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FOOD AID INTERVENTION AND GENDER: A CASE STUDY OF
KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP, KENYA //

BY
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Thesis submitted to the Institute of African Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology of the University of Nairobi.

January, 2005

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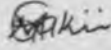


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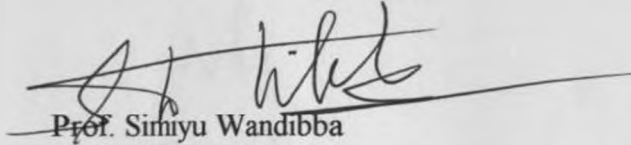
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Date 12/01/2005

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Prof. Simiyu Wandibba

Date 12/1/05

DEDICATION

To my parents, Janet and Jacob Kinyua, for all the support they have accorded me.

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IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before and during the writing of this thesis, several persons offered valuable contribution. Special thanks to my husband, Ben Wanjusi, and brothers, Evans Gitobu and Franklin Mwenda, for their moral and financial support.

My gratitude goes to all my course work lecturers: Prof. Simiyu Wandibba, Dr. Wilfred Subbo, Dr. Stevie Nangendo, Dr. Ruth Kibiti, Dr. Isaac Nyamongo and Dr. W. Onyango-Ouma. It is their lectures that laid the foundation of this work. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Wandibba, for his invaluable guidance and close supervision of the work.

ABSTRACT

This study, carried out between November and December 2002, made deliberate efforts to investigate gender relations in regard to food aid among refugees at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. The Camp, situated in the arid Turkana District of Northwest Kenya, is the second largest shelter site for refugees in the country. Using gender as a key factor that influences the vulnerability and capacities of individuals and households to feed themselves, the overall objective of this study was to investigate how gender relations influence the use of food aid in the camp. The first specific objective was to assess gender considerations in food aid distribution. The participation of individual members of households in the food aid distribution programmes was examined. To investigate the effect of gender roles in the utilization of food aid at the household level was the second specific objective of this study. The third specific objective was to assess the impact of these gender roles on decision-making regarding utilization of food aid.

The methods used in the data collection included: structured interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, direct observation, and library search. Questionnaire responses were obtained from a sample of 192 refugees originating from four nations, namely, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda and Ethiopia, which had been picked randomly from the 9 nationality groupings (Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Angola) within the camp. To analyse qualitative data, information was coded to establish trends while for quantitative

data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used. The information has been presented in form of tables and a bar chart.

The study reveals that all groups of refugees at Kakuma Refugee Camp are heavily dependent upon the general ration as their main source of food as there are hardly any realistic alternative sources of food. This has generally reduced men's ability to provide for their families whereas food aid distribution has resulted in increased responsibilities for women. Women groups of different sorts have been formed within the camp that have enabled women to take up wider public and family roles, thereby increasing their capacities and reducing their vulnerabilities. The refugees' survival was found to not only depend on sufficient food aid provision, which is on the decline, but also on the strengthening of the community members coping mechanisms. This study, consequently, recommends that gender issues related to food aid rationing and management be addressed by organizations involved in food aid interventions. Generally, the principle of refugee self-reliance should be promoted pending voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Africa has historically produced the world's largest number of refugees. The number has increased rapidly during the past ten years due to factors such as war or civil strife and natural disasters, posing today the largest problem the world has to face. Instability and internal conflicts in the region have resulted in a substantial inflow of refugees to Kenya. After the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in Somalia, and more recently the conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda, there has been an influx of refugees into the country. As such, most of Kenya's 365,863 refugees come from Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and the Sudan (ACT, 2001).

According to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, a refugee is:

any person who owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence ...is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Eriksson *et al.* 1979:107).

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 428 (V) established the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on 14 December 1950, with a mandate to provide international protection for refugees under the auspices of the UN, and to seek permanent solutions to the problem of refugees (Chida, 2002). Though it was originally hoped that UNHCR would be dissolved upon finding a permanent solution to the massive

refugee victims of World War II, a lasting solution of refugees returning to their home countries has not been feasible.

In Africa, the refugee crisis has become chronic, especially in the region South of the Sahara. The disintegration of the Somali government, political upheavals in Ethiopia and Sudan, and the continued crisis in the Great Lakes region discourage the refugees from going home. The need to cater for the refugee population has led to the development of systems and infrastructure to enable the provision of basic human needs such as health care, water, shelter, sanitation and food (ACT, 2001). There are approximately ten international NGOs, three UN agencies and a host of Kenya Government departments serving the refugees at Kakuma camp. Each organization addresses a specific aspect of the refugee needs such as health, food, shelter, security and other social needs. UNHCR's mandate to protect refugees is absolute, but the financial means with which it is expected to do so are relative.

Refugee camps are often perceived as transient settlements, reflecting the temporary nature of the refugee phenomenon. In Kakuma, the essential needs of refugees whose plight has not found resolutions for over a decade now, are rising while the UNHCR's capacity to meet them is shrinking. While refugees continue to be provided for in terms of necessities, their sheer numbers are a strain on resources. Donor states have made it increasingly clear that they are no longer prepared to support long-term refugee assistance efforts. According to a senior US State Department official, resources are "limited and diminishing" (Oakley 1996). "There appears to be a growing number of situations in

which people are repeatedly uprooted, expelled or relocated within and across state borders forcing them to live a desperately insecure and nomadic existence”(UNHCR, 1997:33). One of the best-known examples of this trend concerns the plight of some 20,000 boys from Southern Sudan who, having initially been displaced within their country, were subsequently forced into Ethiopia, then back to Sudan and eventually into Kenya, settling in Kakuma Camp.

A growing problem is the need for food for refugees and displaced people in protracted relief situations. As their numbers have grown, an increasing proportion of what is designated as ‘emergency’ food aid has been allocated to them. Food aid is categorized into three types: programme (non-project), project and emergency. Emergency food aid, which is the focus of this study, is a response to sudden natural disasters, war or civil strife, and shortfalls in production caused by drought or pest and disease attacks. Almost all emergency food aid is free (Shaw and Clay 1993).

Institutions involved in assessing food security levels in refugee camps need to meet the gender-based food needs identified by the affected persons. According to Social Development Department, Department For Funding International Development (DFID), it is necessary to identify constraints and opportunities for increasing women’s involvement and community participation in disaster response planning, for example, food interventions (Jamal, 2000:14).

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the context of decreased food aid availability, it has become necessary for food aid providers to identify the most effective means of achieving their objectives. While illustrating the benefits of food aid over other types of development assistance, the World Food Programme (WFP) is committed to the assessment of its policies, programmes, projects and practices to strengthen its operational effectiveness (WFP, 1998).

Gender dimensions influence the vulnerability and capacities of individuals and households to feed themselves in refugee situations. Gender disparity in the division of labour for food production, distribution, processing, preservation and consumption in Africa is vast. In peaceful times, the status of women is poor in all aspects of life and development, deteriorating further in conflict and emergency situations (Mwagiru and Karuru 1998).

The World Food Programme (WFP) says that aid can be directed to women in countries where social indicators demonstrate a significant gender disparity. There is, therefore, need to assess the gender differential on control over food resources and expenditure patterns within refugee camps. It has been observed that in the camps in countries of asylum, women are often malnourished because they receive less food than male refugees do (Oxfam 1997). This could be as a result of women receiving less food at the distribution centres or receiving less proportion within the household as compared to men. Other factors such as women expending more energy than their intake could also come into play.

Gender projects have been set up at Kakuma Camp to create awareness on gender issues and put special emphasis on the status of women in social, cultural and economic spheres. However, there are still many barriers preventing attention being focused on women's needs. Women's role in food matters in the camp and the limitations to their involvement was a concern of this investigation in seeking to underscore the gender division of labour and its link to household food security and nutrition. The questions to investigate were: -

1. What are the gender perspectives in food distribution in the camp?
2. How does food aid intervention affect the gender roles at the household level?
3. Who makes the decisions on how food aid is utilized at the household level?

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Overall objective

The overall objective of this study was to investigate how gender relations influence the use of food aid in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To assess gender considerations in the way food aid is distributed in the camp.
- To investigate the effect of gender roles in the utilization of food aid at the household level.
- To assess the impact of these gender roles on decision-making regarding utilization of food aid at the household level.

1.4 Rationale of the study

International and national tensions suggest that special efforts will continue to be required to ensure an adequate level of emergency food aid that can be deployed rapidly. Two United Nations (UN) agencies appealed for urgent food aid for refugees in Africa, according to a press release (*The East African Standard*, Monday, February 17, 2003). The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) warned of food shortages for more than 1.2 million refugees in Africa. In a joint press release, they said that the WFP urgently needed 112,000 metric tonnes of food worth an estimated 84 million dollars over the next six months to avert hunger among the refugees. “As new emergencies arise the interest in these long standing causes tends to fade leaving refugees on the brink of hunger”, said the WFP deputy executive director Jean Jacques Graisse.

Lack of funds has already forced the WFP to reduce food rations by 25 per cent, affecting the health of refugees and an added risk of forced repatriation if the food crisis is not solved promptly. Kakuma Refugee Camp, like all other refugee camps, has been subjected to the drastic measures taken by UNHCR to comply with financial prioritization requirements. Planning food relief interventions requires information on utilization of and attitudes towards gender roles in refugee communities. The anthropological research methodology adopted in this study aimed to capture the experiences and views of the refugees themselves. By identifying the gender roles in food aid utilization, this research has yielded information that could assist food aid providers to improve on their intervention. Emphasis was put on the distribution and availability of food to the

household so that improved food distribution is enhanced to cater for household requirements. This study, therefore, aimed at providing information to help modify food aid intervention programmes to suit refugee needs. The understanding of gender disparity in access to resources is useful for policy makers in designing strategies for curbing food aid shortages. There was a dearth of information on the impact of displacement (refugee status) on women, including food relief (Oxfam 1994). A gender perspective should, therefore, provide vital information to policy makers who must mainstream gender in the formulation and implementation of policies. Furthermore, the study has also contributed knowledge to scholarship by adding to existing literature and reference materials for future scholars.

