

TACKLING THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AND CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) should be regarded as a priority for all actors in every humanitarian response operation from the very outset. By mainstreaming GBV considerations in cash-based interventions (CBIs) throughout the programme cycle, and by utilizing cash within GBV case management services, cash can be optimized as a tool to enhance the protection of crisis- and conflict-affected populations, and to mitigate their risks of recurrent violence, promote their recovery and build their resilience.

Between 2016 and 2018, the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) undertook a 17-month action research project to assess how cash and GBV programming are currently integrated in humanitarian settings, to develop and test practical and adaptable guidance and tools, and to build the capacity of cash and GBV actors. This article shares the key findings from WRC's stock-taking research, as follows:

1. While there has been progress on cash and protection, the integration of cash and GBV programming has yet to be widely addressed and represents the next frontier.
2. Cash, gender and GBV actors are siloed within agencies and across communities of practice, impeding clarity over roles and responsibilities, the development of successful approaches, and effective coordination efforts.
3. Prevailing anxiety about integrating cash and GBV programming, including the view held by some GBV actors that cash, in itself, is risky, and the view of some cash actors that the protection sector is intimidating, inhibit actors from working together to develop the required skills and build up the evidence to move forward.
4. Good practice and nascent programming exist and can be scaled up and institutionalized.
5. Resource gaps, including staffing and donor funding, represent challenges to generating learning and building up evidence.

6. Persistent poor practice undercuts the potential of cash: a lack of gender and protection analysis, the perpetuation of one-size-fits-all programming, missed opportunities to pair cash with complementary services for gender-transformative and protective outcomes, and a failure to establish and utilize GBV referral pathways.
7. Cash and GBV practitioners need practical field resources for staff capacity-building, assessments and monitoring.

1. INTRODUCTION

Efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) should be regarded as a priority for all actors in every humanitarian response operation from the very outset.¹ The evidence on cash and gender, as well as on cash and GBV, is nascent and mixed.² Cash and GBV prevention and response practitioners need to work together to build up evidence and optimize cash-based interventions for enhanced protection from GBV. Cash, as a modality, is not inherently risky, but by ignoring gender dynamics, unequal access to and control over resources, and the potential GBV risks and protection benefits associated with the introduction of cash, and by failing to ensure that risk mitigation mechanisms are in place, programmers may cause unintended consequences for cash recipients, for their households and for their communities.³ When the risk of GBV in cash-based interventions is not taken into account, then recipients may face associated risks. The nature of these risks depends on context, age, gender and diversity.⁴ By mainstreaming GBV considerations into CBIs throughout the programme cycle, and by utilizing cash within GBV case management services, cash can be optimized as a tool to enhance the protection of crisis- and conflict-affected populations, to mitigate risks of recurrent violence, promote recovery and build resilience.⁵

How can GBV considerations be mainstreamed within CBIs? Cash actors need to take steps to mainstream GBV considerations within CBIs in order to get cash right from the start. In doing so, any associated risks of GBV can be prevented and mitigated. These steps include:

- conducting comprehensive and participatory assessments of associated protection risks (e.g. domestic violence) and benefits (e.g. school enrolment for adolescent girls) disaggregated by sub-population;
- tailoring programme design (e.g. adjusting the delivery mechanisms employed, the value, duration and frequency of cash transfers, the mitigation mechanisms deployed, and the complementary activities and services paired with cash) for different sub-populations (e.g. women with disabilities and LGBTI individuals) to reduce the likelihood and impact of associated risks;
- undertaking robust protection monitoring integrated within post-distribution monitoring;
- adapting programme design and implementation, as required, if monitoring raises any red flags.

