerable groups. Among the 198 respondents who confirmed the impacts of CVA on women, various significant effects were identified. Firstly, 50 respondents (25.25%) highlighted that CVA is particularly helpful for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors, providing them with support and resources to aid their recovery. Additionally, 85

respondents (42.93%) emphasized that CVA benefits single or separated women as it enhances their resilience in challenging circumstances. Moreover, 44 respondents (22.22%) recognized that cash-for-work initiatives under CVA contribute to increasing women's independence and fostering their economic empowerment. Engaging women in CVA spending decision-making was mentioned by 41 respondents (20.71%), emphasizing how this promotes flexibility and dignity. Other impacts identified included increased privacy for women to secure their special needs (53 respondents, 26.77%), the convenience of receiving cash instead of carrying heavy kits (83 respondents, 41.92%), and improved access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services, especially for Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) (80 respondents, 40.40%).

Similarly, among the 246 respondents who confirmed the impacts of CVA on People with Disabilities (PWD), the analysis revealed several significant effects. The majority of respondents, 171 (69.51%), indicated that CVA promotes access to healthcare for PWD, ensuring they can receive necessary medical services and support. Additionally, 134 respondents (54.47%) recognized that CVA enhances the resilience of PWD, equipping them with the resources and stand to navigate challenges and survive during emergencies. The ease of receiving cash instead of carrying heavy kits was mentioned by 104 respondents (42.28%), highlighting the practical benefits of CVA for PWD. These findings, as illustrated in Figures 16 and 17, shed light on the varied impacts of CVA on women and PWD. From addressing the specific needs of GBV survivors and single/separated women to enhancing independence, dignity, and access to essential services, CVA demonstrates its potential to empower women in humanitarian contexts. Similarly, by promoting healthcare access, resilience, and reducing physical burdens, CVA proves instrumental in supporting the well-being and inclusion of PWDs. These insights provide valuable evidence for the conclusive effects of CVA

on women and PWD, informing the planning and implementation phases of future programming.

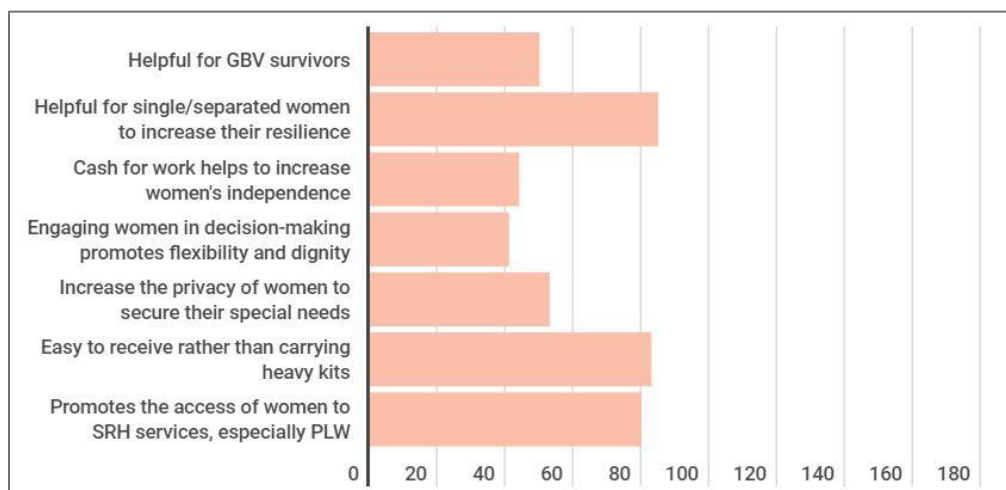


Figure 16. Specific Impact of CVA on Women

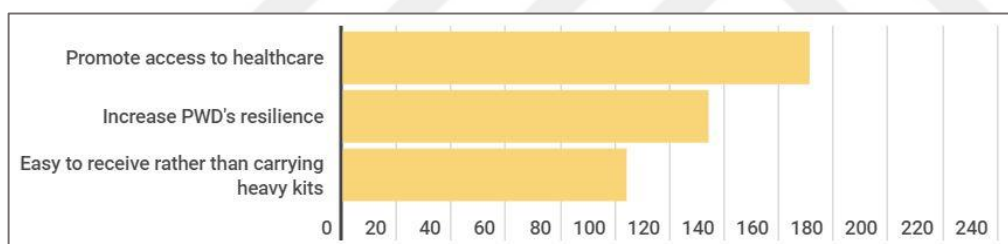


Figure 17. Specific Impact of CVA on PWD

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the potential drawbacks of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), participants were asked about the disadvantages associated with cash and voucher modalities separately. The responses shed light on the perceived limitations and challenges related to using vouchers. Among the 334 respondents, several disadvantages of vouchers were identified. Firstly, 163 respondents (48.80%) highlighted restrictions as a drawback of voucher-based assistance. These restrictions may limit the flexibility and choices available to beneficiaries when it comes to selecting the items they need.

Additionally, 150 respondents (44.91%) expressed concerns about the potential price increase within the market, which can affect the purchasing power of the vouchers. The issue of monopoly by contracted vendors was

raised by 186 respondents (55.69%) considering that those vendors may have exclusive control over the goods available for redemption, potentially limiting competition and variety in the market.

Furthermore, 18 respondents (5.39%) mentioned the perceived riskiness of markets, while 34 respondents (10.18%) expressed that the distance to markets could pose a challenge for beneficiaries. The insufficiency of items available in the market was raised by 58 respondents (17.37%), indicating that there may be limited options or scarcity of certain goods.

Moreover, 93 respondents (27.84%) expressed the view that only recipients are authorized to redeem vouchers, which reduces the possibility of engaging in decision-making on how to utilize the voucher. 151 respondents (45.21%) mentioned limited redemption duration as a disadvantage, indicating concerns about the time constraints of voucher usage. Furthermore, specific challenges for vulnerable groups including People with Disabilities (PWD), in accessing the market were noted by 48 respondents (14.37%). The perceived inadequacy of voucher values to cover the needs of beneficiaries was highlighted by 114 respondents (34.13%). Additionally, the fact that voucher distributions are often one-off events was raised by 156 respondents (46.71%).

Similarly, when asked about the disadvantages of the cash modality, respondents expressed various concerns. These included risks associated with markets (4 responses, 1.20%), distance to markets (34 responses, 10.18%), insufficient items in the market (52 responses, 15.57%), barriers faced by vulnerable groups in accessing the market (72 responses, 21.56%), the perceived inadequacy of cash values to cover needs (208 responses, 62.28%), the risk of theft (95 responses, 28.44%), and the fact that cash distributions are usually one-off events (240 responses, 71.86%). However, 21 respondents (6.29%) stated that they did not identify any specific disadvantages of the cash modality. These findings, illustrated in Figures 18 and 19, provide valuable insights into the perceived disadvantages of both cash and voucher modalities

in CVA. Addressing the identified challenges associated with each modality, such as restrictions, market risks, accessibility barriers, adequacy of values, and security concerns, is crucial to optimizing the effectiveness and advantages of cash-based activities. By mitigating these disadvantages, CVA can better cover the diverse gaps and preferences of the affected people, ultimately contributing to more impactful humanitarian programming.

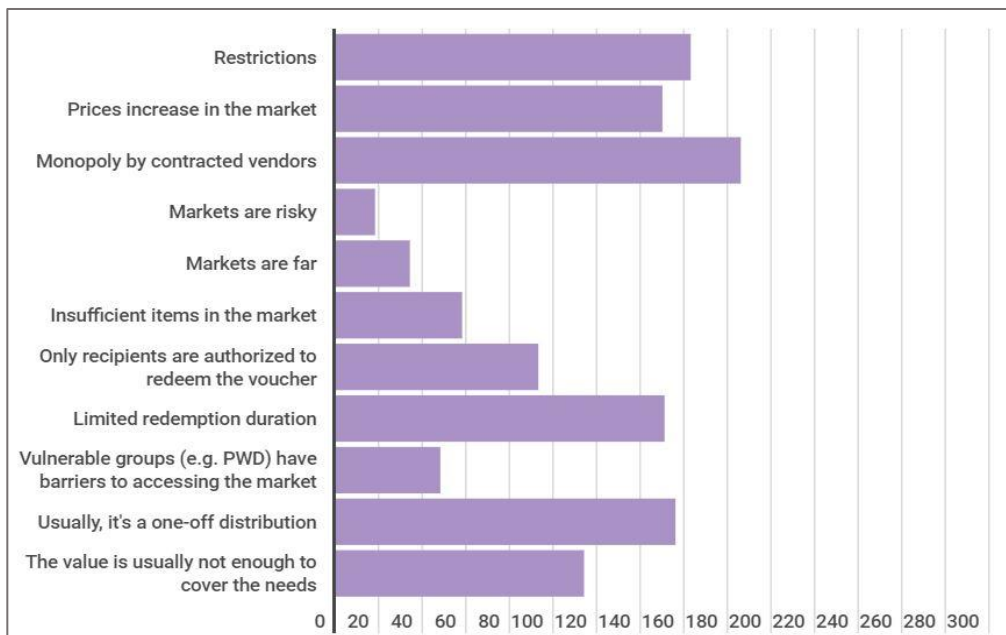


Figure 18. Disadvantages of Voucher Modality

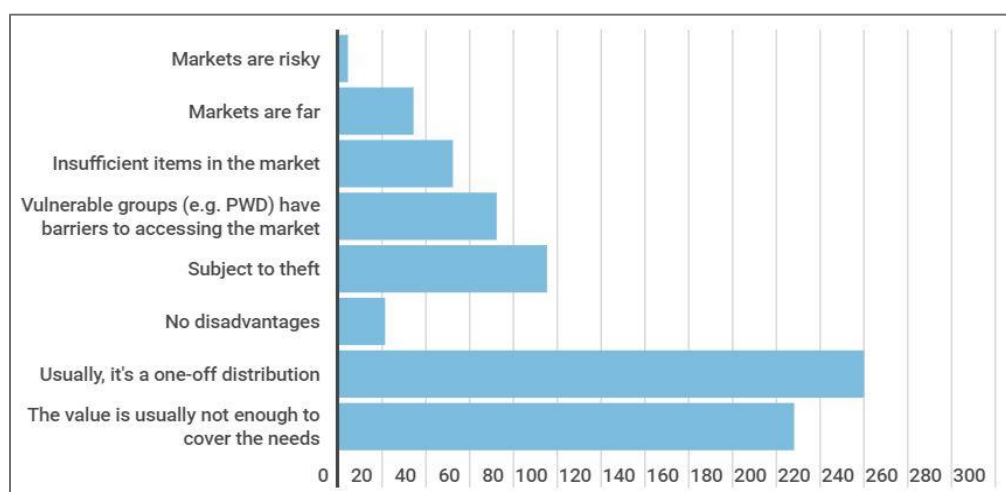


Figure 19. Disadvantages of Cash Modality

Qualitative data analysis obtained through interviews with humanitarian workers offers valuable insights into the impact and effectiveness of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). These findings complement the quantitative data, providing a deeper understanding of the nuances surrounding CVA implementation. The interviews shed light on specific examples that demonstrate the range of positive impacts and potential challenges associated with CVA activities.

i. One illustrative example highlighted by six out of 14 key informants focuses on comparing two different activities using the cash modality. The first activity involves a one-off cash distribution as part of emergency response, providing immediate assistance to help people survive in the aftermath of crises and disasters. While this activity has a shorter-term impact, enabling individuals to address immediate needs, it primarily serves as a temporary measure. In contrast, the second activity adopts a more sustainable approach by targeting families with six rounds of monthly cash grants. This longer-term intervention has proven to be effective in improving the economic situation of beneficiaries. It enables them to support small businesses, reduce vulnerability, and enhance access to basic goods and services like healthcare, education, and basic needs. By promoting economic resilience and sustainability, this activity empowers families to better navigate emergency situations.

ii. Another compelling example, shared by one interviewee, focuses on implementing Village Savings and Loans Associations (VLSAs). VLSAs aim to foster community engagement and empower individuals participating in multi-round cash activities. Through regular contributions of small amounts of money, group members pool their resources to establish a collaborative grant. This grant is then disbursed to one or two members, enabling them to launch new businesses or improve existing ones. These revolving funds, accompanied by interest repayments, not only empower individuals

economically but also strengthen their economic resilience. By facilitating sustained income generation and fostering entrepreneurship, VLSAs provide beneficiaries with greater financial stability.

iii. Four interviewees also highlighted cash-for-work activities as a notable example of CVA. This approach combines conditional cash assistance with vocational training and engagement in development projects. Individuals participating in cash-for-work activities undergo vocational training to enhance their skills and increase their employability. They then contribute their newly acquired skills to development projects for a specific duration. By engaging in meaningful work, such as rehabilitating public spaces, roads, schools, and facilities, beneficiaries improve their communities, develop their capacities, and enhance their income opportunities. This approach promotes self-reliance and reduces dependency on unconditional cash distributions. However, it is significant to note that cash-for-work activities are more suited to post-disaster phases, where there is a focus on long-term recovery and development rather than immediate life-saving responses during emergencies.

iv. An additional example provided by two GBV specialists focuses on cash assistance specifically tailored for women survivors of gender-based violence. Cash assistance in this context has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, it significantly improves the living conditions of survivors, enhances their resilience, and promotes their independence. In cases where multi-round targeting is employed, cash assistance enables survivors to establish small businesses, fostering income generation and sustained economic empowerment. However, it is crucial to address the potential risks associated with cash distributions in GBV contexts. There is a risk that the abuser may attempt to access the cash or that the provision of cash may incentivize further violence. To mitigate these risks, awareness sessions can be conducted, targeting both survivors and perpetrators, to promote understanding, collaboration, and responsible

decision-making. By addressing the underlying reasons for GBV, for instance, poverty and lack of economic opportunities, cash assistance can play a pivotal function in assisting survivors and breaking the cycle of violence.