1.5 Scope and limitations

It should be noted that distribution and utilization of food aid is complex and is influenced by various factors other than gender. This research was, however, concerned with identifying and describing the linkage between food aid and gender roles. The study was also restricted to Kakuma Refugee Camp as the designated research site. The research did not consider alternative sources of food within the camp. Also, this study did not undertake any nutritional measurements as this lay outside the scope of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Human existence has been characterized by wars and religious or political persecutions, coupled with natural disasters like droughts, famines, floods and earthquakes that have all led to displacement of people in the history of men and women. The African continent is especially hard hit by conflict situations, primarily civil wars. Formal mechanisms of conflict resolution and peace making are largely ill-equipped to handle the multiplying number of complex and intractable conflicts (Kathina 2000). In addition to the war situations, severe famine affecting millions of people in Africa has exacerbated the number of refugees in the continent. Africa's main refugee hosting nations are Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Algeria and Sudan. In Kenya, most of these refugees are housed in two major refugee settlements-Kakuma and Dadaab camps. These camps are located in the semi-arid areas in the northern parts of the country (ACT 2001).

The Kenya government selected this dry and remote area for refugee camps for one, because it is easy to control the movement of refugees and, two, it is possible to isolate problematic refugees away from densely populated areas. Kenya has presented a case of governance operationalised as protection of the political and commercial interests of its population. There is a fundamental assumption that refugees represent a problem or a burden, rather than an opportunity (Callamard, 1994). According to Crisp (2000), the emergence of the Kakuma Refugee Camp undermined public security in Kakuma area.

The prospects of finding a durable solution to the refugees' plight by means of voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement have been pursued. While some refugees choose not to go home under voluntary repatriation even when the conditions in their country of origin appear to have stabilized, the other two options pose greater challenges. Local integration is challenged by the fact that refugees are feared to have disruptive effects on the hosting communities. This is partly because refugee numbers increase, either as a result of new influxes, or as a result of natural growth. The pressure on natural resources, notably land, then causes friction with the host community. Worse still is that historically the land issue presents a critical challenge for Kenya. The failure of the government to harmonize the traditional and common law issues of ownership and land use has been a major issue of contention in the politics of this country. Thousands of Kenyans have yet to be resettled after being displaced by land clashes. Resettlement to a third country continues to offer solution but only for a small number of the refugees.

The positive aspects of refugee presence include their attraction of humanitarian aid that has led to improvement in infrastructure like roads, communication networks, health facilities, schools and sports facilities in the otherwise backward semi-arid environments. Local economies have also improved due to trade and creation of jobs by UNHCR in these regions, and the food rations by UNHCR have been beneficial to the locals. Kakuma Refugee Camp is located roughly 2kms from Kakuma town, which is estimated to hold a population of 35,145 (Silva, 2002:45). The presence of refugees and humanitarian agencies has had a catalytic impact on local trade. Although emergency food aid was started in 1999 throughout the District, many Turkana swarmed around Kakuma and

settled in the periphery of the town and the refugee camp. Kenyans from other parts of the division, district and country have been attracted by the services (health and education), job opportunities (with international and national NGOs) and trading opportunities (firewood, charcoal, building materials and customer goods) which became available with the establishment of the refugee camp. Most of the refugees did not have any contact with the Turkana before they came to Kakuma. That is, the refugees and the Turkana hosts started their relationship as strangers to one another, sharing no linguistic, social or cultural background. Although refugees are seen as a major source of insecurity and crime and have repeatedly been accused of perpetuating violence and banditry, trade between the Turkana and the refugees is not uncommon. The Turkana visit the camp to sell firewood, charcoal, building materials and milk while, in return, the refugees give portions of their rations, blankets, cooking pots, e.t.c.

Most of the people in this region keep camels, cattle, goats, sheep and donkeys and lead a nomadic life. Emergencies, particularly drought and famine, which are very common in this part of the country, conjure an image of further distress in conditions that already lack basic sustenance. This cuts deeper and darker marks on a slate of existing poverty. The Lutheran World Federation, Department for World Service (LWF/DWS), has been working with the host community in emergency relief distribution, and currently has, together with the communities, developed a 3-year –2003-2005 planning and monitoring document (PMD) for a recovery and development intervention.

The camp occupies an area of about 2km x 5km divided into eight zones for administrative purposes (Ohta 2002). To maintain basic life-saving activities for the refugees, UNHCR works in partnership with various agencies. The implementing partners in Kakuma Refugee Camp are mainly responsible for camp management, which encompasses security, water/sanitation, food distribution, logistics, community services and education.

2.2 Gender issues in food aid distribution

Failure to take gender issues into consideration in food distribution can have negative implications that go well beyond the distribution system itself. UNHCR and implementation partners are making major efforts at affirmative action. At all levels, some form of gender representation is in place. Gender training is becoming increasingly popular with many aid institutions as a way to improve the quality of relief and development work. The importance of focusing on the distinct needs of women refugees became part of the mainstream policy agenda in the 1980s, leading to UNHCR's (1991) *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women's Initiatives* implemented on the ground in Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo in the 1990s.

The statistic indicating that 80 per cent of the world's refugees are women and children is often cited to illustrate the necessity of shifting the focus towards the needs of women and children. The use of this statistic relies on an assumption that, as far as the needs of particular groups of individuals are concerned, majoritarian concerns rather than issues of historic disempowerment and vulnerability, should determine where policy priorities are placed. Even on a majoritarian basis, the significance of the statistics, as far as women are

concerned, can be undermined if the numbers are broken down: two thirds of the 80 per cent are children, meaning that there are seven per cent more women refugees than men refugees. While it is not correct to see women as a vulnerable group, women do have specific needs that, if not met, can put them at risk, such as vulnerability to exploitation and sexual abuse, sexual discrimination and restricted access to basic services. Female refugees are the most vulnerable of all groups, not only to violence but also to hunger and hunger-related illnesses. The suffering they endure over the loss of home and forced migration is worsened by inadequate food availability, which exerts a high toll in infant and maternal deaths.

The Lutheran World Federation/ World Service (LWF/WS), a UNHCR partner in Kakuma Camp, runs a gender equity project to promote awareness issues relating to gender and specifically the rights of the girl child. The project makes deliberate efforts on the status of women in social, cultural and economic spheres, as these have been the exclusive domains of men. Since the inception of the programme in 1998 a number of women have been able to take up positions of leadership in the camp, including food and security committees. There have been improvements in surveying demographic data, disaggregating this information along gender lines. However, more needs to be done to improve gender specific assistance.

Male domination is manifested in cases of community decision-making structures. Many decisions in camp management which affect women are made without them being consulted. Culture and tradition have been used as reasons to exclude refugee women

from participation in decision-making. UNHCR's policy is to ensure the maximum possible appropriate involvement of refugee women in all aspects of decision-making, including food distribution. However, measures to address gender disparity are perceived by men at the camp as disempowering. The disruption of existing social structures in conflict situations has several adverse effects on both men and women. In conflict situations people find themselves in conditions where they are faced with the inability to fulfill the roles expected of them. They are also affected by the lack of self-sufficiency and reliance because of the loss of their means of production.

In various interviews conducted for the study of “women and property rights in conflict situations”, the women said that they face the peculiar situation where their husbands are forced to stay at home because of lack of employment opportunities while some of those who get a source of income end up using it all on themselves instead of the family (Mwagiru and Karuru 1998). Using a rights-based approach, this study identified the needs of women and children in difficult circumstances, for example, in situations of conflict, as particularly important aspects of analysis. The rights-based approach is complemented by a gender approach to implementation.

The women's law approach to research takes women as the starting point and identifies “the problems experienced by women in their lives and realities”. The objective of this methodology is to describe, explain and understand women's legal position, especially for the purposes of improving women's position in law and society. This approach encapsulates a desire to escape from the constraints of traditional research, apart from

being weighed heavily towards male conceptions of the situation of women. In this approach, the researcher had all the power and the researched none (Mwagiru and Karuru 1998).

When seeking women's participation in decision-making, it is noted that measures that challenge the *status quo* may be threatening to traditional leaders. There have been acts of antagonism and retaliation from aggrieved men who feel that women are getting preferential treatment. Accustomed to being regarded as the breadwinner, protector and head of the family, they feel disempowered. It is often the case that husbands sell part of the ration given to the family.

UNHCR recommends that a standard criterion for vulnerability of certain groups likely to be more at risk than others be established. This is with the recognition that some groups may be excluded from decisions directly affecting their well being, and the particular needs of these groups may be unintentionally ignored or excluded in programme development. This exclusion may result in making the group vulnerable. This is often the case with a minority of groups. Women who often make up the majority of the population can be excluded in much the same manner (UNHCR 1997). Refugee women who formally had a means of expressing their views in the community may find themselves unable to do so through the camp leadership, which is often composed of men. In camps, traditional support networks, systems of communication and decision-making have broken down. Men predominate armies and militias and, as civilians, they are often targeted and killed. In the absence of men, women bear the burden of maintaining their families, hence the

majority of single parent households in the camp are female-headed. This means that community services must be sensitive to their needs. Women heading households are exposed to pressures attached to provision of food and material resources.

In the great majority of refugee communities, the objective of fair distribution is best served by having an appropriate balance of men and women. However, it is normally women, and in particular single female heads of households, who are either underrepresented or excluded. According to UNHCR (1997), women must be directly involved in decision-making and monitoring, including being involved in planning the system and determining their own participation in its implementation. Women should, therefore, be members of the commodity distribution or food committees. Some of the measures that have been proposed are to ensure that women receive their fair share and retain control of its use thereafter. This is by making sure that women actually collect or are at least present at the distribution of food and non-food items for their household (whether or not they are its head).

2.3 Food aid and nutrition programmes

One of the devastating situations in refugee camps is hunger and starvation due to constant food shortages. The stress of war and escapes from native countries often severely threaten refugees' food and nutritional security, leaving them completely dependent on external food sources. The World Food Programme (WFP), the food aid arm of the United Nations system, shares with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) responsibility for meeting the food and nutritional needs of refugees.

A memorandum of understanding exists between these two organizations covering cooperation in the provision of food aid. WFP has the lead responsibility for mobilizing food commodities and the resources to deliver them to agreed extended delivery points (EDPs). On the other hand, UNHCR is responsible for the transportation of all commodities from the EDP to the final destination and for final distribution. According to WFP/UNHCR's *Guidelines for Estimating Food and Nutritional Needs in Emergencies* (1997), everyone in the population, irrespective of age or sex, should receive exactly the same quantity and type of foods.

The aim of the food programme is to ensure the restoration and maintenance of basic nutritional status, through a food ration that does not necessarily meet the assessed requirements. The food is not nutritionally balanced, non-palatable and culturally unacceptable to some communities. The UNHCR recommends that refugees, and in particular women refugees, be involved in the organization of the food and nutrition programmes. However, our study did not come up with any evidence that this was being done at Kakuma.

