



GLOBAL CASH FORUM

The Cash Reform in Action

July 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises current developments in Cash Transfer Programming (CTP), as captured at the recent **Global Cash Forum**, held in Geneva in June 2017.

In recent years, CTP has emerged as one of the most significant innovations in humanitarian response. Major donors and agencies have made public commitments to increase its use, for instance through the Grand Bargain. Now, work is under way to build the sector-wide capacity to turn those commitments into action.

“Your forum really brought home the value of having CaLP pull together the full range of stakeholders and to function as an ‘honest broker’ to consider the many elements that are at play when planning and executing cash programming.” Paula Reed Lynch, Bureau of Population Refugees & Migration, US State Dept

The **Global Cash Forum** brought together 200 key actors with 30 speakers and more than 500 online participants, representing leading thinking and practice in CTP from across the globe. Participants included UN agencies, small and large NGOs, donors, private sector actors, academics and specialist consultants. Collectively, the forum addressed the substantial issues that will enable the sector to achieve the potential of cash programming.

The Forum, organised by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and designed to complement other initiatives such as the Grand Bargain, featured a wide range of lively discussions and a [keynote speech by Androulla Kaminara](#) (Director, DG ECHO) on ECHO’s vision for the future of cash programming in humanitarian response.

CaLP is grateful for financial support for the Forum from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The ‘Key Messages and Actions’ section of this report summarises the major discussion points from the forum. The second section provides more details, with links to recorded presentations from all speakers for reference.



All recordings and content from the Global Cash Forum can be found on CaLP’s website:

<http://www.cashlearning.org/what-we-do/global-cash-forum>

Key Messages

The vigorous discussions at the forum can be summarised in seven key messages:

1. **Momentum for the cash reform is strong and getting stronger.** There is huge commitment at all levels across the humanitarian sector to use cash and vouchers to provide aid more efficiently and effectively. Billions of dollars more aid will be delivered as cash and vouchers in the next few years. This will play a crucial role in enabling limited resources to achieve more for people in crisis, in response to rising humanitarian needs.
2. **Cash and voucher programmes need to be carefully designed for each operating context.** Design relies on detailed analysis and sensitive judgements, the same as other forms of aid. Cash and voucher programmes have to be integrated into wider humanitarian action. They are neither simple nor always the right tool for every response.
3. Humanitarian actors are currently **upgrading their organisations and approaches to integrate cash transfer programming** into how they work. This includes donors, operational agencies, host governments and the private sector. It is work in progress, and will require time and investment to complete.
4. **Cash can play a key role in strengthening humanitarian assistance.** It disrupts existing ways of working. It shines a spotlight on current weaknesses and can help address some, but not all, of them. Looking ahead, it is expected that there will be:
 - Greater use of the private sector to deliver cash and vouchers, using existing and new technologies.
 - Greater use of unrestricted, multi-purpose cash grants, cutting across sectors.
 - Greater use of large scale cash programmes, where possible, and reduction in overlapping programmes delivered by agencies working independently.
 - Improved coordination of cash programmes across sectors and actors, with greater leadership by host governments.
 - New funding and operating models, where organisations collaborate on the basis of shared standards or principles, while each focuses on its core strengths. This will include greater use of shared operational mechanisms, and more independent monitoring.
 - Continued synergy with associated reforms, including the Grand Bargain and others, for instance on transparency, reducing duplication and bridging the humanitarian-development divide.
5. There are **different views about how cash can reform international humanitarian aid.** On the one hand, existing agencies can use cash to improve what they do. On the other, cash can potentially be used to reduce duplication and cost, open the door to new actors and drive wider reform. Reform could be achieved in ways such as establishing common delivery mechanisms for use by multiple agencies, or actively promoting unrestricted cash and large scale delivery by single actors. Navigating these options will depend on the context of each response and the political will for associated reforms, informed by emerging evidence and on-going dialogue.
6. **The cash reform is at a significant and exciting stage.** The humanitarian sector is learning more about how to use cash and vouchers at scale, in different contexts, and for different purposes. There are many examples of good practice and powerful case studies to draw from, and many gaps in experience and evidence to fill. There are also challenges, such as:

involving national actors, revising business models, managing risk, balancing efficiency with effectiveness, and maintaining trust across stakeholders. The need for progress is urgent, for both practical and political reasons.