¹ Global Protection Cluster and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2015) 'Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action: Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery'. Available at: www.gbvguidelines.org

² Simon, C. (2018) 'Setting the Stage: What we know (and don't know) about the effects of cash-based interventions on gender outcomes in humanitarian settings'. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/resources/Other/genderandctpun-women.pdf> ; Overseas Development Institute (2017) 'The impact of cash transfers on women and girls'. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/11374-odi.pdf>; Berg, M. and Seferis, L. (2015) 'Protection Outcomes in Cash Based Interventions: A Literature Review'. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-cash-and-protection-literature-review-web.pdf>

³ Women's Refugee Commission, International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps (2018) 'Overview of Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence: Mainstreaming GBV Considerations in CBIs and Utilizing Cash in GBV Response'. Available at: wrc.ms/cashandgbv

⁴ UNHCR, Women's Refugee Commission, Oxfam, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, Global Protection Cluster and the World Food Programme (2015) 'Guide for Protection in Cash-based Interventions'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1280>

⁵ Women's Refugee Commission, International Rescue Committee and Mercy Corps (2018) 'Overview of Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence: Mainstreaming GBV Considerations in CBIs and Utilizing Cash in GBV Response'. Available at: wrc.ms/cashandgbv

By mainstreaming GBV considerations in CBIs throughout the programme cycle, and by working closely with GBV actors, it is possible to ensure that any risks associated with cash transfers are mitigated for recipients and that the protective benefits of cash are maximized.⁶

How can cash be utilized in GBV responses? Cash can be a key component of survivor-centred GBV case management services in humanitarian settings. In contexts where core GBV response services (e.g. health and legal services) have associated costs and are not available for free, cash transfers can support GBV survivors to access relevant services and recovery. Cash can be life-saving; it can help a survivor of GBV meet the costs associated with fleeing an abusive relationship (e.g. rent, temporary shelter, transport, food and clothing). Cash can also help meet urgent needs and, therefore, reduce exposure to GBV risks (e.g. to mitigate an imminent threat of early marriage for adolescent girls whose families are struggling to meet their basic needs and who are likely to engage in negative coping strategies). To ensure that cash referrals are appropriate to meet the protection needs of survivors, and that the introduction of cash assistance minimizes the risk of any further exposure to harm, cash must be tailored (e.g. adjusting the delivery mechanisms employed, the value, duration and frequency of cash transfers) and closely monitored through a GBV case management process.⁷

Coordination among cash and GBV actors at all levels is essential in order to build the right capacities and to develop systems and procedures that effectively meet the specific needs of diverse populations, including the most marginalized (e.g. women and adolescent girls, LGBTI individuals and persons with disabilities).⁸

Between 2016 and 2018, the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) undertook a project to build the capacity of humanitarian actors to mainstream protection in cash-based interventions, and to utilize CBIs for protection outcomes, specifically, protection from GBV. The project was funded by the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. WRC assessed how cash and GBV programming are currently integrated in humanitarian settings, engaged in key partnerships to develop and pilot practical and adaptable guidance and tools, and provided technical assistance to cash and GBV actors in order to enhance practice remotely and in the field in multiple humanitarian settings.⁹

In the following sections, the paper will present WRC's key findings from assessing current practice on integrating cash and GBV programming, as well as articulate calls to action for cash actors, GBV actors and donors in humanitarian settings to advance practice.¹⁰

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ WRC and its partners, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Mercy Corps, developed the 'Toolkit for Optimizing Cash-based Interventions for Protection from Gender-based Violence'. The toolkit supports cash and GBV practitioners, on the one hand, to mainstream GBV considerations within CBIs, and, on the other, to utilize cash, where appropriate, within the delivery of GBV case management. This toolkit assists practitioners in collecting the requisite situational protection information on risks for affected populations through an age, gender and diversity lens, identifying community-based or self-protection mechanisms, informing tailored and protective cash-based interventions and preparing a monitoring system that is based on identified protection risks. The toolkit comprises two sections. Section I includes a focus group discussion/interview tool and accompanying guidance to assess and mitigate potential risks, as well as a post-distribution monitoring tool and guidance to monitor risks. Section II includes a protocol to assess and address the needs of GBV survivors for cash assistance within GBV case management services, as well as a post-distribution monitoring tool and guidance to monitor risks. The toolkit was piloted across three emergency settings with four implementing partners and was revised based on lessons learnt: in Somalia, with African Development Solutions (Adeso); in Jordan, with Mercy Corps and IRC; and in Niger, with Save the Children. WRC presented the toolkit during CaLP's Gender and Cash Symposium in Nairobi, Kenya, held on February 21, 2018 during the marketplace session. The toolkit is available at wrc.ms/cashandgbv.