There are three food distribution centres in Kakuma Camp located within an average of eight kilometres from the WFP food stores. Each centre serves an average of 27,000 refugees. Food distribution, which takes about five days in one cycle within the distribution period, involves giving out food commodities to refugees using a centralized family head distribution system according to family size. The family, as a basic social unit,

is the target of distribution. There are three broad categories of commodity (both food and non-food items) distribution systems. These are:

- Through group leadership.
- Through groups of heads of families.
- Through individual heads of family.

While the first category is used in the early days of an emergency when there is mass influx of refugees with no formal registration, the others are used when the population is comparatively stable, and /or has ration cards. In the case of food distribution, dry uncooked rations are distributed in bulk. Dry food distribution is preferred to cooked meal distribution as it allows families to prepare their own food and permits them to continue to eat together as a unit, which is more culturally and socially acceptable (UNHCR 1997).

The general ration comprises a mixture of milled and whole grain cereal (either wheat, maize or sorghum), pulse, vegetable oil and salt. The refugees receive on average 2,100 kilo calories (kcal) of food daily, in line with WFP/UNHCR minimum standards (2,100 kcal/person/day) (UNHCR, 2000). All groups within the camp remain heavily dependent upon the general ration as their main source of calories as there are hardly any realistic alternative sources of food. Insufficient access to land and the locally very unreliable rainfall mean that except for a minority who can cultivate vegetables within the camp, the majority of refugees cannot cultivate any food. Most families supplement their diet with purchases of very small amounts of milk, sugar, meat and vegetables. *Kudra*, a green leafy vegetable grown around the tap stands in the camp by a small proportion of the refugees, is sold in the market.

Hostility from the neighbouring Turkana prevents the refugees from keeping livestock and there are no significant local sources of employment. The hostility from the locals also prevents attempts to leave the camp area in search of firewood, effectively blocking a source of income while limiting the collection of wild foods. Refugees cannot practise non-existent agricultural activities unless huge investments are poured into the peripheral region. This has, however, never been a priority of the Kenya government.

One of the most controversial means of capital accumulation in the camp is through the sale of the food rations given to the refugees by humanitarian organizations. Of course, not all refugees exchange portions of their ration in order to generate capital. While some sell in order to buy other necessities, which UNHCR or its NGO partners do not provide, others sell or barter a portion of their food ration in order to meet minimum nutritional requirements. Yet others sell their entire food ration because it is not part of their traditional diet and use the proceeds to purchase food, which they consider more appropriate. Sudanese refugees, for example, sell a proportion of the wheat flour provided by the WFP in order to buy millet, sorghum, maize flour and cassava flour, which are elements of their traditional diet. Some traders specialize in buying up food rations from the refugees in small quantities and selling it in large quantities to merchants outside the camp. This practice has occasionally resulted in conflict with the WFP (Kagwanja 2000).

The basic food commodities distributed through the general ration do not normally cover the required amounts of vitamins and minerals. Therefore, deficiencies often arise among

populations entirely dependent on external food aid and, within a population, among vulnerable groups like infants, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The capacities and vulnerabilities analysis (CVA) framework was used to guide this study. This analytical framework was designed by the Harvard International Relief and Development project by Mary B. Anderson and Peter J. Woodrow. It is a tool intended to help predict the outcome of interventions specifically in humanitarian interventions, and for disaster preparedness. CVA is based on the central idea that people's existing strengths (or capacities) and weaknesses (or vulnerabilities) determine the impact that a crisis has on them as well as the way they respond to the crisis. The aim of interventions in emergencies should be to increase, in the long term, people's capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities.

Capacities and vulnerabilities are differentiated by gender as they are by other factors, such as race, caste, class, ethnicity and age. Women and men experience crisis differently according to their gender roles. They have different needs and interests. The CVA encourages users to ask two main questions:

- What were/ are the ways in which men and women in the community were/ are physically or materially vulnerable?
- What productive resources, skills and hazards existed/ exist? Who (men and/or women) had / have access and control over these resources?

This framework also distinguishes between three categories of capacities and vulnerabilities, using an analysis matrix. The three categories used are physical, social, and motivational capacities and vulnerabilities. The physical capacities refer to material

resources while the motivational capacities refer to emotional support mechanisms. The social or organizational capacities and vulnerabilities category, which relate to this study, refer to the social fabric of a community. This includes the formal political structures and the informal systems through which people make decisions, establish leadership, or organize various social and economic activities. Social systems include family and community systems, and decision -making patterns within the family and between families.

2.4.1 Relevance of the theory

Analysis of capacities and vulnerabilities was crucial to this study because women's and men's roles in various forms of organization differ widely. Building on several case studies, Mary B. Anderson and Peter J. Woodrow (1989) used this theory to show that relief programmes are never neutral in their development impact. They present a simple framework for understanding the dynamic relationship between different people's needs, vulnerabilities and capacities. In this study, this theory provided the rationale and means for understanding gender roles and intrahousehold dynamics as they affect distribution and utilization of food aid.

2.5 Assumptions

1. Gender relations influence the way in which food aid is distributed.
2. Gender plays an important role in the utilization of food.
3. Capacities and vulnerabilities are differentiated by gender and influence decision making on utilization of food aid.

2.6 Definition of terms

Gender: is a social construct that defines differential roles of men and women, and of boys and girls. Gender can also be defined as a social construct of femininity and masculinity, which is enacted through learned rather than innate behaviours.

Food aid: is aid supplied as food commodities on grant or concessional terms. It includes donations of food commodities by governments, intergovernmental organizations (particularly the World Food Programme), and private voluntary or non-governmental organizations, monetary grants tied to food purchases, and sales and loans of food commodities on credit terms with a repayment period of three years or more (FAO: 1980).

Gender roles: the socially constructed roles and responsibilities ascribed to men and women. Gender roles are constructed to suit the needs and situations of the people at the household level.

Capacities: are the existing strengths in individuals and social groups. They are related to people's material and physical resources, their social resources and their beliefs and attitudes. They are built over time and determine people's ability to cope with crisis and recover from it.

Vulnerabilities: are the long-term factors, which weaken the ability of people to cope with sudden onset or drawn-out emergencies. They also make people more susceptible to disasters.

CHAPTER THREE

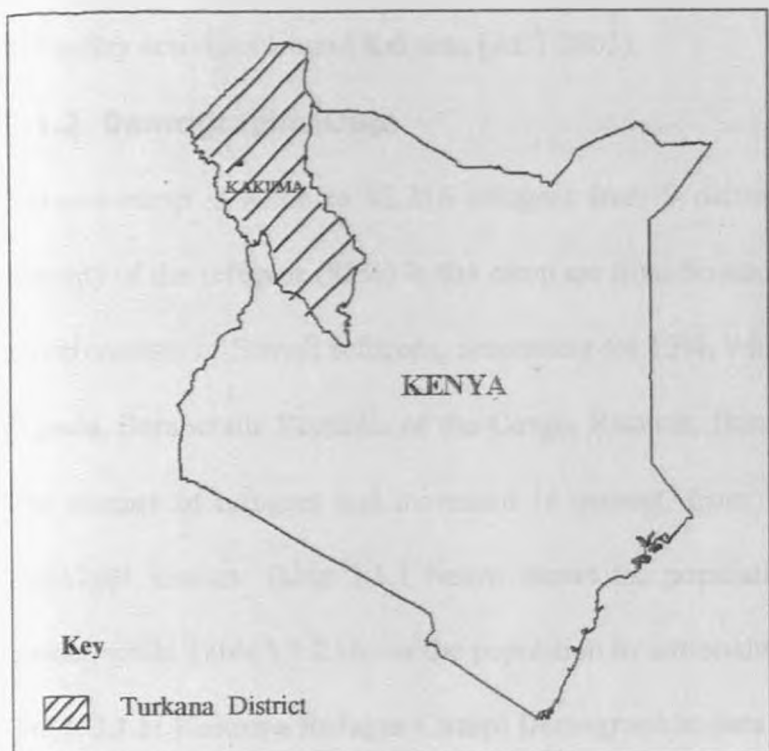
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research site

Kakuma is one of the divisions in Turkana District in Rift Valley Province. The area is classified as semi-arid; it is extremely hot and the vegetation is sparse. In 2001, the district experienced poor rains for the fifth consecutive year, a situation that has created severe famine and drought in the district. The available natural resources are barely sufficient to sustain the local population, which is mainly involved in pastoralism. Established in July 1992, Kakuma camp is located 120km south of the Sudanese border with a density of less than 0.05 inhabitants per hectare (Kenya Government, 2001).

3.1.1 Location

Kakuma Refugee Camp, situated in the arid Turkana District of Northwest Kenya,(map 3.1) is the second largest shelter site for refugees in the country after Dadaab. It is situated 95 km south of Lokichogio, about 120 km South of the Sudan/Kenya border and almost 1,000 km Northwest of Nairobi. Kakuma is one of the 17 administrative divisions in the District. The area is extremely hot and the vegetation, consisting mainly of shrubs and acacia trees, is sparse. The district's geographical position, low productivity of the land/environment and the low population have led to its marginalization. This is manifested in the absence and poor status of social and economic services and infrastructure.



Map 3.1: Location of Kakuma

The harsh climatic conditions and remoteness of the district have made the local Turkana host community among the poorest in Kenya. Water is in short supply in this area with an annual rainfall of about 200 mm and the land is not suitable for farming. Poverty in this region is caused by lack of resources other than livestock and poor integration in the rest of the economy. Recurrent droughts have exposed the local population to vicious cycles of famines, destitution and vulnerability. Those around Kakuma flock in the refugee camp in search of menial jobs in exchange for food rations with the refugees. With the assistance of UNHCR and other international NGOs that provide services to the refugees in the camp, the host community views the refugees as relatively well off. This situation leads to

friction between the refugees and the indigenous population of the area that is manifested in banditry activities around Kakuma (ACT 2003).

3.1.2 Demographic Data

Kakuma camp is home to 82,216 refugees from 9 different countries in Africa. The majority of the refugees (82%) in the camp are from Southern Sudan. The second largest group consists of Somali refugees, accounting for 15%, while the rest are from Ethiopia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Eritrea (ACT 2003). The number of refugees had increased 16 percent, from 70,958 to 82,148, during the 2000/2001 census. Table 3.1.1 below shows the population of the camp by age and gender, while Table 3.1.2 shows the population by nationality and gender.