These examples shed light on the multifaceted character of CVA and indicate the seriousness of considering context-specific factors when designing and implementing cash-based interventions. By considering these insights, humanitarian practitioners can maximize the positive impacts of CVA while minimizing potential risks and challenges.

The findings from the analysis of the effectiveness and impact of CVA in the Syrian context provide robust support for the different theories discussed earlier in this thesis. Analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data offers valuable insights into the outcomes and mechanisms of CVA, strengthening the linkages with the theories under examination. The linkage of the theories and the findings can also reflect the application of the CVA theories in complex situations such as the Syrian context.

The Effectiveness and Efficiency of CVA theory posits that CVA interventions should be designed and implemented to maximize their impact and efficiency. The quantitative data on the positive impacts of CVA, such as supporting debt payments, savings, and meeting basic needs, reinforces the theory's statement. The qualitative data further enhances this understanding by providing specific examples of how CVA interventions have contributed to improving the economic situation and resilience of beneficiaries in the Syrian context. The results present the significance of careful program design and implementation to ensure that CVA interventions effectively address the gaps of crisis-affected people.

The Gender and Social Protection theory highlights the need to address gender dynamics and social inequalities within Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) interventions. Quantitative data analysis reveals specific impacts of CVA on women and people with disabilities, reinforcing the theory's premise.

For women, CVA has been found to decrease their vulnerability by providing support for debt payment, savings, and meeting basic needs. Additionally, CVA interventions have proven useful for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors by improving their living conditions, increasing their resilience, and promoting their independence. The qualitative data expands on these findings, illustrating how CVA interventions have empowered women by providing them with economic opportunities, enhancing their accessibility to services like healthcare and education, and promoting their decision-making abilities within households.

Furthermore, the analysis highlights the specific impact of CVA on people with disabilities (PWD). CVA interventions have been shown to increase the resilience of PWDs by addressing their unique needs and barriers to accessing services. The qualitative data emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and dignity, with CVA interventions promoting the participation of PWDs in decision-making and providing them with opportunities for economic participation and independence. By recognizing and addressing the private needs of women and PWD, CVA interventions can effectively contribute to reducing gender disparities and social inequalities in the Syrian context. The findings also underscore the significance of incorporating gender and social protection considerations into the design and implementation of CVA interventions. By integrating these considerations, CVA programs can guarantee that the unique needs and experiences of women and vulnerable groups are addressed, promoting their empowerment, dignity, and social inclusion. This entails designing interventions that are sensitive to gender dynamics, promoting women's participation and decision-making, and providing targeted support for vulnerable groups. By adopting a gender and social protection lens, CVA interventions in the Syrian context can contribute to promoting gender integration, reducing vulnerabilities, and fostering developed and resilient communities.

The Theory of Economic Resilience posits that CVA interventions can result in the establishment of the economic resilience of disaster-affected individuals and communities. The analysis of the positive impacts of CVA, for instance, supporting livelihoods, promoting income generation, and enhancing accessibility to healthcare and education, aligns closely with this theory. The qualitative data provides additional context by showcasing specific examples of how CVA interventions have empowered beneficiaries economically and fostered community development. These findings highlight the potential of CVA to not only provide immediate assistance but also facilitate long-term economic stability and self-reliance in the Syrian context.

The Theory of Change offers a framework for understanding the causal pathways through which CVA interventions bring about desired outcomes. The analysis of the positive impacts and challenges of CVA, as supported by both quantitative and qualitative data, aligns with this theory by emphasizing the complexity of change processes. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive program design, clear objectives, and adaptive approaches to address the nuanced dynamics of CVA interventions in the Syrian context. By applying the Theory of Change, practitioners can better understand how CVA interventions lead to change and adjust their strategies accordingly.

In conclusion, the findings from the analysis of the effectiveness and impact of CVA in the Syrian context provide strong empirical support for the theories discussed earlier in this thesis. Integrating quantitative and qualitative data strengthens the linkages between the theories and the observed outcomes of CVA interventions. These theories can serve as guiding frameworks for designing and implementing CVA interventions in the Syrian context and beyond, enabling practitioners to enhance the effectiveness and impact of their interventions and contribute to the well-being and resilience of crisis-affected populations.

2.5. Risk and Challenges

The forthcoming section presents the findings derived from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on the main risks and challenges encountered in both the field and the management aspects of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects. The analysis in this section is closely linked to the risk and vulnerability theory, which provides a framework for understanding the potential threats and vulnerabilities faced by individuals and communities in the context of humanitarian interventions. By examining the data through this theoretical lens, a deeper understanding of the specific risks and challenges associated with CVA projects will be gained, informing future programming and policy decisions. The section will shed light on the complexities and dynamics of risk management in the field, including issues related to program targeting, delivery mechanisms, market fluctuations, and protection concerns. Additionally, it will explore the challenges faced by project management teams, such as coordination and collaboration with various stakeholders, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluation processes. By examining these risks and challenges, the section aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of practitioners and policymakers, enabling them to mitigate risks and overcome challenges more effectively in the implementation of CVA projects.

In the quantitative data analysis, all 334 respondents were asked about the risks and concerns they encountered as part of the CVA activities. The responses shed light on several key areas of concern. Firstly, 28.44% of the respondents highlighted the risk of interference from local authorities, which can potentially hinder the smooth implementation and delivery of CVA. Secondly, 23.35% of the respondents expressed concerns about aid diversion, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that the assistance reaches the intended beneficiaries. Additionally, 29.34% of the respondents identified

polygamy as a risk factor that can impact the equitable distribution of CVA benefits. Another concern raised by 27.25% of the respondents was the potential negative impact of one-person decision-making on cash spending, highlighting the importance of ensuring transparency and participatory approaches in decision-making processes. Furthermore, 23.95% of the respondents mentioned the risks of gender-based violence (GBV) for female recipients, emphasizing the need for protection measures in CVA interventions. The data also indicated that tension among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries was a significant concern, with 71.86% of the respondents expressing this worry. Lastly, 37.72% of the respondents mentioned concerns related to the behavior of NGO staff, including issues of corruption and sexual exploitation and abuse. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of risks and concerns within CVA, emphasizing the need for robust risk management strategies and accountability mechanisms to address these challenges effectively. Figure 20 provides a visual representation of the risks and concerns related to CVA activities.

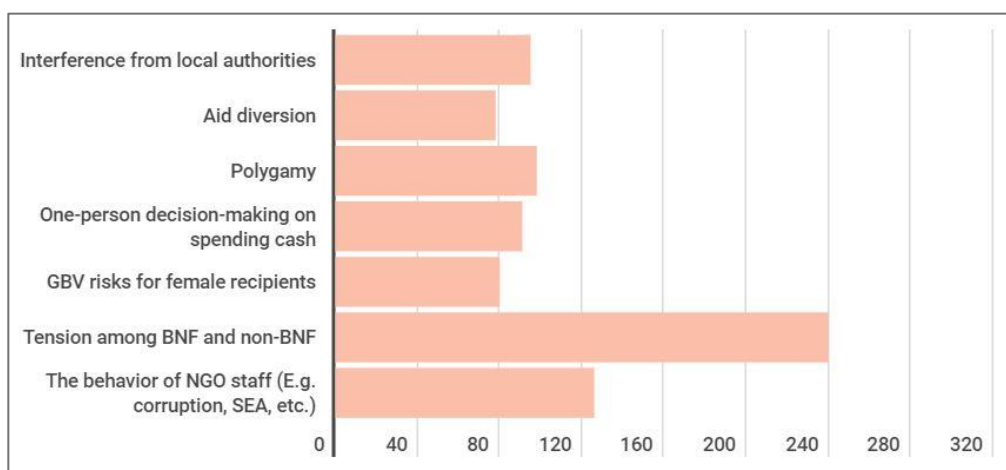


Figure 20. Risks and Concerns of CVA

The qualitative data analysis revealed critical risks and challenges faced in the field and the management and implementation of CVA activities in the Syrian context. These risks and challenges that were mentioned by the interviewed humanitarian workers can be categorized as follows:

A. In the field:

- i. The security situation poses a critical challenge to the safety and security of CVA operations. The ongoing conflict in the operating areas creates a volatile environment, making it difficult to guarantee the safety of humanitarian staff and the delivery of assistance.
- ii. Interference from local authorities is another risk faced in CVA activities. Local authorities may attempt to exploit CVA programs by requesting portions of the assistance or imposing fees on beneficiaries for their inclusion in the programs. This kind of interference compromises the integrity of the assistance and diverts resources away from the intended recipients.
- iii. The tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries is a common challenge in CVA projects. As CVA is highly valued by the population, those who are not selected for assistance may feel dissatisfied and voice complaints. This can lead to community tensions, highlighting the importance of transparent selection criteria and effective communication about program limitations.
- iv. The lack of official identification presents challenges in beneficiary verification processes. Many individuals have lost their identification documents during displacement and have resorted to using fake IDs. Without an official actor who can issue valid identification, verifying beneficiaries' eligibility becomes more complex, potentially resulting in inclusion errors or fraud.
- v. Decision-making issues within CVA programs can contribute to an increase in gender-based violence among partners. When decision-making processes are flawed, unequal power dynamics may be perpetuated, leading to situations where vulnerable individuals, particularly women, face an increased risk of gender-based violence within their households or communities.

- vi. Market price increases pose financial challenges for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. As prices rise in the market, the purchasing power of cash or vouchers provided through CVA diminishes. This can strain households' capability to secure their essential needs and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.
- vii. Restricted vouchers, while offering a more targeted approach, come with their own set of risks. Violence, corruption, monopolies, and price increases by contracted vendors are prevalent risks associated with the use of restricted vouchers. These challenges highlight the importance of rigorous vendor selection, close monitoring, and effective regulation to ensure the intended benefits reach the beneficiaries without exploitation or abuse.

B. Operations and implementation:

- i. Money transfer challenges: The limited capacity of Financial Service Providers (FSPs) poses a challenge to the efficient transfer of funds. The FSPs may face constraints in terms of processing large volumes of transactions, which can lead to delays and inefficiencies. Additionally, the Turkish government imposes restrictions on money transfers from Türkiye to Syria, including limitations on the amount of money that can be transferred, and the transfer method itself is restricted through one legal bank whose three branches are in Northern Aleppo and no branches in Idleb and West Aleppo. These limitations and constraints create obstacles for organizations as they need to comply with the regulations and navigate the complexities of the financial system. Furthermore, project budgets are usually designed in USD, but the money transfer regulation mandates that only Turkish Lira (TRY) can be transferred through the bank to North West Syria. Consequently, NGOs are required to convert the money from USD to Turkish Lira, send it to bank branches in North West Syria, and then convert it back

to USD to pay the FSPs who will distribute the funds to the beneficiaries. This exchange process incurs significant losses and adds a layer of complexity to the financial operations of CVA projects. Figure 21 presents an illustration of the banks in Northwest Syria and the pathway of the money transfer from Türkiye to Syria.

