

**THE POTENTIAL OF CASH
AND VOUCHER
ASSISTANCE TO
EMPOWER WOMEN AND
REDUCE VIOLENCE:
EVIDENCE, PRACTICE
AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Workshop report



May 2019

BACKGROUND

The humanitarian community's focus on gender in cash and voucher assistance (CVA) has gained significant momentum. In February 2018, the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP), Women's Refugee Commission (WRC), African Development Solutions (Adeso), Norwegian Refugee Commission (NRC), and Oxfam co-sponsored the symposium "Gender and Cash Based Assistance" in Nairobi to deepen the commitment to action on gender and cash transfer programming in humanitarian contexts. From that meeting, participants contributed to the "Gender and Cash Based Assistance in Humanitarian Contexts: An Agenda for Collective Action" that aims to "enable cash, gender and protection specialists to work together and ensure quality programming".

During the second Grand Bargain Cash Work Stream Workshop in June 2018, gender and cash was identified as a new priority action point. At the workshop, CARE and UN Women committed to lead a sub-workstream dedicated to advocate for and support the mainstreaming of gender issues throughout the Cash Workstream and to ensure better synergies with other Workstreams.

During "Cash Week" held in London in October, CaLP, CARE, WRC, ActionAid UK, and UN Women led a half-day session dedicated to strengthening the commitment to gender in CVA. Forty participants from NGOs, the United Nations, donors and researchers engaged in robust discussion about gender and cash and vouchers.

In early 2019, CARE and UN Women invited interested stakeholders to official form part of the gender and cash sub-workstream focusing on improving practice, research and policy related to gender and CVA. Specifically, the sub-workstream seeks to:

- Provide an overview of the emerging evidence, disseminating new research findings and identifying research gaps on gender and CVA.
- Develop and share guidance materials on cash and voucher assistance and gender that help practitioners move from commitment to action.
- Convene interested stakeholders on gender and CVA topics.

EVENT OVERVIEW

On April 29 and 30th in Washington DC, CARE and UNWOMEN, on behalf of the gender and cash sub-workstream of the Grand Bargain, convened a workshop with the objectives of:

- Sharing and exchanging existing knowledge, experiences, and good practices;
- Exploring and prioritizing research gaps on cash and gender.

The expected outputs from the workshop were:

- A collaborative learning agenda on gender and CVA which will be shared with stakeholders, including implementing agencies and donors;
- A set of key recommendations to the Grand Bargain Cash Workstream, to be presented at the Rome workshop in May 2019.

More than 40 participants representing NGOs, donors, research organizations, UN and international organizations participated in workshop. Three panels comprised of researchers and practitioners

framed the current state of evidence, upcoming research and recently developed guidance on gender and CVA. Breakout groups explored more deeply which research topics should be prioritized, discussed existing opportunities on the horizon to share learning, and how to overcome barriers to uptake of promising practice on CVA and gender.

OVERVIEW PANEL PRESENTATIONS

There were three panels focusing on:

- **Panel 1: Evidence** - What Do We Know About the Potential of CVA To Promote Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment?
- **Panel 2:** Deep Dive Into CVA, Gender and Protection
- **Panel 3:** Presentation of Newly Developed Guidance Materials and Practical Tools

(See Annex I for the hyperlinks to presentations and research)

RECOMMENDATIONS: RESEARCH AGENDA GENDER AND CVA

Participants divided into three groups and discussed the priority areas for future research on gender and CVA based on three themes: Gender Transformative Cash: Equality and Empowerment; Women-centered CVA design/process characteristics, and CVA in GBV & Protection.

The groups were asked to explore the main research questions currently driving this area of research, paying special consideration to whether we are missing something or whether there are specific geographic areas to consider. After each group presented their findings, the plenary as a whole was asked to vote on their priority research topics. The topics receiving the most votes were:

1. How does CVA work with different types of complementary programming to produce greater or more long-lasting gender impacts? What are the characteristics of the CVA or complementary programming that drives improved outcomes?
2. What does an effective exit strategy look like in different contexts? How can we ensure that CVA effectively links to longer term solutions that include persistent positive impacts for women and men and boys and girls, and make sure we do no harm?
3. How do gender norms moderate impacts on equality and empowerment - What are effective strategies for challenging gender norms? Can we develop a behavioral change communication “menu of options” that works well to promote gender outcomes in different contexts?
4. Can we develop a mapping of the evidence to date across different CVA design elements that include gender?
 - Looking at the evidence to date that works in different contexts (protracted crisis, social protection) and along different time frames (where are we in the crisis, in phases of the response)?

