

RESEARCH GAPS IN CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING

LOIS AUSTIN



The Cash Learning Partnership

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About the author

Lois Austin is an independent consultant specialised in market-based interventions and humanitarian response. She has extensive experience managing relief programmes in emergency contexts for aid agencies in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

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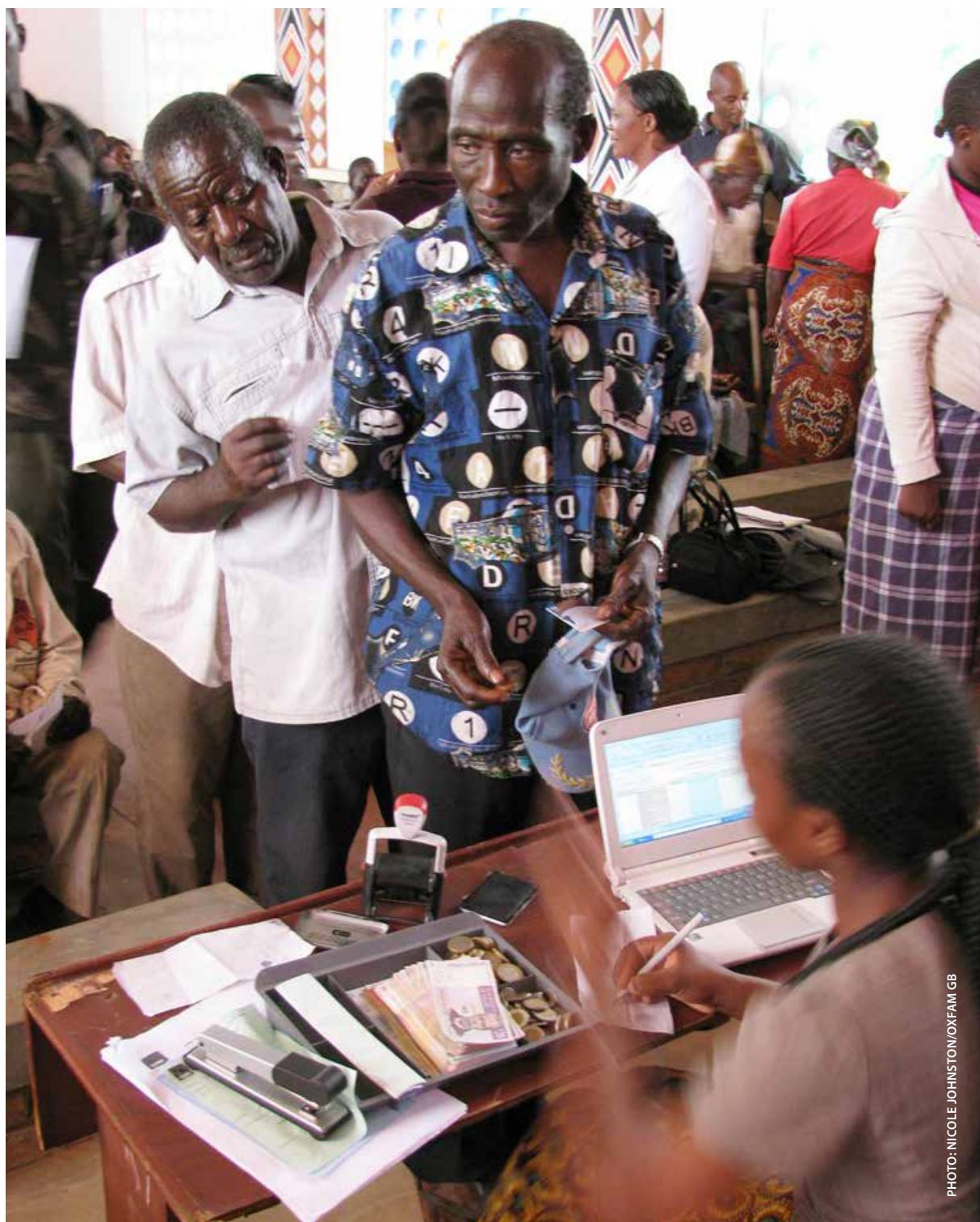


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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
Adeso	Africa Development Solutions
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CalP	The Cash Learning Partnership
CGAP	Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
CoP	Community of Practice
CT	Cash transfer (including vouchers)
CTP	Cash transfer programming (including vouchers)
DFID	The UK Department for International Development
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
GPR	Good Practice Review
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OPM	Oxford Policy Management Ltd.
RAPID	Research and Policy in Development
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and health
WFP	World Food Programme

Definitions

Action research	Research initiated to solve an immediate problem led by individuals working with others as part of a “community of practice” to improve the way they address issues and solve problems.
Evidence-based research	Includes the use of scientific research as a way to inform service delivery, or programming or policy.
Operational research	Research emanating from existing interventions through for example programme monitoring and evaluation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gathering evidence through action research is one of the ways that the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP www.cashlearning.org) aims to raise awareness of cash transfer programming (CTP) as an appropriate mechanism for emergency response and to improve implementation practice.

In advance of defining potential research topics for 2014, CaLP commissioned the current study in order to:

- Understand more fully what action and evidence-based research is currently available.
- Find out who the key research actors are, and how research findings and recommendations are used and shared, and research impact monitored.
- Identify and prioritise gaps in action research.

The findings of the study will be used by CaLP to inform its own research and advocacy strategies and shared with other stakeholders who are active and planning research in cash transfer programming.

The study was undertaken by an independent consultant and took place over 15 days. Within the study timeframe, an effort was made to speak to a range of stakeholders involved in CTP research to assist in the identification of research gaps. To this end, a total of 25 individual discussions were held with representatives of implementing agencies, research bodies, and donors, with further inputs on the issues raised in these discussions provided in writing. In addition, the wider community of practice were asked for their inputs via the English and French CaLP online discussion groups and through the East Africa and Asia cash working groups.

CaLP understands **action research** to be research which is initiated to solve an immediate problem, led by individuals working with others as part of a “community of practice” to improve the way they address issues and solve problems. **Evidence-based research** includes the use of scientific research as a way to inform service delivery, or programming or policy. Another form of research that was referred to in discussions as part of this study was **operational research** which is understood to be research emanating from existing interventions through, for example, programme monitoring and evaluation.

The study produced 12 key findings on the basis of which 13 recommendations for future action are proposed.

Key Findings

The key findings are presented around the main lines of enquiry followed in this study, namely:

- The CTP research context
- Key research actors
- Current gaps in CTP research
- Addressing the gaps
- Research utilisation and impact
- Research dissemination

The CTP research context

There has been a large amount of CTP-focused research undertaken by a range of stakeholders in recent years. Whilst this initially focused on the viability of CTP, more recently the focus has been on the production of evaluations, case studies and other documentation emanating from small and/or medium-sized interventions.



CaLP is considered to be one of the leading bodies undertaking CTP research, with implementing agencies and the UN undertaking their own operational research in specific contexts. A number of donors have also undertaken and commissioned research, with a tendency to focus on areas where there has already been investment, such as social protection and cost-effectiveness. The focus of research by private sector actors is on the potential business case for providers to be involved in cash transfers, although this research is often difficult to access and it is not widely shared.

KEY FINDINGS: THE CTP RESEARCH CONTEXT	
Key Finding 1	CTP research has developed from a specific focus on the viability of CTP to the production of large quantities of action-based and operational research by a range of humanitarian stakeholders. Whilst there is still some research focusing on the proof of concept, the focus today is more upon specific thematic topics and studies that can show what works, that feed into guidance and that take learning forward.
Key Finding 2	Much research is undertaken by implementing agencies, donors and private sector actors in order to contribute to developing organisational strategies and policy papers. This is often not shared within the wider community of practice.
Key Finding 3	Undertaking credible research requires significant time and resource commitments which many implementing agencies do not have, particularly when their focus may be upon implementing responses in the heat of a crisis. Due to time and resource limitations, many NGO studies are only able to touch the surface and often lead to the need for further context-specific research.

Key research actors

There are a number of NGOs such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Adeso, ACF and Concern who are considered as leaders in operational CTP research. They aim to demonstrate what works and to create programme guidance. Their focus is to take learning forward and provide practical solutions to identified problems. Research bodies such as ODI/HPG are expected to provide reliable CTP research and CaLP, with its neutral positioning, is relied upon for credible operational research on a range of topics.

Whilst some donors like the Department for International Development (DFID) carry out their own research, which focuses on specific areas of interest and potential linkages with CTP, others rely on the research of their partners to inform their understanding of, and approaches to, CTP.

KEY FINDINGS: KEY RESEARCH ACTORS	
Key Finding 4	A small number of actors, including CaLP and ODI, are those most commonly referenced as leading CTP-related research. CaLP undertakes valuable action-oriented and operational research which is frequently based on the application, experience and challenges of the use of CTP on the ground (albeit without having its own research strategy). Other bodies are relied upon for more academic and scientific research.
Key Finding 5	The research agendas of implementing agencies and donors are often influenced by the areas in which they have already invested or plan to invest.

Current gaps in CTP research

Although this study identified a number of gaps in CTP research, it was also highlighted in discussions that some of these research gaps are not specific to CTP and that further investigation of them would be relevant to other response options as well. Topics where this was relevant include, for example, making effectiveness and cost efficiency comparisons, recipient voices on aid preferences and impact on markets and private sector partnerships. In addition, there remain question marks over whether the right balance has been struck between the call for further research and actual further programmatic action, given that pressure for the production of CTP-related research is more apparent than in other forms of response modality.

Some 16 topics were identified that require additional research in order to help humanitarian stakeholders advance with cash transfer programming. Of these, six were priority gaps. In addition to these topics, a number of thematic areas for further investigation were highlighted by individuals during the course of this study. Many of the topics identified have already been researched in some way but practitioners continue to struggle with how to operationalize and follow up on recommendations provided in existing research.

It was also noted that with the array of CTP guidelines and tools that have been developed in recent years, it would be beneficial to have these collated and synthesised in one place, as with the Good Practice Review on cash transfer programming in emergencies in 2011.

KEY FINDINGS: CURRENT GAPS IN CTP RESEARCH		
Key Finding 6	There is a significant amount of research available on CTP which is used to advocate for CTP and to design or improve programming. There remain a number of research gaps which need to be addressed in order to take current research forward in an actionable way for practitioners. Some of these gaps are CTP-specific whilst others, such as the need for additional research into cost-effectiveness and market impact, are more generic.	
Key Finding 7	Of the many potential research topics identified, there are six for which further investigation, resulting in practical, forward-thinking recommendations, would be beneficial for humanitarian stakeholders as a priority. These six thematic areas are: (i) a cost efficiency and effectiveness comparison; (ii) multi-sector cash programming; (iii) WASH and (iv) health potential with CTP; (v) links between social protection systems and emergency CTP; and (vi) cash in refugee contexts.	
Key Finding 8	In addition to further research, there is a need to pull together the many guidelines and tools on CTP that have been developed in recent years.	

