



ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF
VULNERABILITY BASED TARGETING IN JOINT EMERGENCY
OPERATION PROGRAM: THE CASE OF CATHOLIC RELIEF
SERVICES**

BY

EYERUSALEM HIBST

JANUARY 2025, SMU

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO ST. MARY UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
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DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

BY

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**JANUARY 2025, SMU
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Student's Declaration

I, hereby declare that this study entitled “Effective Coordination and Impact Assessment of Vulnerability Based Targeting in Joint Emergency Operation Program: The case of Catholic Relief Services”, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Project Management at ST. Mary's University, Addis Ababa, is my original work. All Sources of information used for this study have been appropriately cited.

Eyerusalem Hibst

Signature_____

Date: January 2025

Place: St Mary's University Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Certificate of Approval

I certify that the thesis entitled Effective Coordination and Impact Assessment of Vulnerability Based Targeting in Joint Emergency Operation Program: The case of Catholic Relief Services has been prepared by Eyerusalem Hibst after due consultation with me.

Alazar Amare (PHD)

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alazar Amare', is written over a horizontal line.

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APPROVAL OF BOARD OF EXAMINERS

As a member of the Board of Examiners of the Master Thesis open defense examination, we testify that we have read and evaluated the thesis prepared by Eyerusalem Hibst under the title of “Effective Coordination and Impact Assessment of Vulnerability Based Targeting in Joint Emergency Operation Program: The case of Catholic Relief Services”. We recommended that this thesis be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Project Management.

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of coordination and impact of the VBT implemented by CRS within JEOP in North Wollo, Amhara Region. Specific areas investigated in this research are inclusion and exclusion gaps in targeting, change in beneficiaries induced by VBT, capacity building effort for partners, and stakeholder collaboration in aid distribution at the grassroots level, project participant engagement and FCRM mechanism. A mixed-method approach was used, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The Demographic and impact-related information was collected through household surveys, whereas in-depth interviews with the JEOP stakeholders explored operational challenges and effectiveness of VBT. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used to summarize relationships between key variables, and thematic analysis provided qualitative insights.

Results indicated significant demographic diversity among beneficiaries, with older male-headed households and relief beneficiaries dominating the sample. Vulnerability-based targeting had moderate success in reaching priority groups but faced several challenges, IDPs and ultra poor households were most affected by exclusion error. inclusion exclusion errors linked to quotas and data mismanagement. Stakeholder collaboration remained limited, particularly with respect to engaging local governments in decision-making processes. The effect of VBT on food security was negligible, with only 3.8% showing statistically significant improvements. Satisfaction with the mechanism of VBT was generally mixed: 58.5% reported satisfaction, while dissatisfaction reached 40% due to high exclusion rates and inequity.

The study concludes that there has been an improvement with respect to targeting transparency and inclusivity, but many important gaps remain in terms of operational effectiveness and resource equity. Recommendations include enhancing coordination mechanisms, stakeholder involvement, scale-up of training for partners, and strengthening feedback and complaint mechanisms to redress exclusion errors. These recommendations are important in refining the VBT and bringing improved humanitarian outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Keywords: Vulnerability and Vulnerability Based Targeting.

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List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

CRS	Catholic relief Services
EDRMC	Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission
FCRM	Feedback complaint Response Mechanism
FGD	Focal Group Discussion
HEI	Household Economic Analysis
HH	Household
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
IDP	Internally Displaced people
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
JEOP	Joint Emergency Operation program
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ORDA	Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara
PDM	Post Distribution Monitoring
PWD	People with Disability
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SVI	Social Vulnerability Index
UN	United Nation
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VBT	Vulnerability Based Targeting
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Natural disasters and humanitarian crises are occurring more frequently and with greater severity, which emphasizes the need for focused, efficient responses to lessen suffering and encourage recovery. Vulnerability-based targeting (VBT) has become a vital strategy in joint emergency operation program (JEOP) to guarantee that aid reaches the people who need it most. In VBT, communities are identified and prioritized according to their degree of vulnerability, which can be impacted by things like socioeconomic status, health, and resource availability. (Catholic Relief Services [CRS], 2021).

Good coordination at the time of implementation on the part of all stakeholders will help leverage the fullest potential of the emergency response effort. Coordination will also ensure that other actors, including NGOs and community-based organizations align their operations for the effective use of resources, and that targeted interventions meet the needs of the vulnerable (Temesgen,2021).

While VBT continued to be significant, there is a growing concern that in the application of joint emergency operations, it could be presented with challenges regarding coordination and assessments of impacts. Issues like overlapping mandates, loss of stakeholder power, and barriers in communication can readily interfere with the performance of such programs. Moreover, the VBT initiatives also require comprehensive evaluation regarding completeness in outcomes and areas where improvement can be achieved (Tigist, 2022).

The traditional targeting process approach is where food operators (EDRMC, WFP, and JEOP) identified the most affected geographies in Ethiopia, based on seasonal assessment evidence, and then allocated caseloads to woredas in proportion to anticipated needs. Again, at the level of woreda governments, it targets the most affected kebeles and allocates caseloads according to this. However, the allocations of resources to Kebeles and identification of households were not done based on rigorous data. In VBT, CRS and its partners take the bottom-up approach, whereby they identified people who may be needy from whom they collected information on vulnerability and capacity, which in turn will be used to prioritize them for assistance based on their relative vulnerability and availability of resources (CRS,2021).

In humanitarian assistance programs like JEOP, there is a need for efficient vulnerability-based targeting. VBT aims at ensuring that aid goes to the most at-risk populations, but this is often disrupted by limited data and poor coordination. Agencies mostly fail to correctly identify and prioritize vulnerable groups because of weak assessment, which resulted in the misallocation of resources. This is crucially important in Ethiopia, given the fact that food insecurity is still a common feature, with the success or failure of a humanitarian response determined by getting to target right to those most in need (Kopinak, 2013).

There is a realization of the importance impact assessments have in humanitarian assistance. Impact assessments are important because, without these processes, it becomes increasingly difficult to measure the effectiveness of the work and what adjustment may be required in strategy for future interventions. These impact assessments provided critical data insights that can help optimize targeting accuracy and overall efficiency of aid delivery. Most humanitarian programs lack robust mechanisms for evaluation; hence, inefficiency and inability to learn from past mistakes prevail (Kopinak, 2013).

Previous reviews and studies of humanitarian response interventions, including coordination enhancement efforts and impact assessments, have identified several gaps that each individually act to reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of targeting based on vulnerability. These can be identified from global coordination mechanisms down to field-level operations which includes Inconsistent leadership and high turnover that undermines long-term coordination, marginalization of local actors, inadequate training and technical capacity, limited baseline data collection, Lack of accountability and participatory approaches, erratic funding (Humphries, 2013).

JEOP initiated, refined, and then scaled up the use of the VBT methodology. Guidelines, training, workshops, pilots, and subsequent revisions were carried out to ensure that targeting practices across the consortium were more accurate and performance oriented. In 2023, full-scale national expansion was implemented. This methodology has been developed within the context of the JEOP program but applies to any emergency response (JEOP VBT Dashboard,2024)

For JEOP to be successfully implemented on effective coordination to ensure proper targeting based on actual vulnerability. Improvement in coordination among agencies, inclusiveness of local organizations, and impact assessments in JEOP would have been able to guarantee that the aid reaches the most deserving segments and resources are put to best use. This study explored how those components can be enhanced to improve the overall efficiency of the JEOP in Ethiopia.

This study also assessed coordination mechanisms for VBT within JEOPs and examined the effect of the interventions on the targeted populations. The underlying premise is that it will provide an overview of how combined emergency operations could be better conceptualized and managed to enhance effectiveness and increase outreach by looking at these factors. Results will go towards shaping best practices and recommendations for improving vulnerability-based targeting in subsequent disaster responses.

1.2 Background of the Organization

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been operating in Ethiopia since 1958, implementing emergency responses as well as longer-term development to strengthen families and communities. Currently, CRS implements activities in nine regions in close collaboration with the Ethiopian Catholic Church, the Government of Ethiopia, and other actors in emergency response, health, agriculture, WASH, and peacebuilding.

The vision towards which CRS works for integral human development is to have a world where all people reach their full, God-given human potential in the context of just and peaceful societies respectful of the dignity of every human person and the integrity of all of God's creation.

JEOP is an emergency food assistance program that will be implemented to avert temporary food insecurity among households in targeted USAID approved woredas within Ethiopia. The JEOP will cover up to 33 percent of the crisis-affected woredas across four regions and the city administration of Dire Dawa, aiming at timeliness and safety of access to adequate and appropriate emergency food assistance for the most vulnerable households in the covered areas. JEOP addresses critical nutritional needs of the most nutritionally vulnerable populations in Ethiopia as one of its three major food operators. Effective targeting of the neediest is a main determinant of success for the goal. In cooperation with other food operators, (WFP and the Government of Ethiopia), JEOP is greatly involved in geographic and household targeting in attempts to unify methods.

In response to this crisis, CRS has scaled up its emergency efforts through its flagship JEOP program. CRS has a long history in Ethiopia, with over 60 years of experience in development and humanitarian work, making it a key factor in the region's crisis response.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The context of vulnerability and humanitarian assistance, focused on food insecurity with socioeconomic challenges for the children and other vulnerable individuals (Wood et al., 2021).

Ayenew (2021) narrated this scenario as due to its unique geo-climatic and socio-economic conditions, long-term exposure to food insecurity crises has brought into being a tradition of dependency on humanitarian assistance, particularly for incidents like drought and other natural disasters. This has been compounded by low-quality, non-coordinated responses in the form of aid, which has resulted in relentless problems like malnutrition, dropout students, and diseases among the affected populations.

This discourse on vulnerability and humanitarian assistance resonated with the principles of a rights-based approach, which emphasize accountability, transparency, and non-discrimination in the provision of aid. In humanitarian crises, the increased availability of humanitarian resources had not been followed by a satisfactory effort to implement such principles; this was problematic and made the situation even more complex for the vulnerable. This backdrop sets the stage for an assessment of humanitarian aid gaps and subsequent activities that will lead to a more coherent response to issues of vulnerability across different demographic categories (sphere handbook,2018).

Stakeholder management and effective coordination in projects is very key for the successful realization of the projects' objectives. Projects, especially within the NGO sector, involve highly controlling stakeholder management practices mainly due to the diverse and usually conflicting interests and expectations of various groups involved. It is, therefore, an exercise from the basis of understanding that CRS, as an international humanitarian agency, works with local communities, government bodies, civil society organizations, and international partners. Effective coordination leads to organizational capability for goal accomplishment in Ethiopia, where, through protection and transformation, it engages in leading lives via emergency food distribution, health, agriculture, and other developmental projects. It recommended that CRS reassesses the present stakeholder management practices that ensure the continuing satisfaction of these various identified stakeholder groups considering the critical operational objectives (Tigist, 2022).

Tigist (2022) emphasized from the theoretical underpinnings of project management and stakeholder theory that stress the importance of systematic identification, engagement, and communication with the stakeholders throughout the life cycle of a project.

For smooth operation and to avoid conflicts resulting from the different stakeholder interests, CRS Ethiopia's JEOP program focused on these processes. The researcher also identified managing stakeholders in the JEOP program as a challenge that had to do with competing interests. Local communities may be more interested in emergency food relief, while the government bodies are more interested in sustainable development impacts; likewise, while donor agencies feel the need for accountability through better reporting, NGOs on the ground need rapid response and flexibility. These will have to be managed with due care by coordination and communication so that all stakeholders remain committed to the overall objectives of the project. CRS Ethiopia, through the JEOP program, achieved major milestones in managing its stakeholders, but there are areas that need improvement. Areas include the process for stakeholder identification, the development of an effective strategy in communication, and addressing the challenges brought by conflicting interests among the different stakeholders. This was achieved through the enhancement of different aspects, allowed CRS Ethiopia to attain a holistic achievement of the objectives for its JEOP program in serving the vulnerable populations (Tigist, 2022).

Hunde (2021) researched the project management practices of NGOs such as World Vision within the Tigray region. His research showed the complexity of humanitarian crisis management, especially when many stakeholders need to be coordinated, and activities are logistically complex to deliver in areas of conflict.

Kirubel (2023) explored factors that determined the success in the implementation. Therein, he identifies that the shortage of resources, poor stakeholder communication, and procurement processes in emergencies are an obstacle to the successful accomplishment of humanitarian projects. Coordination at higher levels with the introduction of better management practices will lead to improved project outcomes in crisis interventions.

Vulnerabilities among internally displaced persons and the humanitarian response targeting their specific needs, IDPs are among those highly vulnerable groups who have been affected by conflict, natural disaster or forcibly displaced, and who are usually exposed to an increased protection risk of family separation, sexual- and gender-based violence and reduced access to basic needs including shelter, food and healthcare (Sida et al.,2024).