¹⁰ Findings, learning and recommendations from the three pilots are captured in a series of case studies. The case studies are available at wrc.ms/cashandgbv.

2. METHODOLOGY

WRC conducted a literature review to assess current practice, identify good practice and examine critical gaps with respect to GBV mainstreaming as well as utilizing CBIs to achieve GBV outcomes in humanitarian settings.¹¹ In addition, WRC conducted a series of key informant interviews (KIIs) to inform its practitioner toolkit and advocacy efforts. WRC, using purposive and then snowball sampling, interviewed cash, gender and GBV experts at agencies researching or implementing cash and/or GBV programming in humanitarian settings. KIIs took place in person, over the phone and via Skype with over 40 respondents¹² across 20 humanitarian agencies¹³ from November 2016 to January 2017. Interviews and analysis were undertaken by a team of three WRC senior staff with technical expertise in cash, protection and research methods. An interview guide was used and running notes were taken during interviews, which were then written into a condensed transcript, coded and analysed.



A refugee woman shopping. Photo: Peter Biro/ECHO.

¹¹ This review built upon recent literature reviews on cash and protection to include more recent publications, and focused specifically on cash and GBV.

¹² Informants included independent consultants, lead researchers, technical advisers at global and regional level and in-country programme coordinators and managers.

¹³ Agencies included: African Development Solutions, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, CARE, Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), Danish Refugee Council, FAO, G-insight, Haitian Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), IRC, Mercy Corps, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Oxfam, Save the Children, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women and the World Food Programme (WFP).

3. FINDINGS

The key findings from WRC's stock-taking research are as follows:

1. **While there has been progress on cash and protection, tackling the integration of cash and GBV programming represents a new frontier.** A number of resources exist on cash and protection, for example, the 'Guide for Protection in Cash-based Interventions,'¹⁴ the 'Risks and Benefits Analysis Tool'¹⁵ and the 'Training on Protection in Cash-Based Interventions.'¹⁶ Some institutionalization efforts have taken place and, while nascent, momentum is picking up on the integration of cash and GBV programming.
2. **Cash and GBV actors are siloed within agencies and across communities of practice.** Within agencies, it is rare for cash and GBV actors to work closely together across departments. This is attributed to organizational structure and culture; any exceptions were ascribed to leadership. Across agencies and communities of practice, collaboration is minimal. Actors across both sectors acknowledge that coordinating bodies lack a unified vision about the integration of cash and GBV programming. This siloing impedes clarity over roles and responsibilities, the development of successful approaches and effectively maximizing human and financial resources.
3. **Prevailing anxiety about integrating cash and GBV programming inhibits actors from building the required skills to collaborate effectively, and the evidence to move forward.** Despite evidence that cash in itself is not risky, some donors and practitioners remain apprehensive. There is, seemingly, more buy-in for mainstreaming GBV considerations into cash-based interventions than utilizing cash as a tool within GBV case management for protection outcomes. This situation is underpinned by a lack of understanding by each sector of the other domain and its methodology. It is a chicken-and-egg scenario: without cash and GBV actors beginning to explore mutual problems together, they cannot build up the required evidence base and skills to integrate programming. Hesitancy to conduct action research and implement protective pilots is rationalized as "doing no harm", when, in fact, a failure to address the economic drivers and factors of GBV with cash assistance when it is needed may be harmful.
4. **Good practice and nascent programming exist.** Existing guidance should be institutionalized. Several agencies are leading the way, mainstreaming GBV in CBIs¹⁷ and/or utilizing cash within GBV programming in humanitarian settings;¹⁸ these successful approaches should be scaled up.

¹⁴ See footnote 4.