7. The [Global Framework for Action](#) sets out a clear collective roadmap of six global objectives, based on existing commitments, that will make the cash reform happen. As the global partnership for cash transfer programming in humanitarian aid, CaLP plays a crucial role in bringing actors together to deliver those objectives and address the actions outlined below.

Note: for clarity, in this report the term 'Cash Transfer Programming' is used as defined by [CaLP's Glossary](#), to refer to both cash and voucher programmes.

Proposed Actions

This section records the key actions that were proposed by international leaders during the Global Cash Forum. They provide powerful suggestions on practical next steps for the cash reform, reflecting the breadth and depth of discussions. They are not presented as being comprehensive or formally endorsed by Forum participants. They should be considered alongside existing commitments summarised in the Global Framework for Action, and have been organised accordingly.

Global Objective 1: Funding

- 1a Continue to actively promote cash transfer programming to decision makers across the humanitarian sector, as a proven, effective and efficient method of providing humanitarian aid.
- 1b Strengthen support for cash transfer programming among politicians and the tax-paying public in donor countries, based on an honest and balanced approach rather than “cash evangelism”.
- 1c Ensure that the funding and opportunities associated with the cash reform are accessible to national and local actors.
- 1d Identify opportunities for donors to work together to accelerate the adoption of cash transfer programming and address obstacles.

Global Objectives 2 and 3: Routine consideration and Capacity

- 2a Provide sustained leadership within organisations to integrate cash transfer programming in areas such as: support by senior management, building staff capacity, preparedness, upgrading procedures and systems, developing relationships with new partners and building cash into existing guidance and funding cycles.
- 2b Provide clearer requests to private sector firms about specific services and products required for humanitarian action.
- 2c Establish a budget line for multi-purpose cash grants as a standard component in Humanitarian Response Plans.

Global Objective 4: Quality

- 4a Develop operational standards for cash transfer programming.
- 4b Agree a set of high level principles among operational agencies and donors to guide the way forward on cash transfer programming.

- 4c Increase the use of single transfers to beneficiaries that cover as many needs as possible and reduce inefficiencies created by multiple transfers.

Global Objective 5: Coordination

- 5a Improve collaboration between governments and humanitarian actors to use and strengthen social protection systems for humanitarian response, and to bridge humanitarian and development approaches.
- 5b Design cash and voucher programmes in the expectation that agencies will share operational mechanisms for activities such as: assessing needs, delivering cash and vouchers, monitoring and managing complaints.
- 5c Develop standards for common delivery mechanisms, that any agency can establish and different agencies can use to deliver cash based assistance.
- 5d Clarify how cash transfer programming fits into the formal coordination system and how high quality coordination for cash transfer programming can be predictably resourced and implemented in humanitarian responses.

Global Objective 6: Evidence and innovation

- 6a Continue to innovate with new operational models, programmatic approaches and technologies, and actively share lessons in order to drive learning and practical solutions in different contexts.
- 6b Develop new models for funding overheads and core functions within operational agencies, beyond the current charge of a flat percentage of total programme costs, which is no longer viable in large scale cash programmes.
- 6c Continue to identify synergies between cash transfer programming and related humanitarian reforms, for instance across the Grand Bargain and other initiatives.
- 6d Continue dialogue to resolve collective challenges, share experience and build collective capacity and standards for better cash transfer programming across the humanitarian sector.

DETAILED DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

The detailed discussions are captured below. Full recordings of all individual speakers are also available, for detailed reference (see Annex I).

The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) held the first Global Cash Forum on June 28th 2017 in Geneva, just over a year after the World Humanitarian Summit where commitments were made to embed cash transfer programming in humanitarian responses. The forum was attended by 200 delegates from a broad array of organisations and individuals, including UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross movement, governments, academics and the private sector, with an additional 500 participants joining online.

As the global partnership working on cash in humanitarian aid, CaLP's aim for the Forum was to bring together actors to address collective challenges.

The Forum covered current challenges facing the sector, and looked at how best to use cash and move from commitments to action. Agencies reported back on field practice, and resulting discussions were firmly rooted in how best to evolve the cash agenda.