The diversity in vulnerability assessment methods underlined the need for a holistic, multi-level approach in capturing the dynamic and complex nature of vulnerability in various contexts.

Vulnerability assessments are important in the design of effective interventions that reduce risk and enhance resilience among economically vulnerable populations (Moret, 2014).

Identified research gaps in the JEOP program regarding the absence of comprehensive assessment frameworks that integrate qualitative and quantitative methods in measuring responses on the effectiveness of vulnerability-based targeting. Unclear roles and poor collaboration between government agencies, implementing partners, and communities Besides, there was lack of strong mechanisms in accountability and transparency that leads to low beneficiary participation in decision-making processes.

The rationale of this study falls within responding to the critical gaps in effectiveness, coordination, and impact that characterize the JEOP's VBT. Current approaches miss comprehensive integrated frameworks through which the effect of interventions on vulnerable populations can be holistically assessed during humanitarian efforts in which huge investments are made. This paper introduced a robust model of evaluation that combines quantitative data with qualitative stakeholder insight to foster understanding of the programs' intervention.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess effective coordination and impact assessment of vulnerability-based targeting in joint emergency operation program.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. Identify inclusion exclusion gaps in targeting process
2. Assess stakeholder collaboration and coordination practices
3. Conduct impact assessment of VBT
4. Evaluate community engagement and feedback complaint response mechanisms

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the key factors contributing to inclusion exclusion gaps in the JEOP VBT process?
2. How do stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of collaboration efforts within JEOP?

3. What are the outcomes achieved through VBT in terms of program reach and vulnerability characteristics of the population being served?
4. What FCRM are in place to engage communities and their level of accessibility, responsiveness of FCRM for project participants?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is crucial to ensure resources are distributed to the people who are most in need, ensuring general efficiency and effectiveness of JEOP. This research will help to increase distribution of aid through mechanisms of coordination and targeting based on vulnerability analyses, reduce redundant efforts, and close service delivery gaps.

Through proper coordination and attentive impact assessment, best practices to ensure minimum drawback for the accountability and transparency of emergency operations are achieved. The study established best practices to ensure that there is minimal drawback, so that all stakeholders involved in the program, such as donors, governments, and NGOs, are accountable in their various roles. This can build trust in the beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The study aimed to enhance the capacity of the JEOP participating organizations to identify the competencies required at the national level for effective coordination and impact assessment. It also provided a framework for capacity building and training, which is an important element to be considered in enhancing the long-term sustainability of emergency operations.

This study provided insights on VBT upon which another research may be conducted. It provided basis for further, more detailed, or broader research into related areas by bringing clarity to some of the key concepts, processes, and findings in relation to VBT and coordination in emergency operations. This study paved the way for comparative analyses that review how different strategies for targeting vulnerability and coordinating operate across different emergency contexts. This will allow researchers to compare results from different geographies, types of emergencies, and demographic groupings to develop a fine-grained understanding of what works best in which circumstance.

As CRS introduced VBT in 2023 this research will be used for future studies by establishing key concepts, methodologies and findings related to VBT and coordination in emergency response operations conducted by CRS and other stakeholders

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focused on effective coordination and impact assessment of Vulnerability-Based Targeting, which is part of JEOP's intervening area in the Amhara region, North Wollo Zone Guba Lafto Woreda. Because JEOP performs commodity assistance and nutrition linkage, this study only encompassed the emergency commodity food assistance. The focus of this study included methodologies and criteria applied to VBT within JEOP and how implementing partners and other stakeholder coordinated for the success of VBT. This includes an analysis of how vulnerable population are targeted and verified for aid assistance.

JEOP provides transitory emergency food assistance, the impact assessment of VBT within covered VBT targeted population compared to traditional targeting.

The time scope of this study looked JEOP activities starting from January 2024 since the JEOP implemented VBT across all its intervention areas.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Vulnerability: is defined as the degree to which a system or its components are likely to experience harm from exposure to stressors, such as environmental or social hazards. This concept has been adopted broadly within sustainability science to guide program designs and interventions in development initiatives (Moret,2014).

Vulnerability-Based Targeting (VBT): is an approach developed by the JEOP to ensure accurate and timely targeting at the household level. VBT contains detailed approaches, explanatory notes, and tools for identifying and ranking vulnerable households (JEOP VBT dynamic dashboard, 2024).

1.9 Organization of the Study

This research is organized in 5 chapters. Chapter one discussed the background of the study, background of the organization, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two discussed theoretical review and empirical review of the study. Chapter three included research methodology which includes research approach, research design, population, Sampling and sampling method, data collection tool, data analysis, reliability and validity, ethical consideration. Data presentation and analysis discussed in chapter four. Chapter five briefly explained the summary of the main finding, limitation of the study, recommendation and contribution of the study and future research directions.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Introduction

The success of development and emergency projects in Ethiopia depends on several crucial elements, such as determining inclusion/exclusion gaps, strengthening partner capacity building, encouraging stakeholder collaboration, carrying out impact assessments, and improving community engagement and feedback mechanisms. It will contend that a more integrated and adaptable approach is required to enhance project outcomes.

2.1.2 Theoretical bases of vulnerability targeting

Vulnerability theory explains that certain population groups are more susceptible to harm due to social, economic, environmental, and political factors. This theory underpins the importance of identifying and considering giving this vulnerable people precedence in doing humanitarian assistance.

Vulnerability emanates from exposure to potential risks or hazards and sensitivity of the population to these very risks. Rural Ethiopia where exposure to environmental shocks such as drought, death of livestock, and rainfall variability increase the risk of any household to food insecurity. In this case, sensitivity is aggravated by variables such as household income level, education, and access to different resources. Households with limited opportunities for off-farm income, with low educational attainment, or having no access to credit are considered more sensitive to external shock. This kind of framework therefore helps us understand why, even when similar environmental risks are posed to different populations, some populations are more susceptible to food insecurity than others (Tsige & Sisay, 2022).

The concept of vulnerability is deeply rooted in a multidimensional framework of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. In this respect, vulnerability will be understood as the quantified or qualified condition or state of a system, individual, or community determined by exposure-susceptibility-resilience who is unable or less able to resist, cope with, recover, or adapt to an external stress affecting the system, including disasters, economic shocks, or food insecurity. Vulnerability-based targeting therefore aims to give priorities in assistance with those who are most vulnerable by first identifying and assessing various factors that build up to their susceptibility (Wood et al., 2021).

Social vulnerability theory identifies that vulnerability is socially constructed, arising from the interactions between people and their environment, as well as the broader socio-economic systems

in which they live. This theory highlights how poverty, marginalization, and exclusion contribute to vulnerability, making certain groups more susceptible to risks (Wood et al.,2021).

2.1.3 Identifying Inclusion/Exclusion Gaps

Successful development projects have always been based on identification and addressing gaps regarding exclusion/inclusion. Temesgen (2021) gives emphasis to the fact that ineffective targeting of the most vulnerable groups within emergency response projects in Ethiopia creates great disparity in project outcomes. This is affirmed by the finding of Kirubel (2018) Absence of conclusive inclusion criteria and underperformance of basic entry assessments lead to the exclusion of crucial beneficiaries. Further, the gap goes in the Afar area, as emergency response often comes in speedy packets and allows not all the specific needs of the disadvantaged people to be included. In that regard, projects should indeed consider the application of more effective inclusion strategies, which would involve continuous assessment and immediate strategy adjustment to ensure that the vulnerable populations are indeed reached. Identification and addressing of such gaps in inclusions/exclusions are key to making sure there are adequate responses to vulnerable populations with respect to disaster management and humanitarian interventions.

In the context of project management, filling in the gaps of inclusion and exclusion involves the full participation of all stakeholders in a certain project. Watt (2014) states good stakeholder management can be said to mean the very foundation for success of any project because needs and concerns of all parties get heard and factored into the planning of such a project. This view is based on inclusiveness, of people in the decision-making processes, so that no significant sentiments are left out from other angles and dimensions which may come from other voices Sida et al. (2024) identify the most appropriate inclusion strategies in their analysis of IDPs in Ethiopia. The result of this study readily indicates that displacement resembles increased vulnerabilities, which general humanitarian responses cannot address satisfactorily. Development in this respect will exclude the most vulnerable in the absence of specified interventions allowing support to these vulnerable groups.

This finding was supported by an argument that Tsige and Sisay (2022) professed when they

found put that most environmental shocks affecting rural households in Ethiopia remain excluded because assessments are usually targeted well enough, the finding collectively supports continuous reassessment and adaptation of inclusion criteria to ensure services are covered for all vulnerable groups.

Identification of inclusion and exclusion gaps can therefore be instrumental in making humanitarian assistance reach the vulnerable groups.

According to the Sphere (2018) handbook there is a key need for adherence to humanitarian principles that make the dignity and rights of all individuals from different backgrounds and settings paramount. It sets some standards that ensure there is no discrimination during the distribution of the relief; this is regarding a needs assessment principle that quite obviously tries to help the neediest.

The Emergency Handbook by the UNHCR indeed acknowledges that there is an urgent need for interventions to meet specific needs of marginal groups-for example, women, children, and persons with disabilities-regarding exclusion from access to services (United nations High commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2007).

2.1.4 Strengthening Capacity Building for Partners

The capacity building process in project management is mainly when the project outcomes are heavily dependent on a collaboration of different project partners. According to Watt (2014) an increase in the capacities of the project partners ensures that the partners heighten their ability to provide constructive e contributions towards the realization of success in the project. What is key here is the idea of walking partners through or within the process of capacity strengthening so they become equipped with relevant skills and tools to engage in the project through meaningful contribution.

This will ensure that the capacity building can be opened to all its project partners. According to Carstens et al. (2013) project management is made up of the capacity of its implementers and partners, as this goes a long way towards determining success. Tools and techniques that could be used in improving the capacity of these project partners would include workshop and training sessions amongst others. Capacity building makes it possible for project managers to ensure that their partners can address the demands laid out for the specific project, thereby enriching the general outcome of the project (Carstens et al., 2013).

For sustainable success of development projects, capacity building is one of the cornerstones. Yet these partners often lack the necessary resources and training to manage complex projects effectively for training to manage complex projects, many rely on their capacity (Kirubel, 2018). Similarly, Temesgen (2021) emphasized the potential of local NGOs lack potential for successful implementation during the time of emergency. Hunde (2021) argues that capacity building should be a process that moves forward not only through technical training but also in creating local leadership and managerial skills. This will ensure that projects will build on the capacity of local partners in view of ensuring sustainability and effective service delivery. sustainability of development and humanitarian projects highly depends on strengthened capacity building. In this regard, Tsige and Sisay (2022) emphasized that the effectiveness of an intervention often goes together with the capacity of the local partner to implement and manage the project. Again, they contend that the partner organizations lack the appropriate capacity or resources, especially for rural Ethiopia where the management of resources greatly depends on traditional knowledge and practices. Therefore, it goes without saying that such local capacity be consolidated by continuous training and leadership development to ensure that undertaken interventions are appropriate and sustainable.

On the other hand, Wood et al. (2021) argue that capacity building should be more than a one-time session but a process evolving with time in coming up against the most crucial needs and demand challenges raised by the environment. This was further supported by Sida et al. (2024) highlighting the importance of building resilience among local partners for the essence of longer-term success in development projects that a local partner has a propensity to change and innovate. It has, therefore, become an intervention strategy that is truly embedded in capacity building.

Capacity building remains instrumental in the process of empowering local partners with the relevant capacity to respond effectively to emergencies. Catholic relief Services (CRS,2002) emergency preparedness and response handbook emphasizes building local capacities as one necessary ingredient for achieving timely and effective responses in crisis situations. The handbook describes how to enhance both the technical and organizational capacities of local partners so that they can handle emergency responses autonomously with efficiency. Further elaborating on this Inter Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE,2024) Report of Northern Ethiopia puts great emphasis on training and resource allocation to local NGOs to be better able to effectively implement such programs

2.1.5 Fostering Stakeholder Collaboration

Tigist (2022) stakeholders are very instrumental in achieving the successful execution of project management, particularly in humanitarian settings. CRS Ethiopia, JEOP identified stakeholders in this study, meaning those entities and persons broadly ranging from project beneficiaries, through governmental bodies, NGOs, and local communities to private sector actors. Each stakeholder group also has its own expectations, priorities, and influences, which may have a great impact on the project outcomes.

Tigist (2022) shows the importance of identifying stakeholders early in the project life cycle and continuously engaging with them to manage their expectations and influence on the project. In such a dynamic and sometimes volatile environment, where stakeholder priorities and needs might change by the hour depending on changes on the ground, this engagement is very critical for CRS Ethiopia's JEOP program (Tigist, 2022).

Effective collaboration with stakeholders is a key part of successful project management. Encouraging collaboration among stakeholders makes sure different views are included, resulting in stronger and more complete project results. Teamwork is important when projects involve many stakeholders with possibly opposing interests, as it helps to align goals and create a common vision for project success (Watt, 2014). In projects entailing a lot of stakeholders whose interests might be diverse, collaboration lines up goals towards a single vision of success for a project.