- How do different community groups (i.e. women’s groups) in different settings and contexts contribute to cash plus programming?
- 5. When is it safe and/or appropriate to explicitly target women as recipients?
- 6. What is specific risk mitigation needed across all modalities/transfer mechanisms for different genders?
- 7. What types of digital transfer modalities work with different groups in different contexts?
 - How does financial literacy/numeracy play into the uptake and use? Which consequences should this have for complementary programming?
 - Is technology inhibiting/excluding women or not, and why?
 - How can technology be an enabler for empowerment?

MAPPING SYNERGIES AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

The group identified over [40 potential opportunities](#) for synergies with potential connections to improve the evidence, practice, and policy. Not all of these opportunities were explicitly focused on gender and CVA, but have potential elements that could contribute to the conversation. Participants were encouraged to submit relevant research to CaLP’s [“Ongoing and future research”](#) webpage to foster synergies and collaboration.

ROAD MAPPING: BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVING GENDER AND CVA POLICY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Participants were divided into groups to discuss the primary challenges/barriers to mainstreaming CVA and gender including disseminating and getting people to use technical guidance. For each challenge/barrier, the participants were asked to identify solutions. Five common themes converged. It is evident that the barriers/challenges identified were not specific to gender and/or CVA, however, they appear to be accentuated in the union of these two themes.

BARRIERS/CHALLENGES	SOLUTIONS
<p>Collaboration between humanitarian and development actors and government-led Social Safety Net Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and influence on the convergence of gender and CVA by interested stakeholders with the government • Make more visible existing examples (e.g. LSE mapping, socialprotection.org, ODI and OPM research, other ministries in-country)
<p>Insufficient focus on gender aspects in CVA from different stakeholders including donors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate with donors to raise gender as a priority issue, especially at the onset of a crisis • Work with donors to develop/use existing guidance on how to incorporate gender into all phases of CVA • Liaise with donors and other influencers to help partners raise the profile of gender and CVA at the response level
<p>Lack of widespread capacity across all stakeholders on promising practice on gender and CVA: (i.e. training, knowledge, application to practice, individual needs vs. household)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively and support each other to help create and disseminate tools (i.e. CVA & GBV Compendium funded by CARE with contributes form 15 organizations) • Ensure training and materials are accessible (i.e. various outlets, languages) and mixed media (i.e. webinars, videos, documents, podcasts)
<p>Knowledge management on gender and CVA: the good, bad and the promising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand target audience and target accordingly (i.e. field based vs. HQ, gender vs. CVA specialist or generalists) • Make findings accessible (i.e. various outlets, languages) and mixed media (i.e. webinars, videos, documents, podcasts) to humanitarian and development practitioners • Use mix methods for data collection (e.g. qualitative and quantitative, gender and stake holder analyses) • Encourage collection of experiences on gender and CVA (i.e. follow on the CALP series) • Share experiences widely (i.e. extract relevant examples from larger pieces or work) • Target big initiatives for wider reach (i.e. CCD, Common Cash Delivery Platform, consortia at response level, clusters, CashCap, GenCap)
<p>Timing: “getting it right” / competing priorities in emergency response / challenging gender norms during crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do “pre –crisis gender assessments” to understand gender dynamics in “normal” times • <i>For agencies that don’t have gender capacity</i> look for existing gender assessments and analyses; train up key staff • <i>For agencies that have gender capacity</i>, share widely assessments and analyses; take leadership in crises to guide others during assessments and contribute to joint assessments • In assessments, use qualitative data and mixed methods gender and stakeholder analysis, consider sensitive ways to ask questions to get needed information, ensure staff gender mixed teams in assessment and analysis

There were cross-cutting solutions across each of the groups of barriers:

- Existing tools/guidance: before new tools created, take stock of what real gaps are and what needed (or not)
- Normalizing gender considerations into CVA
- Building momentum at different levels-HQ, field- and through different focuses (sector specialists, senior leadership) and actors (donors, research, UN, NGOs)
- Capitalize on interagency coordination to highlight gender and CVA in the field and global/national platforms
- Use good practices to incentivize other countries, humanitarian actors to get on board
- Work with cash working groups or cluster/sectors to encourage more gender and CVA focus a response level

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTIONS IN THE GENDER AND CASH SUB-WORKSTREAM

Based on the evolution of the discussions, participants came up with ideas that gender and cash sub-workstream could promote amongst its members and other interested partners in order to improve the policy, research and practice on gender and CVA. Some of the ideas included:

