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Data analysis of food and non-food items purchases through voucher assistance

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**EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WASH SERVICES:
FUTURE CHALLENGES IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD**
**Data analysis of food and non food items purchases
through voucher assistance**
D. Pedraza & H.D. Bouta
Colombia
REFERENCE NO. 3145

Cash transfers for food and hygiene items in Colombia

From September 2020 to January 2021, ZOA made monetary transfers restricted to food and hygiene items to 628 families in Colombia for an amount of COP \$ 252,250 (€60) and COP \$ 370,000 (€87). The selected households were in one way or another directly affected by the COVID 19 pandemic crisis, either because they had a positive test or a family member had a positive test result.

As the targeted households had a COVID-positive person in the household, people could not leave the house to buy food and often had a stop in their (ir)regular income. Through the project, each household could contact the selected vendors and indicate the requested items, which were subsequently delivered to the doorstep. The transfers were made through the Red Rose platform, which allows monitoring of consumption habits made within the network of shopkeepers.

Two-thirds of the beneficiary heads of household are female, with the majority of beneficiaries (54%) in the age of 18-64 years.

Analysis of beneficiary expenses

Red Rose offers the possibility for almost real-time tracking of expenses. This abstract focuses on the end-line analysis of purchases made. Based on previous research a list of 80 food items and 22 Non Food Items (NFI) has been made available to the beneficiaries and selected vendors.

Out of all the money spent by the beneficiaries, the majority has been on food supplies (table 1). It is important to mention this was an initial pilot model of a shared basket between food and non-food, which is why of the list of 102 items available for purchase, only 22 of the total (23%) are NFIs and the rest are food products.

Table 1. Breakdown of total expenses

Category	Expenses (COP)	Percentage
Food items	\$ 191,000,437	90.5 %
Non food items	\$ 20,085,590	9.5 %
Total	\$ 211,086,027	100.0 %

About 50% of the food purchases are done on only 4 food items, namely rice (25%), oil (9%), sugar (8%) and corn flour (7%). This is consistent with the main food purchases of this population in two other food security ZOA projects in the La Guajira area .

For the top-10 expenses on hygiene items, 35% of spending was done on diapers for children in different ages (4 out of the 10 items). As the majority of targeted families have children under 5 years of age, this makes sense. Further research might be needed on this.

Gender and expenses

The result shows there is no difference in consumption patterns depending on the gender of the head of the household. The food products are practically the same with the exception of the cheese and the tuna in relation to food. Regarding non-food products, the purchasing behavior continues to be very similar. It is observed that even men also purchase menstrual hygiene implements for women as well as diapers for children.

Range of spending

Despite spending patterns between men and women is quite similar, there is a diverse range of spending between households. While the average household spends 10% of the available money on NFI's, the deviation of spending ranges from 0% spending on NFIs to over 30% as can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Total spending on NFIs		
Percentage of spending on NFI	Number of HH	Percentage
Zero	126	20.1 %
< 10 %	245	39.0 %
10 – 30 %	240	38.2 %
> 30 %	17	2.7 %
Total	628	100.0 %

How this data is used for future programming

This information will serve as the basis for future restricted money transfer projects for NFIs. Currently the NFIs were restricted to items in existing hygiene kits and a few additional products.

Also the analysis of the NFI will serve to review the items that are delivered in physical hygiene kits and that might not be responding to the needs of the households. A clear example of this is that no hygiene kit that has been delivered so far has, contemplated the delivery of diapers, which although it is difficult due to the age of each baby, it is possible to think about implementing cloth diapers that are used for any age. Thus responding to the needs of the households verified during this pilot

Conclusion

- On average, 10% of the project's total resources were invested in buying hygiene items.
- The foods in which the Wayuu population invest the most are rice, oil, sugar and corn flour.
- For the hygiene items most money was spent on diapers for different stages, we presume that it is because it is an expensive product.
- There is no evidence of a relevant trend change in consumption if the head of the household is female or male, the same 10 products remain in the top 10, although there is a small variation in the order.
- Men also invest in menstrual hygiene items and diapers to a similar extent to that of women.
- There is a broad range of spending on NFIs between households. Reasons for this need to be investigated.
- It is important to have analysis of this style of programs greater than 1 month where the buying behavior of NFIs can be seen over time, as certain hygiene items, like tooth paste, only have to be replaced every few weeks or months.

Contact details

Mr. Daniel Pedraza is an Industrial Engineer with a master degree in sustainability and rural social development. He works as the National programme manager for ZOA Colombia.

Daniel Pedraza MSc: Bogotá, Colombia. Telephone: +3143010359. Email: d.pedraza@zoa.ngo
Website: www.zoa-international.com

Harm Bouta MSc: Hoevelaken, Netherlands . Telephone: +31659460658.
Email: h.bouta@zoa.ngo