The objective of project management is that of involving the stakeholders (Carstens et al., 2013). This is because communication is the plan that involves all the stakeholders to make sure that each stakeholder involved has got the information and continuously remains part and parcel of the project life cycle. Carstens et al. (2013) states that Collaboration ensures projects are effective and the quality of projected outputs is optimum since it puts together ideas and different capabilities.

Effective collaboration with the stakeholders aligns the interest of the project to align needs and expectations of the community, as well as other stakeholders. Temesgen (2021) describes that a major problem in managing emergency response projects is that different groups, like government agencies, NGOs, and local communities, do not work together well. Kirubel (2018) points out similar problems in the World Vision Ethiopia case, where unclear communication and different goals among groups made it hard to work together effectively. Surmounting these issues, both the studies propose more organized collaboration frameworks where the role and responsibility of each stakeholder are defined. In addition to this, Hunde

(2021) emphasizes frequent stakeholder meetings and feedback loops to ensure that all parties move in the direction of one goal and thus raise overall project efficiency.

Effective collaboration with stakeholders is very important for making sure project goals match what the community needs and for successfully putting plans into action. Wood et al. (2021) discusses the problems with using complicated vulnerability indicators in disaster management, pointing out that these tools usually do not help stakeholders work together effectively. According to the research findings, this shows that simpler, more transparent tools are effective at promoting collaboration because they allow all parties to understand and interact with the data utilized in decision-making.

Sida et al. (2024) highlighted the needs of IDPs to be addressed through collaboration between the international agencies, local government and community organizations. They argue that without effective collaboration, efforts to assist vulnerable populations are likely to be fragmented and less effective. Tsige and Sisay (2022) also highlight that better coordination of agencies working with agricultural and environmental issues in Ethiopia may relieve that country of some of its burdens of food insecurity. Both studies argued that facilitation of collaboration among stakeholders necessitates effective communication, common goals, and tools with associated framework knowledge which all the parties can understand and become effective at using them.

Collaboration among stakeholders, governments, NGOs, and local communities, is important for a unified response to emergencies. The Sphere Handbook supports a way of working that includes all stakeholders in planning and carrying out humanitarian help. This way not only makes aid delivery better but also makes sure that the aid fits the local culture and is accepted by the community (Sphere, 2018).

UNHCR (2007) handbook for emergency states coordination systems are also important, as seen from as these promote better communication and collaboration among different groups, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the response efforts.

2.1.6 Conducting Comprehensive Impact Assessments

The core undertaking of the project is the impact assessment, which compares the outcome of the project to the initial expectations of the project. Impact assessments ensure value for money in project investments and highlight any weaknesses that need amendment. According to Watt (2014) through continuous assessment and evaluation, the project maintains relevance to the expectations of all stakeholders; it realizes the actual benefit to be derived from the project.

Project management would not be complete without the role of impact assessments supposed to give important feedback regarding project intervention efficiency. According to Carstens et al. (2013) KPI along with other evaluation tools enable regular monitoring and assessment of the performance of the project. These evaluations help to realize whether the project is achieving its aims and where changes might be required, thus closely relating to the goal of ensuring that impacts of projects are indeed valued and understood.

Impact assessments are crucial for the assessment of effectiveness in projects related to development, therefore assuring that the set outcomes are achieved. Temesgen (2021) argues that most NGOs have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place, which are usually insufficient to capture the full impact of such projects, especially in complex and volatile environments. Kirubel (2018) adds weight to this assertion when he says that such a lack of comprehensive impact assessments leads to the misunderstanding of the success of the project, especially when only short-term outputs are measured. Hunde (2021) goes further to argue that the integration of impact assessments at each stage of the project cycle should be done, focusing on quantitative and qualitative measures that capture holistic views of the project impacts. By doing so, these projects become effective for both the short and long run-on sustainability issues.

Impact assessments should be imperatives to understand the efficacy of development projects to make sure that outlined outcomes were achieved. The study of Wood et al. (2021) critiques traditional uses of social vulnerability indicators in disaster management for the simple fact that these tools mostly fall short of capturing the full impact of interventions. They suggest the need for a more comprehensive assessment tool combining quantitative data with qualitative insights into how interventions are affecting these vulnerable populations over the long term.

Tsige and Sisay (2022) support this view by underlining that robust statistical models should be employed to assess households' vulnerability to food insecurity. These models give a better representation of the different factors that influence vulnerability and an opportunity for targeting appropriate interventions. Sida et al (2024) further stress that comprehensive impact assessments need to be an integral part of every phase of the project cycle, from planning to post-project evaluation to make sure that projects are effective not only in the short run but also sustainable in the long run and provide valuable lessons that can be used in the design of future interventions.

In addition, it is important to establish the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions regarding meeting the needs of the affected populations. The full Report discusses the role impact

assessments play in identifying areas where there is a deficiency in service delivery and what was corrected to achieve better results in the programs. These assessments also provide an insight into how interventions are affecting different groups within the community; hence, targeting strategies are refined, which in turn increases overall program effectiveness. According to (IAHE 2024) the Emergency Preparedness and Response Handbook also asserts that M&E should be continuous for the programs to adapt to changed circumstances, hence ensuring that they remain relevant for the needs of the most vulnerable populations (CRS,2002).

2.1.7 Enhancing Community Engagement and Feedback Complaint Response

Mechanisms

Community engagement and feedback of complaints are usually considered critical in the process of improving humanitarian and development programs. Such processes ensure that the aid is appropriate to meet the needs and preferences of the affected people, thus gaining trust and ownership among its members.

Strengthening community participation and having feedback systems assures project outcome's sustainability and responsiveness to the needs of the community. Watt (2014) affirms that regular communication and loops of feedback with the community serve to readjust strategies of projects in near real time for effectiveness and responsive project management.

Community engagement and feedback mechanisms go a long way in ensuring that the project remains responsive to the needs and expectations of the community it serves. Carstens et al. (2013) recommend tools such as surveys, focus groups, and regular community meetings as means of eliciting feedback and updating the community on the progress of the project. Trust and participation by the community are possible through these mechanisms, which are fundamental to its long-term success.

Community engagement is very important for the success of development projects. It helps that projects meet the needs of the people who benefit from them. Temesgen (2021) points out that even though early community engagement is usually strong, it often weakens as the project moves forward. This can create a gap between what the project aims to achieve and what the community needs. The same is noted by Kirubel (2018) as the problem in World Vision Ethiopia, where a lack of mechanism for feedback resulted in a situation where the project became incapable of adapting to the evolving needs of the community. According to Hunde (2021) the project should develop ongoing feedback mechanisms that allow involvement of the community throughout the project cycle. This could include regular community meetings,

surveys, and using digital platforms to collect feedback in real-time. This will help make sure that the project meets the community's needs and expectations.

Community engagement is very essential for making sure that development projects meet the needs and priorities of the people they help. Sida et al. (2024) point out that involving IDPs in the decision-making process is vital because their unique views and experiences are crucial for designing effective interventions. However, they observe that community engagement often decreases as projects move forward, causing a gap between project goals and the real needs of the community.

Tsige and Sisay (2022) emphasize that continuous engagement with rural communities in Ethiopia is necessary to address the persistent issue of food insecurity. They argue that without regular feedback from beneficiaries, projects risk becoming irrelevant or even counterproductive. Wood et al. (2021) suggest that feedback mechanisms should be simple and accessible, allowing for ongoing conversation between the project team and the community. This approach not only improves the relevance and effectiveness of interventions but also fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among beneficiaries, which is crucial for the sustainability of the project.

Feedback and complaint mechanisms are essential in the accountability of humanitarian programs. These mechanisms provide opportunity for affected persons to express themselves, complain about issues, and provide suggestions for the improvement of services provided (Sphere, 2018). Well-designed and utilized feedback mechanisms make programs responsive, contributing to increased accountability and enhanced transparency.

These mechanisms should be designed to be accessible to all, friendly, and sensitive to various cultures. They should be accessible to all members of the community, especially the most vulnerable, such as women, children, and persons with disabilities (UNHCR, 2007).

Feedback can be solicited through interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, and suggestion boxes to ensure that many avenues are made available for people to give their views (Sphere, 2018).

An essential part of feedback systems is dealing with complaints correctly. Complaints need to be handled quickly, confidentially, and effectively to keep trust between service providers and the community. Programs should explain clearly how they will manage complaints, and staff should be trained to deal with complaints carefully and professionally. Effective complaint system ensures that problems, including those concerning wrongdoing or abuses, are treated

without delay and dealt with properly, so it will help protect dignity and rights of the concerned people (UNHCR, 2007).

2.1.8 Conclusion

A theoretical review of the literature from past studies, therefore, calls for integrated and adaptive approaches to managing development projects in Ethiopia. In this direction, NGOs can significantly enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their interventions by addressing gaps in the areas of inclusion/exclusion, capacity building, stakeholder collaboration, impact assessments, and community engagements. These findings emphasize the importance of continuous learning, flexibility, and coordination on the part of all concerned in the conduct of projects of development that not only achieve objectives that may be proximal but also assure resilience and long-term empowerment on the part of the community.

2.2 Empirical Literature

From different related articles and journals which are like the topic under study the researcher has tried to review some of them for the purpose of empirical review.

Project Management in Emergency Response

One of the surveys conducted by Hunde (2022) focused on project management within the emergency response sector in Tigray, Ethiopia. The purpose was to explore the major challenges that NGOs encounter in executing emergency projects and propose strategies to enhance the success rate of these projects through better project management practices. The researcher conducted descriptive research by incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. He proposed in the research finding that the emergency response project in Tigray faced challenges including security instability, funding limitation and complexity of the nature of emergency response intervention. The researcher emphasized appropriate communication, clear project timeline and use of proper project management tools and techniques were essential to override those challenges.

Food Insecurity of Vulnerable Households

Tsige and Sisay (2022) analyzed vulnerability of rural households to food insecurity, the research focused on identifying determinants of food insecurity to assess the extent of rural household insecurity. The researchers found that a proportion of rural households in Ethiopia are vulnerable to food insecurity.

Trinity College (2022) in collaboration with WFP illustrates the challenges of communicating complex humanitarian aid processes, such as vulnerability-based targeting. They developed accessible communication supports to help the most vulnerable populations, including those with disabilities, better understand how assistance would be allocated. The collaboration

highlights how mainstreaming accessible communication can improve transparency and trust in humanitarian interventions. The project also reveals that clear communication, particularly in vulnerable, low-literacy communities, can help mitigate community tensions and improve the efficiency of aid distribution

Wood et al. (2021) critiques the use of aggregated social vulnerability index in disaster management, pointing out that these indices can often mask critical single variables like poverty. Their empirical research suggests that, while these indices are popular for resource allocation, they may not always provide the most efficient or accurate measure of vulnerability. The authors advocate for a more focused approach, using variables like poverty as primary indicators, which could simplify vulnerability assessments and lead to better-targeted disaster responses. Their study further explores how poverty strongly correlates with vulnerability, especially in the context of disaster mitigation and response.

vulnerabilities faced by IDPs emphasizing that displacement inherently creates unique needs and heightened risks. IDPs are not just another vulnerable group but often face compounded risks due to their displacement status. The authors argue that humanitarian responses must consider these specific vulnerabilities, such as the need for shelter, access to documentation, and protection from discrimination, and address them with targeted strategies. Furthermore, their research underscores the importance of legal frameworks, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which seek to ensure that IDPs' rights are protected and their vulnerabilities addressed (Sida et al., 2024).

Effectiveness of Vulnerability-Based Targeting (VBT)

VBT has shown both successes and challenges. A study by Sida et al. (2024) highlighted high exclusion errors in humanitarian responses, particularly among internally displaced persons (IDPs). Their findings align with Temesgen (2021), who reported that poor targeting mechanisms often exclusion of critical beneficiaries. However, Kopinak (2013) noted that well-implemented VBT approaches improve aid transparency and ensure vulnerable receive assistance. The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group (2024) found that lack of robust M&E systems hindered effectiveness of VBT in crisis response.

Kirubel (2018) states that poor resource allocation and lack of stakeholder collaboration often reduce the impact of humanitarian interventions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of Study Area

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is an international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. CRS works to save, protect, and transform lives in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. CRS' relief and development work are accomplished through programs of emergency response, health, agriculture, education, peacebuilding, Partnership and Capacity strengthening. For nearly 60 years, CRS has taken the lead in responding to natural and man-made disasters affecting Ethiopia's most vulnerable communities. Moving beyond emergency response, CRS' disaster mitigation and recovery projects in drought and flood-prone areas have rebuilt individual and community assets through non-food aid in the form of agriculture, livestock, health, nutrition, and water and sanitation assistance.