¹⁵ UNHCR, Women's Refugee Commission, Oxfam, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, Global Protection Cluster and the World Food Programme (2015) 'Risks and Benefits Analysis Tool'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1299>

¹⁶ Women's Refugee Commission and UNHCR (2015) 'Training on Protection in Cash-Based Interventions'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1281>

¹⁷ This includes, but is not limited to, Mercy Corps in Jordan, Adeso in Somalia, Save the Children in Niger, DRC in Lebanon and Serbia, and NRC in Yemen. For published case studies, see: Women's Refugee Commission and Adeso (2018) 'Mainstreaming Gender-based Violence Considerations in Cash-based Interventions: A Case Study from Lower Juba, Somalia'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1561>; Women's Refugee Commission, IRC and Mercy Corps (2018) 'Optimizing Benefits and Mitigating Risks of Integrating Cash-based Interventions and GBV Programming: Case Studies from Irbid and Mafraq, Jordan'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1560>; and Women's Refugee Commission and Save the Children (2018) 'Mainstreaming Gender-based Violence Considerations in Cash-based Interventions: A Case Study from Zinder, Niger'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1554>

¹⁸ This includes, but is not limited to, IRC in Jordan, Mercy Corps in the Central African Republic and NRC in Yemen. For published case studies, see: Women's Refugee Commission, IRC and Mercy Corps (2018) 'Optimizing Benefits and Mitigating Risks of Integrating Cash-based Interventions and GBV Programming: Case Studies from Irbid and Mafraq, Jordan'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1560>; and International Rescue Committee (2016) 'Integrating Cash Transfers into Gender-based Violence Programs in Jordan: Benefits, Risks and Challenges'. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/erc-irc-action-research-web.pdf>

5. **Resource gaps, including staffing and donor funding, are challenges to generating learning and building up evidence.** Diminishing funds for humanitarian response in the face of unprecedented levels of displacement means that research agendas, like the integration of cash and GBV programming, may be less of a priority. Longer-term project horizons, sufficient staffing to support large caseloads and longer-duration cash assistance programmes are needed to ensure that recipients, including GBV survivors, can safely graduate from cash assistance.
6. **Persistent poor practice undercuts the potential of cash.** Despite established best practices, there continue to be shortcomings in the way that cash and GBV actors operate and implement programming, as outlined below:
 - A lack of initial and ongoing gender and protection analysis – these analyses are rarely integrated.
 - One-size-fits-all cash programming is pervasive, despite evidence that cash needs to be tailored to meet specific needs and ensure protection.
 - Cash and GBV actors are missing opportunities to pair cash with complementary activities and services for gender-transformative and protective outcomes.
 - Cash staff are often untrained in the basics of gender and, rarely, in protection – and even more rarely in the basics of GBV prevention and response, such as the survivor-centred approach, which is critical to tailoring cash for GBV survivors.
 - GBV staff are often untrained in the basics of cash programming and, as a result, are unfamiliar with when, how and why cash is delivered in different settings, thereby impeding the process of identifying entry points for integrated programming.
 - It is commonplace that GBV referral pathways are unestablished; where established, they are often underutilized by cash actors due to the one-directional or multi-directional absence of coordination and a lack of staff capacity-building.
7. **Cash and GBV practitioners need practical field resources** for staff capacity-building, assessments and monitoring. There is a demand for adaptable and modular field resources to capture the requisite information on the protection risks and benefits associated with cash. Practitioners are hungry for guidance and tools that can be adapted to context, and that help them deepen the assessment and monitoring activities they are already doing, rather than adding steps across the programme cycle, in the face of urgent needs and limited resources.¹⁹

“Within agencies, it is rare for cash and GBV actors to work closely together across departments... Siloing impedes clarity over roles and responsibilities, the development of successful approaches and effectively maximizing human and financial resources.”

¹⁹ WRC and its partners have begun to address these needs. See footnote 3.

4. CONCLUSION AND CALLS TO ACTION

Working together, agencies delivering cash and GBV services and their practitioners can coordinate to enhance their individual and collective impact. By mainstreaming GBV considerations in cash programming throughout the programme cycle, and by utilizing cash within a GBV case management approach, cash can be optimized as a tool to protect crisis- and conflict-affected populations.