There was a clear recognition on the day of the urgent need to make progress on collective action on a variety of issues including strengthening the evidence base, developing standards, principles and guidelines, and convening dialogue on policy and strategy in relation to cash transfer programming.

"CaLP has been at the forefront of normative work on the nuts and bolts of cash." Androulla Kaminara, (DG ECHO).

*"CaLP is *the* forum for dialogue and collective action on cash." Manuel Bessler (SDC).*

"[The Forum is] hugely important and timely." Jeremy Konyndyk (CGD).

CaLP's role was strongly re-affirmed throughout the conference, which was widely seen as highly successful. CaLP is continuing to bring organisations together to address many of the issues identified. For example, CaLP is currently producing revised training materials and on-line learning resources, and developing a Knowledge Hub to collate existing evidence, standards and guidance for CTP and more. For more information, see [CaLP's strategy](#).

Great support for cash transfer programming

- The momentum for the cash reform is strong and getting stronger.
- There was unanimous agreement at the forum that the decision about whether to use cash / vouchers /in kind / services should be based on a careful assessment of the context.
- Cash is not always the right answer, or the solution to all humanitarian needs and reforms, but should be a critical part of planning any response.
- The term “cash” is not always helpful – at times it has the wrong resonance (for example for voucher programmes and/or digital payments).

Whilst there was general recognition that cash is not the only approach to humanitarian action, cash is considered a vital component of a wider response (Patrick Saez, DFID), including protection (Waheed Lor Mehdiabadi, UNHCR). Strong commitments were voiced to scale up cash, in particular associated with the Grand Bargain (e.g. Paula Gil Baizan, WVI; Paula Reed Lynch, BPRM; Patrick Saez, DFID), which will drive billions more dollars of aid to be delivered as cash and vouchers. Cash is also closely linked to other Grand Bargain commitments, e.g. joint needs assessment, transparency, participation and others (Paula Reed Lynch, BPRM).



*“We need to **reinforce the case for cash** within the current political climate among donors, including the US Government. It can be strong, focused on efficiency, effectiveness and individual choice.”* Jeremy Konyndyk, CGD

There was wide support for efficiency gains that cash can offer (Androulla Kaminara, DG ECHO; Patrick Saez, DFID; Waheed Lor Mehdiabadi, UNHCR) and for ensuring quality at the same time, with the reminder that there is a need to focus on potentially conflicting areas, including localisation (Patrick Saez, DFID; Deqa Saleh, Adeso).

Wider humanitarian trends

- Humanitarian need is increasing, funds are decreasing, and the supply side of international humanitarian aid is facing new pressures.
- Host governments are playing a stronger role in leading humanitarian responses to natural disasters and in some protracted crises, e.g. Sri Lanka, Liberia. (See also section 5, below)

Jennifer Welsh from the European University Institute, described how the demand for humanitarian action is increasing, while the liberal institutions and democracies that have traditionally supported it are under new pressures. Recent humanitarian catastrophes, like the siege of Aleppo, saw the complete breakdown of cooperation among the great powers with regard to conflict. Eighty per cent of humanitarian need is driven by conflict, which is spiking (particularly internal conflicts). Today, there are human-made famines in many countries (such as South Sudan, Yemen and Nigeria). At the same time there is an increase in “democratic deconsolidation”. A 2016 Freedom House report found that twice as many countries are becoming less democratic compared to those becoming more democratic. This is associated with declining support for international institutions and a reduction in will for international interventions.

As a result, there is an urgent need to make the best possible use of the limited resources available for humanitarian action, as well as to keep making the case for aid. CTP has a key role to play. It can also help new models of assistance and organisation that support individuals to meet their own needs rather than rely on state-led approaches.

Driving reform

A vast amount of innovation and investment is already taking place around every aspect of cash transfer programming – from new technologies like biometrics, to new funding models and new partnerships between government, donors, aid agencies and private sector. The aid sector needs to keep strengthening the evidence base and learning from collective experience. Agencies need to keep investing in their own capacities, guided by a realistic understanding of donors’ intentions.

There needs to be a building of trust among operating partners, which is necessary for delivery of cash at scale, as well as stimulating continual improvement in efficiency and effectiveness. There are different views about the right balance between collaboration and competition – to some extent, depending on the position of the actor.