JEOP focused on addressing the emergency food needs of transitory, food-insecure populations in an accurate, timely, safe, and satisfactory manner. JEOP typically focuses on rural, and crisis affected regions of Ethiopia where communities are highly vulnerable to food insecurity. Jeop intervenes in 4 regions and 1 city administration of Ethiopia. Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP and Diredawa. This research will assess effective coordination and impact assessment of VBT in Amhara region North Wollo Zone Guba Lafto Woreda. Both relief and IDP's are included in the study.

3.2 Research Design of the Study

Decisions about what, where, when, how much, by what means with respect to an inquiry, or a research study is what constitutes a research design (Kothari, 2004).

Descriptive research describes the characteristics of a particular individual or a group (Kothari, 2004).

The descriptive research design method is important in giving a clear picture of how the vulnerability-based targeting is being used, how the different stakeholders are working together, and the characteristics of the population served.

The researcher used descriptive methods to conduct the study which used to discuss characteristics of VBT.

3.3 Research Approach

This approach combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the targeting process affects vulnerable populations and to measure the program's overall outcome. According to Creswell (2014) mixed methods are particularly useful in a situation when one data set is insufficient to comprehend a complex issue. Through this approach, researchers can cross-check data, confirm findings, or provide more insight by mixing numbers with detailed qualitative findings.

Qualitative research approach is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis (Kothari, 2004).

Quantitative research is used to check theories or ideas by looking at numerical data. This method usually works from general ideas to specific cases and focuses on measuring different things and finding how they relate to each other. points out that tools like surveys or experiments are used to collect organized data that can be analyzed with statistics. This type of research is good for studying behaviors, opinions, or events and for applying results to bigger groups (Creswell 2014).

The research approaches the researcher used was a mixed approach of both Qualitative and Quantitative methods.

3.4 Population of the Study

Creswell (2014) referred to the population to the overall people or units in which the researcher found interest in studying. Therefore, it included all elements possessing the characteristics needed for the research in which the researcher sought to draw conclusions.

Populations of the study included project participants(beneficiaries), JEOP program team members and partner staff and government Officials. According to the information the

researcher received from the human resource department of the organization the total number of staff engaged in VBT are 20 and from implementing partner ORDA in Guba Lafto woreda number of staff assigned in JEOP program is 5 and 3 Woreda level government officials. As a result, all the staff of the project will be considered for the study to obtain a holistic and broader view of the research topic.

Total Project participant population is drawn from JEOP's monthly allocation plan. In August JEOP targeted 45753 IDP and 837662 Relief in Amhara Region. From this number 6613 IDP and 237113 were from North Wollo Zone. The data shows that 759 IDP and 16382 relief populations were targeted in Guba Lafto woreda for August commodity assistance. The researcher took 32 kebele and 08 Kebele where 115 relief community and 47 IDPs.

3.5 Sampling & Sample Method

Creswell (2014) sampling involves the process of drawing a portion of cases, or units of interest, from the larger population in which the study is interested. The purpose of the sampling is to achieve data that describes the whole group hence the researcher can generalize to the whole population without collecting data from all members of the same group (Kothari, 2004).

stratified random sampling method would be used for quantitative data collection. This method allows to divide the population into distinct strata as IDP and Relief. From each subgroup, a random sample is drawn. This approach ensures that each group is adequately represented, providing more reliable and generalizable results about the different perspectives and experiences related to the program's coordination and impact.

For qualitative data collection Interview and KII will be used by using purposive sampling technique.

using Yemane (1967) formula, $n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$ Where: • N = total number of populations • n = number of sample size • e = error margin / margin of error, a 95% confidence level was taken and e = 0.05.

Table 1: Sample size of the study

Strata	Population Size	Sample Size
IDP	47	42
Relief	115	89
JEOP Staff	20	19
ORDA staff	5	5
Government Officials	3	3
Total		158

3.6 Tools for Data Collection

Quantitative data collection method used to conduct Structured household surveys used to collect data on demographics, food security, access to resources, and satisfaction with the targeting process.

Qualitative data collection used to Conduct Interviews and KII with JEOP staff, implementing partner, and government officials to understand the coordination dynamics, challenges, and strategies for improvement.

This research analyzed both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was gathered from HH survey, KII and Interview. Secondary was collected from existing reports and PDM.

3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative aspect of the data was analyzed using a statistical software called SPSS statistical package. Depending on the nature of the questions asked, different techniques of descriptive statistics analysis such as frequencies, percentages, and cross tabulation and correlation used to show relationship between variables without establishing causality. In addition to these the qualitative aspect was analyzed and interpreted by way of transcription as well as logical and deductive narratives. And the analyzed data was presented in the form of tables, Graphs and charts in a way which gives much understanding to the data being analyzed.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are issues of general concern in all that entails the research process, data, and contribution of the research-the quality that must be preserved relative to the fact that

research is dependable for all parties. The tool used in this study for collecting data mixed various ways such as questionnaires, interviews, and reviewing secondary documents. Accordingly, triangulation of data collection methods is done from an ethical standpoint as it serves also to ensure the validity of all procedures involved. Triangulation increases the reliability of both data and the method of collection at the same time.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are paramount to guarantee that protection of participants, integrity of research, and proper procedures are applied.

It is necessary to fully explain to project participants the purpose of the study, what it encompasses, and how the data is to be used. Participation in the study must be completely voluntary. The participant should be at liberty to decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse consequences. Written or oral informed consent from participants should be exercised by the researchers based on the context. This must be ensured, with no collection of personal information, or if done, it must be anonymized to protect the participant. Special care must be given to hold the data confidential for the JEOP study since possibly sensitive data are being collected from a vulnerable population.

It is important to adhere to local norms, values, and practices through the interview and FGDs, since members might have different cultural settings and backgrounds.

Informed consent, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, and the principle of minimizing harm are principles that protect the participant and assure the integrity of the research. Besides, transparency throughout the ethical approval of research will give more confidence to the participants, thus adding more validity and ethics to the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provided the findings alongside their interpretation with respect to the study of effective coordination and impact assessment of vulnerability-based targeting in joint emergency operation program for the case of CRS. The results are presented and interpreted according to the study objectives. The purpose of this study is to assess effective coordination of stakeholder management impact assessment of VBT. VBT is an essential approach in emergency response program aiming to prioritize assistance based on level of vulnerability among communities. The success of VBT depends on level coordination among humanitarian organization, government agencies and implementing partners. The study employs mixed approach, utilizing HH survey, Interview and KII. The research adopted a census approach, and the target population were 131 project participants, Enumerator collected 130 HH survey. From 19 targeted CRS JEOP staff, interview was conducted for 13 staff members. From 5 ORDA staff, the interview was conducted for 4 of them and able to conduct KII for all 3-government officials. which represents about 94.9% response rate. In the questionnaire the researcher disclosed that the information given by respondents was based on their consent and will be kept confidential to any third party. The analysis of the data from the questionnaire is carried out by using a SPSS and Microsoft excel. Interviews held with the key staff members of the project, and the relevant project and other documents reviewed. This provides the researcher an in-depth look at the different aspects of the research under study from the point of view of addressing the research objectives. By integrating multiple perspectives, this research contributes to understanding of effectiveness of coordination and impact of VBT in emergency response programs, highlighting areas for improvement and best practice for humanitarian intervention.

4.2 Demographic Summary of Household Sample

The data represents demographic composition of households that have been surveyed in the study, to outline the nature and characteristics of the study population. Demographic data collected from HH survey includes sex aggregation, age, residence type, family size, marital status and disability status.

Table 2 : HH Demographic summary

Demographic Characteristics of the HH sample			
Respondent Demography	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	22-40	47	36.2
	41-59	52	40
	60-86	31	23.8
Sex	Female	28	21.5
	Male	102	78.5
Residence Type	IDP (Camp)	42	32.3
	Relief	88	67.7
Family Size	2-6	96	73.8
	7-12	34	26.2
Marital Status	Married	115	88.5
	Divorced	9	6.9
	Widowed	6	4.6
Disability Status	No Disability	118	90.8
	Physical Disability	7	5.4
	Visual Disability	4	3.1

Source: Own Survey data 2024

Age Distribution

In the research, there are three age groups of respondents: 22-40 years, 41-59 years, and 60-86 years. Most of them fall in the age group of 41-59 years, whereas 36.2% of the respondents were in the age group of 22-40 years. The age group of 60-86 years constitutes 23.8%. Most of the respondents are older, so this group may need special help and care.

Gender Composition

The gender distribution in household heads showed 78.5% males, while 21.5% are females. The smaller percentage of female-headed households might indicate a potential gender-based vulnerability.

Residency Type

The residency status of the respondents showed the different living conditions. Most respondents, 67.7%, are Relief beneficiaries, while 32.3% are currently living in IDP camps. The larger number of Relief beneficiaries testifies to the greater need for JEOP assistance in non-displaced but vulnerable populations.

Household Size

Household size distribution indicated 73.8% of the households have between 2-6 members, while 26.2% of the households have between 7-12 members. Larger households may face increased economic and food security pressures.

Marital Status

Marital status showed that 88.5% of the respondents are married, followed by 6.9% being divorced and 4.6% widowed. The small proportion of the sample consisting of widows suggests that widow-headed households have different barriers and might be excluded from the sampling frame.

Disability Status

The findings revealed that 90.8% of the households report not having any household members with disabilities, while physical disabilities constitute the highest prevalence of 6.2%, followed by visual disabilities, which constitute 3.1%. These figures call for inclusive targeting mechanisms that would ensure that the specific needs of households with disabilities are adequately addressed.

The demographic analysis showed some important features of the surveyed population, including a high proportion of older people, male-headed households, and Relief beneficiaries. These findings point to the diversity and complexity of the JEOP target population. Vulnerable subgroups, such as female-headed households and those with disabilities, require particular attention to ensure equitable access to resources and aid.

The understanding of the demographic profile will help in refining the VBT mechanism for better effectiveness and accuracy to address the needs of the most vulnerable population. The results further reiterate the need for targeted interventions at the levels of household size, type of residency, and demographic-specific challenges for improving the overall impact of JEOP assistance.

4.3 Inclusion Exclusion Factors

Vulnerability Criteria: categories of households based on their vulnerability criteria. This can be a single vulnerability factor or multiple vulnerabilities. This criterion is factor for inclusion in JEOP assistance.

Exclusion Factors: a criterion used to determine households to be excluded from jeep assistance for short term and for jeep's quarterly assistance.

Table 3 : Crosstabulation for Vulnerability Criteria & Exclusion Factor

		Exclusion Factor								Total	
		capital threshold	Validation Meeting	Exclusion Error	Synchronization issue	Not excluded	Not registered	Psnp client	Reduced quota allocation		
Vulnerability Criteria	Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Disability, Ultra poor household	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9
	Elderly, Ultra poor household	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
	Female headed household, Ultra poor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Female headed household, Ultra poor household Pregnant or Lactating Woman	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
	I don't Know	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	IDP	0	0	2	1	7	0	0	0	26	36
	IDP, Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	IDP, Female headed household	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	IDP, Pregnant or Lactating Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
	Pregnant or Lactating Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4
	Pregnant or Lactating Woman, Ultra poor household	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
	Ultra poor household	3	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	55	63
	Total	5	2	4	2	7	3	1	1	106	130

Source: Own Survey data 2024

Major Exclusion falls into IDP, and ultra-poor households' vulnerability groups faced the highest impact with 35 and 63 individuals listed. Exclusion due to reduced quota allocation appears to be the largest contributor to exclusions, with 55 cases for ultra-poor households alone.

The column Information was not properly synced by enumerators shows cases, indicating data

collection problems. Specific Vulnerable Groups: Groups like Disability and Elderly, ultra-poor households show fewer exclusions compared to broader categories such as IDPs.

Selection criteria are communicated through community leaders, project staff, and local government representatives. Often, this communication occurs during community consultation meetings.

Stakeholders characterized community validation as an important step in the process of ensuring fairness. Community leaders, together with local government and project staff, work together to check the eligibility of beneficiaries. However, quota limitations, biases within the community, and inconsistent implementation of the VBT criteria were cited as challenges.

Exclusion of Eligible Households: Sometimes this is due to limited budgetary allocation, allocation by HEA caseload, and shifting of resources to other areas. The various factors for exclusion include quota limits, community conflicts and debates on fairness during verification meetings, errors in recording households, and miscommunication on processes and criteria.

Key concerns reported by stakeholders:

- High community expectations: The demand for assistance usually outstrips available resources, thereby causing dissatisfaction and disputes
- Poor training of field staff: This leads to the subjective application of targeting criteria.

4.4 Stakeholder collaboration and coordination

Capacity building and stakeholder engagement involves aligning efforts among CRS, ORDA (Implementing partner) and local government.