4.1 Cash Actors

To mitigate any associated risks of GBV, cash actors need to collaborate with GBV actors to assess and monitor individual and household-level risks of GBV associated with the introduction of cash assistance, and to mitigate these risks with protective programme design. Cash actors must incorporate protection monitoring into post-distribution monitoring and adapt programming throughout the implementation phase, if monitoring raises any red flags, in order to ensure safety and inclusion. Cash actors need to proactively engage and collaborate with GBV actors at field level in order to mainstream GBV considerations within CBIs across the programme cycle. This may mean adjusting the delivery mechanism, the value and frequency of cash transfers, as well as complementary activities and services. Cash actors should seek out and establish partnerships with GBV case management service providers to integrate cash as a tool, where appropriate, to better meet the protection needs of GBV clients.²⁰

4.2 GBV Actors

In their support to GBV survivors, GBV actors can identify when cash can be used as a tool in case management. When core GBV response services – for example, health or legal services – are not available for free, cash can become a key aspect of a survivor's recovery. Establishing referrals with cash actors is equally as important as health or legal referrals. GBV actors need to collaborate with cash actors to develop partnerships and context-specific protocols to tailor the financial component of case management in order to promote access and ensure safety. GBV actors should lead in the monitoring of cash assistance for GBV survivors to ensure that the introduction of cash promotes access to relevant services and does no harm. Service provision should be adapted as needed. GBV actors should coordinate with cash colleagues to ensure GBV mainstreaming within CBIs across the programme cycle.²¹

“Practitioners are hungry for guidance and tools that can be adapted to context, and that help them deepen the assessment and monitoring activities they are already doing, rather than adding steps across the programme cycle, in the face of urgent needs and limited resources.”

²⁰ UNHCR, Women's Refugee Commission, Oxfam, Save the Children, Danish Refugee Council, Global Protection Cluster and the World Food Programme (2015) 'Guide for Protection in Cash-based Interventions'. Available at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/issues/livelihoods/research-and-resources/document/download/1280>

²¹ Ibid

“Donors should require cash providers who are soliciting funds to demonstrate analysis and mitigation of any associated GBV risks within their programme design, as well as monitoring plans for implementation.”

4.3 Donors

Resources are needed to push further into this frontier. Support is needed for additional research on, and the scaling-up of, the integration of cash assistance into GBV programming. Dedicated funding streams will help move protective programming forward. Donors must consider the unique parameters required to successfully utilize cash within GBV response, which include, but are not limited to: longer-term project horizons to ensure that survivors of GBV have access to sufficient support and can safely graduate from GBV case management services; and the new costs associated with emergent practice, including start-up costs, additional staff, capacity-building and institutionalization efforts. Donors should require cash providers who are soliciting funds to demonstrate analysis and mitigation of any associated GBV risks within their programme design, as well as monitoring plans for implementation. Grant reporting should include disclosure of any associated protection risks that arise during implementation, the effectiveness of mitigation mechanisms, and adaptations taken during delivery to ensure safety and inclusion.²²

As cash and GBV programmers, we have to ask ourselves: Are we collecting data on the protection risks and benefits associated with cash throughout the programme cycle? Are we being responsive to ensure that cash programming is tailored to promote access, safety and inclusion? If the answer is no, then we have a lot of work to do. If the answer is sometimes, then we need to borrow from leading examples and institutionalize them across operations. Commitments, like those articulated within ‘Gender and Cash Based Assistance in Humanitarian Contexts: An Agenda for Collective Action’,²³ need to become our modus operandi. If the answer is yes, then well done for leading the pack – but don’t hoard knowledge, skills and practice. Instead, share with partners and colleagues to build their capacities to mitigate the risks of recurrent violence for affected populations, promote their recovery and build their resilience.

²² Ibid

²³ Cash Learning Partnership (2018) ‘Gender and Cash Based Assistance in Humanitarian Contexts: An Agenda for Collective Action’. Available at: <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/agenda-for-collective-action---gender---cba---final.pdf>

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