- ii. UN resolution: After three years of the Syrian crisis, in 2014 the UN resolution for Syria's cross-border program was launched for the first time by the UN Security Council to allow the UN agencies and their partners to use four humanitarian borders for shipping the aid from Türkiye to Syria. This resolution is being renewed annually or bi-annually based on the decision of the UN security members. Since July 2020, only one border called Bab Al-Hawa remained functioning for humanitarian aid based on several adaptations of the first resolution 2165 (2014) (OCHA, 2022, June 8). As part of the last UN Resolution 2672 of January 2023, this border is functioning until July 2023 and is still subject to renewal or non-renewal (Security Council, 2023, January 9). However, in February 2023, due to the earthquake circumstances, two additional borders were opened temporarily for six months, February to August 2023, for humanitarian aid as part of the emergency response to the affected people (Security Council, 2023, May 31). The potential non-renewal of Resolution 2672 creates a significant concern for the humanitarian response in Northwest Syria. This would severely limit the ability of UN agencies and NGOs to deliver essential aid. Considering that UN agencies such as WFP, IOM, WHO, and UNHCR every month send hundreds of thousands of kits including Food baskets, tents, NFI, Hygiene kits, and medications to Northwest Syria to help millions of people in camps and off-camp to survive during the continuous conflict and lack of livelihood. The non-renewal could result in a significant impact on the implementation

of CVA projects, as alternative solutions would need to save the continuity of assistance to vulnerable individuals. Figure 21 presents an illustration of the humanitarian borders used by the NGOs in Türkiye through the cross-border as part of the UN resolution.

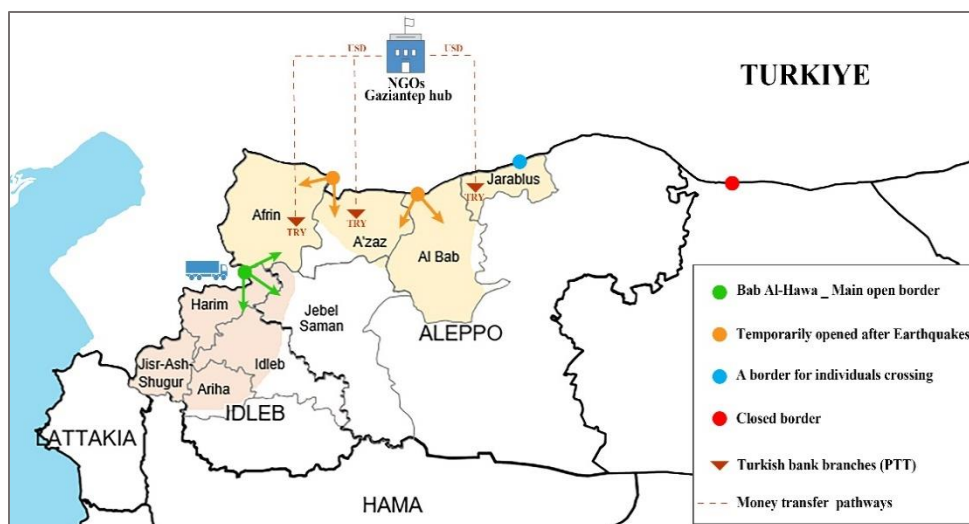


Figure 21. Illustration of Humanitarian Borders and Money Transfer

- iii. Limited availability of banknotes: The scarcity of specific denominations of banknotes in Syria presents a challenge during cash distributions. The respondents gave an example if a project is designed to distribute \$120 to each targeted family, but the required banknote of \$20 is not available, alternative solutions must be explored. This may involve exchanging the unavailable banknote for the local currency or another acceptable currency. These alternative options can introduce additional logistical and operational complexities, potentially delaying the distribution process and impacting the effectiveness of CVA activities.
- iv. Limited bank system and lack of e-technologies: The limited presence of bank branches in certain areas of Northwest Syria poses challenges to implementing electronic-based CVA interventions. Insufficient mobile and internet networks further hinder the use of electronic vouchers and point-of-sale (POS) machines. This necessitates costly

partnerships with a limited number of companies to develop specific systems for CVA projects. The reliance on paper vouchers as an alternative can lead to difficulties in controlling their redemption and may increase the risk of fraud and abuse.

- v. Global economic decline: The recent global economic downturn has harmed the implementation of CVA projects. The decline in the global economy has led to significant price increases for both direct project activities and operational costs. This can strain project budgets, reduce beneficiaries' purchasing power, and limit the overall impact of CVA interventions in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

These findings underscore the multifaceted risks and challenges faced in the field and during the management and implementation of CVA activities in the Syrian context. Addressing these challenges will require strategic planning, close coordination with local authorities, robust beneficiary verification processes, adaptive decision-making structures, market monitoring mechanisms, and alternative solutions in response to potential shifts in UN resolutions. It is crucial for organizations to stay vigilant and adapt their approaches to mitigate these risks and ensure the effective delivery of CVA to the affected population in a rapidly changing and challenging environment.

The findings regarding the risks and challenges in the field and management of CVA projects align with the theory of risks and vulnerability. The theory emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the vulnerabilities that individuals and communities face in humanitarian contexts. The identified risks such as interference from local authorities, tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, decision-making issues, and restricted vouchers, demonstrate how vulnerabilities can manifest and impact the effectiveness of CVA interventions. The qualitative data highlight the security situation, lack of official identification, and market price increases

as additional challenges that expose vulnerable populations to heightened risks. These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive and context-specific approach to mitigate risks and enhance the resilience of affected communities. By considering the theory of risks and vulnerability, practitioners can develop strategies that address these challenges and ensure that CVA interventions effectively support and protect the most vulnerable individuals and households.

2.6. Donors and Regulations

In order to effectively plan and implement Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects, it is crucial to examine the mandates and regulations set forth by donors. Donors significantly shape the funding landscape, policy frameworks, and operational guidelines that govern CVA initiatives. By analyzing qualitative data gathered from interviews and conversations with main stakeholders, this section provides valuable insights into the perspectives and requirements of donors in the context of CVA projects. Understanding the specific mandates and regulations of donors is essential for organizations seeking to secure funding, ensure compliance, and align their interventions with donor priorities. The analysis will explore various aspects, including donor funding preferences, thematic priorities, reporting requirements, and the expectations and conditions attached to funding allocations. By delving into the complexities and nuances of donor mandates, this section aims to provide organizations with a comprehensive understanding of the donor landscape, enabling them to navigate the intricacies of donor engagement and effectively design and implement CVA projects that meet donor expectations.

The qualitative data analysis reveals several key regulations imposed by donors regarding the implementation of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects. These regulations include:

- i. Aid diversion consideration: Given the challenges in Syria, where remote management is required through cross-border programs, and there is an absence of regime control, laws, and government oversight, donors emphasize measures to prevent aid diversion, fraud, corruption, bribery, theft, terrorist financing, and other forms of misuse of funds. To address these risks, donors require implementing organizations to establish restricted selection criteria to ensure that assistance reaches the intended affected civilians. Accurate beneficiary verification is conducted by Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) teams to confirm eligibility and prevent misappropriation. Additionally, donors often contract with third-party monitoring companies to provide independent reports on implementing CVA activities and ensure compliance with established protocols.
- ii. Compliance policies: Donors expect implementing partners to follow and comply with all the contractual requirements set forth in the agreement for implementing CVA activities. This includes adhering to guidelines, policies, and procedures outlined by the donor, such as program design, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, financial management, and procurement guidelines. Implementing organizations are responsible for demonstrating their commitment to fulfilling these requirements and maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the project.
- iii. Reporting and auditing: Donors place significant emphasis on regular reporting and auditing as part of their accountability measures. Implementing organizations are typically required to submit detailed reports on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis, providing comprehensive information on project progress, financial utilization, and outcomes achieved. Project closing audits are often conducted to

ensure financial and programmatic requirements compliance. These reporting and auditing processes serve as mechanisms to track the proper use of funds, assess project effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement.

- iv. Operational policies: Donors expect implementing organizations to adhere to various operational policies, including procurement, recruitment, and financing policies. Organizations are typically required to follow established procurement procedures, ensuring transparency, fairness, and competition in the selection of suppliers and vendors. Similarly, recruitment policies should promote equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and adherence to labor laws and regulations. Financing policies govern the allocation, disbursement, and utilization of funds, including guidelines for budgeting, financial management, and expenditure control.
- v. Anti-terrorism checks (ATC) and due diligence: Donors prioritize mitigating risks related to terrorism financing by implementing rigorous ATC checks and due diligence processes. This includes conducting background checks on potential contracted vendors, suppliers, and even beneficiaries to ensure compliance with international sanctions and prevent any inadvertent association with prohibited entities. Additionally, financial service providers must undergo thorough scrutiny and receive approval from the donor before being contracted to handle fund transfers and disbursements. In certain cases, donors may maintain a blacklist of suppliers or vendors that organizations must adhere to and promptly terminate contracts with any blacklisted entities.
- vi. Local government regulations: Organizations operating in the Syrian context must emphasize compliance with local government regulations and follow the rules governing the implementation of humanitarian

projects. For example, the Turkish government sets guidelines for the legal transfer of funds, including requirements related to the currency used and the authorized financial institutions involved. Organizations must ensure they understand and adhere to these regulations to maintain a transparent and legally compliant operation.

- vii. Coordination requirements: Donors emphasize coordination and collaboration with global actors, such as clusters and technical working groups, to ensure the harmonized implementation of CVA projects. This includes following global standards and guidelines, such as Core Humanitarian Standards, SPHERE standards, CaLP standards, and cluster-specific guidelines. Collaboration with these actors helps ensure a coherent and integrated response, promotes best practices, and enhances the overall effectiveness of CVA activities.

These regulations and requirements reflect the commitment of donors to promoting transparency, accountability, and the effective use of resources in CVA projects. By adhering to these guidelines, implementing partners can demonstrate their commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and the effective use of resources in CVA projects. Adhering to these regulations and requirements ensures that the funds allocated for humanitarian assistance are utilized appropriately and reach the intended beneficiaries. Aid diversion consideration, a critical issue in Syria, necessitates implementing measures to prevent fraud, corruption, and other misuse of funds. Restricted selection criteria help ensure that assistance targets the affected civilians, while accurate beneficiary verification by MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning) teams enhances accountability and reduces the risk of aid diversion. Contracting third-party monitoring companies provide independent reports on the implementation of CVA activities, adding another layer of oversight and accountability. Compliance policies ensure that implementing partners fulfill all contractual obligations while reporting and auditing

requirements enable donors to monitor the progress and impact of the projects. Following operational policies, such as procurement, recruitment, and financing, further promotes project implementation transparency and efficiency. Anti-terrorism checks and due diligence on vendors and suppliers help mitigate risks and ensure that funds do not inadvertently support illicit activities. Emphasizing adherence to local government regulations, particularly in the Syrian context with the Turkish government's involvement, ensures compliance with the legal framework governing humanitarian projects. Additionally, coordination requirements with global actors, such as clusters and technical working groups, foster adherence to global standards and guidelines, promoting harmonized implementation among NGOs operating in the area. By upholding these regulations and requirements, implementing partners contribute to a more accountable and effective CVA response, aligning with the principles of humanitarian aid delivery.

2.7. Digitizing Humanitarian CVA

The digitization of humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) activities has gained significant attention in recent years as organizations seek to leverage technology to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of their interventions. This section explores the landscape of E-Systems available in the Syrian context for implementing CVA projects. It examines how these E-Systems are performing, identifies the main constraints and challenges faced, and outlines the key requirements for better implementation of e-vouchers and e-cash. The findings presented in this section are based on the analysis of qualitative data, providing valuable insights into the practical aspects of digitizing humanitarian assistance in Syria. Moreover, this section establishes a link with the Innovation and Technology theory discussed earlier in the thesis, highlighting the importance

of exploring innovative solutions and leveraging technology to enhance the delivery of humanitarian aid. By examining the current state of E-Systems in the Syrian context and analyzing the associated challenges and requirements, this section aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on leveraging innovation and technology in humanitarian CVA interventions.

The qualitative data analysis reveals various methods of money transfer for CVA activities, each with its own considerations and challenges. The main issues that were mentioned in this regard by the interviewed humanitarian workers as main key informants for the thesis are as follows:

- i. Banking system constraints: Due to limitations within the banking system in North-west Syria, implementing bank-based e-cash is not feasible. While there are three branches in Northern Aleppo, constraints and restrictions hinder its application. Distributing e-cards to beneficiaries simplifies operations, especially for multi-round distributions, allowing for easy monthly charging. However, this method requires beneficiaries to visit branches monthly to withdraw cash, resulting in logistical challenges and overcrowding. Opening bank accounts for all beneficiaries is difficult due to factors such as the lack of official identification and limited awareness of banking processes. Additionally, project requirements and beneficiary data may not be provided by the banks due to restrictions and data security concerns. As a result, utilizing the available banking system for e-cash projects and broader humanitarian response remains uncertain, with banks primarily serving to transfer funds from Türkiye to Syria and facilitating distribution points or voucher activities through contracted vendors.
- ii. Custom e-systems: Some organizations opt for custom e-systems by contracting with development companies to create operating systems, secure necessary devices and cards, and facilitate the redemption

process. However, this method is costly. From a cost-efficiency perspective, it is more viable for multi-round CVA distributions, enabling easy monthly card charging and centralized recipient data. Conversely, large one-time cash distributions are highly cost-efficient and not financially feasible from a budgeting standpoint.