Addressing the research gaps

There are a number of leading research actors who would be well placed to research the priority topics identified. With CaLP viewed as very proactive in CTP research and as a body that has successfully commissioned and advocated for research uptake, it is one of the research actors that could and should take the lead in addressing research gaps. CaLP's unbiased and openly inclusive approach to identifying research topics has contributed to its reputation as a reliable and independent producer of research, although its choice of topics has not stemmed from a defined research strategy. Any research that is undertaken on CTP in the future will require collaboration between stakeholders in order to ensure mutually beneficial research outputs.



KEY FINDINGS: ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH GAPS



Key Finding 9	CaLP is considered to be well placed to follow up on some of the research gaps identified in this study. Due to the number of topics that require further investigation, the close involvement of, and collaboration with, research bodies, implementing agencies, donors and other actors, is important to ensure that the practical recommendations required to assist stakeholders in taking CTP forward, where appropriate, are a result of any further research.
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Research utilisation and impact

Implementing agencies frequently use research for internal advocacy purposes and as justification for adopting CTP. It is also used to feed into current and future programming. Some of the most helpful research findings for practitioners have emanated from programme evaluations which provide practical lessons learned.

Donors tend to use CTP research to assist in the evaluation and review of funding proposals and some research – in terms of a body of research rather than one single piece – has also contributed to some donor policy change within recent years.

Beyond publishing research on their websites and recording the number of downloads, many organisations find it difficult to monitor the impact of the research produced. Individual pieces of research are unlikely to have significant impact and it is more a body of evidence to which any changes can be attributed. Measuring the impact of research can be complex and dedicated capacity for this is required if it is to be done in any depth.

KEY FINDINGS: RESEARCH UTILISATION AND IMPACT



Key Finding 10	Measuring the impact of research is complex and requires a skillset and a capacity (financial and human) that the majority of implementing agencies, and even research bodies, simply do not have. Measuring the impact of research is a time- and resource-intensive activity but it is necessary for those commissioning research to be able to understand more fully what research is used and which research is most effective.
Key Finding 11	Research is likely to have increased impact if it proposes a solution to an identified problem, if it is communicated and targeted appropriately and if it comes from a body of research as opposed to a single piece.

Research dissemination

In order to disseminate research, many organisations summarise key findings and recommendations and distribute these internally, as longer research documents are not always easily accessible. Some of the case studies produced by CaLP that contain recommendations based on lessons learned are considered to be the most accessible for practitioners.

There are many methods for disseminating research, all of which are utilised today, including the production of videos, document summaries and promotion through social networking. However, there remains a need to reinforce these methods and, in some cases, to organise them more effectively, so that research is easy to access by a broad range of stakeholders.

KEY FINDINGS: RESEARCH DISSEMINATION



Key Finding 12	Many approaches to the dissemination of CTP are currently being used by humanitarian and other stakeholders. There remains a need to reinforce and strengthen current dissemination methods in order to reach a broad target audience – which includes practitioners, governments and decision-makers – effectively.
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Recommendations

Based on the key findings, a number of recommendations are suggested with a focus on areas for further action and areas for further research.

Recommendations 1-8 focus upon actions that need to be taken by a range of actors – CaLP, implementing agencies, research bodies and donors – in order to ensure the production of priority research based on defined strategies, which will also increase access to research.

Recommendations 9-13 focus upon the details of undertaking the priority research topics identified in this study.

AREAS FOR FURTHER ACTION

Recommendation	Corresponding Key Findings
1. In order to bridge the gap between research and operational activities, CaLP member agencies and other interested implementing agencies should support linking research to some of their interventions from start through to implementation and withdrawal/exit/handover. This research could focus on one of the six priority topics identified in the gap map in this study, which are of interest to implementing agencies as well as donors (such as a comparison of effectiveness and cost efficiency). With appropriate research design built clearly into the design of an intervention, the potential for receiving funding for the whole package (research and intervention) is high.	6, 7, 9
2. To build on this current study, CaLP should undertake a cataloguing process to collate the CTP action and evidence-based research currently available and improve the way that it is accessed on the CaLP website. Humanitarian stakeholders and other actors would need encouragement, via CaLP and influential donors, to share their research proactively. This could be further added to by cataloguing existing tools and guidelines and linking both to the CaLP Cash Atlas. ¹ (www.cash-atlas.org)	2, 8, 9
3. In order to provide an accessible, up-to-date synthesis of guidelines, prescriptive tools and lessons around CTP that have been developed and identified in recent years, an update of the GPR or the creation of a similar synthesis document(s), would greatly benefit practitioners and other humanitarian stakeholders.	2,8

¹The Cash Atlas currently allows users to upload any documents relating to the specific project that they have entered, so this could include tools, guidelines and other project-related documentation. As such, guidelines and tools which are specific to one project (but which could be replicable for other projects) could also be uploaded. It may be, however, that tools and guidelines are relevant to organisations or regions as opposed to one particular project. CaLP will be reviewing the Cash Atlas in January 2013 and assessing if its objectives have been met and where modifications might be necessary. Emerging and new needs will also be assessed to consider their inclusion in a more structured "library". If during the review process it is considered beneficial and possible to upload tools and guidelines to the Cash Atlas, it would be important to ensure there is no duplication of the "Resources" section of the CaLP website.

AREAS FOR FURTHER ACTION	
Recommendation	Corresponding Key Findings
4. In order to guide more clearly the research topics and research methodologies that CaLP will utilise in the future, a research strategy needs to be developed . Proposed research topics within the strategy should start with an identified research gap/problem as outlined in this study. The strategy needs to include impact indicators and a research impact monitoring plan. Definition of the most practical impact indicators could be discussed with other experienced organisations, such as ALNAP, ODI and OPM, and some of the approaches discussed in this study (such as monitoring website downloads, monitoring requests for further information on or presentation of individual research pieces) could be used as a starting point.	9, 11, 4
5. With its existing experience in undertaking research, CaLP should take the lead on commissioning some of the priority areas of research identified in this study. Which actual topics to focus upon should be defined within its research strategy. A close connection with other research actors will be necessary to ensure synergy, pooled thinking and shared networks, as well as to avoid duplication. CaLP should focus on action research with the topics in which it has already been involved in undertaking foundational research, such as effectiveness, cost-efficiency and multi-purpose grants. Through its regional focal points, an effort should be made to ensure that the researchers from the Global South are included in order to reinforce ownership and legitimacy of research and the topics that it investigates.	4, 5, 9
6. CaLP should advocate for the undertaking of other research topics by other actors as identified in this study, making practical linkages between those topics and organisations best placed to undertake the research. For example, global cluster leads or specialist organisations may be best placed to take forward sector-specific or thematic research, given their existing expertise and knowledge/awareness of existing foundational research. As with Recommendation 5, an effort to connect research actors in order to enhance shared thinking and networking would be essential. These topics have been proposed by interested stakeholders, so it remains within their interest and responsibility to produce the research and then share it widely.	6, 8
7. There is a need to build on current research dissemination practices by, for example, ensuring that all research (or at least that undertaken by CaLP) includes a short summary which focuses on key findings and recommendations in order to increase utility by practitioners. Additionally, methods to ensure that broad target audiences, including decision-makers, are reached through dissemination practices, such as the provision of short (5-minute) non-technical presentations with brief entreaty messages and handouts at high-level meetings (such as country director level, IASC and SCHR meetings) and the development of webinars and videos.	12
8. Donors funding CTP research should ensure that when financial support is being provided for research, sufficient time for measuring the impact of research is included, in order to allow research bodies and agencies and donors themselves to gain a better understanding of what research and what approaches to research are the most useful and effective.	10



AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Recommendation	Corresponding Key Findings
<p>9. Undertake a comparative study of the effectiveness and efficiency of different response options i.e. cash, in-kind or vouchers. This requires the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A donor or donors to agree to fund this work from planning (before an emergency has occurred) through to response implementation, data collection and on to analysis.- A number of agencies to put themselves forward to undertake this research, bearing in mind the support that will be required from different departments and units involved in planning and implementing emergency responses (such as logistics, finance, administration, programmes, management). Some agencies may prefer to use their own staff to undertake this research whilst others may prefer to use independent consultants in order to ensure neutrality and buy-in from all those involved. If more than one agency is able to undertake such studies then the data can be brought together for further analysis.	6, 7
<p>10. Undertake action research on how to link emergency CTP with existing (or new) social protection and social safety nets programmes. This would require humanitarian agencies, in collaboration with donors and host governments, to include such linkages in their preparedness activities. This would then allow for a testing of whether previous recommendations on making such linkages are actually practical to implement.</p>	
<p>11. Building on some of the lessons being learned in relation to, for example, the Syrian refugee response being implemented by UNHCR and WFP, undertake research into operational modalities and implications of multi-sector cash programming and multi-purpose cash grants.</p>	
<p>12. Further investigate the possibilities for CTP in the WASH and health sectors, taking into account current approaches to CTPs in these sectors and operational and ethical considerations.</p>	
<p>13. In light of ongoing large-scale population movements, particularly in relation to conflict, undertake research to investigate the scope of CTP in refugee contexts and politically sensitive protracted refugee situations, taking into account the appropriateness and limitations of cash in such environments.</p>	

I. INTRODUCTION

Gathering evidence through action research is one of the ways that the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) aims to raise awareness of cash transfer programming (CTP) as an appropriate mechanism for emergency response and to improve implementation practice.

The CaLP plays a key role in circulating relevant documents related to CTP on its website and via its newsletter. The CaLP website (www.cashlearning.org) provides a platform to publish and share research, evaluations, standard operating procedures and other CTP-related documents within the wider community of practice (CoP).

As outlined in its current strategy,² CaLP aims to facilitate the access of key humanitarian stakeholders to tools, good practice, action research and programming guidance to improve the quality of CTP.

To date, the CaLP has not only developed a significant number of documents such as implementation guides, good practice guides, modality briefs and training materials, but has also undertaken research into a number of topics,³ all of which are available on the CaLP website.

Before defining further potential research topics for 2014, it became evident to CaLP that a thorough understanding of research 'gaps and needs' in CTP was required in order to:

- a) Gain an appreciation of what action and evidence-based CTP research has taken place, is planned and is being undertaken.
- b) Identify who is requesting, undertaking and applying the research. Linked to this is the need to understand how research findings and recommendations are used, shared and their impact monitored.
- c) Understand any gaps in action research and a prioritisation of topics that may require awareness raising and advocacy to highlight their importance.

The CaLP intends to share the findings of this study with NGOs, think tanks, private sector agents, research bodies, donors and academic institutions planning research into CTP. The aim would be to ensure that decisions made regarding research topics are well informed and consider the wider research environment within CTP.

CaLP will also use the findings of this study to inform its own priority research and advocacy strategies.