Table 4 : Frequency Table for Stakeholder Collaboration

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Awareness of organization conducting aid assistance				
Yes	130	100.0	100.0	100.0
Organization of CRS/ORDA to deliver aid assistance				
Yes	104	80.0	80.0	100.0
No	26	20.0	20.0	20.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
Local government involvement in targeting process				
Yes	23	17.7	17.7	100.0
No	107	82.3	82.3	82.3
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own Survey data 2024

Effective stakeholder collaboration and coordination are critical for the successful implementation of humanitarian programs like the Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP). In the case of CRS's Vulnerability-Based Targeting (VBT) approach, multiple stakeholders including government agencies, humanitarian organizations, local implementing partners, and community play key roles in ensuring aid reaches the most vulnerable populations efficiently and equitably.

Awareness of Organization Conducting Aid Assistance

- 100% of respondents, or 130 out of 130, are aware that the organization is conducting aid assistance. This represents complete awareness in the surveyed population and thus effective communication or visibility of the organization.
- It indicates full awareness that such an organization has gained a solid position in the community, an important factor for transparency and trust.

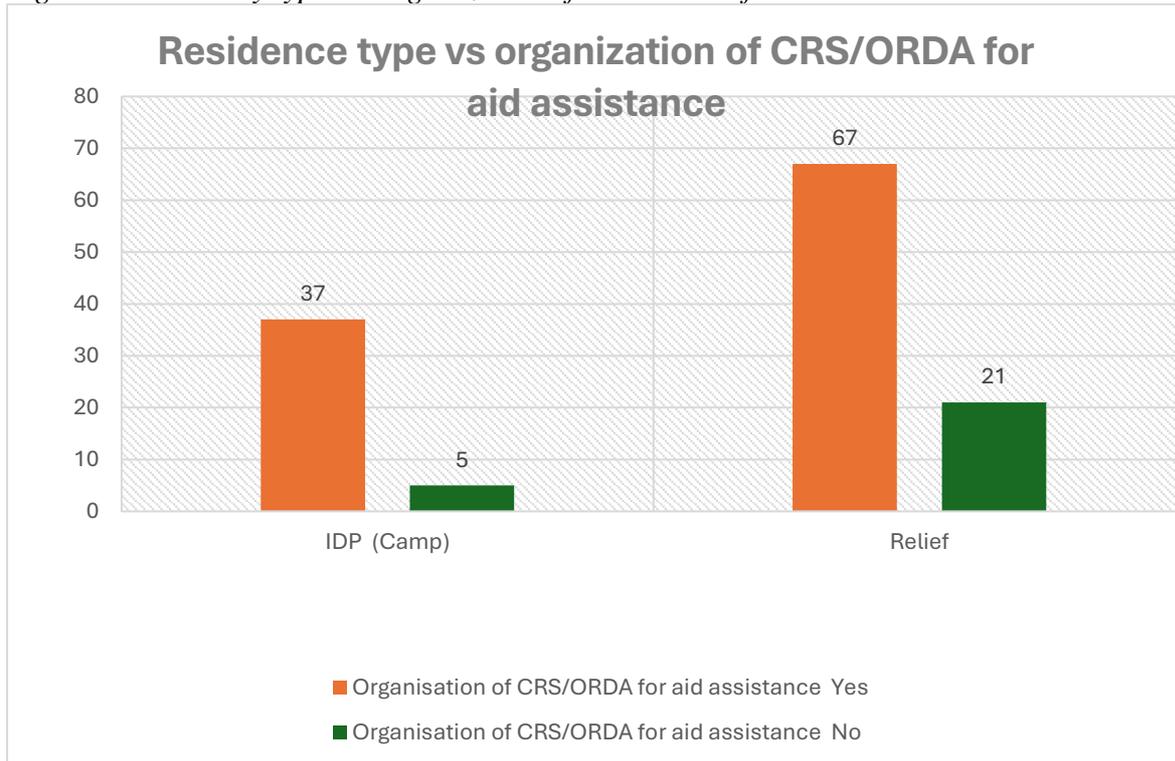
Organization of CRS/ORDA to Deliver Aid Assistance

- 80% respondents believe that CRS/ORDA was well-organized in delivering aid assistance.
- 20% do not find CRS/ORDA to be well-organized to deliver aid assistance in the area.
- While the majority find the organization effective, the 20% dissatisfaction suggests areas for improvement in aid delivery operations.
- The high approval rate (80%) highlights that CRS/ORDA is generally perceived as capable in aid delivery.
- The 20% dissatisfaction, however, points to gaps in service delivery, such as high exclusion rate, inclusion error and inadequate service delivery comparing to project participant need expectation

Local Government Involvement in the Targeting Process

- Only 17.7% (23 respondents) agreed that the local government is involved in the targeting process.
- A significant 82.3% (107 respondents) believe the local government is not involved.
- This indicates limited engagement of local authorities, in the targeting process to achieve the initial target of USAID/ CRS plan to shift from traditional targeting to the new VBT which minimizes the role of government to enhance fairness of aid assistance.

Figure 1: Residency type vs Organization of CRS/ORDA for Aid Assistance



Source: Own Survey data 2024

IDP: IDPs who live at Lamerbata and College camps count a total Individuals 42 from those, 88 % which is 37 individuals affirms that CRS/ORDA is well organized to deliver aid assistance for the community. 5 individuals (12%) of the IDP community confirms that they don't believe CRS/ORDA is organized to deliver aid in the area.

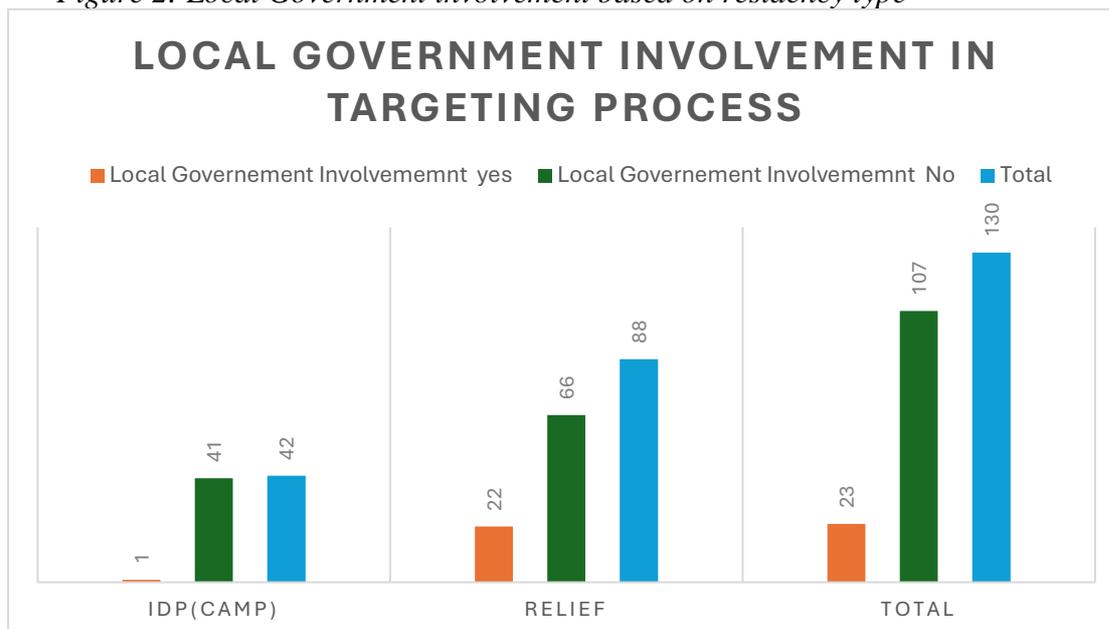
Relief: Relief community who live in Kebele 32, 76% of them agreed that CRS/ORDA is well organized to deliver aid assistance the remaining 24% responded the opposite.

From overall respondents both Relief and IDP 80% of them affirm that CRS/ ORDA provides organized aid assistance. The remaining 20% responded that they are not well organized.

Effectiveness of Aid Distribution:

- 80% of the total population responded that CRS/ORDA is well organized to deliver aid assistance, indicating substantial coverage of organized aid assistance.
- Aid distribution is more effective for IDP camp residents, with 88% coverage, compared to Relief residents, where only 76% confirms the service is well organized in the camp.
- The smaller number of individuals not believed that the service is organized the IDP who lives in a camp category (12%) might reflect prioritization due to greater vulnerabilities in displaced populations.

Figure 2: Local Government involvement based on residency type



Source: Own Survey data 2024

This graph data on the local government involvement in aid delivery processes, segmented by residency type.

IDP:

- A total of 42 respondents resides in IDP camps.
- Only 1 respondent (2.4%) indicated that the local government was involved in the aid delivery process.
- 41 respondents (97.6%) reported no local government involvement.
- The data highlights smaller significance of government involvement in aid delivery processes, particularly for IDP camps, where only 2.4% of respondents reported such involvement.

Relief Beneficiaries:

- 88 respondents belong to the relief category.
- Among them, 22 respondents (25%) reported local government involvement, while 66 respondents (75%) indicated no involvement.
- Compared to IDP camps, relief beneficiaries reported relatively higher local government involvement (25%). This suggests that local authorities may have more integration with relief initiatives over IDP-specific programs. For CRS which have negative impact as per the new VBT procedure, which minimizes the role of local government to only oversee activities.

Overall Total:

- Out of 130 respondents, 23 (17.7%) acknowledged local government involvement in the targeting process, while 107 (82.3%) did not.

Pre-implementation assessments are undertaken by CRS in the estimation of the Technical, logistical and operational capacities among partners. Commonly recognized gaps include poor data management skills and weak community-based engagement practices. Training focuses on equipping partners with skills in:

- VBT principles and tools
- Community consultation and validation processes
- Feedback and complaint management

Nevertheless, stakeholders pointed out the need for ongoing training to address newly emerging issues, particularly regarding community engagement and effective communication practices. Coordination gaps are most pronounced during validation and feedback resolution processes. Local government and community leaders play essential roles in Registration, targeting, validation, and conflict resolution.

- Community Leaders:
 - Act as intermediaries and facilitators, guaranteeing clarity throughout the selection procedure.
 - Serve as CHD committee during registration and the entire food assistance process.
 - Provide local knowledge, which is crucial for identifying household information
 - However, some stakeholders expressed concerns about biases or favoritism that undermine the fairness of targeting.
- Local Government:
 - Their involvement is often limited to oversight and coordination rather than active decision-making.

4.5 VBT Impact

This study examines the impact of VBT within JEOP implemented by CRS, focusing on key indicators such as household food security, access to essential resources, beneficiary satisfaction, and overall program effectiveness.

Table 5: Frequency table for impact assessment of VBT

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
HH food security status				
Improved	5	3.8	3.8	3.8
Stayed the same	125	96.2	96.2	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
Satisfaction with the type of commodity				
Yes	95	73.1%	73.1%	100.0%
No	35	26.9%	26.9%	26.9%
Type of commodity received				
Maize	35	26.9	26.9	26.9
Wheat	95	73.1	73.1	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
Sufficiency of aid assistance				
No	130	100.0	100.0	100.0
Satisfaction with new VBT				
Satisfied	76	58.5	58.5	100.0
Neutral	2	1.5	1.5	41.5
Dissatisfied	50	38.5	38.5	38.5
Extremely dissatisfied	2	1.5	1.5	40.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own Survey data 2024

This table summarized data on HH food security, satisfaction with commodity type, sufficiency of aid assistance, and satisfaction with a new VBT

Household Food Security Status:

- Improved: Only 5 households reported improved food security status, at 3.8%.
- Stayed the Same: The majority, 125 households, indicated that their food security status remained unchanged, at 96.2%.
- Aid interventions seem to have very little effect on improving the food security of most households.