- iii. Lack of digital market systems: Multi-purpose e-vouchers face challenges in Northwest Syria due to the absence of digital systems in the local markets. Purchasing transactions are solely conducted in cash. For e-voucher activities, organizations must contract with specific vendors in the market and supply dedicated devices for the activity's specific system.
- iv. Absence of mobile cash: Mobile cash solutions are unavailable in the Syrian context due to the lack of a functioning mobile operating network.

Finding alternative solutions to digitize CVA projects is crucial and recommended by interviewed humanitarian workers to enhance implementation quality, mitigate risks associated with paper vouchers, and improve control and monitoring of CVA activities. By exploring innovative approaches, the humanitarian community can address these challenges and reduce risks across various operational areas.

Overall, the analysis highlights the need to address the constraints and requirements for effective digitization of CVA activities in the Syrian context, as well as the potential benefits it can bring to enhance program delivery and management.

The findings on the different money transfer methods for CVA activities in the Syrian context provide valuable insights that can be linked to the theory of Innovation and technology. It is evident that the application of innovative digital solutions, such as e-cash and e-vouchers, is highly desirable for the efficient implementation of CVA projects. However, the context-specific

limitations and constraints pose significant challenges to the widespread adoption of these technologies. The non-applicability of certain methods, such as bank-based e-cash, due to banking system constraints and the absence of mobile cash options, highlights the need to consider the local context when designing and implementing innovative solutions. These limitations necessitate alternative approaches and creative problem-solving to effectively overcome constraints and leverage available technologies. By aligning the application of innovation and technology with contextual realities and identifying feasible methods, humanitarian actors can maximize the benefits of digitization, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure better control and monitoring of CVA activities. This integration of theory and practice enables a more nuanced understanding of how innovation can be effectively harnessed within the specific constraints of the Syrian context, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for the affected populations.

2.8. Recommendations by Beneficiaries and Humanitarian Workers

This section presents the recommendations for future planning of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects based on the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. These recommendations are derived from the valuable insights and feedback provided by the respondents, including beneficiaries, humanitarian workers, and stakeholders involved in CVA interventions in the Syrian context. By examining the data, identifying emerging themes, and considering the perspectives of various stakeholders, this section aims to provide actionable recommendations that can enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of future CVA initiatives. These recommendations not only address the challenges and risks identified earlier but also seek to refine the delivery, planning, and implementation of CVA projects to actively cover the gaps of affected populations. By incorporating

these recommendations into future planning processes, organizations and practitioners can strengthen their approach to CVA and contribute to sustainable and impactful interventions in the Syrian context.

In the quantitative data analysis, all 334 respondents were asked about their recommendations for more effective Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) activities in future planning. The responses provide valuable insights and suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of CVA interventions. The majority of respondents, 66.17%, emphasized the importance of increasing the value of the assistance provided. This highlights the need to ensure that the assistance meets the basic needs and requirements of the beneficiaries. Additionally, 36.53% of the respondents recommended conducting multi-round distributions, indicating the potential benefits of providing sustained support over a longer period to promote resilience and stability. Another recommendation put forth by 29.94% of the respondents was to update the standard selection criteria, recognizing the evolving needs and vulnerabilities of the target population. Prioritizing multi-purpose cash was suggested by 24.85% of the respondents, emphasizing the flexibility and effectiveness of providing cash assistance based on the beneficiaries' priorities.

Moreover, 20.36% of the respondents recommended digitalizing cash delivery through e-cash, highlighting the potential advantages of utilizing technology to streamline the distribution process. Enhancing accessibility for vulnerable groups was highlighted by 34.13% of the respondents, emphasizing the significance of assuring that CVA activities are inclusive and accessible to all, including people with disabilities, women, and other marginalized groups. Additionally, 29.94% of the respondents suggested conducting awareness sessions to promote better engagement of women in decision-making processes, recognizing the importance of empowering women and promoting their active participation. Lastly, 65.87% of the respondents recommended implementing more cash activities dedicated to

vulnerable people, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different groups. These recommendations provide valuable guidance for future planning and implementation of CVA activities, emphasizing the importance of adaptability, inclusivity, and responsiveness to the needs of the beneficiaries. Figure 22 provides a visual representation of recommendations for more effective CVA activities.

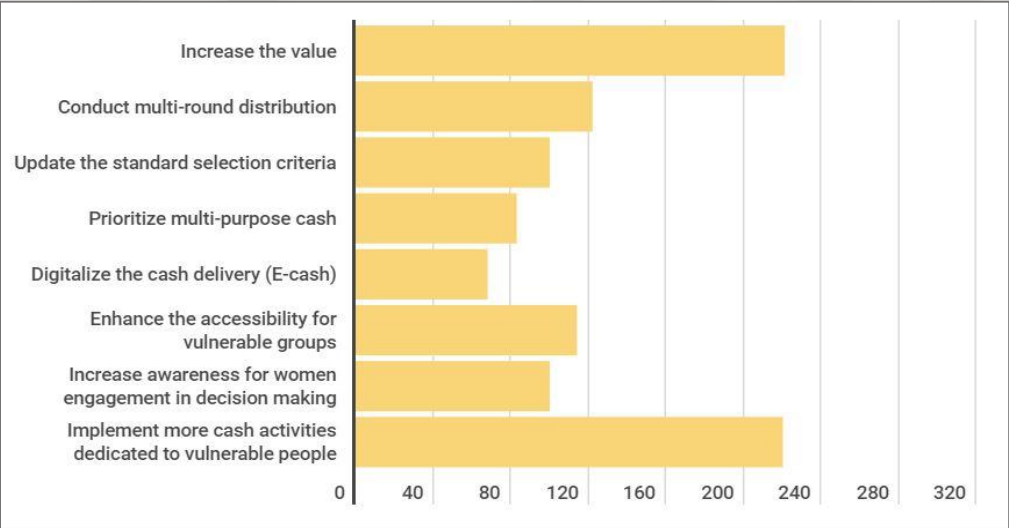


Figure 22. Recommendations by Beneficiaries for Future CVA Projects

The qualitative data analysis yielded several recommendations from the perspective of CVA specialists. These recommendations provide valuable insights for the future planning of CVA projects in the Syrian context.

- i. First and foremost, there is strong advocacy for increasing cash activities as opposed to voucher modalities or in-kind assistance. This recommendation is driven by the challenges associated with voucher distribution, the logistical resources required for in-kind assistance, and the potential risk of non-renewal of the UN resolution. Moreover, advocating for more cash activities aligns with the preferences, needs, and feedback of the beneficiaries, promoting their participation in project design. Cash interventions have also demonstrated qualities such as efficiency in terms of time, resources, and costs.

- ii. Another significant recommendation is to incorporate more cash-for-work programming. This approach not only enhances the abilities of individuals and contributes to the improvement of local communities but also aims to reduce dependency among those who are able to work. By targeting vulnerable groups with unconditional cash transfers and providing employment opportunities, the targeting of those unable to work can be improved.
- iii. The analysis also underscores the importance of implementing multi-round cash targeting, particularly for vulnerable groups, including survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Multi-round targeting enhances beneficiaries' resilience, improves their economic situations through the establishment of small businesses, and promotes the overall well-being of their families in the long term.
- iv. Furthermore, the promotion of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) is recommended based on good practices and lessons learned from similar activities in development contexts. This entails emphasizing effective coordination, collaboration, and community engagement to ensure the success and sustainability of VSLA initiatives.
- v. Lastly, there is a strong emphasis on promoting complementarity and coordination among sectors to provide a comprehensive response. For instance, during winter responses through CVA modalities, it is common for people to sell their vouchers for money, prioritizing other essential needs such as food and medication. Similarly, monitoring findings often reveal that cash recipients allocate a larger portion of the funds to immediate necessities like food, medication, and shelter rather than winter supplies. By adopting a multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach, specific activities can be implemented more effectively to achieve the intended objectives.

3. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter of this thesis encapsulates the comprehensive exploration of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) project design and implementation in the context of Northwest Syria. It serves as a future vision of the extensive research conducted, drawing upon both qualitative and quantitative data analysis to derive meaningful insights. This chapter proposes to present different recommendations based on the holistic understanding of the current state of CVA activities in the region.

By reflecting on the research findings, it becomes evident that CVA projects in Northwest Syria face numerous challenges and constraints. These challenges include security risks, limited financial capacities, regulatory restrictions, and operational complexities. It is crucial to acknowledge these limitations and recognize the contextual factors that shape the implementation of CVA initiatives in this particular setting.

Despite the challenges, the research findings also shed light on the opportunities and potential for improvement in CVA project design and implementation. This chapter critically examines the identified limitations and proposes recommendations to address them effectively. These recommendations aim to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of future CVA interventions in Northwest Syria.

Moreover, this chapter acknowledges the inherent limitations of this thesis and identifies potential areas for further research. By recognizing the scope and boundaries of the study, future researchers can delve deeper into specific aspects of CVA projects and explore additional strategies and approaches for addressing the complex challenges faced in humanitarian contexts.

The recommendations put forth in this chapter are based on the synthesis of research findings, expert insights, and the integration of theoretical frameworks such as risk and vulnerability analysis, innovation, and technology. These recommendations provide practical guidance for humanitarian practitioners, policymakers, and organizations involved in CVA projects in Northwest Syria. They aim to optimize the planning, implementation, and monitoring phases of future CVA interventions to better meet the needs and aspirations of the affected population.

3.1. Overall Thesis Recommendations

This section presents a set of recommendations purpose to enhancing the effectiveness and long-term influence of the CVA projects from both the perspective of donors and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Drawing on the findings and insights obtained throughout this thesis, these recommendations provide practical guidance for stakeholders involved in CVA interventions. By implementing these recommendations, donors and humanitarian NGOs can contribute to the improvement of project design, community engagement, coordination, capacity building, and feedback mechanisms. These recommendations emphasize the importance of beneficiary-centric approaches, adaptive and flexible methodologies, and collaborative partnerships to achieve more impactful and contextually appropriate CVA interventions. By adopting these recommendations, stakeholders can further enhance the positive effect of CVA projects and promote the well-being and resilience of affected communities.

For donors' interest, the below list provides valuable recommendations and insights to enhance their engagement and effectiveness in CVA projects:

- i. Prioritize beneficiary perspectives and community engagement, through allocating resources for robust needs assessments and context

monitoring, conducting regular consultations with local communities throughout the project cycle, and ensuring project designs align with the specific needs, preferences, and cultural contexts of the beneficiaries.

- ii. Encourage flexibility and adaptive approaches by allowing for iterative project design and implementation, considering the evolving needs and challenges on the ground, creating mechanisms for feedback and change while projects and activities are ongoing, and emphasizing the importance of learning and knowledge management in project design and implementation.
- iii. Invest in technical capacity building and knowledge sharing by providing support and resources to implementing partners for developing technical expertise in CVA, fostering platforms for knowledge exchange and coordination among donors, implementing partners, and the various stakeholders, and promoting the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned in CVA interventions.

From the interest of humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the below list offers practical recommendations to optimize their role in CVA projects:

- i. Prioritize community engagement throughout the project cycle, particularly during the design phase, through several procedures, including the establishment of participatory mechanisms that ensure the meaningful involvement of local communities, leaders, and representatives, incorporating beneficiary perspectives in decision-making processes, conducting regular consultations, and seeking input from community members.
- ii. Build strong relationships and foster coordination by developing and maintaining strong partnerships with local authorities, relief actors,

and other stakeholders, collaborating closely with other organizations to avoid duplication of efforts and promote synergy, and facilitating coordination mechanisms to enhance collaboration and information sharing.

- iii. Invest in capacity-building initiatives by providing training and resources to staff members involved in CVA projects, particularly in market-based approaches and beneficiary-centric design methodologies, enhancing technical expertise in areas such as market assessments, context analysis, and project management, and promoting continuous learning and professional development opportunities for staff members.
- iv. Actively seek and integrate feedback by establishing robust feedback mechanisms that foster a continuous dialogue between beneficiaries, stakeholders, and project implementers. These mechanisms should encompass diverse channels, including community meetings, surveys, and digital platforms, ensuring that a comprehensive range of voices is heard. This iterative process of engagement will not only gather valuable insights but also cultivate a sense of ownership and agency among beneficiaries. Moreover, this process fosters a dynamic of reciprocal accountability, where humanitarian initiatives are shaped by the people they intend to assist.

By adopting these recommendations, donors can contribute to more responsive, locally-led, and impactful CVA interventions. Similarly, humanitarian NGOs can strengthen their role as catalysts for positive change by prioritizing community engagement, building strong relationships, investing in capacity building, and actively seeking and integrating feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders. These recommendations provide practical guidance for both donors and humanitarian NGOs to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of CVA projects.