² <http://www.cashlearning.org/calps-strategy/calp-s-strategy-2012-2015>

³ See <http://www.cashlearning.org/english/home>. Recent research includes: the use of new technology in CTP; capacity for CTP scale-up; "Ready or Not"; a compilation of tools for CTP implementation in urban contexts; and a review of market analysis. Research undertaken (or being undertaken in 2013) focuses on cost-effectiveness of cash transfers and specific delivery mechanisms; social protection systems and emergency CTP scale-up; the future of CTP; minimum requirements for market analysis in emergencies; and e-payment data management and protection codes of conduct.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was planned as a short and practical piece of research to take place over 15 days. An independent consultant with a good knowledge of those involved in CTP programming and research was engaged to undertake the study. During the short study period, an effort was made to reach as many stakeholders as possible in order to gather a range of perspectives on current needs and gaps in CTP-related research. This was done by:

- Undertaking a total of 25 individual stakeholder interviews with NGOs, the UN, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, independent consultants, research bodies and donors. A further four responses were received in writing.⁴
- Reaching out to the wider community of practice through the French and English CaLP D-groups and through CaLP's regional East Africa and Asia networks.⁵
- Reviewing existing action and evidence-based research available through the CaLP website and through other platforms.

Based on the findings emanating from these discussions, a set of clear, actionable recommendations for further action are proposed.

Study limitations

There are a small number of limitations to the current study as follows:

- The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this study requested an understanding of what research has taken place to date, is currently being undertaken and is planned for the future. It has not been possible (nor has it been the objective of the study) to undertake a complete cataloguing exercise of CTP-related research within the study timeframe. It has been possible to gain a picture, focused mainly around thematic areas or sectors, of the main pieces of research commissioned and hosted on the CaLP website. (See Annex 2)
- Definitions of action research and evidence-based research were provided in the evaluation ToR (see Annex 3). At times, it was difficult for respondents to know where to draw the line in terms of how to define research, but this study has aimed to maintain the definitions in the ToR and has not included guidelines and tools within the definition.
- In line with the ToR, this study focuses on cash transfer programming related research in emergency settings and does not cover longer term development contexts. Where relevant, linkages to long-term social safety net systems are made.
- Interviews were predominantly carried out with humanitarian organisations and some donors. In the short timeframe within which the study was undertaken, it proved difficult to access actors in the private sector who have an involvement in research relating to humanitarian cash transfer programming.

⁴ See Annex 1 for key informant list.

⁵ Inputs from this approach were provided by ACF, the French Red Cross, Humanitarian Outcomes, the Kenya Red Cross Society, Mercy Corps, NRC, UNICEF, WFP and a number of independent consultants.

3. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

3.1 The CTP research context

KEY FINDINGS	
Key Finding 1	CTP research has developed from a focus on the viability of CTP to the production of large quantities of action-based and operational research by a range of humanitarian stakeholders. Whilst there is still some research focusing on the proof of concept, the focus today is more upon specific thematic topics and studies that can show what works, to feed into guidance and to take learning forward.
Key Finding 2	Much research is undertaken by implementing agencies, donors and private sector actors in order to contribute to developing organisational strategies and policy papers. This is often not shared within the wider community of practice.
Key Finding 3	Undertaking credible research requires significant time and resource commitments which many implementing agencies do not have, particularly when their focus may be upon implementing responses in the heat of a crisis. Due to time and resource limitations, many NGO studies are only able to touch the surface and often lead to the need for further context-specific research.

In the last decade or so, there has been a significant amount of research on various elements of humanitarian programming using cash as the mechanism through which to deliver assistance to disaster-affected populations. The initial focus of CTP-related research was to determine the safety and viability of programming cash in emergency responses. A number of pilot projects were implemented which fed into this research and the result, some years later, is a fairly common agreement among humanitarian actors that cash is viable and is an appropriate response modality in certain contexts. The next, more recent phase of CTP research, which continues at the present time, has been to understand what specific areas of cash transfer programming research is needed to support the further development and refinement CTP. This second phase of research can be broken down into two core levels:

- Global high level advocacy-focused
- Field level, driven by needs in different countries and contexts

The field level phase has seen the production of many hundreds of evaluations, case studies and other documentation of humanitarian programmes using cash or vouchers which primarily emanate from small and medium-sized interventions.⁶ This research is often undertaken or commissioned by implementing agencies and its quality varies. It is rarely empirical in nature and is more focused on operational learning. However, even though the methodology of this type of operational research is not always concretely robust, the findings are often useful in terms of developing and amending CTP. Running alongside this operational research have been some more in-depth studies by specifically interested donors, such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID).⁷

⁶ Some of this can be located on the CaLP website. <http://www.cashlearning.org/resources/library>

⁷ See, for example, Annexes 2 and 3 of "Cash Transfers Literature Review" (DFID 2011) for further information on DFID's contribution to building the evidence base on CTP and DFID-supported research on social protection

Since its creation in 2006, CaLP has been proactive in CTP-related research and the CaLP website is used as a depository for many agencies to share their research, which is often programme-related. At the current time, the website is host to nearly 80 pieces of research commissioned and undertaken by a range of different research bodies and humanitarian actors, some of which has been commissioned by CaLP itself and undertaken by different independent consultants and research institutions.⁸ The research on the CaLP website includes papers on issues specific to eight different countries⁹ and three regional humanitarian disasters¹⁰ and covers a wide range of topics.

The list compiled by CaLP for this study (please see Annex 2) indicates the areas where research has been carried out, but is by no means exhaustive. Many agencies do not yet share their research widely and it is difficult to keep up-to-date with the research activities of stakeholders and potential stakeholders.

The range of topics covered by CTP research to date, as displayed on the CaLP website, is undoubtedly broad. In spite of this, many consider that nearly all thematic areas of research would benefit from further, more pointed enquiry, as most of the research to date has not gone sufficiently far to assist practitioners, decision-makers and donors to move further forward in terms of, for example, programming cash at scale. At the same time however, given the enormous amount of research undertaken (through evaluations, case studies etc.), many feel that a line needs to be drawn, as the viability of cash has been accepted and practitioners need to be able to continue programming without the ongoing pressure of researching different elements to show the feasibility of CTP – a pressure which appears less acute for in-kind transfers. In addition, with a relatively small amount of disaster assistance funding being allocated to CTP globally,¹¹ there is a concern that there is an imbalance between the focus on research before programming is supported and on actual programming itself.

Many **implementing agencies** undertake their own research in specific contexts, often through evaluation and the production of case studies, but at times with a more technical and thematically specific focus. This research is generally used to inform their own programming choices. So, for example, in Burkina Faso, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) will soon start a context-specific CTP research project, whilst Save the Children has undertaken such studies in Nigeria, and recently in Yemen, looking at the appropriateness of cash versus vouchers in these environments. In East Africa, Concern Worldwide and Africa Development Solutions (Adeso) do their own CTP-related research to inform programming. Save the Children has recently undertaken some work on technology with Vodafone but still uses the CaLP technology paper from 2011 as a basis for its programming in Niger.

Some NGOs, like Save the Children and Oxfam, have internal policy departments or research teams that focus on evidence-based research, looking at topics such as social protection and the impact on children. However, the research that is used to influence NGO policy is predominantly operational as opposed to empirical.

There is a consciousness amongst NGOs of the time that it takes to complete robust and credible research on complex topics such as cost-effectiveness comparisons or links between emergency CTP and longer term social protection transfers. During an emergency response, however, time is one of the things that is in short supply for implementing agencies, particularly when the focus needs to be on launching and maintaining life-saving operations. Due to these time and resource limitations, many NGO studies are only able to touch the surface and often lead to the need for further context-specific research. In other cases, organisations prefer to keep their research for internal use and are reluctant to share it widely.

⁸ The list of research referred to in this study has been put together by the CaLP team specifically for use in this study and is not exhaustive, only indicative of what is available. See Annex 2.

⁹ Kenya, Somalia, Haiti, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Niger, the Philippines and Nepal.

¹⁰ The 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami; the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa; the 2012 Sahel drought.

¹¹ The *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report* 2013 by Development Initiatives and CaLP's Fit for the Future research state that according to available estimates, in 2010, when the level of funding peaked, financing for cash transfer programmes constituted 1.9% of the US\$13.8 billion in humanitarian funding that donor governments provided. In 2012, it fell to 0.9% of the US\$12.9 billion from donor governments.

Different bodies of the UN have been involved in a variety of pieces of CTP-related work recently. WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) have worked together to look at the nutritional impacts of providing cash versus food in four countries (Niger, Ecuador, Uganda and Yemen); FAO is considering looking at risk management of cash in relation to working remotely, following on from the recent experience of CTP in Somalia; as part of its policy and studies series, OCHA has recently completed a study on networking and technology which includes a component on mobile cash; and UNHCR and WFP have completed joint studies looking at protection and gender in cash and voucher transfers. How well the planning for these different research studies is coordinated and shared remains unclear.

Collating a picture of upcoming research has been difficult to do, particularly in relation to actors in the private sector. It is understood that MasterCard, for example, is in the process of looking for data on "sizing the market" and trying to understand how much humanitarian CTP happens in an average year in order to assess whether there is a business opportunity for them. MasterCard also has an interest in understanding the links between CTP and financial inclusion, although is not necessarily planning its own research in this area. A number of NGOs follow what Globale Speciale Mobile (GSMA) is developing as a way of keeping in touch with some private sector developments in technology that may be influential in terms of cash transfer programming. It is possible that GSMA will review the impacts of mobile technology on the resilience of communities vulnerable to natural disaster. In the Philippines, VISA is supporting Oxfam GB to test how the preparedness of electronic cash transfer payment delivery mechanisms might work as part of an emergency CTP response. Although this is a pilot project as opposed to a research study, operational details and discussions with regard to how best to document the programme (with CaLP support) in order to ensure possible future replication (particularly of CTP mainstreaming into emergency preparedness planning) in country, within the region or even globally are still ongoing. The programme consists of using the VISA Aid Disbursement Solution (VADS box), which consists of pre-positioned cards and points of sale machines; emergency simulation focusing on needs assessment and analysis; and response – test driving the cards, machines and distribution measuring speed of delivery.



Private sector research is often focused on payment providers and the potential business case for providers to be involved in cash transfers. Private sector actors such as Visa, Vodafone and MasterCard are also acting as donors in the commissioning of research.

There is a body of research focusing on longer term programming and payment methodologies being undertaken by organisations such as Bankable Frontiers and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP). Although the focus here is not directly on emergency contexts, it is likely that there are lessons that can be learned from this research (for example, recent research undertaken by CGAP in Haiti, Kenya, Uganda and the Philippines piloting new payment systems) and amended and applied in humanitarian operating environments.

For **donors**, either through their own research or research commissioned on their behalf, the focus is on evidence that cash will work and under which circumstances it will work. Some donors, such as DFID and ECHO, have an additional specific interest in specific topics, such as the cost-effectiveness of cash transfer programming.

It is important to note that organisational and institutional mandates and specificities can at times influence research, which does not mean that the research itself is questionable, but may highlight the importance of ensuring that there are neutral bodies that are also able to undertake research.