Table 3.1.1: Kakuma Refugee Camp: Demographic data by age and gender

Age (in years)	0-5	6-17	18-25	26-55	56 +	Total
Female	7,290	10,628	5,346	9,349	748	33,361
Male	8,419	16,060	13,092	10,627	657	48,855
Total	15,709	26,688	18,438	19,976	1,405	82,216

(Source: Action by Churches Together (ACT) 2003)

Table 3.1.2: Kakuma Refugee Camp: demographic data by nationality and gender**Gender**

Country	Male	Female	Total
Sudan	34,682	21,898	56,580
Somalia	11,813	10,403	22,216
Ethiopia	1,693	628	2,321
Rwanda	128	96	224
Burundi	87	51	138
Uganda	181	135	316
D. Rep. Congo	232	145	377
Eritrea	19	4	23
Angola	1	1	2
Total	48,836	33,361	82, 197

(Source: Action by Churches Together (ACT) 2003)

A large proportion of the refugee situation has become protracted because the armed conflicts which originally forced people to leave their own country have dragged on for so many years, making it impossible for them to return to their homeland. Disintegration of the government in Somalia, political upheavals in Ethiopia and persisting and/or unresolved crises in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and Eritrea, continue to keep refugees from those countries in Kakuma. These refugees have been here for a long time without any concrete solutions and this situation is expected to persist in the near or even far future.

3.2 Sampling design

Questionnaire responses were obtained from a sample of refugees originating from four nations, namely, Somali, Sudan, Rwanda and Ethiopia, which had been picked randomly from the 9 nationality groupings within the camp. Simple random sampling method was used in drawing a household sample and the names of the household heads assigned numbers. A total of 100 names were selected to represent the same number of households in the final sample. Data was collected through house-to-house visits gathering both qualitative and quantitative data.

The key informant questionnaire targeted those working on gender issues as well as those working on development issues in general at the camp. Women's organization leaders were of special interest since they have information and insights about the situation of women within the camp.

3.3 Sample selection

The selection of a refugee camp for this study was purposive because refugees depend almost exclusively on international and host governments for food assistance. Having approximately 82,148 refugees from nine different countries, Kakuma Refugee Camp provided a typology of the food aid intervention situations, which occur most commonly. The universe consisted of all the refugees currently residing at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. The sampling frame was obtained from the latest UNHCR refugee census report. The household was the unit of analysis since it is the decision-making unit on food aid utilization. Due to time and resource limitations, only a sample of the refugee population

was interviewed. Stratified sampling was adopted to select 4 nationality groups from which using simple random sampling, a sample of 100 households was selected for interviews. The choice of 100 households was arbitrary and not based on sampling theory. This is because the research design was not only based on the survey method of data collection but also on qualitative methods of data collection. A combination of these methods offered different types of data so that the validity of one type could be verified by the other. Moreover, since the data were collected personally, it was only practical to deal with a manageable sample size.

Due to absenteeism and refusal to respond, only 96 households were interviewed. Probability sampling design gave each household in the population an equal chance of inclusion in the sample. Purposive sampling was adopted to arrive at appropriate respondents for focus group discussions and key informants.

3.4 Methods of data collection

3.4.1 Primary data

3.4.1.1 Structured interviews

Face-to-face interviews were administered to respondents in their various languages with the assistance of translators. The questionnaire contained 24 items, consisting of both open- and closed-ended questions. The household members were interviewed separately. The number of questions, their sequence and their wording remained identical for all respondents, as no question rewording or re-sequencing was encouraged. This ensured that any variation between responses was attributable to the actual differences between the respondents and not to variations in the

interviews. The advantage of using this method is that it enables one to collect quantifiable data. In addition, there was greater control over the interview situation and the exact time and place of the interview was also recorded. This allowed for interpretation of the answers more accurately. The method also had a higher response rate and was suitable because the majority of the respondent did not know how to read and write. The biggest disadvantage of this method is that it is time consuming.

3.4.1.2 Focus Group Discussions

Two guided group discussions were conducted with the aim of exploring further the issues on the utilization of food aid. Qualitative data collected from these discussions enriched the quantitative data obtained from structured interviews. The group participants were identified through the guidance of relief food workers. The groups consisted of men only, and women only groupings so as to get the disparity and/or similarities in the perception of the two genders. Each group consisted of six members. Focus group discussions were particularly useful as personal reactions were obtained and the cross-checking of different perceptions was possible through this method. The homogeneous group composition (based on gender) stimulated a more open attitude and active participation among interviewees than it would have been possible with another method.

3.4.1.3 Key informant interviews

To gain a broad overview of attitudes and practices of the group, interviews were conducted with respondents considered to be knowledgeable in the themes of the investigation. Purposive sampling was used to select the key informants. These included 7 adult refugees. To gain an in-depth knowledge on matters relating to food aid interventions at the camp, six food aid providers were also interviewed. These included staff from the Lutheran World Programme at the

distribution centres during the food distribution process. This method of data collection supplemented information collected by structured interviews and elicited vital information. The advantage with this method was that key informant interviews were carried out quickly. This is because of the small number of interviews involving knowledgeable informants. They therefore took shorter periods (about 2 to 3 weeks) and saved on time and money. The key informant interviews were also flexible and took into account responses on individual differences, situational changes and allowed for exploration of newly emerging ideas. They also provided in-depth, inside information as they came directly from knowledgeable informants.

3.4.1.4 Direct observation

This method was adopted in the course of fieldwork to compliment all the other methods of data collection. It involved participating in the food distribution exercise, which took place every fortnight. The researcher was also able to observe the refugees in their day-to-day activities at the household level as the face-to-face interviews involved visiting the respondents in their homes. Observation helped gather first-hand information on the involvement of men and women in the food distribution process and utilization of the same at the household level. This eliminated biases that might otherwise have been introduced if other methods alone had been used. The disadvantage was that the recorded observation might not have represented a wide enough population, thus limiting the scope for generalization. This disadvantage was, however, overcome through using a combination of various methods.

3.4.2 Secondary data sources

Documentary materials were major sources of data from the formulation stages of this study and throughout the research process. Books, journals, and reports, especially UNHCR reports, were consulted. More relevant materials were consulted at the UNHCR sub-office in Kakuma in the course of fieldwork. These, and other library sources, helped in establishing the current refugee population and situation. These secondary sources have been helpful in shaping the arguments and general direction of this study.

3.5 Problems encountered in the field

There were false expectations among respondents as the study touched on issues of major concern to the refugees. It was, therefore, critical to properly and carefully identify appropriate entry points and win the confidence of the community by explaining the purpose of the study. The refugees were also motivated by the questions to give opinions and complain beyond the scope of this study. Informants were especially curious about how they were going to benefit from the study. The expectation of increased food ration was particularly high. However, apart from slowing down the progress of fieldwork, this did not hinder the study. Language barrier was yet another problem. Consequently, the researcher had to rely on interpreters from the various communities represented in the camp in addition to relief workers' support. This meant spending more time with each respondent to get the questions understood.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

Qualitative data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions were interpreted after coding by establishing trends. This analysis has been used to explain the patterns of information collected. On the other hand, data collected through closed-ended questions was coded and fed into a computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The information has been presented in form of tables and a bar chart.

3.7 Ethical issues

As with all ethnographic studies, this study adhered to the code of ethics in conducting anthropological research. This involved seeking government permission to undertake the study and the consent of the respondents/ informants. In so doing, the nature of the research and its purpose was explained. The research also sought to conceal the informants' identity in order not to harm their safety, dignity and privacy. Names indicated on the interview schedules were pseudonymised during data analysis and presentation. To the concerned organizations, the results will be conveyed through the UNHCR office.

CHAPTER FOUR

FOOD AID INTERVENTION AND GENDER IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings on the food situation at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in the context of how it impacts negatively or positively on the relationship between men and women refugees. However, a short description and analysis of the respondents' food situation prior to flight is necessary in order to gain some insights into the problem. The respondents were asked to describe the food situation in their areas of origin. The situations varied greatly and this can be illustrated by a comparison of the formerly peasant communities of Ethiopia and the pastoral communities of southern Sudan. Although drought was recurrent in parts of Ethiopia, there was food security for the peasants who claimed that during previous famines they had moved freely from the affected regions. Civil war had, however, compounded the problem, leading to their flight. The pastoral Sudanese, on the other hand, related to a hot and dusty climate in the Sudan much close to the environment in Kakuma. Though they had moved from area to area in search of water and pasture, they relied heavily on their livestock for food.

Twenty-six per cent of the respondents indicated that the main cause of flight from their home countries was famine. These included families whose breadwinners had been killed in war and were facing starvation. They had been forced to sell their last possessions like oxen and goats, which were their main source of food. Although famine is a recurrent phenomenon in Turkana district, settling in the Kakuma camp is viewed as an assurance of basic food rations. Nearly 38 % had fled because of fear resulting from civil war. Other

main causes of flight include persecution, poverty and loss of property, which formed 36 %.

About 72 % of the respondents have been in Kakuma for over ten years. The memories of such respondents may have become blurred and they tend to focus on a past of plenty and prosperity. Broadly speaking, there are two categories of refugees in this camp:

- Rural refugees whose homeland is similar in terms of climatic and general physical conditions, as well as ethnicity.
- Urban groups with some intellectual or professional background, students or would-be students who already in their country of origin were disconnected from their original rural environment.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees facilitates the movement of refugees from the borders to the camp, the overwhelming majority having travelled long distances on foot. Lack of food, water and shelter combined with harsh environmental conditions along the way, leaves the refugees sick and malnourished, many succumbing to death. According to the respondents, most of the people who died en-route were the elderly, women and children. On arrival at the camp, the refugees are temporarily placed in a communal shelter and provided with cooked food rations. This facilitates their recovery as shelter arrangements and food ration cards are prepared to accommodate them in the camp. They are facilitated by UNHCR to put up shelters after which they can now prepare their own meals from the food rations availed to them once in every two weeks.

4.2 Characteristics of respondents

4.2.1 Religious affiliation

Table 4.1 shows the religious affiliation of the refugees by nationality.

Table 4.1: Religious affiliation by nationality

Religion	Sudanese	Ethiopian	Somali	Rwandese	Total	Percent
Christian	42	32	12	21	107	55.7
Muslim	6	11	31	27	75	39.1
Other	2	3	5	0	10	5.2
Total	50	46	48	48	192	100

Religious affiliation was used to characterize the respondents, because this influences the standards of living, health status, economic activity and household composition.

Although no open conflict seems to exist on religious grounds as such, there is some obvious resentment and mutual avoidance, not only between refugees and their hosts but even between Christian and Muslim refugees. Partly because of the religious differences, refugees tend to have conflicting views on issues like the role of women in society.