3.2. Future of the CVA Programs

CVA programs have emerged as a transformative approach to humanitarian aid, revolutionizing the way assistance is provided to crisis-affected populations (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2022). As the field continues to evolve and adapt, it is essential to envision the future trajectory of CVA and explore the potential advancements and challenges it may encounter (Pusterla & Pusterla, 2021). This discussion aims to delve into the future of CVA, examining key trends, innovations, and areas of focus that will shape the landscape of humanitarian interventions. By anticipating and responding to these developments, humanitarian actors, policymakers, and practitioners can better harness the potential of CVA to address the ever-changing needs of vulnerable communities (Tirivayi et al., 2021).

In envisioning the future of the CVA technological advancements and digital solutions are poised to play a transformative role (Cohen & Salaun, 2017). The ever-increasing prevalence of mobile technology and internet connectivity is set to revolutionize the accessibility and reach of digital payment systems (Smith et al., 2012, January 1). This development will enable faster, more secure, and cost-effective cash transfers, ensuring that humanitarian aid reaches crisis-affected populations swiftly and efficiently (Cohen & Salaun, 2017). Additionally, the integration of blockchain technology holds significant promise for enhancing the transparency, accountability, and traceability of CVA programs (CaLP & IARAN, 2019, October 17). By leveraging the decentralized and immutable nature of blockchain, risks associated with corruption and fraud can be mitigated, fostering greater trust and confidence in the humanitarian response (Humanitarian Futures Programme, 2014, January 18). Moreover, the advent of mobile applications and platforms will empower beneficiaries by providing access to essential information, tools, and services. This digital empowerment

will enable individuals to make informed decisions, effectively manage their financial resources, and navigate the complexities of their circumstances, ultimately strengthening their resilience and autonomy (Cohen & Salaun, 2017). The convergence of technological advancements and digital solutions within CVA represents a promising future, characterized by increased efficiency, transparency, and beneficiary empowerment (Vogl & Parker, 2018, June 30).

Looking ahead, the future of the CVA programs will be characterized by a strong focus on localization and community empowerment (Peachey, 2021, December 15). The localization agenda, which seeks to switch mastery and decision-making closer to the communities suffering from crises, will gain significant momentum (Harvey & Bailey, 2011, June 7). This shift will result in an increased emphasis on engaging local actors, including community-based organizations and institutions, in the planning, implementation, and monitoring phases of CVA projects (Harvey & Bailey, 2011, June 7). Humanitarian actors will recognize the importance of building the capacity of local organizations and promoting their leadership roles in delivering CVA. By doing so, they will foster sustainability and long-term community resilience, as local actors possess deep knowledge and awareness of the local context, societies, and dynamics (Tschunkert & Vogel, 2022).

Furthermore, participatory approaches and beneficiary feedback mechanisms will be further integrated into the project design and decision-making processes (Smith et al., 2012, January 1). This integration will ensure that CVA programs are responsive to the specific needs and preferences of the communities they serve. By actively involving beneficiaries and local representatives in the planning and implementation of CVA programs, humanitarian actors can ensure that interventions are contextually relevant and accountable (Longhurst et al., 2020, April 20). Participatory approaches will enable community members to actively contribute to the decision-making,

ensuring their voices are heard, and their perspectives are considered (Tschunkert & Vogel, 2022). Beneficiary feedback mechanisms will be established to facilitate ongoing dialogue and learning, allowing for continuous improvement and adaptation of CVA interventions based on real-time feedback and evolving needs. Ultimately, the increased localization and community empowerment within CVA will lead to more effective, sustainable, and community-centered humanitarian responses (Mendelson & Rhys Kesselman, 2020).

As for the utilization of CVA, this will be increasingly integrated into broader humanitarian response frameworks, fostering collaboration among various sectors. CVA interventions will no longer operate in isolation but will be seamlessly linked with sectors like food security, health, livelihoods, and education. This multi-sectoral approach will enable comprehensive support to affected populations, addressing their diverse needs and ensuring a holistic response to humanitarian crises (Tirivayi et al., 2021). To optimize the impact of CVA interventions, strong partnerships will be forged among different stakeholders. Humanitarian organizations, governments, financial institutions, private sector entities, and technology companies will come together, leveraging their respective expertise, resources, and networks. These partnerships will enable the design and implementation of CVA programs that are technologically advanced, financially sustainable, and customized to the specific context and gaps of the impacted communities (CaLP & IARAN, 2019, October 17). Collaboration with financial institutions will facilitate efficient and secure digital payment systems, ensuring the timely delivery of funds to beneficiaries. Technology companies will contribute their innovative solutions, enabling the use of mobile applications and digital platforms to enhance the accessibility and usability of CVA programs. In this future landscape, coordination and interoperability among humanitarian actors will be paramount. Greater efforts will be made to harmonize standards, share

data, and avoid duplication of efforts. Donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and United Nations (UN) agencies will work together, streamlining their approaches and sharing best practices (Maghsoudi et al., 2021). This coordinated effort will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of CVA interventions, minimizing gaps and overlaps in assistance. By leveraging collective expertise and resources, humanitarian actors will be better positioned to address the complex and evolving needs of affected populations, ensuring a more cohesive and impactful humanitarian response (CaLP & IARAN, 2019, October 17).

Moreover, the future of CVA will be characterized by a strong emphasis on evidence-based approaches and innovation. To enhance the effectiveness of CVA programs, there will be a prioritization of rigorous research methodologies and the use of evidence to inform program design, implementation, and decision-making processes. This shift towards evidence-based approaches will enable humanitarian practitioners to better understand the impact and outcomes of CVA interventions, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and efficiently to address the needs of affected populations (Vogl & Parker, 2018, June 30). Innovation and experimentation will also be key drivers in shaping the future of CVA. Recognizing the evolving nature of humanitarian crises and the unique challenges they present, there will be a deliberate focus on testing and scaling up new approaches, tools, and models in the field of CVA (Smith et al., 2012, January 1). This will involve exploring innovative technologies, such as blockchain and digital payment systems, to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of CVA programs. Additionally, there will be a concerted effort to develop and implement context-specific solutions that can address the complex and diverse needs of affected populations (Cohen & Salaun, 2017). By fostering a culture of innovation, the humanitarian community will be better equipped to adapt to changing circumstances, reach underserved populations, and optimize

the impact of CVA interventions. To facilitate the integration of research and practice, the collaboration between academia, research institutions, and humanitarian practitioners will be actively fostered (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2022). By associating the distance between theory and practice, this collaboration will generate valuable insights and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise. Academic institutions and research organizations will conduct rigorous studies to evaluate the efficiency of various CVA outlooks and identify best practices (Vogl & Parker, 2018, June 30). The findings from these studies will directly inform program design and implementation, ensuring that CVA interventions are evidence-based and contextually relevant (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2022). At the same time, humanitarian practitioners will contribute their on-the-ground experiences and practical insights to academic research, enriching the knowledge base and promoting continuous learning and improvement in the field of CVA (Maghsoudi et al., 2021).

Additionally, the future of CVA will be guided by a strong commitment to ethical considerations and safeguarding measures. As CVA programs continue to expand, there will be a heightened focus on data protection, and privacy, and ensuring the safety and security of beneficiaries' personal information (CaLP & IARAN, 2019, October 17). Robust safeguards must be implemented to uphold the dignity of beneficiaries and protect them from potential harm or exploitation. This will involve establishing clear protocols for data collection, storage, and sharing, as well as ensuring compliance with relevant legal and ethical frameworks (Smith et al., 2012, January 1). Gender responsiveness and the prevention of gender-based violence will also be integral to the future of CVA programs. Recognizing the unique needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, and marginalized groups, CVA interventions will prioritize gender equality and promote inclusive approaches (Longhurst et al., 2020, April 20). This will involve incorporating gender-sensitive strategies

into program design, implementation, and monitoring, as well as providing targeted support and resources to handle the specific risks arising by different gender groups. By adopting a gender-responsive lens, CVA programs can contribute to empowering women, promoting social inclusion, and reducing gender disparities. Furthermore, the future of CVA will prioritize environmental sustainability and climate resilience (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2022). Recognizing the impact of humanitarian interventions on the environment, there will be a concerted effort to minimize the ecological footprint of CVA programs. This will involve integrating environmentally friendly practices into program design and implementation, such as promoting sustainable livelihoods, supporting local markets, and reducing waste and carbon emissions (Peachey, 2021, December 15). By prioritizing environmental sustainability, CVA interventions can contribute to the long-term well-being of communities and enhance their resilience against climate change and environmental challenges (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2022).

The future of CVA holds great promise for revolutionizing humanitarian interventions. By embracing technological advancements, fostering localization and community empowerment, promoting multi-sectoral collaboration, prioritizing evidence-based approaches, and upholding ethical considerations, CVA can promote the effectiveness, efficiency, and durability of humanitarian aid. Embracing these future trends will enable stakeholders to navigate the evolving humanitarian landscape, better cover the gaps of disaster-affected individuals, and build more resilient communities.

3.3. Thesis Limitation and Future Research

While this thesis offers valuable insights into the design and community engagement of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) projects, it is crucial to acknowledge several limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, the

research approach predominantly relied on qualitative analysis and the perspectives of humanitarian workers involved in CVA projects. While efforts were made to ensure diversity in the sample, the relatively small size and specific context of the study, namely the Syrian crisis, may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. It is important to exercise caution when extrapolating the results beyond the scope of this research.

Additionally, it is crucial to recognize that this thesis primarily focuses on the design and community engagement aspects of CVA projects. While these are significant elements, other equally important dimensions, such as monitoring and evaluation, scalability, and sustainability, may require further exploration and analysis.

Lastly, it is significant to notice that this thesis does not account for certain challenges and circumstances unique to each individual context. CVA implementation can vary greatly depending on factors such as local governance structures, cultural norms, and political dynamics. Therefore, the findings presented should be interpreted within the context of the Syrian crisis and may not be directly transferable to other humanitarian settings.

Future research in the field of CVA programs holds great potential for further advancing our understanding and enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. Building on the insights provided by this thesis, several avenues for future research can be explored. Firstly, there is a need for more comprehensive studies that encompass a wider range of contexts and crises to validate and expand upon the findings presented here. By examining CVA projects in diverse settings, researchers can identify contextual factors that influence the design and community engagement processes, as well as their impact on outcomes.

Moreover, future research could delve deeper into specific aspects of CVA, such as the integration of market-based approaches, the role of technology in improving program efficiency, or the impact of CVA on local

economies. These areas offer ample opportunities for in-depth investigation and the development of innovative approaches to maximize the benefits of CVA interventions.

Furthermore, exploring the long-term effects and sustainability of CVA projects is an important area for future research. Understanding the durability of outcomes and the potential for positive spillover effects beyond the immediate project timeframe can provide valuable insights for program design and policy-making.

This thesis contributes to future academic research by providing a comprehensive analysis of the design and community engagement aspects of CVA projects in the specific case of the Syrian civil war. The findings and recommendations presented here can serve as a foundation for future studies, offering researchers a starting point for further investigation. Additionally, the limitations and challenges identified in this thesis provide opportunities for researchers to address and overcome these obstacles in future research endeavors.

By building upon the knowledge generated in this thesis, future research can strive to refine existing methodologies, explore new approaches, and expand the evidence base seeking to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of CVA interventions. Ultimately, the collective efforts of researchers and practitioners will contribute to the advancement of CVA as a crucial method for addressing humanitarian needs and promoting the well-being of crisis-affected populations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in the thesis, it can be concluded that Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) programs in general and in Northwest Syria specifically have shown both strengths and weaknesses in their design, implementation, and impact due to various circumstances, capacities, and external regulations and challenges in the field and the operation levels. The research findings provide valuable insights into various aspects of CVA programs, including design and community engagement, activities and beneficiaries, effectiveness and impact, usage and preferences, risks and challenges, donors and regulations, and digitizing the CVA projects.

In terms of the design and community engagement of CVA programs, it was found that while efforts are made to gather information through needs assessments and engage local communities and stakeholders, there are challenges in achieving full community participation. Donor requirements and logistical limitations often limit real-time and direct community input during the design phase. This highlights the need to balance donor requirements and beneficiary preferences to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of CVA interventions. Furthermore, market considerations, such as market assessments and price monitoring, were emphasized to inform decision-making and ensure the availability and affordability of items for beneficiaries.

Regarding the objectives and purposes, the research findings highlight the importance of considering beneficiary preferences, community engagement, market dynamics, and contextual realities in designing and implementing CVA programs. While CVA interventions have shown positive impacts, some challenges need to be addressed to ensure the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of these programs. The recommendations provided can inform future program design, policy development, and

advocacy efforts to refine the quality and effect of CVA activities in Northwest Syria.