3.2 Key research actors

KEY FINDINGS		
Key Finding 4	A small number of actors, including CaLP and ODI, are those most commonly referenced as leading CTP-related research. CaLP undertakes valuable action-oriented and operational research which is frequently based on the application, experience and challenges of the use of CTP on the ground (albeit without having its own research strategy). Other bodies are relied upon for more academic and scientific research.	
Key Finding 5	The research agendas of implementing agencies and donors are often influenced by the areas in which they have already invested or plan to invest.	

CaLP has already been noted as proactive in terms of CTP-related research, is considered to be neutral in the choice of which topics to research and a reliable research body that has the buy-in and support of its partners. In addition, its research has mostly been based on the application, experience and challenges of the use of CTP on the ground, which is valuable for practitioners. CaLP's 2012-2013 research topics were identified with the assistance of the community of practice, stakeholders and also by reviewing the recommendations made in previous research. This was done through stakeholder meetings and the Survey Monkey tool which received 135 responses. CaLP does not, however, have a research strategy to guide its choice of research topics or its approach to undertaking or monitoring research.

The Overseas Development Institute/Humanitarian Practice Group (ODI/HPG) is another key actor in terms of commissioning and undertaking CTP-related research, with the 2011 Good Practice Review on cash transfer programming in emergencies being recognised as a valuable reference tool for humanitarian stakeholders.

From an **NGO** perspective, the NGOs that are most frequently referred to as leading on CTP-related research include Save the Children International, ACF, Adeso, Oxfam and Concern. NGOs tend to focus their operational research (primarily evaluations) on showing what works and on creating guidance. Their motivation tends to be taking learning forwards and providing appropriate assistance.

A number of humanitarian agencies, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), do not generally undertake their own evidence-based research, but use real-time evaluations and other forms of evaluation to inform the direction that their CTP should take. For example, the IFRC recently evaluated its cash programming work in the Philippines. Other IFRC evaluation reports are available through its website.¹²

Looking more at **longer term social safety nets and social protection** (somewhat outside the scope of this current study but of relevance in terms of potential linkages with emergency CTP), IFPRI has undertaken significant work, notably in Latin America. Together with Research Institute for Development (IRD), IFPRI is currently conducting a study looking at food and nutrition security and social transfers in West Africa using a robust randomised methodology. IFPRI has done similar studies in Sri Lanka and Malawi and Tufts/Concern have taken a similar approach in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Similarly, the World Bank is seen as a key research actor and reference point for humanitarian agencies in the field of social protection, as is DFID.

IFPRI's recent work with WFP, looking at a comparison of cash versus food to understand more fully the impacts on **nutrition** in four different countries, is thought to be fairly rigorous by those spoken to as part of this study, although it is understood that there was significant financial investment in undertaking these studies. There are considered to be some shortcomings to the studies, as the focus was primarily on transfer modality, and the critical elements of context and managerial practices were not necessarily taken into account.

From the **donor** perspective, DFID is seen to be a leader in conducting CTP-related research with a focus on areas in which it has already invested, such as social protection and inclusion, efficiency and effectiveness. DFID has also put out a recent call for a study to examine the impact of cash on nutrition outcomes and for a systematic review on the evidence of the effectiveness and efficiency of CTP. Other donors, like ECHO, have done less direct CTP research and are not necessarily in a position to fund partners purely for research purposes (although a research component within a programme proposal could be positively viewed by ECHO, for example).



PHOTO: TOM PIETRASIK/OXFAM GB

¹² <http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/evaluations/>

3.3 Current gaps in CTP research

KEY FINDINGS		
Key Finding 6	There is a significant amount of research available on CTP which is used to advocate for CTP and to design or improve programming. There remain a number of research gaps which need to be addressed in order to take current research forward in an actionable way for practitioners. Some of these gaps are CTP-specific whilst others, such as the need for additional research into cost-effectiveness and market impact, are more generic.	
Key Finding 7	Of the many potential research topics identified, there are six for which further investigation, resulting in practical, forward-thinking recommendations, would be beneficial for humanitarian stakeholders as a priority. These six thematic areas are: (i) a cost efficiency and effectiveness comparison; (ii) multi-sector cash programming; (iii) WASH and (iv) health potential with CTP; (v) links between social protection systems and emergency CTP; and (vi) cash in refugee contexts.	
Key Finding 8	In addition to further research, there is a need to pull together the many guidelines and tools on CTP that have been developed in recent years.	

The areas of CTP-related research which have already received attention from humanitarian actors are fairly broad.¹³ However, there remain significant gaps and outstanding needs in terms of research that is required to help implementing agencies and donors further advance cash transfer programming.

A key point that came out in discussions during the current study is that although there remain some gaps in terms of CTP-related research, these gaps are not all CTP-specific (such as impact on markets, cost-effectiveness, recipient voices and private sector partnerships) and their further investigation is relevant to a range of humanitarian response options as well. In addition, although a lot of research work has been carried out, it is difficult to translate it into solid scientific evidence and some question the need for this when the viability and feasibility of CTP is already fairly widely accepted. There is a call for research in sectors other than food security and livelihoods and those spoken to during this study highlighted this specifically for WASH and health.

There do remain some question marks about whether it is further research that is required or whether there needs to be a more accessible compilation of lessons and experience, shared more widely within the community of practice. Whilst this question remains somewhat open, the current brief study has identified the following top 16 priority outstanding research gaps that humanitarian stakeholders feel need addressing or developing in order to further enhance the adoption of CTP where appropriate.¹⁴ These research gaps were identified through discussions with key stakeholders and through feedback provided via the CaLP French and English D-Groups, as well as through a consideration of the action and evidence-based research currently available on the CaLP website, a list of which was provided by CaLP for this study. Those topics which were raised consistently and by a range of stakeholders (e.g. donors, UN, Red Cross/Crescent, NGOs and consultants) are included in the top six. The next 10 included in the gap map were also raised by a range of stakeholders but less systematically. Table 2 below – “Additional potential research topics” – highlights potential research topics that were raised by one or two individuals during the course of discussions or through the D-Groups as part of this study.

The first six thematic areas are considered to be the priority gaps that require addressing.

¹³ See Annex 2 for a list of some of the research available on the CaLP website.

¹⁴ With the exception of the top six, this list is not presented in order of priority.

Table 1: Thematic research gap map

Sector/ Thematic Area	Additional detail /Potential research questions or focus
1. Comparative study between in-kind, cash and voucher programmes focusing on effectiveness and cost efficiency	Challenges identified for this research are that it is difficult to make comparisons between different settings or to be able to use comparisons from one operational environment in another one. The research would need to look at the impact of the different modalities in a similar operating environment, taking into account managerial practices, and also make a comparison of the cost efficiency of in-kind/cash/voucher. Similar comparisons would need to be undertaken in a variety of operating environments.
2. Simultaneous multi-sector cash programming and multi-purpose grants	The focus would be on the benefits of providing recipients with one transfer to cover a package of outcomes potentially spanning different sectors. It would consider how to determine whether a multi-purpose grant is appropriate, the operational modalities for multi-sector grants, the implications for partnerships, the implication of technology, reporting and accounting obligations and providing an understanding of the impact of multi-purpose grants.
3. Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	There is a need for evidence from within the WASH sector, using familiar language, to understand the particular WASH needs for the appropriate use of cash transfers. The CaLP WASH scoping exercise, which should ensure WASH experts are consulted or driving this process, is one step in this process. ¹⁵
4. Health	Ethical considerations are important here if cash (for payment of treatment at private health clinics, for example) is to be considered as an alternative to more tried and tested forms of humanitarian support in emergencies, such as the use of medical response units and field hospitals, due to the need to be assured of the quality of treatment.
5. Linking emergency CTP to social protection and social safety net programmes	Although there is some research covering this topic, including CaLP's recent Fit for the Future initiative in conjunction with the Humanitarian Futures Programme, more is required to make the research accessible and practical for implementing agencies, donors and host governments. What does engagement with government social safety nets mean for humanitarian actors? What could it look like? To what extent can humanitarian agencies use safety nets to advocate for CTPs to ensure social inclusion? Can humanitarian agencies provide technical advice to governments on targeting and delivery? How can existing social safety net systems be used to top up payments in disaster as opposed to having to establish parallel systems?
6. Cash in refugee contexts	What is the feasibility and scope of cash in refugee contexts? How can CTP work in protracted refugee situations which are often politically sensitive? Is cash an adequate tool and what are its limitations? Are market assessments and feasibility studies enough to convince host governments on CTPs? What have CTP programmes in these contexts achieved and what discussions/concessions (if any) had to be made? How can markets in long-term refugee camp environments be assessed? The research should include some guidance and recommendations emanating from protracted refugee crises such as Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh), Dadaab (Kenya), Lebanon and Jordan.
7. Organisational set-up and preparedness	The focus here is on the necessary technical, technological and compliance requirements for institutions to deliver cash at scale, bringing on board support departments such as logistics, finance and administration. What is needed to enable support service functions to cater for the needs of CTP in a better way?

¹⁵ The CaLP WASH Scoping Study is planned to start imminently. It is a short study which aims to understand the current use of, approaches to and capacity for CTP in the WASH sector.



Sector/ Thematic Area	Additional detail /Potential research questions or focus
8. Modality/ delivery mechanism comparison ¹⁶	This research would look at the most appropriate mechanism to transfer cash (including vouchers) and then the means to deliver it (physically, electronically, in a one-off payment, spread out over time). This requires a backwards-looking piece of research to allow practitioners to see how best to achieve their objectives.
9. Nutrition and nutritional health	Whilst there is a small body of work on this, more is required to assess what cash does or can do for nutritional outcomes in terms of acute malnutrition and whether cash alone is sufficient to achieve desired outcomes or whether a combination of cash and in-kind is necessary. There is anecdotal evidence about the positive effects of cash and its links to the causal factors of malnutrition but little empirical evidence. ¹⁷
10. Recipient voices	This would look at the less tangible reasons why people might choose in-kind over cash or vouchers or vice-versa and preferred payment systems, allowing for an understanding of why people make such judgements.
11. Preparedness	What does this look like in practice (including examples of a country programme being truly prepared)? How can preparedness plans be effectively linked with actual implementation? This might include tools that have allowed the meaningful integration of CTPs in emergency preparedness and contingency planning to allow for scalable responses.
12. E-banking and private sector partnerships	What are the potential synergies and risks associated with collaboration with private companies seeking to extend banking services to remote and hard-to-reach communities? To what extent do humanitarian agencies know what their beneficiaries need and how to influence the services provided along with CTP for the banks' new clients? The implications for humanitarian agencies contracting large international companies instead of local, traditional service providers who don't have the capacity for large-scale CTP but may get pushed out of the market as a result.
13. New technology	Cash transfers and new technology (with the caveat that technology is being developed on a continual basis, so research into this topic would require flexibility and innovation in terms of the methodology adopted and the requisite technical know-how to tap into ongoing developments).
14. Risk management	With a specific focus on working remotely, organisational/ donor risk 'appetite' and the risk tolerance for losses. Based on experiences of CTP in Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of the Middle East where access is not always feasible.
15. Protection	How can improved protection assessments feed into potential cash-based interventions?
16. Scale	Action-based research to follow an operation at scale (potentially with a consortium of agencies) from inception design to exit.