4.2.2 Marital status

Marital status, which otherwise translates into household composition, is another characteristic that was used to categorise respondents. In women-headed households, which comprised one third of the population, women act as both father and mother having to take care of the children and ensure that the family has enough food to eat. This household type results from various factors such as death of the male spouses, especially

on the war front, separation as some men go into hiding for fear of being suspected as rebels or, may be, combatants. Table 4.2 shows the marital status of the refugees by gender.

Table 4.2: Marital status by gender

MARITAL STATUS	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Married	55	64	119	61.9
Widowed	18	14	32	16.7
Separated	14	6	20	10.5
Divorced	11	10	21	10.9
Total	98	94	192	100

The majority of our respondents could only be classified under absolute poverty where absolute poverty implies closeness to survival margins in the satisfaction of basic needs. Nearly all of them live in very crowded conditions. The average dwelling space of the households is about three square metres per member. The median area of the refugee huts and shacks surveyed was 13 square metres and was used by an average of five persons, adults and children, per hut, for living, cooking, sleeping, socialization and for storage. Nearly all of the dwellings are single-room units. At least 26 per cent of the housing units are shared between two or more households. These housing conditions impact negatively on food preparation and storage, considering the scarcity of food.

4.3 Food situation at Kakuma Refugee Camp

Refugees almost entirely depend on external food sources mainly provided by the World Food Programme. Very harsh climatic conditions render food production practically impossible to meet the additional needs of feeding refugees. There is intense competition between the locals and refugees, both in business opportunities and in the meagre natural resources such as land, firewood and water sources, whose access and use appears to generate perpetual rivalries between locals and refugees. The refugees have been accused of shifting market prices by driving food prices up and the wages down in the area. In addition, the refugee policy of the Government of Kenya currently provides for encampment of refugees. This arrangement denies the refugees opportunities for free movement, employment, business, and local integration. Refugees are encouraged to stay within the camp by restricting movement within the country. Through the long tedious process of applying for travel documents, refugees are increasingly being confined to their camps. This renders the refugees almost completely dependent on international humanitarian assistance for food and other supplies.

After more than ten years of existence, the main priority of the refugees has been on emergency food supplies which are threatened by UNHCR budget constraints. Under these circumstances, the refugees risk to slide into a life-threatening situation, triggering a more costly intervention to provide life-saving health care. A developmental rather than an emergency approach has been used which requires financial assistance as well as food aid. Ensuring that refugees have access to the basic requirements for dignified life has been the main task of the UNHCR, its donors and implementing partners. This, however, has not

been an easy task in the face of diminishing donor funding. The situation here is one of a chronic emergency of complex origins. The organizations working here have been involved in costly and complicated 'care-and-maintenance' programmes. WFP has been forced to reduce by more than 30 per cent the food rations distributed to refugees from 2,166 kilocalories per refugee per day to 1,400 due to lack of funds (WFP 2000). This has meant constant food shortages among the refugee households, leading to untold suffering.

As camp managers and the lead-implementing agency, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is directly responsible for ensuring the provision of food, water and sanitation facilities to the entire refugee population of the camp. They are charged with the responsibility of implementing general food distribution twice a month, i.e., on the 1st and 16th day of each month. Each food distribution cycle takes a minimum of four days. The Logistics Officer in charge of the activity in collaboration with other staff of the Logistics Department, prepare a food distribution plan for the various family sizes (number of persons per family). The actual assistance provided is basic and relatively sufficient but with global attention and charity being directed towards other refugees such as the Afghans, resources for Kakuma are drying up and this is having adverse effect on the refugees.

The camp water system consists of 7 boreholes, 3 booster stations and 26 reservoir tanks. An extensive piping system supplies water to tap stands located within an average distance of 85 metres of each group settlement. Each refugee is provided with an average of 10 litres of water per day (ACT 2000). Stringent rules concerning water use are in place.

water use are in place. Water pumps are activated at specified times of the day for a limited duration within which each household should fetch water for the day's use. During dry spells, which are usually prolonged in this district, the water available to each household is reduced as the water level reduces considerably. According to ACT (2003:12), "Kakuma experiences a dry spell between October and April every year (normal long dry season). During this period the yields of camp boreholes drastically drop to the extent that serious water rationing must be implemented". The cost of pumping water has also increased over the years coupled with declining funding, further subjecting the refugees to insufficient water supplies.

4.4 Gender considerations in food aid distribution

The first objective of this study was to assess gender considerations in food aid distribution. The participation of individual members of households in the food aid distribution programmes was examined. This was meant to test the assumption that gender considerations influence the way in which food aid is distributed. Quantitative data was disaggregated by sex to ensure some degree of gender equity in data collection and interpretation of statistical data. To achieve a level of equality, efforts were made to include almost equivalent numbers of both women and men in the study sample by involving both spouses in the households selected (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Gender representation in the study sample by nationality

Gender	Sudanese	Ethiopian	Somali	Rwandese	Total	Percent
Men	23	26	17	32	98	51
Women	27	20	31	16	94	49
Total	50	46	48	48	192	100

As indicated in Table 4.4 above, the population of males is 2% greater than that of females. However, when compared with data obtained from the UNHCR Sub-office in Kakuma, a large proportion of the population consists of people with special needs, i.e., children, adolescents, women and the elderly. Just over a half of the population is aged below 18. Reasons given as to why vulnerable refugees are generally 'over-represented' include: -

- Able-bodied men are most likely to have left the camp to look for work elsewhere.
- Refugees who are able to survive without assistance may not choose to live in a camp but will prefer to be 'spontaneously settled' in their country of asylum or repatriated.
- Some refugee households choose to disperse in different locations or camps in order to minimize risk and maximize opportunities (Silva, 2002:12).

All refugees within the camp are entitled to equal food rations of food aid, regardless of age and sex. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has established household size ration cards, which are issued to refugees upon registration. Members of each household are issued with one card reflecting the household size, meaning that larger households get proportionally more food rations. These cards are used at the food

distribution centres where any member of the household is at liberty to receive food on behalf of the entire household. Upon the birth or death of any member of the household, authorities are notified and changes reflected on the ration cards. Supplementary feeding for pregnant and lactating women is also provided at the camp.

At the distribution centre people queue up, show their ration card, which indicates how much food they are entitled to, and then move patiently from one food scooper to another.

Widows with children are the worst victims of this process of food distribution. Queuing up for hours is not a pleasant event. Women have to collect rations especially when they are the heads of households and their children if any are too young for the activity. They claimed to have been pushed out of the way in the rush for food at the distribution centres. There were six reported cases alleging harassment of women by men and security forces at the food collection points. It is not easy to address these problems in a situation where most of the camp officials are men. Twenty-three percent of refugee women proposed to have separate queues for men and women to avoid harassment of women by a section of the security forces.

One of the major problems faced by the agencies staff is the arrogance of some refugees. Refugees often have a tendency to demand assistance by force. As a consequence, in most cases food distributors who are assisting the refugees on the ground are the likely first targets of their attack when they are not satisfied with the assistance or services rendered to them by the international community. This is a common occurrence, considering that the World Food Programme has been forced to reduce the food rations distributed to

refugees from 2,166 kilocalories per person per day, to 1,400 kilocalories due to lack of resources. Though the food and non-food items distributed vary from time to time depending on the funding available, Table 4.5 below shows a list of items distributed within the period of this study.

Table 4.5: Food and non-food items distributed and quantity per person over a period of two weeks.

Items provided	Maize	Wheat flour	Pulses ¹	salt	Vegetable oil	soap
Quantity per person	3 kgs	3 kgs	3kgs	1 lid ²	1/2 cup ³	10 cm bar*

Key

1. Not always available
2. 50 litre jerrycan lid
3. Tea cup

* for all household needs

Random checks on the weights of the food items distributed are performed to ensure a uniform rate of scooping of food items for all the beneficiaries. Problems of 'unfamiliar' or 'untraditional' foods tend to arise, especially when refugees first arrive at the camp. Thirty- eight per cent of the respondents argued that special consideration has to be given to the desire of refugees to be provided with their traditional foods.

Table 4.6 below shows the gender participation in food aid distribution by nationality.

Table 4.6: Distribution of food ration by gender and nationality

Gender	Sudanese	Ethiopian	Somali	Rwandese	Total	Percent
Men	10	8	16	11	45	23.4
Women	13	7	12	15	47	24.5
Both	27	31	20	22	100	52.1
Total	50	46	48	48	192	100

These figures refer to the persons involved in the collection of food rations for their particular households and for other households who are not able to collect their food on their own behalf due to illness and old age, among other factors. In the study area, the roles related to food distribution vary narrowly among the various communities and there is not much variation between gender roles.

Food distribution also involves refugees in other ways such as loading and off-loading of food items onto or from trucks, scooping of rations for recipients and building of distribution shelters. These activities are paid for by the organizations, mainly the Lutheran World Program, thereby creating employment for the refugees. It was observed that men are usually involved in heavy task jobs such as lifting of sacks of grains and building activities. Other more technical jobs like supervision of the entire food distribution process are usually allocated to non-refugees. Women, on the other hand, find jobs in the scooping of food rations. However, using women to distribute food aid does not always mean that they are empowered by the process or even that adequate amount reaches their

households. WFP is adamant: the agency commits itself to use its resources in interventions that seek to reduce gender-related inequalities. The reasoning is that giving food to women is the best way to fight hunger and poverty. Women are the ones who prepare the food for the family and so by giving it to them, WFP knows that it will not be diverted to buy alcohol or cigarettes. Despite WFP's support, each individual woman has to battle to be heard in her community. Women that work at the distribution centres have managed to achieve prominent positions in the community.

In the assessment of operations at distribution centres, LWF staff were found to often interpret WFP operational guidelines on gender sensitivity in food aid distribution to mean the successful targeting of women in food aid. This overlooks the complex structures behind women's gender specific vulnerability. There is also scope to redress gender inequalities, which may have worsened during the emergency by upholding women's rights and access to resources. Food, money and other basic necessities have been difficult to come by, thereby making provision for a family exceptionally difficult. Quantitative data indicate that 67% of the households source supplementary food from other sources. Almost the only avenue open to both men and women is petty commerce.

At Kakuma camp like in many protracted refugee situations in Africa, refugees have been provided with a very conditional form of asylum. On Kenyan soil, they benefit from being allowed to remain there and not to be forcibly sent back to their home countries. Inside Kenya, however, they enjoy neither basic freedoms available to nationals nor the somewhat restricted but still generous rights enshrined in the 1951 convention. The right

to asylum in the country is, implicitly but emphatically, premised upon their complying with certain restrictive conditions (Jamal 2000). One of the rights denied to many of Africa's long-term refugees is the ability to engage in agricultural, wage earning and income generating opportunities. Even in Kakuma where land within the camp is available to refugees, the soil is not fertile and rainfall is unreliable.