Regarding the impact and effectiveness of the CVA projects, the thesis reveals that CVA plays a crucial role in supporting crisis-affected populations by alleviating financial burdens, supporting debt payments, and enabling individuals to save money for the future. CVA also contributes to covering gaps, for instance, food, shelter, clothing, and hygiene items, thus promoting a dignified life. It has a positive impact on supporting all family members and addressing critical aspects of housing stability, such as rent payments. While the impact on healthcare and medication expenses is relatively lower, CVA still provides important support in covering these costs. Moreover, CVA empowers individuals economically by supporting livelihoods, small businesses, and agriculture, contributing to food security and sustainable practices. Regarding the specific impact of CVA on vulnerable groups, it is acknowledged that CVA is helpful for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) survivors, providing support for their recovery. It also enhances the resilience of single or separated women, promotes their economic empowerment through cash-for-work initiatives, and involves them in decision-making regarding CVA spending. CVA offers increased privacy, convenience, and improved access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services for women, including Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW). Similarly, CVA has specific impacts on People with Disabilities (PWD). It promotes access to healthcare, enhances their resilience, and reduces physical burdens.

In terms of the risks and challenges, CVA projects in the Syrian context face various risks and challenges both in the field and in the management and implementation processes. These findings provide valuable insights into the complexities of CVA interventions and highlight the need for robust risk management strategies and adaptive approaches to overcome these challenges effectively. In the field, the identified risks include interference from local

authorities, aid diversion, polygamy affecting equitable distribution, one-person decision-making impacting cash spending, gender-based violence for female recipients, tension among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, and concerns related to the behavior of NGO staff. These risks emphasize the importance of addressing power dynamics, ensuring transparency and accountability, implementing protection measures, and selecting reliable and ethical partners to mitigate risks and ensure the intended benefits reach vulnerable individuals and households. Meanwhile, regarding the management and implementation of CVA activities, several challenges were identified. These challenges include the security situation, interference from local authorities, the tension between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, limited availability of official identification, decision-making issues, market price increases, risks associated with restricted vouchers, money transfer challenges, UN resolution limitations, limited availability of banknotes, limited bank system and lack of e-technologies, and the global economic decline. These challenges underscore the need for strategic planning, close coordination, adaptive decision-making, market monitoring mechanisms, and alternative solutions to ensure the effective delivery of CVA in a rapidly changing and challenging environment.

As for donor mandates and regulations, the thesis highlights the importance of understanding and complying with donor requirements. Donors prioritize preventing aid diversion, ensuring compliance with contractual obligations, reporting and auditing, adhering to operational policies, conducting anti-terrorism checks and due diligence, complying with local government regulations, and emphasizing coordination and collaboration with global actors. Organizations seeking funding and implementing CVA projects need to align their interventions with donor priorities, demonstrate transparency and accountability, and adhere to established guidelines and protocols.

The thesis also sheds light on the digitization of CVA activities in the Syrian context. The analysis of qualitative data revealed various methods of money transfer for CVA, along with their considerations and challenges. The constraints identified within the banking system, limitations of custom E-Systems, absence of digital market systems, and lack of mobile cash options pose significant obstacles to the widespread adoption of digital solutions in CVA projects. However, the study emphasizes the need for alternative solutions and innovative approaches to overcome these constraints and leverage available technologies effectively. The integration of innovation and technology with the specific contextual realities of Syria is crucial for successful digitization. It is evident that the application of e-cash and e-vouchers can greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of CVA projects. However, these technologies must be adapted to address the local limitations and challenges. By aligning innovation with the practical constraints on the ground and identifying feasible methods, humanitarian actors can maximize the benefits of digitization, improve program delivery, and ensure better control and monitoring of CVA activities.

In summary, the research findings underscore the importance of beneficiary preferences, community engagement, market dynamics, and contextual realities in the design, management, and implementation of CVA programs in Northwest Syria. While CVA interventions have shown positive impacts, challenges need to be addressed to ensure effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability. By mitigating the risks and taking the recommendations of the beneficiaries and CVA specialists into consideration, as well as, having a proper and effective mechanism for learning and knowledge management, organizations can improve the quality and impact of CVA interventions, ultimately benefiting crisis-affected populations in Syria.

REFERENCES

- Akesson, B., & Coupland, K. (2018). *Without Choice? Understanding War-affected Syrian Families' Decisions to Leave Home*. International Organization for Migration (IOM). https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mrs_54.pdf
- Alameldeen, A. (2021). The Relevance of Humanitarian Principles in Contemporary International Humanitarian Affairs. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 11(8). <https://doi.org/10.30845/ijhss.v11n8p14>
- Asfaw, S., Carraro, A., Davis, B. G., Handa, S., & Seidenfeld, D. (2017). Cash transfer programmes, weather shocks and household welfare: evidence from a randomised experiment in Zambia. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 9(4), 419–442. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2017.1377751>
- Asfaw, S., & Davis, B. G. (2018). Can Cash Transfer Programmes Promote Household Resilience? Cross-Country Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. In *Natural resource management and policy* (pp. 227–250). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-61194-5_11
- Balmer, L., Alam, S. M. A., & Koirala, B. (2021). *Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA): A Step by Step Guidelines*. Plan International. https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/ninja-forms/2/GLO-Plan-International-CVA-Step-by-Step-Guidelines_external-ENG.pdf
- Barnett, M., & Weiss, T. G. (2011). Humanitarianism Contested: Where Angels Fear to Tread. *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (20-42). <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB07980291>
- Betts, A., & Bloom, L. (2014, November 23). *Humanitarian Innovation: The State of the Art*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Retrieved April 25, 2023, from

<https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/humanitarian-innovation-the-state-of-the-art>

Big-Alabo, T., & Okechukwu, S. A. (2019). The United Nations Security Council and the Syria Civil War. *International Journal of Research*.
<https://journals.pen2print.org/index.php/ijr/>

Bommart, D. (2021, July 23). *Humanitarian Cash Transfers By Mobile Money: Towards The Financial Inclusion Of Burundian Refugees In South Kivu, Democratic Republic Of Congo (DRC)*. Adam Smith International. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from
<https://seepnetwork.org/files/galleries/Humanitarian+Cash+Transfers.pdf>

Borton, J., Brusset, E., & Hallam, A. (1996). *Humanitarian Aid and Effects*. Overseas Development Institute (ODI). <https://www.oecd.org/derec/50189439.pdf>

Boyer, M., & Deubel, T. (2016, October 12). *Gender, Markets and Women's Empowerment: Sahel Region Case Studies on Mali, Niger, and Chad*. World Food Programme (WFP). Retrieved April 27, 2023, from
https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/gender_markets_and_womens_empowerment-sahel_region_case_studies_in_mali_niger_and_chad.pdf

Broussard, G., Rubenstein, L. S., Robinson, C., Maziak, W., Gilbert, S. Z., & DeCamp, M. (2019). Challenges to ethical obligations and humanitarian principles in conflict settings: a systematic review. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-019-0063-x>

Brown, D. (2009). *The Effectiveness of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) Within Civil Society*. International Studies Masters.
https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1074&context=intlstudies_masters

CaLP & IARAN. (2019, October 17). *The Future of Financial Assistance: An Outlook to 2030*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and the Inter-Agency Research and Analysis Network (IARAN). Retrieved June 21, 2023, from

<https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/future-of-financial-assistance-report-fullfinal.pdf>

CARE. (2022, August 17). *The Impact of Integrating Cash Assistance into Gender-Based Violence Response in Northwest Syria*. Women's Refugee Commission & CARE International. Retrieved April 26, 2023, from <https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Impact-Integrating-Cash-Assistance-Gender-Based-Violence-Response-NW-Syria-English-Final-Report.pdf>

Castillo, J. G. (2021). Deciding between cash-based and in-kind distributions during humanitarian emergencies. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management*, 11(2), 272–295. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhlscm-07-2020-0060>

Center for Global Development. (2015, September 24). *Doing Cash Differently*. Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved April 14, 2023, from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/odi_paper_doing_cash_differently.pdf

CHS Alliance. (2013). *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability*. Groupe URD, HAP International, People In Aid, and the Sphere Project. <https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard.pdf>

Clarke, P., & Ramalingam, B. (2008). *Organisational change in the humanitarian sector*. Political Science. https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/7rha-ch2_0.pdf

Cohen, L., & Salaun, V. (2017). e-cash & e-vouchers: The digitalization of the humanitarian aid and logistics. In HAL (Le Centre pour la Communication Scientifique Directe). *French National Centre for Scientific Research*. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01627418>

Coppi, G., Jimenez, R. M., & Kyriazi, S. (2021). Explicability of humanitarian AI: a matter of principles. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 6(1).

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-021-00096-6>

CVA Risk Management Working Group. (2017, June 5). *Towards the Introduction of Market-based CVA*. Japanese Bankers Association. Retrieved May 01, 2023, from <https://www.zenginkyo.or.jp/fileadmin/res/en/news/news170629.pdf>

Da Silva E Silva, M. O. (2023). Cash transfer in the Covid-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Revista Katálysis*, 26(1), 21–31. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0259.2023.e86538>

DG ECHO. (2009, July 2). *Study on the Mapping of Donor Coordination (Humanitarian Aid) at the Field Level*. Channel research. Retrieved April 18, 2023, from https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/evaluation/2009/Donor_coordination.pdf

DG ECHO. (2013, March 7). *The Use of Cash and Vouchers in Humanitarian Crises*. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/ECHO_Cash_Vouchers_Guidelines.pdf

DG ECHO. (2022, March 21). *Cash Transfers*. Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/thematic_policy_document_no_3_cash_transfers_en.pdf

Doocy, S., Busingye, M., Lyles, E., Colantouni, E., Aidam, B., Ebulu, G., & Savage, K. (2020a). Cash and voucher assistance and children's nutrition status in Somalia. *WILEY Maternal and Child Nutrition*, 16(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.12966>

Doocy, S., Busingye, M., Lyles, E., Colantouni, E., Aidam, B., Ebulu, G., & Savage, K. (2020b). Cash-based assistance and the nutrition status of pregnant and lactating women in the Somalia food crisis: A comparison of two transfer modalities. *PLOS ONE*, 15(4), e0230989. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0230989>

- Doocy, S., & Tappis, H. (2015). PROTOCOL: The effectiveness and efficiency of cash-based approaches in emergencies: A Systematic Review. *The Campbell Collaboration*, 11(1), 1–45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/c12.150>
- Doocy, S., & Tappis, H. (2017). Cash-based approaches in humanitarian emergencies: a systematic review. *The Campbell Collaboration*, 13(1), 1–200. <https://doi.org/10.4073/csr.2017.17>
- Doocy, S., Tappis, H., & Lyles, E. (2016). Are cash-based interventions a feasible approach for expanding humanitarian assistance in Syria? *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-016-0015-7>
- Doocy, S., Tappis, H., Lyles, E., Witiw, J., & Aken, V. (2017). Emergency Food Assistance in Northern Syria: An Evaluation of Transfer Programs in Idleb Governorate. *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*, 38(2), 240–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0379572117700755>
- Duclos, D., Ekzayez, A., Ghaddar, F., Checchi, F., & Blanchet, K. (2019). Localisation and cross-border assistance to deliver humanitarian health services in North-West Syria: a qualitative inquiry for The Lancet-AUB Commission on Syria. *Conflict and Health*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-019-0207-z>
- ELAN. (2016). *Mobile Money Transfers For Humanitarian Assistance & Development Programming: A Service Provider Perspective*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/mmctpresearch.pdf>
- Electronic Cash Transfer Learning Action Network. (2016, February 2). *Mobile Money Transfers – For Humanitarian Assistance & Development Programming: Service Provider Perspective*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved April 23, 2023, from <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/mmctpresearch.pdf>
- Esser, A., Bilo, C., & Tebaldi, R. (2019). How can cash transfer programmes work

for women and children? *International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)*.

https://ipcig.org/pub/eng/WP178_How_can_cash_transfer_programme_work_for_women_and_children.pdf

Fabre, C. (2017, May 3). *Cash-based response: The commitments into action series*.

