



WRC ASSESSMENTS OF PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S ADOLESCENT-FOCUSED CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Synopsis of Case Studies in Egypt and Central African Republic

In 2018 and 2019, Plan International (Plan) continued integrating cash and voucher assistance (CVA) into its programs for families and children affected by conflict and crisis. For the first time, these CVA-integrated programs were specifically designed to enhance the wellbeing of adolescents. Girls and boys aged 10 to 19 are adversely affected by crisis; however, the needs of adolescents are not always met through CVA programs in crisis settings.

To that end, Plan recently completed two CVA-integrated projects with the goal of improving the wellbeing of adolescents. Plan Central African Republic's (CAR) "Monetary Transfers, Child Protection and Digital Data Analysis" project and Plan Egypt's "Tawasol: Learning for Coexistence" project both provided cash transfers to families affected by crisis – with the specific goal of improving the protection, education and wellbeing of adolescent boys and girls aged 10 to 19 years old in those families.

To synthesise its internal learning, strengthen its capacity to integrate CVA, and share learnings with other protection and CVA actors, Plan is undertaking the "Use of Cash and Voucher

Assistance for the Protection, Wellbeing, and Education of Adolescent Girls and Boys in Crisis" initiative. The initiative is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and conducted in partnership with the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC).

To that end, in late 2019, WRC conducted assessments of two Plan adolescent-focused CVA projects: one project in CAR, focused on using cash transfers to enhance child and adolescent protection, and one in Egypt where cash transfers were meant to facilitate adolescent education. In CAR, WRC found that the cash transfers improved education enrolment, basic health and food security of adolescents. However, some adolescents continued to face protection risks, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. In Egypt, cash transfers improved education access for families, but barriers remained for some, especially for adolescents with disabilities, and documentation remained a barrier for refugee families. In addition, cash transfers were linked to social tensions between refugee and host families.

“MONETARY TRANSFERS, CHILD PROTECTION AND DIGITAL DATA ANALYSIS” (CAR)

A protracted civil conflict since 2012 has resulted in mass displacement in Mambéré-Kadéï, a rural area in the southwest of CAR bordering Cameroon. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) are children and adolescents who were separated from their families and caregivers in the conflict.

Plan implemented the “Monetary transfer, child protection and digital data analysis” project from December 2018 to December 2019. The project aimed to provide holistic, innovative and quality support to improve the protection and wellbeing of some 800 adolescent girls and boys aged 10 to 18 who were separated, or at risk of being separated, from their families.

This was the first Plan CAR project for the protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) that integrated CVA. Along with a range of intervention components designed to meet various protective outcomes, families that were hosting a UASC and families that were recently reunified with a formerly separated child received cash transfers.

Caregivers received 150,000 Central African francs (CFA francs) (about US\$250) in three tranches per reunified or fostered child or adolescent in the household. Conditional cash transfers were distributed to a designated beneficiary adult in the household. To receive the cash transfers, the adult had to participate in biweekly parenting sessions run by Plan, and meet a set of 17 conditions focused on adolescents’ protection and education.

Findings from WRC’s assessment

In November 2019, WRC conducted an assessment to understand the perceived strengths and weaknesses of Plan’s “Monetary Transfer and Child Protection” project, including implementation challenges and successes, risks and benefits for beneficiaries, and any needs for continued capacity building. Key findings from focus-group discussions with caregivers, participatory activities with adolescents, and interviews with community stakeholders included:

- Adolescents reported feeling safer after the project’s reunifications and host family placements.
- The project did not give the cash transfer to families unless caregivers met conditions such as attendance in parenting training; in spite of these conditionalities, some adolescents

faced protection risks and challenges within the household.

- Education enrolment of adolescents appeared to be met through cash transfers and conditionalities.
- Cash transfers and the intervention could not fully remedy missing opportunities for quality education, vocational training and sustainable livelihoods for adolescents and their caregivers/families.
- Cash transfers reportedly helped improve basic health for adolescents.
- Cash transfers did not appear to meet all the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) protection needs of older adolescent girls in foster families. The assessment indicated that these girls appeared to still be experiencing sexual exploitation by adults in school and early pregnancies after placement in households that were receiving CVA.
- Food security for adolescents appeared to have improved after placements in households receiving cash transfers.