¹⁶ This was identified as a current gap during this study. CaLP has recently commissioned Oxford Policy Management with the support of Concern Worldwide to look at whether electronic transfers are more cost effective than other cash delivery approaches and under what conditions.

¹⁷ DFID has recently put out a call for proposals for: Preventing Acute Undernutrition in Emergencies using Food Assistance : a study to examine the impact of cash on nutrition outcomes.

There is a high degree of complexity contained within the detail of some of the research gaps identified and in order to undertake sufficiently solid research, the amount of time to undertake it should not be underestimated.

With regard to undertaking a **comparative study** (gap one in the Table 1 gap map) of the effectiveness and efficiency of the potential different assistance delivery mechanisms (cash, kind or voucher), it is understood that this type of research is difficult to undertake, as it would have to be set up in advance of an emergency humanitarian response taking place. However, without more evidence on this, practitioners and organisations find it difficult to advocate for one kind of response modality over another. There are a number of issues which make this kind of study difficult. Firstly, the researcher would have to support the implementing agency in advance of a response happening to allow for collecting the right data, thereby ensuring its comparability. Secondly, there is the challenge of having a researcher undertaking this study real-time, in the heat of an emergency response, when implementing agencies are primarily trying to focus on the response itself and managing the staff critical to that response. There is frequently little means or motivation to conduct research during the immediate start of an emergency, with energy and resources being focused elsewhere. Finally, the resourcing of this kind of study is generally beyond what is available to implementing agencies who often find themselves struggling to finance emergency appeals 100% as it is. There is a danger that the hunger for such analysis will lead to managers and donors 'looking for a number' as a panacea to decision-making. In many cases, the analysis is only as good as you make it, and depends on what aspects you consider.

It should be noted that at the beginning of 2013, CaLP commissioned the Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to undertake an analytical study of the cost-effectiveness of electronic cash payment mechanisms in emergencies. The work started in January with an initial attempt to collect details on emergency CTP across the world and what payment mechanisms were being used. On the basis of this, humanitarian organisations were asked if they would be willing to have their programmes included in a special case study on electronic payment systems. As a result, Oxfam and Concern programmes in Somalia and Kenya will be covered in detailed case studies in the final report. A detailed approach was adopted in the case studies, starting from the earliest phase of programme design, to provide a breakdown of key costs at different stages of the programme cycle as opposed to only looking at total programme costs. The end result should be able to show the costs at different stages of the programme, such as what it costs to set up the programme, to register beneficiaries, to make monthly disbursements etc. Such a study could be used as a basis for any future efficiency and cost-effectiveness research. It should, however, be mentioned again that the variables within such studies can be many and varied and this makes it difficult to make a comparison. However, the OPM research will be able to provide findings on the factors that can make certain types of cash transfer more expensive or cheaper than another payment mechanism.

Whilst the gap map presented in the table above highlights research gaps that were consistently noted throughout this study, there was a much wider range of topics which individuals who contributed to this study suggested require further investigation, although perhaps not as a priority. These include:

Table 2: Additional potential research topics

Sector/ Thematic Area	Additional detail /Potential research questions
Donor environment	To allow humanitarian agencies to understand more fully the donor environment around cash. This is based on examples of implementing agencies having difficulty in acquiring donor support to finance unconditional cash grants within emergency appeals, which appears to be in conflict with some of the messages that donors are emitting with regard to their approach to supporting CTP.
CTP financing	Research and data on how much financing is going into CTP to build upon the work undertaken in the Fit for the Future research. This would require improved visibility and better reporting and recording of this. A better understanding of this could allow for an improved understanding of the impact of CTP in emergencies and this may in turn influence future resource allocation
Gender	Not only the impact on women, but action research with control groups, baselines and different approaches that take context and protection into account. How to reduce the risk of household conflict and avoid creating or reinforcing negative stereotypes of men through targeting women. The appropriateness and effects of targeting men or women.
"Cash First"	An examination of the implications of adopting a principle of "Cash First" across the humanitarian arena in terms of the type of change and scale of change that this may achieve.
Healthcare	An investigation of any linkages between the provision of cash transfers and access to healthcare.
Market impact	The impact of providing cash at household level on the local and regional economies.
Coordination	Coordination of cash remains a topic which requires some further research, although this would be political rather than empirical in nature.
Inflation contexts	The appropriateness of implementing CTP in contexts where there is sustained, stable inflation – where prices have risen and remain high but are not increasing further – such as in South Sudan.
Low-tech distribution	Looking at systems such as hawalla would benefit from further research, as this is often relevant in remote locations
Urban environments	Although CaLP has already produced a study on this, there is increasing need for more information as many agencies continue to struggle with this. This topic was specifically raised from the Asia region.

CaLP's recent Fit for the Future initiative also identified a number of research gaps, particularly in connection with preparation for the future of emergency CTP in the context of increased government uptake.¹⁸

As with research, there has been a tremendous production of CTP guidelines and tools in recent years and the need to map these and have as many as possible consolidated in one accessible location has been identified in this study. In addition, there is a call for an update of the ODI/HPN Good Practice Review which synthesised cash transfer guidelines, highlighted lessons from evaluations and provided practical examples of CTP drawn from experience in the field.¹⁹

¹⁸ "The uptake of emergency CTP by governments: A speculative analysis on the changing roles of governments and international actors" (Draft) – CaLP and the Humanitarian Futures Programme (2013)

¹⁹ Harvey, P., Bailey, S., "Cash Transfer Programming in Emergencies – A Good Practice Review" (2011) ODI/HPN

As can be seen by the numerous topics identified for further research above, there is a body of opinion that feels there remains a need for action research to look at one (or more) of the identified gaps and study the topic over a period of time. However, there is another body of opinion that feels that there has been sufficient research into CTP-related topics and that humanitarian actors are losing sight that CTP is only one form of assistance delivery modality and that a lot of the proposed research could be valid for a whole range of response options.

As has been mentioned, many of the topics raised here have already been covered to an extent in some form or are the focus of current and ongoing research. However, what practitioners are struggling with is how to practically follow up and operationalize the recommendations that have been put forward in some of the research. A lack of follow-up is standing in the way of making some of the research findings and recommendations actionable. The first six topics in the gap map presented in Table 1 above (a cost efficiency and effectiveness comparison; multi-sector cash programming; WASH and health potential with CTP; links between social protection systems and emergency CTP; and cash in refugee contexts) are considered to be the thematic areas where consistent requests for further practical action research is sought from a cross-sector of stakeholders.

3.4 Addressing the research gaps

KEY FINDINGS	
Key Finding 9	CaLP is considered to be well placed to follow up on some of the research gaps identified in this study. Due to the number of topics that require further investigation, the close involvement of and collaboration with research bodies, implementing agencies, donors and other actors is important to ensure that the practical recommendations required to assist stakeholders in taking CTP forward where appropriate are a result of any further research.

Bearing in mind the two diverging schools of thought on the need (or not) for further CTP research, there is nonetheless sufficient interest from key stakeholders and desire from practitioners to take elements of the current available research forward in a practically actionable manner.

As has been outlined in Section 3.2, there are a number of leading research actors who would be well placed to undertake this research and who are considered as credible within the CoP.

CaLP's historical leaning towards research that focuses on programming as opposed to empirical evidence-based research is considered to be most useful for practitioners. However, some of the pieces of research commissioned by CaLP do not go sufficiently far to move debates around cash forwards.

Collaborative action between CaLP, implementing agencies, reliable research bodies and donors such as ODI/HPG and DFID in any future research is critical in order to ensure mutually beneficial research outputs. This collaboration needs to involve other relevant parties such as private sector actors and governments; even though this may be more challenging. Learning from organisations such as CGAP, who are familiar with this sort of partnering even though outside the humanitarian system, is important.

3.5 Research utilisation and impact

KEY FINDINGS		
Key Finding 10	Measuring the impact of research is complex and requires a skillset and a capacity (financial and human) that the majority of implementing agencies, and even research bodies, simply do not have. Measuring the impact of research is a time- and resource-intensive activity but it is necessary for those commissioning research to be able to understand more fully what research is used and which research is most effective.	
Key Finding 11	Research is likely to have increased impact if it proposes a solution to an identified problem, if it is communicated and targeted appropriately and if it comes from a body of research as opposed to a single piece.	

Research users

Research is frequently used by implementing agencies for internal advocacy and justification for adopting CTP. Research is commonly used to feed into both current and future programming in terms of resolving challenges in implementation and designing new CTP. Some of the research which has led to the development of tools and guidance is used by individuals to improve the tools that they are using. In addition, the research allows those who are already comfortable with CTP to convince, raise awareness and back up technical expertise with senior management and support systems teams. For practitioners, some of the most helpful findings have come from programme evaluations. Although they do not fit neatly under the title of "action research", many of the organisational guidelines on CTP which are based on experience and evidence are used frequently by those implementing programmes to guide and steer implementation. Those who are less aware of CTP are able to familiarise themselves with programming and best practice as a result of the research available.

Donors are able to use some of the available research to assist in evaluating and reviewing proposals for cash and voucher programmes and it is likely that research, sometimes emanating from partners and sometimes donors' own research, has contributed to some of the changes in donor policy towards CTP seen in recent years.

It is thought that national governments are less likely to be using CTP research. Reasons for this include the issue that NGO research, for example, is often undertaken in isolation of governments and research tends not to be produced in local language. This is an area which needs addressing.

Research impact monitoring mechanisms

Many of those spoken to as part of this study were unable to provide insights on the best way to measure the impact of research. One of the main challenges has been to identify what the impact of research would actually look like – is impact a change in policy or behaviour? Or is it a change in policy or behaviour that is then beneficial to those affected by disaster? Even if the focus is on the first of those questions, it is very unlikely that one single piece of research would result in policy or behaviour change – it tends more to come from a body of evidence.

In the field of CTP, whilst it is likely that some pieces of research have been more influential than others, it is the whole body of research that has been instrumental in bringing changes to policy that have moved the possibilities around CTP forwards.

At the global level, it is more easy to identify where CTP-related research might have had an impact – for example, with the relatively recent change in ECHO's cash guidelines removing the ceiling of 100,000 Euro for grants to NGOs providing unconditional cash grants to disaster-affected populations. Such impact is more difficult to observe at a field level however, as it is often agency-specific.

There is little doubt about the important role that research in CTP has had on influencing humanitarian policy and programming in recent years. In one of its recent papers, ALNAP pointed out a shift in policy developments focusing on the increased acceptance and support of the use of cash by major donors, which has increased the funds available for CTP.²⁰ ALNAP asks the degree to which evidence has played a role in the policy shift. The paper makes a brief analysis of the history of the documentation of the use of cash in emergency response which was initially brought together in a single document in 2000²¹ and has been built upon since then by a number of stakeholders. ALNAP's assessment found that "research and evaluation played an important role in the acceptance of cash programming".²²

Measuring the impact of research can be complex and requires dedicated capacity if it is to be done in any depth. For this reason, a number of organisations are not able to go much beyond distributing documents or key messages or putting research papers on their websites.