While restrictions on their freedom of movement make it difficult for them to engage in trade, a wide range of economic activities undoubtedly take place in and around the camp. Most of these people have known livestock as their only economic base for the better part of their lives and only knew about business when they started living at the camp. Many are reluctant to abandon the nomadic way of life, or find it hard to practice it side by side with business. However, many refugees work hard out of the feeling that they lack a government to rely on and a place they can call a home, as opposed to the locals who feel they are at home and are not as desperate as refugees. Refugees also do business out of necessity. This is because many of those who rear livestock are not free to graze them deep into the forest for fear of retribution from the locals who are against their keeping of animals. They, therefore, keep fewer animals and supplement livestock keeping with business in order to survive, as the food rations given to them are hardly enough. At the end of the day, therefore, the locals are no match for refugees in business matters, especially the Ethiopian and Somali refugees who were formerly staying in urban centres and doing business as their source of earning a livelihood before they were displaced.

Good infrastructure, mainly the UNHCR offices, is available within the camp due to the presence of humanitarian organizations. Availability of facilities and services within the camp such as hospitals appear to favour most commercial activities. Business seems to flourish more at the actual camps than at Kakuma town. The main reason for this trend seems to be the fact that there are more people inside the camps than at Kakuma. Kiosks, butcheries, restaurants, bars and video theatres, among others, and small business enterprises, are being undertaken despite the hostile environment.

Bicycle taxis busily traverse the roads in the camp, carrying customers on their back seats. This form of transport, commonly known as *boda boda*, is a common income-generating activity solely run by young men between the camps and Kakuma town. For the majority of the female refugees, one means of livelihood is from small makeshift shops inside the camps. Those, especially from Somalia and Ethiopia, who have enough money to run kiosks sell miscellaneous goods and vegetables. Only 7% of the respondents were earning wages from the agencies' jobs. Such information points to the fact that the level of income among the refugee population in Kakuma is very low. Some refugees (12%) rely upon remittances sent to them by family members who have succeeded in moving to another part of the world. Refugees assist one another across international borders because of family obligations and ethnic solidarity. Those without access to remittances depend on the generosity of friends and family who share their resources. Respondents stated that most of their small amounts of money was being spent on food to supplement the rations. This is done to the detriment of everything else, education, shelter, sanitation and health.

All respondents pointed out that the major resource that they lacked was sufficient food and were particularly concerned that the food assistance was decreasing.

Lack of purchasing power, coupled with some traditional food habits, have resulted in severe nutritional deficiencies, especially among the vulnerable groups. Though no special consideration has been given to the needs created by the desire of refugees to retain their own culture, nutritional improvement programmes have been initiated. These programmes involve supplementary feeding and are integrated with basic health services for mothers and pre-school children to reduce the high incidence of malnutrition. Although inability to generate income seems to cut across the refugees, the women were most hit because they had difficulty in trying to secure alternative means of livelihood. Compared to their life before flight, the women had not, for the most part, reduced their working hours. Having to source for water and firewood under difficult circumstances leaves little time for other activities. Fifty two percent of the women interviewed, however, admitted being able to run small-scale businesses within the camp to generate an income. These activities do not generate so much money but still, these women expressed positive feelings about being able to supplement the food aid. Married women did not have significantly different economic activities from single women, though men are able to control their earning by giving or denying them money. Twenty-three percent of the married women interviewed related to incidents of money spent by their spouses on drinking or other women.

Women in reproductive age, who were either pregnant or nursing, described raising children in a foreign country as the most challenging task. The challenges described include experiencing a life event with little or no access to social support, in addition to lack of basic needs such as food. In conformity with traditional beliefs that the main purpose of a marriage is to produce children, together with limited use of modern contraceptives, childbearing and rearing was estimated to continue being a challenge.

The option left then is for non-governmental interveners to become innovative interveners. The long-term refugee situation has produced a kind of refugees who survive on refugee assistance and have lost their motivation and/or willingness to be self-reliant. Many refugees have and continue to be born and brought up in the refugee camp, thus only knowing the life in the camps or refugee life styles. The first group of refugees in Kakuma, having arrived in 1992, have been living as refugees since then without any means or even intention to be self-reliant. Addressing the situation, a senior staff member of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) observes that "one of the most striking features of Kakuma refugee camp is the extent to which after more than 10 years of existence, it remains almost entirely dependent on international assistance for all aspects of its operations". 'Donor fatigue', he explains, "as manifested by stagnant and reducing funding levels, despite increases in population and continued failures to meet minimum international humanitarian standards of service provision, is part of the operating environment for agencies such as IRC, working in a protracted refugee setting"(Crisp 2002).

The refugee situation also harbours the 'short term' visions and 'quick' solutions, thus discouraging the experience of achieving long term-planned objectives. Many refugees blame their failures for lack of resources to external and environmental factors. In any case, the importance of self-reliance is no more emphasized than anything else in this difficult refugee camp situation. The main priority of the refugees is still centred on emergency food supplies. Lack of evidence of any internally driven food provision effort points to the dependency on food aid provision. With the food aid intervention, the dependent system has subsequently developed and has continued to deepen the poverty situation in the camp.

In summary, the data presented shows that while the resources are dwindling, on the one hand, the needs of the refugees continue to grow in size and dynamism, on the other. Given the environmental, political and social conditions in Kakuma, the vast majority of refugees entirely depend on food aid. Following the adoption by the UNHCR of a policy that called for the improvement of participation and access to resources of refugee women in all programmes, LWP has constantly encouraged women's participation in food distribution activities.

4.5 Gender roles in the utilization of food aid at the household level

The second objective of this study was to assess the effect of gender roles in the utilization of food aid at the household level. The division of labour among individual members of households was examined. This was meant to test the assumption that gender plays an important role in the utilization of food aid.

Until displacement, a clear division between men's and women's tasks characterizes relations among many African communities and the resources needed to perform these roles. Broadly speaking, men take responsibility for large livestock in pastoral communities over which they have total control. It is the responsibility of women to take care of the small stock, including goats and sheep, while men move from place to place in search of pasture and water. In agricultural communities, men are in charge of the cultivation of cash crops, the income from which is used to feed the household, among other expenses. Women help their husbands on the family farms following a fairly strict division of labour in which the heaviest tasks are reserved for men. When people flee from disaster or conflict, their lives change rapidly and dramatically. Refugees lose their national status and form new social networks along with new roles. These issues may be very different for women and for men and this study was designed to identify these differences.

Most (87%) of the communities within Kakuma camp were traditionally rural and relied on agriculture and/or pastoralism for livelihood. About 76% of the respondents claimed to having been self-reliant for household food requirements prior to displacement. The traditional gender division of labour and roles was disrupted by flight. From the individual house-to-house in-depth studies, it was explained that in their countries of origin there was sufficient food and those who did not have enough could easily be assisted. At the camp, various factors have impacted on gender relations. Within the household, the division of labour has changed from being a relatively clear one to being blurred. The study further learnt that a good percentage (78%) of the males interviewed still hold onto their

traditional attitudes of female discrimination in resource sharing. This seventy-eight percent believe strongly that women have no authority to own property or make major household decisions.

The division of labour has, however, become much more flexible in the camp. This has come about through necessity and has resulted in a huge burden of work for women. The provision of school feeding programmes encourages parents to send children to school but this means that women have to perform duties that their children would otherwise have assisted. Even in long-term refugee settlements where women and men's roles seem to have stabilized, they are different from those in pre-flight conditions and were regarded as temporary by 64% of the refugees. From the study findings, gender roles related to food aid utilization varied among the various nationality groups. Table 4.6 shows the gender roles in the utilization of food ration at the household level.

Table 4.7: Distribution of food rations at the household level by gender and nationality

Gender	Sudanese	Ethiopian	Somali	Rwandese	Total	Percent
Men	13	18	3	22	56	29.2
Women	23	19	26	15	83	43.2
Both	14	9	19	11	53	27.6
Total	50	46	48	48	192	100

Once food aid is collected from the distribution centre and is available to individual households, the responsibility of food preparation and sharing lay on women in 43.2% of the cases. Women, whether in marriage or as single heads of families, have had to take responsibility for managing food aid provisions for their families. This involves fetching of water and firewood, which are not easily available. In the event that food is insufficient, 56% of the women interviewed preferred to give first priority to the children, second priority to the men and women only get the last share of the food. The reasons for the prioritization ranged between vulnerability to starvation, and cultural obligation. The most salient gender-related issues that emerged relate to differences between men and women with regard to general susceptibility to infections and nutritional deficiencies. These are exacerbated during pregnancy and lactation.

Generally, societal perceptions and values are reflected in household members' behaviour and the habits so formed are somewhat uniform among the occupants of the camp. Evidence of the central role of women in food processing among the people under study is highlighted by our findings. Though traditional roles and responsibilities incline individuals to particular gender roles, there is growing attention to gender issues which goes beyond the traditional concern with women and children as passive victims to a recognition of men's and women's different needs, interests, vulnerabilities, capacities and coping strategies (Byrne and Baden 1995). Participation in training workshops, discussions and group enterprises, has contributed to women's changes in their roles. As expressed by one Somali woman: "...our mothers taught us to obey and work without

complaining. In Kakuma, we are opening our eyes. Here women are different from before...".

A positive outcome of the refugee situation is the widespread acceptance of women's role in community affairs. Sixty percent of the women in the camp are active members of one or more women groups. Women's groups of different sorts have become a positive coping mechanism. From here women claimed to derive means of support and engage in community affairs. Though it is essential to recognize the positive outcomes of food aid, it has also brought in its own problems. Emergencies are times of disempowerment and loss for both men and women and it is important not to further erode their positions. Distribution mechanisms tend to undermine men's traditional areas of authority such as provision of the family's basic needs. Men are generally free for the better part of the day, only getting back to their households for meals and accommodation in the night. Lack of productive activities has made it impossible for men to be able to make constructive use of their time. Relief programmes, which also fail to recognize women's responsibilities in the home management, have put on them pressure, by increasing their responsibilities. This may have led to incidents such as giving sex in return for food.

Only 41% of the households had enough food to last them from one distribution session to the next. This forced the remaining 59% of the households to limit their number of meals per day. On average, 52% of the households have one meal a day, 36% have two meals and 12% have three meals a day. That some families went without food due to shortcomings in the registration process was highlighted in the focus group discussions.