Recommendations

- To achieve adolescent wellbeing outcomes, use cash transfers to caregivers of adolescents to address economic barriers to adolescent wellbeing while providing flexibility and choice to caregivers and families to meet adolescents’ preferences and individualised, holistic wellbeing needs.
- To promote enrolment of adolescents in school, use conditionalities and account for the cost of secondary school fees in the cash transfer value.
- To promote retention of adolescents in schooling, add intervention components to improve the quality of education in schools.
- More needs to be learned about whether and how cash transfers within a larger package of services can support SRH and GBV outcomes for adolescent girls and, in particular, adolescent girls who are pregnant or mothers.
- Future programming must engage men and adolescent boys as allies and agents of change in shifting gender norms and behaviours that harm adolescent girls.

“TAWASOL: LEARNING FOR COEXISTENCE” (EGYPT)

To respond to the education and child protection needs of the most vulnerable children and adolescents in Giza, Sharkiya, Alexandria, and Damietta, Plan Egypt implemented the “Tawasol: Learning for Coexistence” project from June 2018 until August 2019. The aim of the project was to enhance access to and improve the quality of informal basic education opportunities for refugee and Egyptian host community students, while promoting enhanced community cohesion between Syrian refugee and Egyptian host communities. The project reached 4,170 adolescent boys and girls aged 10 to 14 years old from Syrian refugee and vulnerable Egyptian host communities.

“Tawasol” encompassed a three-pronged approach: (1) improving education quality by enhancing the protection of adolescents at home and in the school environment through school rehabilitations and teacher trainings on child-centred teaching methods; (2) improving protection through the formation of Education and Protection Committees made up of parents and community members; parenting circles that trained caregivers in positive parenting; and Peace Clubs that engaged adolescents in peacebuilding activities; and (3) improving education access through a two-part cash grant.

Plan Egypt sought to leverage the potential of CVA in the project to support education access and to overcome the financial barriers to access among Syrian refugee households. Beneficiary households received two “education grants”—cash transfers of 2,200 Egyptian pounds (EGP) (about US\$50) for a total of EGP 4,400 transferred. Of the 2,948 households targeted for the program, 80% of families were Syrian and 50% of adolescent beneficiaries were girls in Egyptian and Syrian households.

Findings from WRC’s assessment

In December 2019, WRC conducted an assessment of perceived strengths and areas for improvement of the cash transfer component of the “Tawasol” project. Key findings from focus-group discussions with caregivers, participatory activities with adolescents, and interviews with community stakeholders included:

- Syrian and Egyptian families used cash transfers to reduce economic barriers to education access, such as school fees and transportation to school.
- Economic barriers to education remained, especially for adolescents with disabilities.
- The multiple project components, along with the cash transfers, worked together to address

multiple barriers to quality education for adolescent boys and girls.

- The teacher training component was perceived to have improved teachers’ use of positive teaching practices in Syrian learning centres.
- Participation in peace education activities, as part of the overall cash transfer-integrated program package, was seen to decrease violence perpetrated on adolescents by peers, which in turn was reported to promote retention of adolescent boys in school.
- Cash transfers assist with school enrolment, but documentation remained a key barrier to timely receipt of cash transfers and therefore to education access and retention.
- Some refugee families reportedly experienced challenges with receipt of the cash transfers through the method in which the transfers were delivered.
- Cash transfers were reportedly linked to social tensions between refugee and host families.

Recommendations

- To achieve education outcomes for adolescents in crisis, CVA alone may not be enough; CVA complemented by other program components, as with the “Tawasol” project, is needed to address the multiple barriers and challenges that prevent adolescents from accessing education.
- To promote the protection of adolescent boys and adolescent girls, ensure that program design includes intervention components to address multiple spheres of adolescents’ lives, such as peer groups, school and the home environment.
- The CVA design should be aligned with the needs of the beneficiaries; in this case, the timing of cash delivery should be aligned with the school year so that assistance arrives in time for families to use it for adolescents’ education-related expenses.
- Further study is needed on the relationship between CVA and some protection risks faced disproportionately by adolescents, such as child marriage and child labour, to identify effective design features to maximise adolescent wellbeing outcomes.

READ THE CAR CASE STUDY AND THE EGYPT CASE STUDY:

CAR:

<https://plan-international.org/publications/cash-transfer-child-protection>

<http://wrc.ms/cash-voucher-assistance-adolescents-CAR>

EGYPT:

<https://plan-international.org/publications/cash-transfer-and-education>

<http://wrc.ms/cash-voucher-assistance-adolescents-Egypt>

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