The ODI, a leading think-tank focusing on humanitarian and development issues, has created a framework to assist in understanding the links between research and policy. The Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) framework is focused on development policy and practice, but the approach used could also be considered for humanitarian and emergency programming. Through RAPID, ODI proposes that improved use of evidence and research in development policy and practice would assist in the saving of lives, poverty reduction and improving the quality of life. One of the key issues that RAPID puts forward is that uptake of research is more likely if it is providing a solution to an identified problem. If research is initiated on the basis of an identified problem and with a clear problem statement that the research aims to address, then endorsement of the research is much more likely. In addition, the way that research messages are packaged and targeted can significantly affect the perception and eventual use of the research. Another important factor identified by RAPID as affecting the link between research and policy is that much research is undertaken by the North and funded by international donors, which raises issues about ownership, priority-setting and legitimacy.

Two of the simplest ways to monitor the impact of research are:

- To look at a change in policy when it has occurred and then write the history of that change (as with all impact evaluations) working backwards, taking a historical approach.
- To follow the course of an individual piece of research and monitor whether people are aware of it and integrate it into their practice. Download numbers are a simple passive way of starting this measurement.

Indicators that can be used for measuring the impact of research (and which are used by leading research institutions such as ALNAP) include: whether people were aware of the research as a necessary condition for influence; whether people engaged with it (a proxy indicator for identifying whether people read it or found it interesting can be the number of people who contacted the researchers/commissioning agency to ask questions or ask to present the research); whether it was used e.g. at training courses or referenced in other documentation. There is, however, quite a big step between the last two indicators – engagement and use – and many implementing agencies and organisations such as CaLP simply do not have the capacity to make such measurements.

²⁰ T Knox-Clarke, P., Darcy, J., "28th ALNAP Meeting: Background Paper: Evidence and knowledge in humanitarian action" (2013)

²¹ Peppiatt, D., Mitchell, J. and Allen, P. "Buying Power: The use of cash transfers in emergencies" (2000) The British Red Cross.

²² Ramalingam, B., Scriven, K., and Foley, C. (2009) "Innovations in international humanitarian action" in ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action (Chapter 3)

Measuring the impact of research – particularly in the way, for example, that ODI suggests, – is very time- and human resource-intensive and most humanitarian agencies simply do not have the capacity (or resources) to do this. However, finding proxy indicators to show whether research is being read and whether people are asking questions, as well as tracking research citations, should be sufficient to assess the impact of research to an extent.

Since mid-September 2013, CaLP has started to calculate the number of downloads of each piece of research (or other documentation) from its website, which may assist in measuring the impact of the research it commissions and that of others that it hosts on its website.

3.6 Research dissemination

KEY FINDINGS	
Key Finding 12	Many approaches to the dissemination of CTP are currently being used by humanitarian and other stakeholders. There remains a need to reinforce and strengthen current dissemination methods in order to effectively reach a broad target audience, which includes practitioners, governments and decision-makers.

Each organisation has its own dissemination practices, but the most common method of disseminating research on CTP internally is for a headquarters focal point to summarise key findings and recommendations and distribute within HQ and to the field. Some of the papers produced by CaLP and others undertaking research are felt to be too long to be easily accessible, particularly by those for whom English is not their first language. The need for short summaries which are packaged slightly differently to research executive summaries but which focus on findings and recommendations without the necessity of focusing on methodology, would be helpful to address this to an extent.

The global-level research tends to be harder to disseminate to the field and is more likely to be used in different international fora for advocacy and awareness-raising purposes.

Whilst the larger NGOs and humanitarian organisations tend to be aware of the research that is coming out, there is potentially a knowledge gap between them and the smaller national/local-level NGOs who are less familiar with CTP in general and less likely to have received any training.

The case studies with recommendations based on lessons learned which have been developed by CaLP are considered to be accessible for practitioners and could be a potential tool for disseminating the results of more complex research.

As has been mentioned, an update of the Global Practice Review or a similar overview document was considered by many as a good way of pulling together the many developments in CTP in recent years.

Within the humanitarian system in general, knowledge is often socially created, and for practitioners, it is often important to understand what peers believe to be effective approaches to programming more than whether there is strong evidential research available. To this end, dissemination tactics need to be broad as opposed to deep, in order that as many people as possible are aware of key issues. This is complex, however, because dissemination needs not only to reach practitioners but also decision makers in the humanitarian system, as well as those that they are talking to. In addition, decision makers do not tend to use the same information and dissemination mechanisms as practitioners which suggests that the means and methods of communicating about and disseminating CTP issues need to be diverse to ensure that the correct messages reach the correct audiences.

A variety of methods were proposed during the course of this study to disseminate research effectively, to ensure that the right people are accessing the information contained in research papers. Whilst the majority of these methods are already being utilised, there is a need to reinforce them. The approaches proposed included:

Table 3: Dissemination methodologies

Vector	Approach/Reasoning
Videos	3/4-minute videos focusing on different cash-related topics which are easy to translate/sub-title
Summaries	Document summaries of no more than 3-4 pages, focusing on findings and recommendations for taking the focus of the paper forwards.
Webinars and conferences	To promote a small number of key messages and allow for the movement of information between an already interested audience (for practitioners).
CaLP D-Group	To disseminate research to an already-engaged audience (for practitioners), in advance of the research being undertaken and as research is released.
Simplification	The translation of scientific results into simpler terms would make research more accessible to a wider group, particularly at the field level.
Meetings	For decision makers, who may not have the same understanding of CTP issues as practitioners, research needs to be presented without high levels of technical detail at internal intra-organisational meetings such as senior management team meetings or annual country director meetings as well as the Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response (SCHR) or the Inter Agency Standing committee (IASC) task force meetings. Short (5-minute) presentations with brief entreaty messages and hand-outs are useful at such gatherings.
Website depository	Sharing research to be contained on the CaLP website which is seen as a document depository (with the caveat that research is not sufficiently well ordered on the website).
Engagement	Engaging operational decision makers at every stage of the research process, from the selection of research topics through to follow-up to ensure the relevance of research and ownership of findings. ²³
Cluster involvement	For cluster-specific research then dissemination could be incorporated at global or regional-level meetings.
Donor promotion	Donors advertising and publicising research with their partners so that all partners are aware of the research studies available.
Agency promotion	Implementing agencies being proactive in approaching donors and asking to present their research to them.
CaLP Steering Committee involvement	A systematic link on CaLP's member agency websites through to the CaLP website.
Cash working groups	Through national and regional cash working groups as fora within which to share and discuss potential common solutions and address common problems.
Practical links	Attaching relevant tools or guidance to research pieces.
Training	Inclusion of promotion of recent research in training and educational curricula to reach engaged minds with an interest in the topic.
CaLP Regional Focal Points	Promotion of research at different internal agencies trainings, workshops, presentations, meetings and learning events and in separate one-on-one meetings with donors, UN, NGOs, private sector and governments.

²³ Knox-Clarke, P., Darcy, J., "28th ALNAP Meeting: Background Paper: Evidence and knowledge in humanitarian action" (2013)

At the moment, many of the learning tools such as the D-groups and other networking tools are not exploiting learning to the maximum and information emanating from such groups is not being sufficiently well captured and consolidated.

When CaLP itself commissions research, it is committed to disseminating through the community of practice via its e-newsletter and web platform, as well as holding global and regional CaLP learning events for practitioners and decision makers. CaLP also uses the outputs and recommendations from its research to feed into its advocacy strategy and training materials on emergency CTP.

The CaLP website is an important library for CTP-related research, although it does not hold all research as, for example, many organisations are not yet ready to share all their own programme evaluations. So the CaLP website is a good starting place for those trying to locate research, although it can be difficult to find papers and documents quickly due to insufficiently effective grouping or tagging within the website.



PHOTO: JANE BEESLEY / OXFAM GB

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The last decade has seen a large amount of research undertaken by a variety of organisations focusing on CTP. There has been a shift from investigating the feasibility of implementing cash transfer programmes to looking in greater detail at a range of different elements involved in programming cash from small context-specific perspectives to more global topics. What remains absent to an extent are actionable recommendations emanating from CTP research which would allow practitioners and others within the humanitarian system to take cash transfer programming forward.

Although a number of gaps in existing action and evidence-based research have been identified through this study, there does need to be a balance between research and action. Whilst there remains more room for research, learning and evidence collection in relation to CTP, it is possible that evidence (or lack of empirical evidence) should not be an obstacle to supporting and implementing cash transfer programming when this modality has been proven to be effective. A recent ALNAP paper²⁴ highlighted the recognition that evidence alone will not be able to alleviate some of the concerns of implementing agencies around programming cash, particularly in complex humanitarian emergencies, although it is able to contribute to policy development. The time and capacity required to undertake and effectively disseminate research should not be underestimated, even if that research emanates from small-scale operational evaluations.

It is also important to highlight that some of the research gaps identified here may be equally relevant to other response options and assistance delivery modalities and that future research does not necessarily need to be framed around one isolated modality.

With a number of the areas for which further research has been identified as a need, what is really required is action research – the identification of a problem for which those within the community of practice work together to find a solution. This could involve testing what might work, such as programming at scale or linking emergency CT to social safety nets or undertaking comparative cost-effectiveness studies. The actors and the architecture to identify and test solutions are present, but they need to be brought together to see what works and what does not. This takes coordination, collaboration and support between donors, implementing agencies and other relevant actors.

²⁴ Knox-Clarke, P., Darcy, J., "28th ALNAP Meeting: Background Paper: Evidence and knowledge in humanitarian action" (2013)

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the key findings emanating from the study, a number of recommendations focusing on future action to progress research and research dissemination are proposed, as well as recommendations on potential topics for further research.²⁵

Recommendations 1-8 focus upon action that needs to be taken by a range of actors – CaLP, implementing agencies, research bodies and donors – in order to ensure the production of priority research based on defined strategies which will also increase access to research.

Recommendations 9-13 focus upon the details of undertaking the priority research topics identified in this study.