Households have sometimes to share their food rations with friends and relatives whose ration cards are found faulty or their serial numbers are lacking in the distribution list at any distribution cycle, thereby being denied their share. LWP food distribution officials at the distribution centres confirmed that some ration card numbers are sometimes found missing in the distribution manifest. There are three food distribution centres at the Kakuma Refugee Camp, each serving a bigger population than the planned capacity. This makes it difficult for the officials to follow up each individual case as it appears. Food Distribution Centre III (FDC III) is the worst affected. Initially designed to handle 20,000, it is now accommodating 44,000 refugees. This has negatively affected the quality of service in terms of accountability, speed, and monitoring of food distribution.

Time-tabling of water availability and ration distributions have an impact on women. In Kakuma camp, centres for supplementary feeding and general food rations were in separate sites. This means that a woman with children requiring several types of support had difficulties accessing all the facilities needed. At the household level, no significant difference was found in net food availability between households headed by men and those headed by women.

Despite the general food shortage, a significant minority is able to retain some financial and nutritional independence through food trade. The type of food provided by the agencies necessitates additional fuel, increasing the need to sell part of the ration in order to buy firewood. LWP officials confirmed being aware of the exchange and attributed it to the inability of the organization to meet all the needs of the refugees. The most commonly

traded for items include firewood, vegetables and maize flour. Eighty-nine percent relied solely on firewood provided by UNHCR though this only met part of their total cooking energy requirements. Many families without an alternative source of income resorted to collecting firewood within the surroundings and there had been cases of firewood-related rapes or assaults by the local population. Indeed, some refugees still sleep without eating even when they have food due to lack of firewood (ACT 2003).

The gender role analysis profile revealed that women are extensively preoccupied with household chores, leading to systematic exclusion from community work and decision-making. In the house-to-house data collection, women were found to be more actively involved in the preparation and sharing of food among household members. Sixty-four percent of the women in the camp were solely responsible for maintaining their family group. Many had either been widowed, or their husbands had joined the guerrilla opposition forces back in their home countries. Many women were looking after orphans in addition to their own children. Certain categories of households headed by women under specific conditions such as those with disabled children were indeed observed to be the most vulnerable. In the Sudan community, representatives identified widows as most vulnerable to food shortages. This is because of having limited access to alternative food sources and not having access to support from the male relatives whose traditional social obligation has broken down. In this respect, it was noted that gender sensitivity without cultural knowledge is ineffective.

Women are forced by circumstances to take on new responsibilities, in spite of attempts to reassert traditional gender roles. Conditions such as insufficient household food security and dietary intake leading to malnutrition, increase the women's vulnerability in this resource poor environment. Shortage of water accessibility translates into difficult living conditions in a place where the mean daily temperatures are above 35degrees Centigrade. Despite this, women have to source for water for drinking and other domestic uses-cooking, bathing and washing.

Women's organizations within the camp have been established by organizations working within the camp with the intention of upgrading women's standards, rather than at the instigation of the refugee women themselves. UNHCR's support to women's participation is assisting women to become stronger advocates of their needs. At the grassroots level, women are building on the new skills acquired and on new social organizations formed, such as informal sector traders among Ethiopians living within the camp. The organizations have become vital to rebuilding civil society and in promoting women's participation in decision-making. Women tend to feel satisfied with their present role. Some women thrive on their increased status as cultural guardians, or as mothers.

In conclusion, this session has attempted to document the gender aspects in the utilization of food aid at the household level. The data presented confirms the assumption that gender plays an important role in the utilization of food ration with women taking up the greater share of responsibility. Despite the increased responsibility women have had to shoulder as

family providers, they have limited access to the resources they need to meet this responsibility.

4.6 The impact of gender capacities and vulnerabilities on decision-making regarding the utilization of food aid

The third objective of this study was to assess the impact of gender roles on decision-making regarding utilization of food aid. The assumption that decisions on utilization of food aid are based on gender-determined capacities and vulnerabilities was consequently examined. Though various factors impact on decision-making regarding the use of food aid, the study findings show that the culture of male supremacy is a major factor. Men have almost absolute control of all resources. According to the household survey, only in female-headed households did decisions regarding food aid utilization lie entirely on the woman.

Many food intervention programmes in this camp have failed to achieve the prescribed purpose because efforts have been focussed mainly on the distribution process, with little or no consideration of the utilization of the same at the household level, which is marked by an overarching male-dominated culture. When only men are targeted, women not only lose access to food but also influence over food management, an area where they previously had control. The Lutheran World Federation encourages women's participation in the food aid distribution process, arguing that targeting women often makes more sense, particularly where female headship and polygyny are common. This strengthens the women's bargaining position in the household. However, involving women in the

distribution process does not necessarily translate into their empowerment in decision-making at the household level. In focus group discussions, it was apparent that most women were stereotypically most suited to activities such as family and child welfare, household work, etc. On the other hand, men were assumed to be the only breadwinners and women and children their dependants. Many of the stereotypes about women were explained to be culturally based.

Though cultural boundaries are flexible and food aid interventions have taken advantage of this, the refugees in general take a great deal of pride in the past glory of their traditional lifestyles prior to conflicts that led to their flight. As much as some of their cultures have gone through changes to suit their current lifestyle, some salient aspects that prevent the emancipation and empowerment of the women have persisted. Women especially face many barriers when they participate in discussion and assessment of needs, and are rarely involved in planning or policy making in emergency situations.

Decisions about when to cut food rations seem to have been triggered by WFP announcements that not enough food is available for the whole population, rather than on the basis of any actual reduction in need. The informants expressed a desire for WFP officials to directly involve refugees in planning for types of food and quantity to be provided. There was an emphasis on community participation that includes community involvement in decision-making. Though 70% of the food advisory committees were reported to consist of women, their views are underrepresented. The delivery of emergency and relief assistance officials blamed the situation on most women's inability to

participate in these meetings due to various factors such as language barrier. Most of them are illiterate and meeting proceedings have to be translated into local languages to enable women's participation in food advisory committees. The committees have also to encourage women to enroll in English courses offered within the camp. This is envisaged to encourage women to participate in decision-making so as to utilize the total community potential and generally enhance respect and awareness of refugee rights through gender equitable programming. The refugees' household food security and coping mechanisms are expected to improve as a result.

The need to involve the refugees themselves as far as possible at all stages in planning and executing programmes aimed at assisting them, was emphasized by key informants and in focus group discussions. Complaints that the quality and quantity of food assistance has declined arose in all the focus group discussions held. The older informants claimed that when the first group of refugees arrived in 1992 they received more items in the food basket as compared to today. The food ration is not only insufficient in terms of quality but also quantity in that it does not last the 15 days it is provided for. Over 31% of the informants complained that the quantity and quality of food was inadequate. Others, particularly widows and single mothers, indicated that vegetables were extremely scarce and inaccessible to the majority of the people. Vegetables and fruits are sold in the kiosks within the camp but not many can afford to buy them.

Negative effects of long-term displacement in the camp, such as loss of one's identity, loss of good role models, loss of income sources, and so on, are particularly serious on the

youth, especially male refugees. The authority of males as bread earner or through a traditional role as the head of the family somewhat weakens in the camp. Camp conditions have had important consequences for relationships within the population. The case in Kakuma closely compares to Turner's observations in his study of Burundian refugees in Tanzania. "What is perceived to be lost", Turner suggests, "is the old social order, and this can be seen in women's lack of respect for men, in children's lack of respect for adults"(Turner 2001). The conditions of life encountered in the camp challenge the authority of patriarchy. The refugees depict the UNHCR as the father or husband. It was indeed observed that divorced women have equal access to food rations as the married, which is proof that female refugees can obtain the ration regardless of male existence in the family. There were about 16% divorce cases in the camp. As part of UNHCR policy, the female-headed households may receive additional assistance as a vulnerable group and may even increase chance of resettlement in a third country.

As people are appointed to lead refugee communities and NGOs focus largely on empowering women, the traditional male role seems to be disappearing and men start to feel worthless and insignificant. These circumstances are having particular impact on adolescent refugees and young men who are unable to assume traditional male roles after puberty, and who have little prospect of establishing a sustainable livelihood. A common finding in discussions in this study is that this age group is particularly prone to engaging in negative coping mechanisms, including various forms of delinquent or anti-social behaviour. The camp managers have as a result set up various activities, such as games, to

involve the youth who spend their days without much to do and get themselves in trouble from time to time.

Many households showed signs of profound disintegration and an absence of the conditions necessary for integration into the camp life. This is particularly the case in the absence of the male head of the household. The household is weakened and disintegrated by a continuous exodus of its young and healthy members in search of jobs and education outside the camp. The women have had to take up the role of decision-maker in addition to that of breadwinner, contrary to tradition, therefore very difficult. The situation is precarious for them, as they are psychologically and occupationally unprepared for what they have to do particularly when they are forced to go out and make a living for themselves and their children. Some of these tasks are abhorrent to their own dignity but with survival at risk, they have little or no choice.

Lacking a privileged social or political status, refugees sometimes take steps to maximize the assistance they receive, so as to support themselves and their households. Some of these steps include obstructing re-registration exercises that might lead to a reduction of relief entitlements, ration card fraud and sales, and keeping children deliberately undernourished so they qualify for special feeding programmes. Refugee women, in particular, have resorted to a variety of survival strategies in order to make ends meet and to come to terms with the difficult conditions in which they find themselves, especially for the female heads of households. These women are particularly susceptible to depending on relationships with men as a way of sustaining themselves financially. Some refugee women

are also involved in selling alcoholic drinks and prostitution which is regarded by the more conservative groups as a serious affront to their cultural and moral values. In some situations, refugee girls are sent to work as domestic labourers in other households. While such strategies represent a short-term solution to the inadequacies of international assistance, they ultimately expose these people to even greater risks and hardships. And in this respect, women are especially vulnerable.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

Food aid interventions at the Kakuma Refugee camp provide the basic food requirements for the refugees. Most refugees have access to food aid or are, indeed, entitled to equal food rations of food aid regardless of age and sex. One of the main challenges facing the refugees is dependency on food aid. Located in a remote and semi-arid part of the country, Kakuma refugee camp is almost totally devoid of an investment or development activity. Among other factors, this has rendered the refugees almost completely dependent on international humanitarian aid. This dependency is a clear indication of their low level of integration into the Kenyan economy. It also indicates that in spite of the length of their residence at Kakuma, ten years for the majority, a very large proportion of the study population are far from attaining food self-reliance. From the study results, most of them were not yet able to provide bare subsistence for their families.