OECD Development Co-operation Directorate.
<https://www.oecd.org/development/humanitarian-donors/docs/cashbasedresponse.pdf>

Falb, K., & Annan, J. (2021). Pre-positioning an evaluation of cash assistance programming in an acute emergency: strategies and lessons learned from a study in Raqqa Governorate, Syria. *Conflict and Health*.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-021-00340-1>

FAO. (2013, April 20). *Guidelines For Public Works Programmes: Cash, Voucher and Food-For-Work*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Retrieved April 17, 2023, from
<https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/cash%20voucher%20and%20Food%20for%20work.pdf>

FAO. (2018, November 15). *Integrating gender into the design of cash transfer and public works programmes*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Retrieved April 29, 2023, from
<https://www.fao.org/3/CA2038EN/ca2038en.pdf>

Faiz, A. (2022). Syria Conflict-The Endless War. *Universiti Sains Malaysia*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366985816_SPU322_Syria_Conflict-The_Endless_War

Finnemore, M., & Katzenstein, P. J. (2015). Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 272–289).
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315664484-34>

Forsythe, D. P. (2007). The ICRC: a unique humanitarian protagonist. *International*

Review of the Red Cross. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1816383107000902>

Fotta, M., & Schmidt, M. (2022). Cash transfers. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. <https://doi.org/10.29164/22cashtransfer>

Gelsdorf, K. (2010). *Global Challenges and Their Impact on International Humanitarian Action*. OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch (PDSB). <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global%20challenges%20and%20the%20impact%20on%20international%20humanitarian%20action.pdf>

GOAL. (2020). *Briefing: North West Syria and Ireland on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)*. GOAL Global. <https://www.goalglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/GOAL-Syria-January-2021-position-paper-summary.pdf>

Gostelow, L. (1999). The Sphere Project: The Implications of Making Humanitarian Principles and Codes Work. *Disasters*, 23(4), 316–325. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00121>

Hall, N., & Todman, W. (2021). Lessons Learned from a Decade of Humanitarian Operations in Syria. *CSIS Briefs*. <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/55c0c56a-0f47-3591-adf8-78255bf91898/Lessons%20learned%20from%20a%20decade%20of%20humanitarian%20operations%20in%20Syria.pdf>

Harvey, P. (2005). Cash and vouchers in emergencies. *Humanitarian Policy Group*. <https://archive.crin.org/sites/default/files/images/docs/Cash%20and%20Vouchers.pdf>

Harvey, P., & Bailey, S. (2011, June 7). *Good Practice Review: Cash transfer programming in emergencies*. Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG). Retrieved May 15, 2023, from <https://odihpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/gpr11.pdf>

Heaslip, G., Kovács, G., & Haavisto, I. (2018a). Cash-based response in relief: the impact for humanitarian logistics. *Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply*

- Chain Management*, 8(1), 87–106. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhlscm-08-2017-0043>
- Heaslip, G., Kovács, G., & Haavisto, I. (2018b). Innovations in humanitarian supply chains: the case of cash transfer programmes. *Production Planning & Control*, 29(14), 1175–1190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09537287.2018.1542172>
- Hidrobo, M., Hoddinott, J., Peterman, A., Margolies, A., & Moreira, V. (2014). Cash, food, or vouchers? Evidence from a randomized experiment in northern Ecuador. *Journal of Development Economics*, 107, 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2013.11.009>
- Hilhorst, D., Melis, S., Mena, R., & Van Voorst, R. (2021). *Accountability in Humanitarian Action*. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 40(4), 363–389. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdab015>
- Hilhorst, D., & Schmiemann, N. (2002). Humanitarian principles and organisational culture: Everyday practice in Médecins Sans Frontières-Holland. *Development in Practice*, 12(3–4), 490–500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0961450220149834>
- Holm-Nielsen, P., Raju, E., & Furu, P. (2022). *The transformative effect of cash and voucher assistance experienced by humanitarian organizations*. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 80, 103238. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.103238>
- Humanitarian Futures Programme. (2014, January 18). *IS CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING ‘FIT FOR THE FUTURE’?* Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved June 19, 2023, from <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/calpffffinalreport.pdf>
- ICRC. (2007, August 4). *Guidelines for cash transfer programming*. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Retrieved May 05, 2023, from https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/icrc_002_mouvement-guidelines.pdf
- ICRC. (2019, July 7). *Cash And Voucher Assistance: Economic Security*.

- International Committee of the Red Cross. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from https://reliefweb.int/attachments/2507beb4-5454-3e2d-85b7-55d143094ca1/4408_002_ECOSEC-Cash-voucher_web_1.pdf
- IFRC. (2022, January 25). *Dignifying, Diverse And Desired: Cash And Vouchers As Humanitarian Assistance For Migrants*. IFRC. Retrieved May 08, 2023, from <https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/Dignifying-Diverse-and-Desired-Cash-and-Vouchers-as-Humanitarian-Assistance-for-Migrants-Final.pdf>
- IOM. (2022, December 15). *Syrian Arab Republic Crisis Response Plan 2023*. International Organization for Migration (IOM). Retrieved May 19, 2023, from <https://crisisresponse.iom.int/response/syrian-arab-republic-crisis-response-plan-2023>
- Kizilkaya, Z., Hamdi, S., & Salman, M. (2021, March 15). *The Syrian Conflict After a Decade*. Brussels School of Governance. Retrieved May 16, 2023, from https://brussels-school.be/sites/default/files/BSoG_Report_The_Syrian_Conflict.pdf
- Kreidler, C., & Reiger, N. (2022, December 5). *Increasing The Use Of Humanitarian Cash And Voucher Assistance: Opportunities, Barriers And Dilemmas*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved May 13, 2023, from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/97339>
- Levine, S., & Bailey, S. (2015, February 16). *Cash, vouchers or in-kind?* Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG). Retrieved May 12, 2023, from <https://odi.org/documents/4736/9456.pdf>
- Longhurst, D., Harvey, P., Sabates Wheeler, R., & Slater, R. (2020, April 20). *Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved April 30, 2023, from <https://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/high-level-briefing-paper-cva-en.pdf>
- Lyles, E., Arhem, J., Khoury, G. E., Trujillo, A. J., Spiegel, P., Burton, A., & Doocy,

- S. (2021). Multi-purpose cash transfers and health among vulnerable Syrian refugees in Lebanon: a prospective cohort study. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11196-8>
- Lyles, E., Chua, S. S., Barham, Y., Jardenah, D., Trujillo, A., Spiegel, P., Burton, A., & Doocy, S. (2022). Multi-purpose cash transfers and health among vulnerable Syrian refugees in Jordan: A prospective cohort study. *PLOS Global Public Health*, 2(11), e0001227. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0001227>
- Maghsoudi, A., Harpring, R., Piotrowicz, W., & Heaslip, G. (2021). Cash and voucher assistance along humanitarian supply chains: a literature review and directions for future research. *Disasters*, 47(1), 42–77. <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12520>
- Mariwala, A. (2014, January 17). *The Syrian Civil War*. Stanford Model United Nations. Retrieved May 22, 2023, from <https://web.stanford.edu/group/sias/cgi-bin/smunc/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Syria-Govt.pdf>
- Mendelson, M., & Rhys Kesselman, J. (2020). In-Kind Versus Cash Benefits in Social Programs: Choices, Structures, and Delivery. *School of Public Policy*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350638164_In-Kind_Versus_Cash_Benefits_in_Social_Programs_Choices_Structures_and_Delivery
- Monich, A., V. Holm-Nielsen, P., & Raju, E. (2023). The stagnation of innovation in humanitarian cash assistance. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-023-00136-3>
- Mountfield, B. (2014, June 26). *Cash transfer programming engaging National Society leadership*. International Federation of Red Cross And Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Retrieved April 24, 2023, from https://cash-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/08/IFRC-CTP-engaging-National-Society-leadership_EN.pdf
- Muzzall, E., Perlman, B. J., Rubenstein, L. S., & Haar, R. J. (2021). Overview of

attacks against civilian infrastructure during the Syrian civil war, 2012–2018. *BMJ Global Health*, 6(10), e006384. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2021-006384>

OCHA. (2013, October 14). *Introduction to Humanitarian Action: A Brief Guide for Resident Coordinators*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Retrieved April 16, 2023, from https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/rc_guide_31_october_2015_webversion_final.pdf

OCHA. (2022, June 8). *Syria Syrian Arab Republic: United Nations cross-border operations under UNSC resolutions*. Retrieved June 20, 2023, from https://reliefweb.int/attachments/344bafbc-e9ef-41e7-af41-35f7542a5d56/syr_united_nations_cross-border_operations_under_unsc_resolutions_may2022_20220601_en.pdf

OCHA. (2022, May 25). *Population overview in northwest Syria (NWS)*. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/northwest_syria_key_figures_factsheet_20220525.pdf

Oxfam GB. (2006, January 2). *Cash-Transfer Programming in Emergencies*. Oxfam Skills and Practice. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/GUIDECashTransferProgrammingOGBPCretiSJasparsJan.pdf>

Pan American Health Organization. (1999). *Humanitarian Assistance in Disaster Situations: A Guide for Effective Aid*. Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief Coordination Program, PAHO/WHO. <https://www.paho.org/disasters/dmdocuments/HumanitartianAssistanceBook.pdf>

Pearson, L., Jowett, E., & Bayley, S. (2014, January 20). *Government Uptake of Cash Transfer Programming*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved May 02,

- 2023, from <https://www.calpnetwork.org/publication/government-uptake-of-cash-transfer-programming/>
- Peachey, K. (2021, December 15). *Cash and Voucher Assistance in 2021: 6 reflections on progress and pitfalls*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved June 20, 2023, from <https://www.calpnetwork.org/blog/cash-and-voucher-assistance-in-2021-6-reflections-on-progress-and-pitfalls/>
- Pinter, Z., Zita Nagy, M., Toth, K., & Varga, J. (2022). The Struggle between Cash and Electronic Payments. *Economies*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies10120304>
- Pusterla, F., & Pusterla, E. (2021). *The Future of Humanitarian Aid in a New Context Full of Challenges*. Directorate-General for External Policies. <https://doi.org/10.2861/859658>
- Robert, S. F. (2019, April 25). *The Syrian Civil War a New Stage: But Is It The Final One?* The Middle East Institute. Retrieved May 17, 2023, from [https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-04/Ford The Syrian Civil War.pdf](https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2019-04/Ford%20The%20Syrian%20Civil%20War.pdf)
- Robson, M., Vollmer, F., Doğan, B. B., & Grede, N. (2022). Distributional Impacts of Cash Transfers on the Multidimensional Poverty of Refugees: The ESSN Programme in Turkey. *OPHI Theme on Multidimensional Measurement*. <https://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OPHIWP142.pdf>
- Rust, B. (2019, October 31). *UnBlocked Cash: Piloting accelerated cash transfer delivery in Vanuatu*. Oxfam Australia. Retrieved May 05, 2023, from <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/10546/620926/1/rr-unblocked-cash-delivery-vanuatu-311019-en.pdf>
- Rysaback-Smith, H. (2015). History and Principles of Humanitarian Action. *PubMed*. <https://doi.org/10.5505/1304.7361.2015.52207>
- Sandvik, K. B. (2017). Now is the time to deliver: looking for humanitarian

- innovation's theory of change. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-017-0023-2>
- Security Council. (2023, January 9). *Resolution 2672 (2023). Adopted by the Security Council at its 9237th meeting, on 9 January 2023*. Retrieved June 20, 2023, from <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/SRES2672.pdf>
- Security Council. (2023, May 31). *Security Council Repost. Middle East Syria June 2023*. Retrieved June 20, 2023, from <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2023-06/syria-56.php#:~:text=This%20resolution%20extended%20the%20authorisation,month%20C%20until%2010%20July%202023.&text=This%20was%20the%20Secretary%20General's,the%20implementation%20of%20resolution%202672>.
- Slim, H. (2016). Humanitarian ethics: a guide to the morality of aid in war and disaster. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 53(10), 469–475. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383115000624>
- Smith, G., Macauslan, I., Butters, S., & Tromme, M. (2012, January 1). *New Technologies In Cash Transfer Programming and Humanitarian Assistance*. Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). Retrieved April 13, 2023, from https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CaLP_New_Technologies.pdf
- Sphere. (2018). *The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*. Sphere Project. <https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-Handbook-2018-EN.pdf>
- Susantyo, B., Habibullah, H., Irmayani, N., Erwinsyah, R., Nainggolan, T., Sugiyanto, S., Rahman, A., Arifin, J., As'adhanayadi, B., & Nurhayu, N. (2023). Social cash assistance for food security during a disaster: lesson learned from Indonesia. *IOP Conference Series*, 1180(1), 012047. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1180/1/012047>