AREAS FOR FURTHER ACTION	
Recommendation	Corresponding Key Findings
1. In order to bridge the gap between research and operational activities, CaLP member agencies and other interested implementing agencies should support the linking of research to some of their interventions from start through to implementation and withdrawal/exit/handover. This research could focus on one of the six priority topics identified in the gap map in this study, which are of interest to implementing agencies as well as donors (such as a comparison of effectiveness and cost efficiency). With appropriate research design built clearly into the design of an intervention, the potential for receiving funding for the whole package (research and intervention) is high.	6, 7, 9
2. To build on this current study, CaLP should undertake a cataloguing process to collate the CTP action and evidence-based research currently available and improve the way that it is accessed on the CaLP website. Humanitarian stakeholders and other actors would need encouragement, via CaLP and influential donors, to share their research proactively. This could be further added to by cataloguing existing tools and guidelines and linking both to the CaLP Cash Atlas. ²⁶	2, 8, 9
3. In order to provide an accessible up-to-date synthesis of guidelines, prescriptive tools and lessons around CTP that have been developed and identified in recent years, an update of the GPR or the creation of a similar synthesis document(s), would greatly benefit practitioners and other humanitarian stakeholders.	2,8

²⁵ Not all key findings have required a recommendation

²⁶ The Cash Atlas currently allows users to upload any documents relating to the specific project that they have entered, so this could include tools, guidelines and other project-related documentation. So guidelines and tools which are specific to one project (but which could be replicable for other projects) could also be uploaded. It may be, however, that tools and guidelines are relevant to organisations or regions as opposed to one particular project. CaLP will be reviewing the Cash Atlas in January 2013 and assessing if its objectives have been met and where modifications might be necessary. Emerging and new needs will also be assessed to consider their inclusion in a more structured "library". If during the review process it is considered beneficial and possible to upload tools and guidelines to the Cash Atlas, it would be important to ensure there is no duplication of the "Resources" section of the CaLP website.

AREAS FOR FURTHER ACTION	
Recommendation	Corresponding Key Findings
4. In order to guide more clearly the research topics and research methodologies that CaLP will utilise in the future, a research strategy needs to be developed . Proposed research topics within the strategy should start with an identified research gap/problem as outlined in this study. The strategy needs to include impact indicators and a research impact monitoring plan. Definition of the most practical impact indicators could be discussed with other experienced organisations, such as ALNAP, ODI and OPM, and some of the approaches discussed in this study (such as monitoring website downloads, monitoring requests for further information on or presentation of individual research pieces) could be used as a starting point.	9, 11, 4
5. With its existing experience in undertaking research, CaLP should take the lead on commissioning some of the priority areas of research identified in this study. The actual topics to focus upon should be defined within its research strategy. A close connection with other research actors will be necessary to ensure synergy, pooled thinking and shared networks, as well as to avoid duplication. CaLP should focus on action research with the topics in which it has already been involved in undertaking foundational research, such as effectiveness, cost efficiency and multi-purpose grants. Through its regional focal points, an effort should be made to ensure that the researchers from the Global South are included in order to reinforce ownership and legitimacy of research and the topics that it investigates.	4, 5, 9
6. CaLP should advocate for the undertaking of other research topics by other actors as identified in this study, making practical linkages between those topics and organisations best placed to undertake the research. For example, global cluster leads or specialist organisations may be best placed to take forward sector-specific or thematic research, given their existing expertise and knowledge/awareness of existing foundational research. As with Recommendation 5, an effort to connect research actors in order to enhance shared thinking and networking would be essential. These topics have been proposed by interested stakeholders, so it remains within their interest and responsibility to produce the research and then share it widely.	6, 8
7. There is a need to build on current research dissemination practices by, for example, ensuring that all research (or at least that undertaken by CaLP) includes a short summary which focuses on key findings and recommendations in order to increase utility by practitioners. Additionally, methods to ensure that broad target audiences, including decision makers, are reached through dissemination practices, such as the provision of short (5-minute) non-technical presentations with brief entreaty messages and hand-outs at high-level meetings (such as country director level, IASC and SCHR meetings) and the development of webinars and videos.	12
8. Donors funding CTP research should ensure that when financial support is being provided for research sufficient time for measuring the impact of research is included, in order to allow research bodies and agencies and donors themselves to gain a better understanding of what research and what approaches to research are the most useful and effective.	10



AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The recommendations below are closely linked to recommendation 1.

Recommendation	Corresponding Key Findings
<p>9. Undertake a comparative study of the effectiveness and efficiency of different response options i.e. cash, in-kind or vouchers. This requires the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- A donor or donors to agree to fund this work from planning (before an emergency has occurred) through to response implementation, data collection and on to analysis.- A number of agencies to put themselves forward to undertake this research, bearing in mind the support that will be required from different departments and units involved in planning and implementing emergency responses (such as logistics, finance, administration, programmes, management). Some agencies may prefer to use their own staff to undertake this research whilst others may prefer to use independent consultants in order to ensure neutrality and buy-in from all those involved. If more than one agency is able to undertake such studies, then the data can be brought together for further analysis.	6,7
<p>10. Undertake action research on how to link emergency CTP with existing (or new) social protection and social safety nets programmes. This would require humanitarian agencies, in collaboration with donors and host governments, to include such linkages in their preparedness activities. This would then allow for a testing of whether previous recommendations on making such linkages are actually practical to implement.</p>	
<p>11. Building on some of the lessons being learned in relation to, for example, the Syrian refugee response being implemented by UNHCR and WFP, undertake research into operational modalities and implications of multi-sector cash programming and multi-purpose cash grants.</p>	
<p>12. Further investigate the possibilities for CTP in the WASH and health sectors, taking into account current approaches to CTPs in these sectors and operational and ethical considerations.</p>	
<p>13. In light of ongoing large-scale population movements, particularly in relation to conflict, undertake research to investigate the scope of CTP in refugee contexts and politically sensitive protracted refugee situations, taking into account the appropriateness and limitations of cash in such environments.</p>	

ANNEX I

CaLP research gaps - key informant list

	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Maite Alvarez	British Red Cross	Economic Security Advisor
2	Mary Atkinson	British Red Cross	Economic Security Advisor
3	Najja Bracey	USAID/Food For Peace	FFP Officer
4	Joanne Burke	Humanitarian Futures Programme	Partnerships Manager
5	Alexandre Castellano	ECHO	Nutritionist and Humanitarian Food Assistant Expert
6	Emma Delo	IFRC	Senior Officer Recovery, Disaster and Crisis Management
7	Heidi Gilert	DFID	Humanitarian Advisor (CHASE OT)
8	Kerren Hedlund		Independent
9	Mark Henderson	Norwegian Refugee Council	Cash and Voucher Advisor
10	Melissa Hidrobo	IFPRI	Research Fellow
11	Glenn Hughson	CaLP	East Africa Regional Focal Point
12	Paul Knox-Clarke	ALNAP	Head of Research and Communications
13	Carla Lacerda	CaLP	Asia Regional Focal Point
14	John Lamm	USAID/Food For Peace	FFP Officer
15	Dan Maxwell	Feinstein International Center, Tufts University	Professor and Research Director, Masters of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance Program
16	Laura Meissner	USAID/OFDA	Economic Recovery Advisor
17	Lili Mohiddin	CaLP	Technical Coordinator
18	Clare O'Brien	Oxford Policy Management	Senior Consultant, Poverty and Social Protection
19	Cecilia Pietrobono	UNICEF	Emergency Specialist, ARCC Coordinator
20	Silke Pietzsch	ACF	Senior Food Security and Livelihoods Advisor
21	David Porteous	Bankable Frontiers	Managing Director
22	Sarah Rotman	CGAP	Technology and Business Model Innovation
23	Jessica Saulle	Save the Children	Humanitarian Food Security and Livelihoods Advisory
24	Tarun Sarwal	ICRC	Head of Sector, Economic Security Unit
25	Kerry Smith	Development Initiatives	Programme Manager
Responses In Writing			
1	Lesley Adams		Independent
2	Sarah Bailey		Independent
3	Sara Murray	Mercy Corps	Emergency Payment Systems Pilot Program Manager
4	Tim Waites	DFID	Senior Livelihoods and Disaster Resilience Advisor

ANNEX 2

CaLP website research The following two tables provide an overview of some of the thematic and context-specific research that is currently hosted on the CaLP website. This is not an exhaustive list and there is a wide body of research available on the website and through other organisations which is not covered here.

Thematic research

Topic	Publication	Publishing Body
Cash and gender	Walking the Talk: Cash transfers and gender dynamics	Concern Worldwide and Oxfam GB (2011)
	Examining protection and gender in cash and voucher transfers	WFP and UNHCR (2013)
Coordination	Comparative study of cash coordination mechanisms	CaLP (2012)
Cash at scale	Ready or Not: Emergency Cash Transfers at Scale	CaLP (2011)
Shelter	Rebuilding lives with shelter grants	IFRC
Child protection	What CTP can do to protect children – discussion paper	Save the Children, the Women's Refugee Commission, the Child Protection in Crisis Network, CaLP (2012)
	Cash and child protection: how CTP can protect children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.	Save the Children, the Women's Refugee Commission, the Child Protection in Crisis Network, CaLP (2012)
	Child Safeguarding in CTP	Save the Children (2012)
Market analysis	Market Analysis in Emergencies	CaLP (2011)
New technologies	New Technologies in CTP and Humanitarian Assistance	CaLP (2011)
Value for money/cost efficiency	Guidance to DFID country offices on measuring and maximising value for money in CTP	DFID (2013)
	Helpdesk Research Report: Financing and cost-effectiveness of cash transfer schemes	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (2010)
Fresh food vouchers	Meta-Evaluation of ACF Fresh Food Voucher Programmes	ACF (2012)
Vouchers	Cash, vouchers, food for work in public work programmes	FAO (2013)
General	Unconditional cash transfers: giving choice to people in need	ODI (2011)
	Cash and voucher in relief and recovery: Red Cross/Red Crescent good practices	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
	Cash transfers in post-conflict contexts	ODI (2009)
	Cash-based responses in emergencies	ODI (2007)
	Evaluation and review of the use of cash and vouchers in humanitarian crises	ECHO
Food security and nutrition	The impact of cash transfers on nutrition in emergency and transitional contexts	ODI (2011)
	Evaluation of European Commission integrated approach of food security and nutrition in humanitarian contexts	ECHO (2013)
	The Impact of Cash Transfers on Food Consumption in Humanitarian Settings: A review of evidence	The Canadian Food Grains Bank (2013)
Impact	Zap it to me: The Short Term Impacts of a Mobile Cash Transfer Programme	Concern and Tufts (2012)
Transfer mechanisms	Paying Attention to Detail: How to Transfer Cash in Cash Transfers	Oxford Policy Management (2010)
	Cash Transfer Delivery in Differing Technology and Humanitarian Contexts	CaLP (2011)
	ATM cash assistance: Does it work?	UNHCR
	Delivering Money: Cash Transfer Mechanisms in Emergencies	CaLP (201)
Urban programming	Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Emergencies: A toolkit for practitioners	CaLP (2011)
Conflict environments	Helpdesk Research Report: Cash transfers in fragile/conflict-affected environments	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (2011)
Value setting	Determining the Value of Cash Transfers – Preliminary Insights from LIME	CaLP