- In protracted crises have ready research ideas for the next funding opportunity, as well as study designs
- Identify key donors who have particular interest in gender and CVA; target and build those relations
- Do case studies of agencies who have used existing gender and CVA tools and resources to understand their impact, effectiveness, deficiencies and promote use more broadly
- Assess the existing CVA/gender/ gender and CVA tools and how to improve them, process around updating them
- Use existing platform for exchanging and sharing knowledge products and resources across and between groups – CaLP's gender page, research pages, d-group, IGWG listserv
- Create short videos with concrete key steps – tip-sheet videos, 2-minute for entry-level content
- Webinars which are still available online for people to watch at their own convenience – linked to tools that can be used to translate lessons into practice
- Map how organizations do internal learning on gender and CVA, leverage the existing systems
- Podcast – multi-sectoral, myth-busting, include sector experts as guests
- Get gender in CoP discussions for social protection actors
- Elevator pitches, including and in addition examples of other governments' programs
- Pre-package content for cash working group coordinators to present to their groups (not expecting them to generate content on their own)
- Linkages and how to work together with other GB workstreams, aligning messaging and advocacy to governments

As next steps, the sub-working group will review and prioritize these recommendations as part of its workplan in the coming year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CASH WORKSTREAM

As a final step, participants honed down on the conversations over the two days to find the most salient recommendations to be made at the upcoming Grand Bargain Cash Workstream meeting in Rome in May 2019. The recommendations are actions that can help raise the profile, understanding and practice of gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive CVA. The recommendations will be presented to the Cash Workstream members to solicit clear commitments:

- Encourage “gender mainstreaming” to across all [CVA] program cycle to create as a minimum “Gender Responsive” programs.
- Advocate for inclusion of the Research and Study Funding as part of the regular CVA approach to understand impact, effectiveness and expand on tools and resources for the diverse operating contexts;
- Recruit donor “champions” that will co-lead Gender and Cash agenda and reinforce relations to pursue impact at scale;
- Encourage mechanisms for globally operating Cash Working Groups to translate the Grand Bargain outcomes into the operational approaches (e.g. pre-packaging the content, linkages with advocacy, etc.);
- Strengthen possible linkages with Social Protection and Recovery /Development programs;
- Adopt SADD indicators in all CVA analyses, reporting, monitoring and evaluations;
- Improve Gender and GBV capacity for the humanitarian actors and Cash practitioners.

ANNEX I: PRESENTATIONS

PANEL 1: EVIDENCE - WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF CVA TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

Moderator: *Claire Simon, UN Women*

Jacqueline Paul, Senior Gender Adviser, World Food Programme

Presentation: [Gender Empowerment: The potential of cash-based interventions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment](#),
[Study reports](#)

Rebecca Holmes, Research Associate with the Social Protection and Social Policy Programme, ODI

Presentation: [Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in shock-sensitive social protection](#)
[Study reports](#)

Amber Peterman, Associate Research Professor of Public Policy, UNC and Social Policy Consultant, UNICEF Office of Research—Innocenti

Presentation: [Leveraging social safety nets for gender equality in Africa: Evidence and methodological challenges](#)
[Study report](#)

Holly Welcome Radice, Cash and Markets Technical Advisor, CARE

Presentation: [Women centered CVA: what does this look like?](#)
Study forthcoming

PANEL 2: DEEP DIVE INTO CVA, GENDER AND PROTECTION

Moderator: Laura Madsen, UNHCR

Lori Heise, Professor of Gender, Violence and Health at the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) and Technical Director of the Prevention Collaborative

Presentation: [Intimate partner violence and cash transfers in low- and middle-income countries: What does the evidence say?](#)

[Study report](#)

Shalini Roy, Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and leader of the “Social Protection Delivery and Outcomes” CGIAR research cluster

Presentation: [Transfers, Behavior Change Communication and Intimate Partner Violence](#)

[Study report](#)

Tenzin Manell, Senior Technical Advisor Cash and Livelihoods, Women’s Refugee Commission

Presentation: [Humanitarian CVA and GBV outcomes: evidence and future research priorities](#)

[Study report](#)

Kathryn Falb, Senior Researcher, International Rescue Committee

Presentation: [Cash and Protection Research in Humanitarian Settings: A Conceptual Framework and Upcoming Priorities](#)

Study report forthcoming

PANEL 3: PRESENTATION OF NEWLY DEVELOPED GUIDANCE MATERIALS AND PRACTICAL TOOLS

Moderator: Lynn Yoshikawa, CaLP

Tenzin Manell, Senior Technical Advisor Cash and Livelihoods, Women’s Refugee Commission

Presentation: [Toolkit for Optimizing CBIs for Protection from GBV](#)

[Guidance](#)

Joanna Friedman, consultant, contracted through CARE

[Cash & Vouchers Assistance and Gender-Based Violence Compendium: Practical Guidance for Humanitarian Practitioners](#)

[Guidance forthcoming](#)

Claire Simon, consultant, UN Women

[How to Promote Gender Equality in Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance](#)

Guidance forthcoming

ANNEX II: LIST OF ATTENDEES

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