- Tan, C. (2015, February 26). *The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Conflicts in the Making*. Strategies Sectors | Culture & Society. Retrieved May 21, 2023, from <https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Syrian-Refugee-Crisis-Conflicts-in-the-Making.pdf>
- Tappis, H., & Doocy, S. (2018). The effectiveness and value for money of cash-based humanitarian assistance: a systematic review. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 10(1), 121–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19439342.2017.1363804>
- Tiberindwa, Z. (2023). From food to cash relief: How prepared are Uganda’s anti-corruption agencies to counter corruption in Covid-19 cash transfers? *Journal of Anti-Corruption Law*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.14426/jacl.v6i1.1278>
- Tokmajyan, A. (2022, January 11). *Hubs and Bubbles: Syrian Civil Society after a Decade of Conflict*. IMPACT- Civil Society Research and Development. Retrieved May 24, 2023, from https://impactres.org/reports/Mapping_CSOs_Phase_4_EN.pdf
- Tirivayi, N., Waidler, J., & Otchere, F. (2021). Cash Transfers: Past, Present, and Future. Evidence and Lessons from the Transfer Project. *In Innocenti Research Briefs*. <https://doi.org/10.18356/26642166-2021/07>
- Tschunkert, K., & Vogel, B. (2022). Humanitarian cash assistance: risks and opportunities for local peace. *Development in Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2022.2134302>
- Ulrichs, M., Hagen-Zanker, J., & Holmes, R. (2017). Cash transfers for refugees. An opportunity to bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance and social protection. *Overseas Development Institute*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.14208.43527>
- UNHCR. (2023, January 24). *Syrian Arab Republic: Operational Update*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/4179>

- Vogel, B. F., Tschunkert, K., & Schläpfer, I. (2021). The social meaning of money: multidimensional implications of humanitarian cash and voucher assistance. *Disasters*, 46(2), 348–370. <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12478>
- Vogl, T., & Parker, S. W. (2018, June 30). *Long-term effects of cash transfers: Looking to the next generation*. Center for Economic Policy Research. Retrieved June 21, 2023, from <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/long-term-effects-cash-transfers-looking-next-generation>
- WFP. (2016). *Gender & Markets: Vam Case Study – Lake Chad Basin*. World Food Organization of the United Nations. https://fsccluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/gender_markets-vam_case_study_-lake_chad_basin_0.pdf
- WFP. (2023, January 23). *Syrian Arab Republic: Country Strategic Plan 2022 - 2023*. World Food Programme (WFP). Retrieved May 22, 2023, from <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/bb3f5122-1518-4232-8d8b-ba6d194be7c0/WFP-0000147991.pdf>
- World Bank Group. (2016). *Cash Transfers in Humanitarian Contexts*. World Bank eLibrary. <https://doi.org/10.1596/24699>
- Yildirim, C. A., & Smyrl, M. (2021a). Cash Transfer and Humanitarian Assistance. In *Social Cash Transfer in Turkey* (pp. 90–112). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70381-3_5
- Yildirim, C. A., & Smyrl, M. (2021b). *Social Cash Transfer in Turkey: Toward Market Citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-70381-3>
- Yusuf, A., & Yusuf, M. (2023). The effects of Cash-Based interventions on the local market systems: A case study of Qardho district in Puntland-Somalia. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Knowledge*, 8(1). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369118236_The_Effects_Of_Cash-Based_Interventions_On_The_Local_Market_Systems_A_Case_Study_Of_Qardho_District_In_Puntland-Somalia

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Questionnaire of the Quantitative Method

Group	#	Question	Type	Options
Consent and permission	1.1	Dear interviewee, my name is _____. I'm collecting this information to analyze the situation of the humanitarian aid in northwest Syria (NWS) and find out the impact of the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) modality, the scale of the distribution of this modality, what are the main advantages and disadvantages, what are the main concerns, feedback, and recommendations. Please note that this survey is anonymous and is not related to any organization, authority, or project since the purpose of this data collection is to work on academic research only. Could you please give us your permission before starting?	Yes/No	1- Yes 2- No
Location	2.1	Governorate, district, sub-district, community, camp	Select one	List of locations in Idleb and Aleppo
Info of the interviewee	3.1	Age	Integer	
	3.2	Gender	Select one	1- F 2- M
	3.3	Residency	Select one	1- Host community 2- Internally displaced people (IDP)
Being a beneficiary of CVA	4.1	Have you received any CVA before?	Yes/No	1- Yes 2- No
	4.2	How many times?	Integer	
	4.3	What was the type/purpose of this CVA?	Select multiple	1- Multi-purpose cash 2- Cash for food 3- Cash for rent 4- Cash for GBV 5- Cash for winter 6- Multi-purpose voucher 7- Voucher for food

				8- Voucher for Non-food items 9- Voucher for clothes 10- Voucher for hygiene items 11- Voucher for winter 12- Voucher for fuel 13- Cash for work 14- Other
	4.3.1	Please specify	Text	
	4.4	Can you provide an average value of the CVA that you received? In USD	Integer	
Usage	5.1	In which sectors the multi-purpose cash are mostly used? Select top five	Select multiple	1- Shelter 2- Non-food 3- Food 4- WASH 5- Health 6- Education 7- Livelihood 8- Protection 9- Agriculture
Advantages of CVA	6.1	Do you prefer the in-kind or the CVA modality?	Select one	1- In-kind 2- CVA
	6.1.1	What are the main reasons for preferring in-kind?	Select multiple	1- No need to go to the market 2- The market is far 3- The market is not functioning 4- To avoid the argument about how to decide on how to spend the CVA 5- The in-kind assistance is designed to what the family needs 6- The in-kind assistance has a specific objective like food kits, non-food item kits, hygiene kits 7- In-kind modality prevents the increase of the prices in the market 8- Other
	6.1.1.1	Please specify	Text	
	6.1.2	What are the main reasons for preferring CVA?	Select multiple	1- CVA gives better flexibility in selecting what the family needs

				2- CVA strengthens the local markets 3- CVA modality avoids the loss of the in-kind when people need Cash and try to sell the in-kind items 4- CVA modality doesn't need huge logistic efforts 5- Since in-kind are usually shipped from Turkiye, CVA is faster for a rapid response 6- CVA saves people's dignity 7- In some cases in-kind is heavy and beneficiaries (especially the vulnerable) can't afford the transport 8- CVA provides more resilience for beneficiaries 9- Other
	6.1.2.1	Please specify	Text	
	6.2	In terms of CVA, what do you prefer, Cash or Voucher? Note that voucher is restricted to specific kind of items based on the project purpose while cash is not restricted regardless of the purpose of the project.	Select one	1- Cash 2- Voucher
	6.2.1	What are the main reasons for preferring Cash?	Select multiple	1- Cash is more flexible than the restricted voucher 2- Cash can be used for multi-purpose and multi-sectors 3- Cash provides more resilience than the voucher 4- Cash can be used whenever the family needs 5- Cash requires less effort than the restricted voucher 6- Since E-voucher is limited in NWS due to

				the limited banking system, Cash is the best modality 7- Cash prevents the monopoly by the contracted vendors of the voucher project 8- Cash strengthens the whole local market and is better than engaging a limited number of vendors 9- Other
	6.2.1.1	Please specify	Text	
	6.2.2	What are the main reasons for preferring a Voucher?	Select multiple	1- Vouchers are safer than cash 2- A voucher is better to implement a purpose-driven project 3- Other
	6.2.2.1	Please specify	Text	
	6.3	Personally and based on your family level, what are the advantages that CVA can provide?	Select multiple	1- Support in paying debt 2- Some saving 3- Secure the family's basic needs 4- Pay for rent 5- Support all family members 6- Support to pay for health care and medicines 7- Support for livelihood and small income-generating 8- Support to proceed with our agriculture business 9- Other
	6.3.1	Please specify	Text	
	6.4	Are there any special advantages of CVA for women?	Yes/No	1- Yes 2- No 3- Don't know
	6.4.1	What are the main advantages of CVA for women?	Select multiple	1- Cash for GBV is considered helpful support for women who experienced GBV to survive 2- CVA is a helpful modality for single/separated

				women to increase their resilience 3- Involving women in cash for work is helpful to increase the independence of women 4- Ensure that women are engaged in the decision-making on how to spend CVA to provide more flexibility and dignity to them 5- CVA is easy to receive rather than carrying heavy kits 6- CVA increases the privacy of women to secure their special needs 7- Cash promotes the access of women to SRH services, especially PLW 8- Other
	6.4.1.1	Please specify	Text	
	6.5	Are there any special advantages of CVA for disabled people?	Yes/No	1- Yes 2- No 3- Don't know
	6.5.1	What are the main advantages of CVA for disabled people?	Select multiple	1- Promote access to healthcare 2- Increase their resilience 3- CVA is easy to receive rather than carrying heavy kits 4- Other
	6.5.1.1	Please specify	Text	
Disadvantages and challenges of CVA	7.1	What are the main disadvantages of voucher	Select multiple	1- Restrictions 2- Prices increase in the market 3- Monopoly by contracted vendors 4- Markets are risky 5- Markets are far 6- No enough items in the market 7- Only the recipient (usually the head of house) can redeem the

				voucher (Less engagement in the decision-making) 8- Limited redemption duration 9- Disabled people and other vulnerable groups have barriers to accessing the market 10- The value is usually not enough to cover the needs 11- No disadvantages 12- Usually it's a one-off / not repeated 13- Other
	7.1.1	Please specify	Text	
	7.2	What are the main disadvantages of the cash	Select multiple	1- Markets are risky 2- Markets are far 3- No enough items in the market 4- Disabled people and other vulnerable groups have barriers to accessing the market 5- The value is usually not enough to cover the needs 6- Subject to theft 7- No disadvantages 8- Usually it's a one-off / not repeated 9- Other
	7.2.1	Please specify	Text	
Access and decision-making	8.1	Who decides how to spend the cash?	Select one	1- Only the head on the house 2- The head of the house with his/her spouse 3- The whole family is engaged to buy our needs
	8.2	Do you think that women have equal access to receive and spend cash same as men?	Yes/No	1- Yes 2- No 3- Don't know
	8.2.1	If not, why?	Select multiple	1- Culture-wise, men are the decision-makers 2- Movement is restricted for women 3- Women are

				dedicated to work at home and take care of children 4- Men are managing the family finance issues 5- Other
	8.2.1.1	Please specify	Text	
Concerns and risks of CVA	9.1	Please select applicable regarding the special concerns and risks related to CVA	Select multiple	1- Interference from local authorities 2- Aid diversion 3- Polygamy 4- One-man decision-making about spending cash 5- GBV risks when women are the recipients 6- Tension among BNF and non-BNF 7- Behavior of NGO staff (corruption or SEA-related issues) 8- Other
	9.1.1	Please specify	Text	
Recommendation and other?	10.1	Please select applicable regarding the future recommendations related to CVA	Select multiple	1- Increase the value 2- Conduct multi-round distribution 3- Update the standard selection criteria 4- Prioritize multi-purpose cash 5- Digitalize the cash delivery (E-cash) 6- Enhance the accessibility for vulnerable groups 7- Conduct awareness sessions for better engagement of women in decision-making 8- Implement more cash activities dedicated to vulnerable 9- Other
	10.1.1	Please specify	Text	
	10.2	Do you have any comments, recommendations, or something to add regarding the CVA modality?	Yes/No	1- Yes 2- No
	10.2.1	Please specify	Text	

Annex 2: Questionnaire of the Qualitative Method

Group	#	Question
Consent and permission	1.1	Dear interviewee, my name is _____. I'm conducting this interview with you as a key informant who can provide qualitative information based on your experience and knowledge in the CVA and Syrian context, to analyze the situation of the humanitarian aid in northwest Syria (NWS) and find out the impact of the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) modality, the scale of the distribution of this modality, what are the main advantages and disadvantages, what are the main concerns, feedback and recommendations. Please note that this interview can be anonymous and it's not related to any organization, authority, or project, since the purpose of this data collection is to work on academic research only. I'll ask questions and will take notes at the same time. Feel free to ask if you have any questions. Could you please give us your permission before starting?
Info of the interviewee	2.1	Age
	2.2	Gender
	2.3	Place of work
	2.4	Years of experience working in CVA
	2.5	General information about your job?
Advantages and disadvantages	3.1	Based on your experience and in general, Do you consider CVA as a useful modality? Can you talk about the advantages and disadvantages in comparison with the in-kind modality? What is the common preference of the beneficiaries regarding the modality, sector, and purpose of the implementation? Hint: Talk about the field and the operation levels separately. (Beneficiaries perspective and implementation perspective) You can also talk about the value of money, the CVA value calculation, and the regularity of distribution
	3.1.1	Following up on the previous question, Can you talk specifically about the advantages and disadvantages of CVA in the Syrian context?
Concerns, risks, and challenges	4.1	Based on your experience and in general, What are the main concerns of the global donors in terms of the CVA modality? Can you list some of the main regulations of donors regarding the CVA? What can be considered different in the Syrian context regarding the concerns?
	4.2	Can you talk about the risks and challenges in the field that you usually face while implementing the CVA modality? What are the main mitigation measures that you usually carry out?
Future of CVA	5.1	As humanitarian worker and CVA expert, Do you recommend more advocacy to implement the CVA modality? What do you think about the future of the CVA in the humanitarian aid program?
Any other?	6.1	Do you have any comments, recommendations, or something to add regarding the CVA modality?