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Context specific research

Country/Disaster	Publication	Publisher
The Philippines	Cash transfer mechanisms in the Philippines	CaLP
Sierra Leone	Cash Transfers in Sierra Leone: Appropriate, Affordable, Feasible?	ODI (2007)
Kenya	Results of the MIFIRA Framework conducted in two locations in Kenya	2011
	Market dynamics and financial services in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands	WFP (2013)
Nepal	More than roads: Using markets to feed the hungry in Nepal	WFP (2010)
Lesotho	Is cash a feasible alternative to food aid for post-drought relief in Lesotho?	ODI/HPG (2007)
Niger	Cash transfers for DRR – a feasibility study	ODI/HPG (2008)
2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami	Cash transfers in emergencies: A review drawing on the tsunami and other experiences	UNICEF (2006)
	Learning from cash responses to the tsunami: Issue Paper 1: Analysing markets	ODI/HPG (2006)
	Learning from cash responses to the tsunami: Issue Paper 2: Disbursement Mechanisms	ODI/HPG (2007)
	Learning from cash responses to the tsunami: Issue Paper 3: Value setting	ODI/HPG (2006)
	Learning from cash responses to the tsunami: Issue Paper 4: Cash and shelter	ODI/HPG (2007)
	Learning from cash responses to the tsunami: Issue Paper 5: Livelihoods recovery	ODI/HPG (2006)
Haiti	Review of cash transfer coordination in Haiti following the earthquake of January 2010	CaLP (2012)
	Unconditional Cash Transfers: Lessons Learnt	Christian Aid (2012)
	Cash Programming in Haiti – Lessons learned in Disbursing Cash	UNDP (2011)
Horn of Africa: Kenya and Somalia	Review of cash transfer coordination mechanisms in the Horn of Africa: Kenya and Somalia	Groupe URD/CaLP (2012)
Zimbabwe	Targeting to reach vulnerable children	Imperial College London (2012)
Senegal	Cash Preparedness in Senegal: Cash Transfer mechanisms	Oxfam (2013)
Somalia	Gender Impact Analysis: Unconditional Cash Transfers in South Central Somalia	The Somalia Cash Consortium
The Sahel	The Crisis in the Sahel	ODI/HPN (2012)
Malawi	Making the Most of it: A Regional Multiplier Approach to Estimating the Impact of Cash Transfers on the Market	Concern

ANNEX 3

Terms of Reference: Research Gaps and Way Forward

Responsible Lili Mohiddin CaLP Technical Coordinator

Date 15th July 2013

Subject CTP action research gap analysis

Consultancy duration and timeframe 15 days Final output by September 30th 2013

Background:

Gathering evidence through action research is one of the ways that the CaLP aims to raise awareness of cash transfer programming (CTP) as an appropriate and effective mechanism for emergency response, and to improve implementation practice. The CaLP plays a key role in circulating relevant documents related to CTP on its web site and via its newsletter. The CaLP website provides a platform for the publication and sharing of research, evaluations, standard operating procedures and other such documents within the wider community of practice. As outlined in the recently completed CaLP strategy (Jan 2013- Dec 2014),¹ action research and evidence gathering form Result 2: 'Key humanitarian stakeholders access tools, good practice, action research and programme guidance to improve the quality of CTP'.

To date, CaLP has not only developed a significant number of documents such as implementation guides, good practice guides, modality briefs and training materials but has also undertaken research into a number of topics,² all of which are available on the CaLP website.

A number of potential research topics for 2013 were identified with the assistance of the CaLP community of practice, stakeholders and also by reviewing recommendations made in previous research. This process involved Stakeholder Meetings,³ the use of a survey via Survey Monkey⁴ to canvas the CaLP community of practice (CoP) for their perspectives on research themes; and reviewing previous research and the recommendations made within each piece. However, it has become evident that a thorough understanding of research 'gaps and needs' in CTP is required within the wider humanitarian sector. This would enable:

- a) An appreciation of what CTP research (action and evidence based research) has taken place, is planned and is being undertaken.
- b) An identification of who is requesting, undertaking and applying the research. Linked to this is understanding how research findings and recommendations are used, shared and their impact monitored (with a view to increasing this aspect).⁵
- c) A better understanding of any gaps in action research and a prioritisation of topics that may require awareness raising and advocacy to highlight their importance.

It would be CaLP's intention to share the findings of this analysis with NGOs, think tanks, research bodies, donors and academic institutions planning research into the sphere of CTP. By doing so, CaLP would aim to ensure that decisions made regarding research topics are well informed and consider the wider research environment within CTP. Where necessary, CaLP would also advocate for priority action research areas. CaLP would also use these findings to inform its own action research strategy, which would include approaches to increase the application of research findings and recommendations within the humanitarian sector.

This is envisioned as a short and practical piece of research with practical recommendations.

¹ <http://www.cashlearning.org/calps-strategy/calp-s-strategy-2012-2015>

² See website <http://www.cashlearning.org/english/home>. Recent research includes: the use of new technology in CTP, capacity for CTP scale-up 'ready or Not', a compilation of tools for CTP implementation in urban contexts, and a review of emergency market analysis.

³ these meetings were held in London and DC in June 2012 in which opinions regarding future research were sought and discussed

⁴ In August 2012 135 members of the CoP participated in this

⁵ For example, see ODI HPN Network Paper Number 73, February 2013 'Response analysis and response choice in food security crisis, a road map' <http://www.odihpn.org/hpn-resources/network-papers/response-analysis-and-response-choice-in-food-security-crisis-a-roadmap>



ANNEX 3

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The consultant(s) are requested to:

Complete a review of the action research gaps in relation to CTP policy and practice to guide and influence research agendas of CaLP and other organisations, highlighting gaps and needs

Key Research Questions:

- 1. Overview of CTP research context:** What research⁶ (action and evidence based, as opposed to anecdotal programme based learning) has taken place to date; is being undertaken and planned?
- 2. Key research actors:** Who are the main actors in commissioning and undertaking CTP related research (UN, think tanks, private sector, donors, NGOs etc...)? What influences their selection of research topics?
- 3. Identification of research gaps:** Thinking broadly about CTP application within the humanitarian sector, what topics require research to further enhance the adoption of CTP when appropriate, and at scale? In which of those topics would action based research be well placed to meet such information needs (as opposed to anecdotal programme based learning or evidence based research)?
- 4. Prioritising gaps:** Based on the findings of Question 3, what are the priority research gaps related to CTP implementation and best practice? Of these priority gaps, which ones should the CaLP undertake and/or advocate for?
- 5. Research utilisation and impact:** Who is using the CTP research? What are the most effective practices in disseminating research findings to maximise their use? How do the key research actors (see Questions 2 above) monitor the impact of their research, especially beyond the commissioning agency when recommendations are applicable and have been shared with a wider group?
- 6. Effective research dissemination:** With regards the dissemination and sharing of research and best practice recommendations, what are the most effective mechanisms to use to ensure that the right people access the information?

Proposed methodology:

- a) Identification of consultant/s to undertake this research. A selection panel will convene to review expressions of interest submitted by interested parties following the publication of these ToRs.
- b) Consultant/s development of an agreed work plan and timeframe.
- c) CaLP induction and introduction to key informants. This would include an update to on-going CaLP research (for example a WASH scoping study, Fit for the Future analysis) and any other related research that the CaLP is aware of.
- d) Email/ phone/ Skype communication with the key informants, consultants, and contacts at a number of organisations including think tanks and academics institutions to better understand the field of research within CTP.
- e) Mapping of existing, planned and on-going research – a desk review of published/ grey literature.
- f) Frequent updates to be submitted to the CaLP in relation to the work plan and timeframe.
- g) Elaboration of 2 documents; the main document that includes research ‘mapping’ and recommendations and a second, shorter summarising document to enable a wider readership.
- h) Support the dissemination of findings and recommendations at CaLP Learning Events and similar meetings.

Please note:

This ToR covers the main focus of this research. Additional ‘guidance’ or ‘reference’ documents may be developed by either CaLP or the contracted consultant/ research body to ensure a satisfactory understanding of the task and the outputs expected.

⁶ CaLP understands the following: Action research is a research initiated to solve an immediate problem led by individuals working with others as part of a “community of practice” to improve the way they address issues and solve problems. Evidence based research includes the use of scientific research as a way to inform service delivery, or programming or policy.

ANNEX 3

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Outputs:

1. A work plan and timeframe to be presented to CaLP at an inception meeting (this can be virtual but face to face is ideal and will be sought).
2. Short progress reports to CaLP to ensure our ability to support and guide where necessary. Frequency of progress reports to be agreed between consultant and CaLP.
3. The main document that answers the key research questions (listed above) including research 'mapping' and recommendations.
4. A short/s document outlining key messages and recommendations. This would be used for advocacy and awareness raising needs and to enable a wider readership.
5. Present research findings at a CaLP Learning Event or similar event if needed.

Management:

This research is being commissioned by Oxfam GB on behalf of the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP). The CaLP Technical Coordinator will manage the consultant/s for this assignment.

Timing:

It is envisioned that this consultancy would last approximately 15 days including a presentation of findings. However, applying consultants can propose an alternative number of days with an accompanying rationale.

Final output by September 30th 2013

Payment:

The payment schedule for this consultancy will be as follows:

- 50% on finalising the work plan (in approval with the CaLP),
- 50% on satisfactory completion of the assignment.

Final payment will be made on receipt of invoice and original receipts (for costs related to this piece of work as per a consultancy contract), according to the number of days actually worked.

Essential profile of the researchers/ consultants:

The consultant or consultancy team (of two people) should have the following skills and knowledge:

- Have knowledge of CTP in humanitarian contexts. (Essential)
- Have a research background (Essential).
- Have knowledge and work experience of the ways of working of emergency NGOs, UN, local organisations and ideally donors. (Essential)
- Have the ability to assemble vast amounts of information and identify critical aspects. (Essential)
- Be able to communicate complex subject matter (in a written and oral form) into accessible and simple guidance that is accessible to people with varying language skills. (Essential)
- Connected to academic institutions and their research in the field of humanitarian assistance (Desired)

Application process

Interested applicants should submit the following documents by final output by September 30th 2013

1. An expression of interest that includes an updated CV and an overview of their experience, how they would approach the piece of work, their added value to this piece of work, and how links to other organisations and research institutions will be made. Daily rates, costs and availability should also be mentioned.
2. An example of a similar piece of work.

**Please submit proposals and questions to Lili Mohiddin, the CaLP Technical Coordinator:
techco@cashlearning.org by 31st July 2013.**



The Cash Learning Partnership

Gathering evidence through action research is one of the ways that the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) aims to improve cash transfer programming (CTP) implementation and raise awareness about CTP and its use as an appropriate and effective mechanism for emergency response.

Before defining potential research topics for 2014, CaLP commissioned a study in order to:

- better understand what action and evidence based research is currently available
- identify who the key research actors are and how research findings and recommendations are used, shared, and research impact monitored
- identify and prioritise gaps in action research

The findings of the study will be used by CaLP to inform its own research and advocacy strategies, and shared with other stakeholders who are planning CTP research.

The key findings are presented around the main lines of enquiry followed in this study:

- The CTP research context
- Key research actors
- Current gaps in CTP research
- Addressing the gaps
- Research utilisation and impact
- Research dissemination

This research was commissioned in October 2013 by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), with the generous support of the Government of Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD)



Foreign Affairs, Trade and
Development Canada

Affaires étrangères, Commerce
et Développement Canada