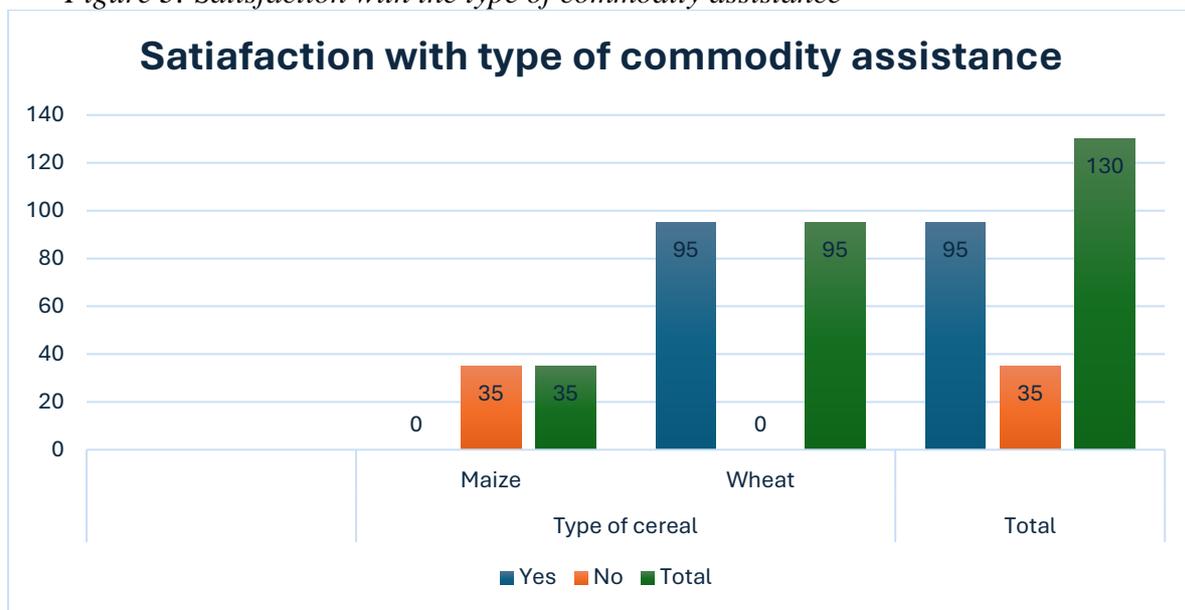
Satisfaction with the Type of Commodity:

- Satisfied: 95 respondents, or 73.1%, were satisfied with the type of commodity received.
- Not Satisfied: 35 respondents, or 26.9%, were not satisfied.
- Though the majority are satisfied, a significant proportion expressed dissatisfaction, which may indicate a mismatch between needs and the commodities provided.

Type of Commodity Received:

- Wheat: The major commodity received, with 95 households or 73.1% reporting its receipt.
- Maize: 35 households or 26.9% received maize.
- Wheat is the dominant aid commodity, which may align with preference or availability. However, Maize is not favorable in the area.

Figure 3: Satisfaction with the type of commodity assistance



Source: Own Survey data 2024

This graph examined the relationship between the type of cereal provided (maize or wheat) and the level of satisfaction with food assistance.

- Total Satisfaction: Out of 130 respondents, 95 (73.1%) were satisfied with their food assistance due to receiving wheat.
- Total Dissatisfaction: 35 respondents (26.9%) were dissatisfied entirely because of the provision of maize.
- The data strongly suggests a preference for wheat over maize among recipients of food assistance. Programs relying heavily on maize need to reassess its appropriateness for the target population.

Table 6: VBT satisfaction based on demographic factor

	Satisfaction rate with the new VBT				
Sex	Dissatisfied	Extremely dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Total
F	19	0	1	8	28
M	31	2	1	68	102
Total	50	2	2	76	130
Disability Status					
Physical Disability	2	0	0	5	7
Visual Disability	2	0	0	2	4
No Disability	45	2	2	69	118
Total	50	2	2	76	130
Residency Type					
IDP	31	2	1	8	42
Relief	19	0	1	68	88
Total	50	2	2	76	130
Age					
22-40	22	1	1	23	47
41-59	22	1	1	28	52
60-86	6	0	0	25	31
Total	50	2	2	76	130

Source: Own Survey data 2024

This table provides insights into the satisfaction rate with the new VBT based on different demographic categories

Sex

- Female: 8 out of 28 respondents (28.6%) were satisfied, 19 respondents (67.9%) expressed dissatisfaction, and 1 respondent (3.6%) was neutral.
- Male: 68 out of 102 respondents (66.7%) were satisfied, 31 respondents (30.4%) were dissatisfied and 2 of them stated their extreme dissatisfaction. 1% is neutral response

- Males have significantly higher satisfaction with the new VBT compared to females. The program may need to explore why females are less satisfied, female respondents informed that youths and males are more favorable with the new VBT in terms of inclusiveness and exclusion rate than female project participants.
- In the new VBT, dissatisfaction is arising from higher exclusion rate, lack of vulnerable households, inclusion error and VBT is not addressing the current scenario in the area.

Disability Status

- No Disability: 69 out of 118 respondents (58.5%) were satisfied and 45 respondents (38.1%) expressed dissatisfaction. The remaining 3.4 % includes half of them who are extremely dissatisfied and neutral responses.
- Physical Disability: 5 out of 7 respondents (71.4 %) were satisfied and 2 respondents (28.5%) are Satisfied.
- Visual Disability: out of 4 respondents (50%) were satisfied and 2 respondents (50%).
- Satisfaction is relatively consistent among respondents with disabilities and those without, though those with visual disabilities appear equally divided. Tailoring VBT accessibility to address specific challenges for visually impaired users could improve satisfaction.
- Dissatisfaction with the new VBT comes from excluding disabilities from HH assistance.

Residency Type

- IDP
 - Satisfied: 8 out of 42 respondents (19%) were satisfied, 31 respondents (73.8%) expressed dissatisfaction, 2 respondents showed extreme dissatisfaction and 1 neutral response.
 - Dissatisfied IDPs stated the reason for their extreme dissatisfaction is that they are treated the same way as relief and complained that more relief communities are included in the new VBT than IDPs who live in the camp.
- Relief
 - Satisfied: 68 out of 88 respondents (77.3%) were satisfied, 19 respondents (21.6%) and 1 neutral response.

➤ Dissatisfaction in the relief community is due to smaller caseload allocation for the area.

- There is a notable disparity between satisfaction rates among IDPs and relief recipients. IDPs are significantly less satisfied, indicating potential issues with how the VBT system is implemented or perceived within camps.

Age

- 22–40 Years:
23 out of 47 respondents (48.9%) are satisfied, 22 respondents (46.8%) dissatisfied, 1 respondent is extremely dissatisfied and 1 neutral respondent. Dissatisfaction in this age group comes from the high exclusion rate in the new VBT.

Table 7: Correlation of Satisfaction rate with the new VBT and vulnerability criteria

		Satisfaction rate with VBT	Vulnerability criteria
Satisfaction rate with VBT	Pearson Correlation	1	.392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	130	130
Vulnerability criteria	Pearson Correlation	.392**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	130	130

Source: Own Survey data 2024

The table displays the correlation between Satisfaction rate with VBT and Vulnerability criteria using Pearson correlation analysis.

Correlation Coefficient:

- The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between satisfaction rate with VBT and vulnerability criteria is 0.392.

This indicates that there is a positive but moderate correlation, meaning the greater satisfaction with VBT the more it results in the tendency to adhere to the vulnerability criteria.

Significance (p-value):

- The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.000, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05.
- The statistical relationship of dependence between these two variables is significant, and the correlation happened not by chance.

Effectiveness of VBT:

The positive correlation shows that the higher the perceived satisfactoriness of VBT, the greater the likelihood of alignment with the criteria for vulnerability. This reflects that the targeting mechanism might be addressing the actual vulnerabilities.

CRS JEOP staff affirm that the new VBT mechanism has changed the way of food assistance conducted compared to traditional targeting. They state that VBT has clear step by step guidelines to enhance effective and efficient aid assistance for the community. Which have a high impact for project participants by adhering these principles.

VBT step by step guidelines

1. Regional Consultation: Train woreda-level VBT leads
2. Woreda Stakeholders consultation: Agree on the process, transfer ownership

Side-steps:

- Set minimum food security threshold: Study preferred staple food, pulse and cooking oil, convert to 2100 kcal per person per day, Study price and project for the analysis period and Calculate cost of 2100 kcal and add 25%.
 - Review and agree on vulnerability criteria
 - Economic: Household asset and household income
 - Physiological: Pregnant woman, Lactating woman, Children under 5, malnourished children, chronically ill person
 - Political: Returnee and IDP
 - Social: Household head with disability, household member with disability, elderly household head, female headed household head, child headed household
 - Standardize capacity: For highland areas barley 20 qtl/ha, Field pea 12 qtl/ha, midland areas wheat 15 qtl/ha maize 25 qtl/ha and in lowland areas sorghum 20 qtl/ha Haricot bean 12 qtl/ha.
 - Standardize vulnerabilities: In VBT, detailed analysis of vulnerabilities is conducted by converting economic, physiological, social and political vulnerabilities into the same parameter to allow fair prioritization of households. Extra cost linked to demographic vulnerability deducted from household wealth pre- prioritization.
3. Train kebele level VBT leads
 4. General meeting at kebele level
 5. Targeting task force trained on data collection
 6. Household data collection

7. Data recording, cleaning and analysis: To calculate per capital wealth sum household economic wealth and deduct demographic vulnerability cost.
8. Caseload allocation to kebeles: Caseloads allocated to kebeles based on number of people fell below locally set food security threshold. When resources are limited and people below food security threshold is high, VBT permits proportional to need allocation to kebeles, prioritizing the most vulnerable at the top of the list.
9. Household prioritization: In case of limited resources, proportional allocation prioritizes households with more months' food gap (those who need food support for survival).
10. Validation and endorsement: List posted for 5-7 days and read to the community in general kebele meeting.

Monitoring activities include post-distribution surveys and beneficiary feedback. Stakeholders acknowledged improvements in targeting accuracy but pointed out limitations in the frequency and depth of monitoring due to resource constraints.

The transition from traditional targeting to VBT has resulted in:

- Improved targeting accuracy: Beneficiaries perceive the process as more equitable.
- Enhanced community trust: Greater transparency has increased trust in the selection process.
- Resource intensiveness: The VBT process requires more time, staff, and financial resources compared to traditional methods.

Even though CRS shifted from the traditional targeting process to VBT as per USAID regulations to enhance the food assistance process and to increase effectiveness and transparency of HH food distribution, which have positive outcomes, still VBT has challenges.

Those issues with ongoing VBT includes:

- Land reporting seems better as compared to the previous VBT. However, 62% reported 0 – less than 0.125 farmland size which is concerning.
- Invalid farmland size such as 0.0001, 0.0082 0.0011 etc.
- 60% reported 0 able men unskilled however from the 60%, 27% of the households have greater than 7 family size
- There are some households with 7 – 9 children

4.6 Community Engagement and FCRM

Table 8: Community engagement and FCRM utilization

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Participation in JEOP orientation for targeting process				
Yes	127	97.7	97.7	100.0
No	3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
Participation in validation meetings				
Yes	112	86.2	86.2	100.0
No	16	12.3	12.3	12.3
Validation Didn't Happen	2	1.5	1.5	13.8
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
Awareness on JEOP FCRM				
Yes	115	88.5	88.5	100.0
No	15	11.5	11.5	11.5
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
Have you provided feedback and complaint				
Yes	17	13.1	13.1	100.0
No	113	86.9	86.9	86.9
Total	130	100.0	100.0	
FCRM Channel used				
CHD	3	17.6	17.6	17.6
Hotline	12	70.6	70.6	88.2
Project staff	2	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	17	100.0	100.0	
Total	17	100.0	100.0	
Satisfaction with the response				
Dissatisfied	10	58.8	58.8	58.8
Satisfied	7	41.2	41.2	100.0
Total	17	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own Survey data 2024

This table presents information on participation, feedback, and satisfaction with the JEOP targeting process, validation meetings, and feedback mechanisms. Below is the detailed analysis:

Participation in JEOP Orientation for Targeting Process

127 respondents (97.7%) participated in the JEOP orientation, and 3 respondents (2.3%) did not participate.

Most respondents attended the JEOP orientation, which indicates strong engagement during the targeting process.

Participation in Validation Meetings

112 respondents (86.2%) participated in validation meetings and 6 respondents (12.3%) did not participate. 2 respondents (1.5%) reported no validation meetings occurred.

While most respondents attended validation meetings, a notable minority (12.3%) did not. The 1.5% who stated that validation meetings didn't happen indicate miscommunication or discrepancies in implementation.

Awareness of JEOP FCRM

115 respondents (88.5%) were aware of the FCRM, and 15 respondents (11.5%) were not aware. Awareness of the FCRM is high, with most respondents knows about the feedback system. The 11.5% who lack awareness represent that during consultation meetings there was a lack of communication among project participants.

Feedback and Complaints Provided

17 respondents (13.1%) provided feedback or complaints using JEOP FCRM and 113 respondents (86.9%) did not provide feedback or complaints.

Although most respondents are aware of the FCRM, only a small percentage used it to provide feedback or complaints. This suggests hesitancy, satisfaction with the process, or limited accessibility to complaint channels.

FCRM Channel Used

Among the 17 respondents who provided feedback or complaints:

- CHD: 3 respondents (17.6%).
- Hotline: 12 respondents (70.6%).
- Project Staff: 2 respondents (11.8%).

The hotline is the most frequently used feedback mechanism, accounting for nearly two-thirds of all responses. This indicates its popularity and potential ease of use compared to other channels.

Satisfaction with the FCRM Response

7 respondents (41.2%) were satisfied with the responses, and 10 respondents (58.8%) were dissatisfied. Most respondents who used the FCRM were dissatisfied with the response they received. This highlights a significant area for improvement in addressing complaints and ensuring participants feel heard.