The economic integration of refugees in Kakuma Camp is far from reaching the targets and expectations of the UNHCR. Unemployment and underemployment rates are very high among all categories of refugees. Only a minority have jobs of a permanent nature. Incomes are very low and the majority of refugee households find it extremely difficult to fend for themselves. Despite the efforts of the international humanitarian organizations and the refugees themselves, lack of adequate food has severely handicapped other development projects in the camp.

The absolute dependency of refugees on food aid is evident from their purchasing power or consumption. It was found that 36 per cent of the households in the survey were unable or barely able to buy food to substitute food aid rations, which are in themselves insufficient. When asked to compare their present standard of living with what they had when they were in their own country, 74 per cent of the respondents answered that they had become poorer, 18 per cent had the same standard of living and 8 per cent were better off. The study findings suggest that the refugees' ability to establish their own livelihoods and to supplement the meager levels of assistance they receive is negligible.

Although gender equality has somehow been achieved in food aid distribution, this study observed that gender inequalities emerge within the households in food utilization. Women are extensively preoccupied with household chores, being more actively involved in the preparation and sharing of food among household members. Being responsible for maintaining their family groups, they are often obliged to give high priority to the children and men. The men maintain the headship of households, often making major decisions regarding food distribution within the household. The coping mechanisms employed most often by the women did not radically differ from those used by the men. Although unemployment and underemployment rates are very high among all categories of refugees, female-headed households find it extremely difficult to fend for themselves. This is because unemployment and underemployment more adversely affect refugee women than men. Even in employment requiring no great skills, women find themselves competing with the men who regard them as a threat. While most of the refugee population is uneducated, lack of skills and education is mostly a women's challenge. Since most of the

refugees who find employment do so on wage basis, the system of wage bargaining entails tricks and pitfalls which refugee women complained of not only being paid less but are in some cases refused remuneration after they have completed their assignments. This is accounted for mainly by the relative segregation of women even within the refugee community.

Social interaction between refugees and the rest of the community was found to contribute to their economic handicap. Being more isolated and less integrated than men exacerbates the situation for women. Segregation minimizes their chance of forming social relationships, affecting not only their own socio-economic absorption but also that of their entire household. They often have to engage in multiple activities to make ends meet. These include self-employment in petty trade within the camp, and in activities that require minimal training such as shopkeeping, hairdressing and cooking food. Only 2 per cent of females heading households had any form of employment.

Although men are more involved in wage employment, women have a heavy responsibility in the camp's economic and social life. The change of their roles happened all of a sudden and without any prior preparation, psychological or otherwise. The social and economic conditions in the camp environment conflict with their newfound roles. For the female heads of households, adjustment to their new role as heads of households is made more difficult by lack of sufficient food. While back at home most of the women, particularly those from agricultural communities, were responsible for social production and reproduction, but are now the bread winners. They were administrators of the home and

the family, while the role of breadwinner was the responsibility of the menfolk. This has made the gender division of labour much more flexible at the refugee camp in comparison to the refugees' traditional gender roles.

Whereas men's ability to provide for their families has been severely curtailed by the ecological and legal circumstances, food aid distribution imposes an additional labour burden on women. Food aid interventions are commonly dominated by logistic considerations - how many tonnes of grains are needed, how many people have to be provided with food, etc. This has meant that technical personnel (often short-term) with little or no training in social analysis, are brought in to manage highly complex social and cultural responses in refugee situations. The prioritization of speed of delivery has often precluded proper discussion with the affected people, overlooked gender considerations and resulted in inappropriate and therefore ineffective responses.

Generally, women face various challenges as opposed to men in accessing food rations for their households, the major one being harassment on the food queues. This is the case where both men and women are served on the same queues as there is a lot of pushing and shoving around, resulting in women, particularly pregnant ones, being pushed aside. Food utilization at the household level, which entails daily management, food budgeting and food preparation, also imposes additional labour burdens on women. In accomplishing these responsibilities, they have to collect firewood and water. This labour burden subsequently translates into a critical constraint on women's full participation in decision-making processes. This is summarized in Fig. 5.1 below.

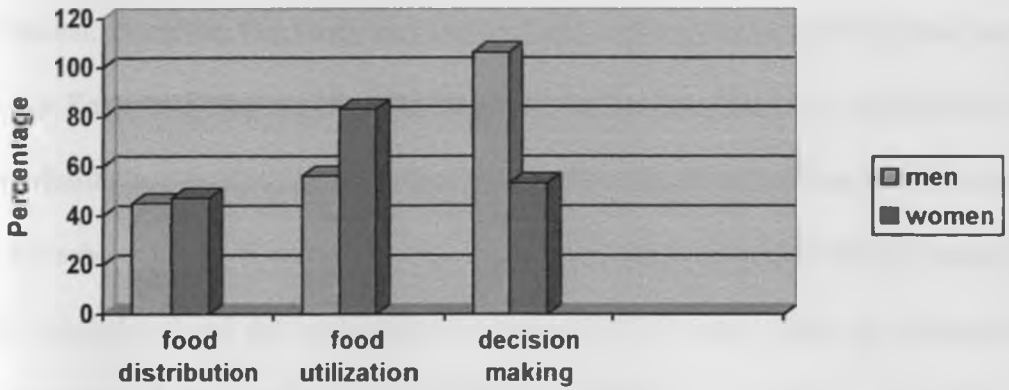


Fig. 5.1 Gender variations in food distribution, utilization and decision making

Women's roles in the survival of their families and communities are critical and therefore their ability to survive and support others must be seen holistically. Their capacity to cope in refugee situations depends not only on access to the food aid provisions, but also on various community fora in which their needs can be addressed, as equal and active community members. This should enable women to contribute as fully as possible to the survival of the whole refugee population.

Given the length of time involved, it has become evident that assistance is needed not only for subsistence and survival, but also in terms of developing individual capacities for growth and independence. Thus, the refugees' survival depends not only on sufficient food aid provision but also on the strengthening of the community's coping mechanisms. The important feature of people's coping strategy is to take measures suited to the situation. It seems to me that the refugees are coping with the situation shrewdly, utilizing whatever lies ready at hand. External limitation of ecological and social environments, which constitutes the range of resources and opportunities, is one factor working to shape their ways of utilizing resources.

In conclusion, therefore, this study has shown that gender relations influence the use of food aid in Kakuma Refugee Camp. While gender variations are almost negligible in the food aid distribution process, gender plays an important role in the utilization of the same at the household level. Women take up the greater share of responsibility having to shoulder almost all of the reproductive work in the camp, they are extensively preoccupied with household chores in addition to obtaining, preparing and sharing of food within their households. The additional task food aid imposes on women constraints them from participation in decision-making processes.

5.2 Recommendations

In the light of the above conclusions, we would like to make the following recommendations:

- The international community should promote the principle of refugee self-reliance pending voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement. This would improve the quality of life for refugees and enable them to make a contribution to the economy of this country, making their presence a boon rather than a burden. The international community can do this without intruding into the internal affairs of this country by introducing small scale income generating activities for the refugees which can be run within the camps.
- A greater understanding of gender biases in food aid rationing and management is needed. Food aid can support women's roles in household food security strategies by targeting high income-transfer value rations to economically vulnerable households.

Such transfers can be made in association with self-help schemes such as the various women groups already in existence at the camp.

- Continuing research and documentation on gender issues in relation to food aid would facilitate essential work such as training curriculum development, programme planning, and even awareness raising. One of the limitations of the current work being done by Non-government Organizations in the camp is their inability to incorporate men in gender development programmes. Biased empowerment of women in isolation of the context in which they operate alienates them from their family units.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Structured questionnaire

Questionnaire No.-----

Date: -----

The information given here will be held in strict confidence.

CAMP NAME:

Gender: ___ male ___ Female

Age

Level of Education.

- Primary
- Secondary
- University
- Other

Religious Denomination

- Christian
- Islam
- Other

Marital Status

- Single
- Married

1. (If married) how many wives/husbands do you have?
2. Do you have any children?
3. If yes, state the number _____
4. How many are:
 - (a) Females _____
 - (b) Males _____

5. How do you meet your basic food requirements?
 - (a) Self generated
 - (b) Provided by an agency
6. If provided by an agency, which one in particular?
7. How many families share this living space or form this household?
8. How many members of your household are entitled to the food rations?
 - (a) all
 - (b) those with ration cards only
9. Who receives food rations from the relief distribution centres?
 - (a) men
 - (b) women
 - (c) both
10. What can you say about the distance from your household to the food distribution centres?
 - (a) near
 - (b) far
 - (c) too far
11. How often do you receive food ration?
 - (a) weekly
 - (b) once in two weeks
 - (c) once in a month
 - (d) others (specify) -----
12. What quantity of food are you given?
 - (a) Less than enough
 - (b) Just enough
 - (c) More than enough
13. How does the amount provided compare to the previous years?
14. How long does the food last you and your household?
15. How many meals do you have in a day?

16. Do you consider the food provided good quality?
17. Once in the house, who is in charge of distributing the food ration?
(a) Men
(b) Women
(c) Both
18. Who takes charge/ makes decisions on food consumption in the household?
(a) Men
(b) Women
(c) Both
19. In your assessment, do you find the food provided by the agency sufficient?
(a) Yes
(b) No
20. In the event that there is insufficient food in the household who is given first, second and third priority to the food available?
21. What alternative food sources do you have?
22. Does provision of food ration change your role as a mother/ father?
(a) Yes
(b) No
23. How has your role changed?
24. Are you comfortable with your changed role?
(a) Yes
(b) No
25. How are you trying to reclaim your lost role?
26. Who, in your opinion, should be involved in food matters within your household?
(a) Men
(b) Women
(c) Both
27. Other than the food rations provided by the agency, what other ways do you think could be employed to satisfy your food requirements?
28. What is the position of the food-distributing agency regarding gender considerations in food Aid?
29. Briefly comment on your past experiences concerning food in the household before becoming a refugee.

30. Give your last comment on food situation in this camp.

Appendix 2

Interview Guide For Staff Key Informants

1. How often is food aid distributed to the refugees at the camp?
2. What are the activities you engage in to ensure fair distribution of food aid to refugees?
3. What are the problems facing food aid distributors?
4. In what ways has gender been put into consideration in food aid distribution?
5. In your opinion, what can be done to increase the involvement of women in food aid activities?
6. Is there a problem of community participation, which hinders appropriate utilization of food aid?
7. How best can these problems be solved?

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR REFUGEE KEY INFORMANTS

1. How long have you lived at the camp?
2. What problems do you experience in relation to food aid provision?
3. How is food aid distributed at the household level?
4. How has food aid intervention affected your traditional roles in the household?
5. How in your opinion should the food aid providers involve members of the refugee community in food aid distribution?