Table 9: Cross tabulation for exclusion factor and FCRM utilization

Exclusion factor	Provided feedback and complaint		Total
	Yes	No	
As Per capital threshold	2	3	5
During Validation community member pointed on me to be excluded	1	1	2
Exclusion Error	2	2	4
Information was not properly sync by enumerators	1	1	2
Not excluded	2	5	7
Not registered	2	1	3
PSNP client	1	0	1
Reduced quota allocation	6	100	106
Total	17	113	130

Source: Own Survey data 2024

The table provides data on the feedback complaints received based on different exclusion factors. It categorizes responses into Yes (complaints provided) and No (no complaints provided), with totals for each exclusion factor.

Reduced quota allocation: This is the most significant factor, with 106 cases, accounting for 81.5% of the total entries. Out of these, only 6 individuals raised complaints, while 100 did not provide feedback complaints, indicating either satisfaction or lack of engagement in providing feedback.

The high frequency of cases in this category suggests that reduced quota allocation is a dominant issue affecting beneficiaries.

The low complaint ratio in this category might indicate that individuals are either unaware of how to provide feedback or unwilling to do so.

Not excluded: A total of 7 cases were reported, with 2 complaints provided. This shows that exclusion is not the only factor to provide feedback and complaint.

Exclusion error: This factor has 4 cases, with 2 complaints, making it one of the higher ratios of complaints to total cases.

As per capital threshold: Only 5 cases were reported, with 2 complaints raised.

During validation: Only 2 cases, with 1 complaint.

Improper synchronization by enumerators: 2 cases, with 1 complaint.

PSNP client: Only 1 case, with no complaints raised.

JEOP FCRMs includes hotline, suggestion boxes, CHD, PDM and project staff consultations.

While there are these mechanisms in place, their effectiveness is hampered by the fact that:

Limited community awareness: Most beneficiaries were not aware of how they can access FCRMs.

Delays in resolution: Stakeholders reported that some complaints take too long to be resolved due to limited staffing and coordination challenges.

FCRMs exist but are underutilized because of the following reasons:

Limited awareness in the community about their rights to complain or provide feedback;
Inaccessibility of beneficiaries with low literacy levels to written channels of suggestions and complaint boxes.

Challenges: In addressing feedback and complaints, challenges include Inadequate staffing;
Delays in resolution particularly for complaints requiring coordination between multiple stakeholders

4.7 Discussion

The current study focused on the effective coordination and effectiveness of Vulnerability-Based Targeting under the Joint Emergency Operation Program, with a particular focus on CRS operations in Ethiopia. The results reflect valuable information regarding demographic characteristics among beneficiaries, factors of inclusion/exclusion, capacity building, stakeholder consultation, and overall impact of the VBT upon food security and satisfaction. The demographic analysis indicates that male-headed households have taken the lion's share, standing at 78.5%, as opposed to female-headed households, which stand at 21.5%. This means that VBT needs a gender-sensitive approach. Besides, a big group of respondents fell between 41–59 years, which could mean that the potential beneficiaries of the program could lean toward middle-aged beneficiaries. Only 9.2% of the total surveyed reported a disability; thus,

making vulnerable groups like persons with disability less represented. This creates the need for specific measures in place to make sure subgroups of vulnerable populations are adequately represented.

The study revealed significant problems of exclusion. Reduced quota allocation was the largest reason for exclusion and hit both ultra-poor households and IDPs hard. Other factors causing exclusion included data collection mistakes and biases at the community validation stage. This agrees with earlier studies highlighting the problems of effective vulnerability targeting under resource constraints. Improved training of the field staff and high-quality data management systems may be used to overcome such pitfalls, while increasing the fairness and accuracy in beneficiary selection.

Major challenges of exclusion and inclusion, mainly caused by reduced quota allocation, data errors, and biases during community-level validation, were recorded in this study. This corresponds to Temesgen (2021) who noted that inadequate targeting mechanisms usually exclude very important beneficiaries, hence causing unequal project outcomes. In a related case, Kirubel (2018) noted that the absence of effective targeting criteria has led to the non-inclusion of vulnerable groups, as observed in responses to emergencies in Ethiopia. This is also reflected in findings by Sida et al. (2024) that displacement intensifies vulnerability and generates unique risks that general humanitarian responses fail to deal with. For targeting gaps, according to Tsigie and Sisay (2022) they reported that these were handled by continuous reassessment of the criteria for targeting and engaging active communication with communities.

Results have shown that 80% of the respondents perceive CRS/ORDA as organized, though the involvement of local government in targeting was very minimal at 17.7%. As the new VBT obliges organizations to minimize government involvement in the targeting process. This finding supports Tigist (2022) who identified that there is a need for systematic engagement and collaboration among stakeholders in aligning interests for the improvement of project outcomes. Lack of involvement from the local government may make the community lose trust, since in most cases, local authorities are important in ensuring a program is legitimate and sustainable.

It has thus emerged that continuous training in the VBT principles, community consultations, and mechanisms of feedback needed to be done. It further underlines the argument of Carstens et al. (2013) in recommending capacity building as necessary for improving effective participation on the part of the partners in project success. Further, Hunde (2021) argued that the capacity-building processes entailing long-term sustainability and adaptability in a complex humanitarian environment include technical training and leadership.

With a contribution of VBT to the household food security situation so low at a time when 96.2% of the households reported no improvement, one may question the sufficiency of the assistance by the aid. In support of this finding, Kirubel (2018) identified that poor resource allocation and lack of effective collaboration among stakeholders have been commonly contributory factors that made humanitarian interventions fail to meet their goals. Temesgen (2021) stated that a well-developed monitoring and evaluation system is key to comprehensively reviewing the effectiveness of the programs and making improvements.

In the new system of VBT, general satisfaction was at a moderate 58.5%, while discontent as high as 40% was recorded among IDPs and female-headed households. This agrees with arguments by Wood et al. (2021) noted that aggregated vulnerability indices usually cannot capture the needs of very heterogeneous populations. As Sida et al. (2024) have pointed out, tailored interventions to meet the peculiar needs of vulnerable groups will, therefore, tend to improve satisfaction and enhance the effectiveness of the program.

The study highlighted the importance of community involvement and mechanisms for feedback as a means of increasing program responsiveness and trust. However, several challenges were identified, including limited accessibility and biases in the processes of feedback. This is supported by Watt (2014) who noted that regular communication and feedback loops with the community are important for adaptive and effective project management. Wood et al. (2021) echoed the same sentiment, suggesting that simple, accessible feedback mechanisms are key in fostering participation and ownership among beneficiaries.

Developing accessible and transparent feedback mechanisms to build trust and adapt interventions. (Sphere Handbook, 2018).

The findings underlined the importance of:

1. Strengthening data collection and validation processes to reduce errors and biases.
2. Enhancing stakeholder collaboration, particularly with local governments, to improve program acceptance and sustainability.
3. Allocating sufficient resources to meet the needs of vulnerable populations and minimize dissatisfaction.
4. Continuously evaluating and adapting the VBT approach to address emerging challenges and feedback from beneficiaries.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summarizes the study's analysis findings including conclusion, recommendation contribution of the study and future research directions.

5.1 Summary of key Findings

This study investigated the effectiveness of the VBT approach under the JEOP implemented by CRS. The research examined demographic characteristics, inclusion and exclusion criteria, stakeholder collaboration in the practice of VBT, and its overall outcomes on food security and satisfaction in the community.

Demographics and Target Population

The study involved 130 households and conducted interviews with staff from CRS and ORDA, as well as government representatives, achieving a response rate of 94.9%. Key findings emerging from the demographic analysis included

- **Gender Composition:** 78.5% of the households were male-headed, while 21.5% were female-headed, thus showing possible gender-specific vulnerabilities.
- **Type of Residence:** 67.7% were recipients of relief, while 32.3% were IDPs—meaning different living conditions and needs.
- **Household Size:** A majority (73.8%) had 2–6 members, with a larger household size (26.2%) experiencing increased economic stress.
- **Disability:** Only 9.2% reported some form of disability, but these households represent an important subgroup that needs particular attention.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

VBT system categorized households according to vulnerability factors such as disability, age, gender, and IDP status. Common inclusion factors included ultra-poor status and physiological conditions like pregnancy and lactation.

Exclusion errors generally stemmed from a lack of quota allocation and issues dealing with data synchronization, and biases in the community validation processes.

Exclusion rates were highest for vulnerable groups such as IDPs and ultra-poor households, while those with disabilities or female-headed households reported fewer exclusions.

Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building

The study pinpointed the collaboration of CRS, ORDA, and local government; though the findings suggested a little involvement of the government in targeting where only 17.7% admitted to participation.

Capacities have been built in the principles of VBT and data management, although gaps remain, particularly in community engagement and validation processes.

Community leaders were instrumental in the targeting process; still, they faced obstacles such as nepotism and lack of adequate training.

VBT Implementation and Effectiveness

The transition from traditional targeting to VBT brought improvements in targeting accuracy, transparency, and community engagement.

- **Impact on Food Security:** Only 3.8% of households reported improved food security, while 96.2% saw no change, underscoring the need for more comprehensive aid.
- **Sufficiency of Aid:** All respondents (100%) stated that the assistance provided was insufficient. The aid, including wheat, maize, and oil, failed to meet household needs comprehensively.
- **Satisfaction Rates:** While 58.5% of respondents were satisfied with the VBT, dissatisfaction was significant (40%), especially among IDPs and female-headed households due to high exclusion rate.

Community Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms

The study highlighted strong participation in JEOP targeting orientation (97.7%) and validation meetings (86.2%). However, FCRM were underutilized. Only 13.1% of respondents utilized FCRMs, and 58.8% of these users were not satisfied with the responses. The hotline was the most used FCRM channel, but delays in resolution and low awareness hindered effectiveness.

Key Successes of VBT

- More equitable and fair beneficiary selection.
- Increased community trust in the aid process through enhanced community engagement
- Development of structured guidelines for VBT implementation

Challenges of VBT

- High exclusion rates of vulnerable groups because of quota limitations.
- inadequate aid to meet home needs.
- inconsistent application of the VBT criteria and discrepancies made in data collection.
- Limited use of feedback mechanisms because of lack of awareness and accessibility.

The results have given a comprehensive view of the benefits and drawbacks of the VBT approach, focusing on the areas that need immediate attention to improve outcomes.

5.2 Limitation of the Study

Limitations that should be considered is the fact that the study will be geographically confined to the North Wollo Zone, Guba Lafto Woreda; thus, generalization of findings might be limited to other geographical and contextual settings. JEOP implement VBT in 2024. Therefore, the research assessed outcomes of VBT in terms of food security and satisfaction, but did not measure the impacts over the long term. Limited engagement of local government in VBT process and in the research may impacted insight to the coordination challenges. Limited logistical resource due to security situation in the area restricted the depth of the study particularly in terms of reaching marginalized community.

Despite these limitations, the present study offers an insight worth valuing on the application of Vulnerability-Based Targeting in humanitarian programs.

5.3 Contribution of the Study

The findings herein presented are useful in contributing to theoretical and practical implementation of the VBT process in humanitarian programs. This study will be the first one targeting humanitarian operations specifically, especially by focusing on JEOP in Ethiopia. Therefore, results will provide critical input for improving aid delivery mechanisms in complex emergencies.

1. Theoretical Contributions

- Framework for Understanding VBT

The study enriches theoretical underpinnings of VBT by examination in a real implementation context. More precisely, it carries out an in-depth analysis of how vulnerability factors such as disability, gender, and displacement status influence targeting accuracy and enhance understanding of VBT to be one of the dynamic and context-specific processes.

- Identification of Key Challenges

This study identifies such challenges to VBT systematically: inaccurate data, partial coverage both in inclusions and exclusions, and limited resources. The paper will, therefore, add to the formulation of an overall framework of commonly recurring pitfalls in the mechanism for targeting.

2. Practical Contributions

- Improving Targeting Accuracy

Analyzing the drivers of both inclusion and exclusion errors, this study puts forward recommendations on ways to increase the accuracy of VBT, from improved data collection methods to training of field staff and transparency of validation processes to ensure targeting of the most vulnerable.

- Strengthening Stakeholder Collaboration

The research stresses that the coordination among NGOs, local government, and the community in general, is urgently needed. It identifies shortfalls in the stakeholder consultation processes and identifies strategies that enhance partnership; something considered necessary if humanitarian programs were to succeed and be sustained.

- Enhancing Mechanisms for Feedback

The current study identified that mechanisms for responding to feedback and complaints could act to afford greater accountability to and the involvement of the communities at program levels. It provides practical lessons on the development of accessible and inclusive mechanisms for assuring that people's voices are heard and responded to.

3. Policy Implication

- Humanitarian policy guidance

These results from the study indicate evidence-informed guidance to enhance guidelines and frameworks for humanitarian targeting of aid through the reviews by policymakers. Guidelines recommendations have sought to make targeting processes more transparent, non-discriminatory as well as fair.

- Scalability and Adaptability

The research represents a model that is replicable in nature for implementing VBT in other regions and contexts; hence, its value in scaling up similar programs globally becomes highly significant. These can be adapted to different settings-geographical and socio-political.

4. Organizational Impact

- JEOP and CRS Best Practices

It assesses the realization of VBT within JEOP and underlines areas of improvement. This will provide valuable insight into how CRS and its partners can best use operational efficiency, improve program outcomes, and meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations.

- Capacity Building and Training

It highlighted the capacity building in terms of mapping of knowledge and skill gaps among the stakeholders. It thus provided a framework focused on continuous training and development for longer-term success and sustainability of the emergency response programs.

5. Contribution to Future Research

- Platform for Further Studies

It also forms the basis on which future research studies can build on when determining the impact of VBT within humanitarian programs. For example, certain areas suggested by this report for further research study entail the long-term effects that VBT has and its integration with community-based approaches within the targeting mechanism.

- Informed Context-Specific Research

This is done through an analysis that focuses on a certain specific geographic and socio-political context, hence underlining the importance of local conditions in the crafting of interventions. Encourage future studies to adopt context-specific methodologies in addressing vulnerability.

Overall, this research has studied the theory and practice of VBT and provided pragmatic solutions that can enhance humanitarian aid delivery. This has important policy, practice, and future research implications that can help assure that aid programs are effective, inclusive, and sustainable.

5.4 Future Research Direction

This study has provided essential insights into the effectiveness of VBT in humanitarian aids and challenges faced. However, several areas remain open for further exploration to deepen understanding and improve practices. The following directions are suggested for further research.

- **Long-Term Impact of VBT on Beneficiaries:** Further research is needed to assess the long-term impact of VBT in project participants including its contribution to reduce vulnerability and study could yield quite useful data about the sustainability of VBT interventions.
- **Gender Sensitive Targeting Approach:** Due to low satisfaction rate among female project participant's future research should explore gender sensitivity targeting mechanisms.
- **Community Engagement in Targeting Process:** Future research could explore the impact of increased community participation and engagement to enhance transparency and increase effectiveness of VBT.
- **Social Impact of VBT:** Future studies could assess the psychological and social impact of exclusion, perceived unfairness on community cohesion and trust in VBT and humanitarian organizations.
- **Policy and Institutional Framework:** It would be important to establish the influence of policy and institutional frameworks on the success of VBT. This calls for further study on examination of how national and international policies support or hinder the implementation of effective targeting mechanisms.

5.5 Recommendation

Based on this research, the following recommendations are put forward to solve the problems and make the VBT approach better in JEOP.

1. Enhance Resource Allocation and coverage

- Allocate caseload allocation based on vulnerability needs: Demand more resources to reduce high rates of exclusion among vulnerable groups, in particular IDPs and ultra poor households.
- Prioritize Vulnerable Groups: Resources shall be allocated proportionally to areas, according to the levels of vulnerability, with special emphasis on IDPs, female-headed households, and those with disabilities.

2. Improve stakeholder coordination and capacity building

- Improve Coordination: Meet regularly with the CRS, ORDA and government groups to reach a consensus on process and criteria and plan for resource sharing.
- Field and Partner staff Training: The VBT principles, data management, and community engagement will be trained on a regular basis to ensure the staff minimize biases and enhance their performances of their tasks.

3. Improve Targeting and Actions to take

- Reduction of Exclusion Errors: Strengthen data collection procedures to decrease errors in recording and selection of households.
- Revisit Vulnerability criteria: Don't forget to review, on a regular basis, the rules for inclusion or exclusion to see if they still fit the current state of the community and its vulnerabilities.
- Tailor the aid: Make sure that the relief goods offered are what the people want and need. wheat rather than maize.

4. Enhance Community Engagement and methods of providing feedback

- Help communities understand FCRM: Launch community campaigns to help project participants and community members understand and use the FCRM more easily.
- Tailor FCRM: Facilitate the use of FCRMs based on project nature and community needs
- Timely response for feedback and complaint: Have enough staff and resources to acknowledge and address complaints in a timely manner.

5. Strength Monitoring and Evaluation

- Implement Robust Monitoring Systems: Establish frequent post-distribution monitoring and beneficiary feedback mechanisms to assess program impact and address gaps.

- **Data-Driven Optimization:** Leverage real-time data to determine resource allocation and targeting criteria.

6. Address Gender Specific Needs

- **Assist Female headed households:** Develop programs that can respond to the specific challenges of the households led by women, especially to counter less access to assets, services and more chances of marginalization.
- **Promote Gender Equality:** Apply inclusive methods to ensure assistance is provided in an equitable manner so that everyone is treated equally and yields positive outcomes.

7. Improve VBT Processes

- **Improve Validation Meetings:** Ensure that community validation meetings are better to ensure fairness and consistency in the selection of beneficiaries.
- **Follow VBT procedure:** Instruct the project areas to strictly follow the step-by-step VBT guidelines so that discrepancies in targeting results are brought to a minimum.

8. Provide accessible service for Vulnerable groups

- **Address Households with Disabilities:** Design accessible plans to accommodate those households with physical and vision impairments.
- **Address large household size:** More aid will be provided to big families who find it more challenging to cope with less funds and purchasing enough food.

With these recommendations, JEOP will strengthen its VBT approach, be more impartial, and have more impact to help the most vulnerable groups receive the aid they need in an effective and lasting way.

5.6 Conclusion

The implementation of VBT demonstrated improved targeting accuracy, fairness, and community engagement compared to traditional methods. However, challenges included limited local government involvement, high exclusion rates, inadequate quota allocations, and dissatisfaction with the sufficiency of aid assistance. Only 3.8% of households reported improved food security, and 40% expressed dissatisfaction with the VBT system, particularly among IDPs and female respondents. Stakeholder coordination, especially with government entities, was minimal, potentially affecting resource allocation and targeting accuracy.

Community engagement efforts, including feedback and complaint mechanisms, were underutilized due to low awareness, delays in resolutions, and complex processes. While FCRMs like hotlines were operational, satisfaction with responses was low (41.2%), pointing to gaps in grievance redressal.

The VBT system has set up a more equitable and transparent way of sharing aid; however, it is a good thing that the various problems noted in this study have emphasized vital areas for improvement: better utilization of available resources, improved collaboration with local governments, and strong mechanisms for obtaining feedback. It's important to fix these problems so that JEOP works and so that those who need help the most get their share of aid. In conclusion, while the VBT system indeed represents a milestone in targeting vulnerable populations, its effectiveness is constrained by systemic challenges. This, therefore, calls for strategic interventions that will fill these gaps, optimize resource use, and increase the programs' overall impact on food security and well-being within the community.

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Annex

Household Questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this discussion today. My name is (Enumerator name) and I'm conducting academic research on effective coordination and impact assessment of vulnerability-based targeting in JEOP operation program. I am here to get feedback on emergency food assistance you received since January 2024. Your participation in this discussion is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions that you don't want to. You are free to stop participating at any time. This survey is anonymous, so you can feel free to give honest feedback. The information you provide will be used for only academic research.

Do you agree to take part in this discussion? Yes No

Instruction: Interview household head if it's possible if not communicate the spouse

Module A: Demographic information

Date: -----

1. Kebele: -----
2. Household head Name: -----

Note: The interviewee can be anonymous

3. Sex of Household head: -----

4. Age of Household Head: -----

5. Residency Type

Relief IDP

- 5.1 If IDP, are you living in

IDP camp Private shelter

6. Total Family Size: -----

7. Marital status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

8. Household composition

- Male and Female Adult(M&F)
- Female no adult male (FNM)
- Male no adult Female (MNF)

- Child No adult (CNA)

9. Does the household have a member (s) with disability?

Yes No

8.1 If yes what type of disability exists

- Visual Disability
- Hearing Disability
- Physical Disability
- Intellectual Disability

Module B: Selection Criteria

1. How did you know about JEOP assistance?

- Community leader
- Government staff
- Project staff
- Family/community members
- Other (specify)

2. Were you informed about JEOP selection criteria?

Yes No

3. What are the vulnerability criteria you have selected for JEOP food assistance

- Pregnant/ Lactating Woman
- Unaccompanied Child
- Elderly
- Female headed household
- Ultra poor household
- Disability
- IDP
- I don't know

Note: The respondent can choose one or more options

4. For how long you have been under JEOP assistance

- Full season of First round (Jan 2024- June 2024)
- Full season of second round (July 2024- recent)
- Other (Specify the months that the participant have taken emergency food assistance) -----

5. Have you ever been excluded from JEOP assistance despite being Vulnerable?

Yes No

5.1 If yes What were the reasons for exclusion

- During Validation community member pointed on me to be excluded
- Reduced quota allocation
- Inclusion error
- Not registered
- Information was not properly synched by enumerators
- Naming error
- PSNP client
- Other

Module C: Stakeholder Coordination

1. Are you aware of the organizations responsible for conducting JEOP assistance in your area?

Yes No

2. Do you think the organization is well organized to deliver aid assistance fairly?

Yes No Not sure

3. Does local government staffs involved in the targeting and distribution process?

Yes No

If yes state how they are involved?

Module D: VBT Impact

1. Since you have been targeted by VBT, how was your household food security changed?

- Greatly improved
- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Worsened

2. Are you satisfying with the type of commodity you received?

Yes No

3. What type of cereal you received in the new round of distribution (Since July 2024 to recent date)?

- Wheat
- Sorghum
- Maize

4. Does this aid assistance sufficient to meet you household need?

- Yes

- No
- Sometime

If no what are the gaps?

5. How satisfied are you with the new VBT mechanism in comparison with the traditional targeting?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Extremely Dissatisfied

If Dissatisfied and extremely dissatisfied selected what are the gaps?

Module E: Community Engagement and FCRM

1. Have you participated in any information sessions or meetings provided by CRS/ORDA regarding targeting process?

Yes No

2. Have you participated in Validation meetings?

Yes No Validation Didn't happen

3. Are you aware about JEOP FCRM?

Yes No

If yes(specify) _____

4. Have you ever provided any Feedback and complaint with JEOP FCRM channels?

Yes No

Note: IF yes ask the next question

5. Which FCRM channel you have used previously?

- Hotline
- Community help desk Committee
- Suggestion box
- Project staff

6. Are you satisfied with the response you have get?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Not satisfied

- Extremely unsatisfied

If not satisfied and extremely unsatisfied selected what are the gaps?

-
7. What are your suggestions to improve targeting and distribution process of JEOP?
-

Interview Questions for JEOP Staff

1. What are selection criteria for JEOP food assistance?
2. How are these criteria communicated to the community?
3. How do you ensure the most vulnerable are targeted?
4. Is there any circumstance that vulnerable households were excluded? If so, what are the circumstances?
5. How do you manage complaint for those who are excluded?
6. What are the major challenges you faced during targeting process?
7. How do you assess the capacity of implementing partners before project implementation?
8. What type of training provided for partners for effective VBT implementation process?
9. Where do you think partners need more support to enhance their capacity?
10. Are there any gaps in coordination mechanisms that needs to be addressed?
11. How do you monitor impact of VBT?
12. What changes have you noticed since the traditional targeting process shifted to VBT?
13. What roles community leaders have in VBT process?
14. What FCRM channels are in place?
15. What are the main challenges of addressing that feedback and how long will it take to resolve a complaint?
16. What recommendation do you have in improving VBT process?

Interview Questions for ORDA Staff

1. What are selection criteria for JEOP food assistance?
2. How are these criteria communicated to the community?
3. How do you ensure the most vulnerable are targeted?
4. Is there any circumstance that vulnerable households were excluded? If so, what are the circumstances?
5. How do you manage complaint for those who are excluded?

6. What are the major challenges you faced during targeting process?
7. What type of capacity strengthening initiative do you require from CRS?
8. Have you received any capacity building and strengthening training from CRS?
9. Are there any gaps in coordination mechanisms that need to be addressed?
10. How do you monitor impact of VBT?
11. What changes have you noticed since the traditional targeting process shifted to VBT?
12. What roles community leaders have in VBT process?
13. What FCRM channels are in place?
14. What are the main challenges of addressing that feedback and how long will it take to resolve the complaint?
15. What recommendation do you have to improve VBT process?

Key Informant Interview for Local government staffs (KII)

1. Can you describe your government role in JEOP in your area?
2. How involved local government in the VBT process?
3. How would you describe the level of coordination between local government, CRS and ORDA?
4. Are there any gaps in the coordination process?
5. Do you think the current VBT criteria appropriate for the community?
6. What do you think is the drawbacks of VBT comparing to the traditional targeting process?
7. From your perspective what are the inclusion exclusion gaps of VBT?
8. What are the major challenges faced by the local government since implementation of VBT?
9. What impacts have you observed since VBT implementation?
10. How does local government assist in managing feedback and complaints raised by participants?
11. What recommendation do you have to improve VBT process?