The aid sector is now working together through the practicalities of how to realise the potential of cash transfer programming. Cash on its own will not reform the whole humanitarian architecture (e.g. changing mandates, reforming clusters). But it has potential to support and encourage major changes.

Some key issues and challenges which were raised at the forum include:

- Cash as an agent of system change:
 - Cash challenges current institutional arrangements. This disruption makes it a threat to existing interests (Jeremy Konyndyk, CGD).
 - The extent of reform depends on how much political will and long term commitment there is to substantially reform existing organisational arrangements.
 - Humanitarian assistance needs the global framework that the UN provides – so it is unlikely we should envision huge changes in the system (Paula Reed Lynch, BPRM).

- The humanitarian system is ill fitted to deliver multi-purpose cash grants (Patrick Saez, DFID).
- Innovation and alignment with other reforms:
 - Areas of innovation and reform include: greater use of multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs); new delivery models making better use of technology; new forms of collaboration, including private sector delivery; greater specialisation on core competencies among humanitarian agencies; and reduction of duplication and overlapping programmes.
 - Actors in the sector need to explore and promote links to other reforms, for example other Grand Bargain workstreams such as transparency, localisation, reduced duplication & bridging the humanitarian-development divide. Actors should identify smart entry points to drive change in the humanitarian ecosystem. Standards for delivery can have ripple effects and drive wider change and collaboration (UNHCR).
- Achieving impact – consolidation and collaboration:
 - The overall purpose is not about increasing the use of cash and voucher programmes, but increasing impact, with a greater focus on what’s best for beneficiaries. There are different views about what that looks like and how to get there.
 - Some assert that the system is too reliant on major agencies, which have become used to operating in a closed cycle of carrying out the assessment, delivering the aid, assessing performance. This raised the question: What is the right level of consolidation among operational agencies, and what new models are needed?
 - For instance, appreciation was expressed for the jolt that DFID and ECHO’s new approach in Lebanon has delivered to the system, forcing agencies to re-examine established ways of working (Alex Gray, RI).



“We are all still learning!”
Androulla Kaminara, DG ECHO

Key issues, findings and challenges

This section describes in detail the discussions, key issues, findings and challenges from the Global Cash Forum, and is structured in line with CaLP's [Global Framework for Action](#).

The Global Framework for Action has been carefully designed with input from across the humanitarian sector to provide a collective, comprehensive and action-oriented road map for humanitarian actors to scale up cash and voucher programming. It consolidates the major commitments and recommendations made to improve cash transfer programming (CTP) in humanitarian response during 2015 and 2016, into six practical objectives:

1. Ensure sufficient funding is available for cash transfer programming.
2. Ensure cash is routinely considered, alongside other tools.
3. Build sufficient capacity for cash transfer programming.
4. Ensure the quality of cash transfer programming.
5. Strengthen coordination of cash transfer programming.
6. Strengthen the evidence base and invest in innovation.

The following pages are organised according to this structure to bring together the discussions from the forum.



As the global partnership working on cash in humanitarian aid, CaLP's aim for the Forum was to bring together actors to address collective challenges.

1. Ensure sufficient funding is available for cash transfer programming.

While humanitarian need (demand) is increasing, the financing (supply) is decreasing. Donors and agencies restated their intention to honour their major public commitments to cash (e.g. through the Grand Bargain), including meeting stretching targets.

Donor approaches

ECHO sees cash as an important way to make humanitarian aid more efficient and effective. They are committed to 35% of their humanitarian aid being delivered as cash by 2018. They recognise the disruptive potential of cash, for instance, by breaking the link between delivery and other aspects of humanitarian work; by forcing better coordination; and not fragmenting people to suit the humanitarian sector's fragmented approach of addressing different needs separately. They see no conflict between a comprehensive quality response and a cash response. ECHO is currently reviewing and finalising their Cash Guidance Note, which only applies in large scale programmes. "On small scale programmes it would be a burden and overkill to separate components A and B." Androulla Kaminara, DG ECHO.

BPRM and USAID want to see greater use of CTP, led by operational agencies identifying appropriate modalities in each context. They emphasised the need to consider protection issues and market realities as a part of these decisions. They recognise that the huge majority of international assistance is multilateral, through international organisations, and expect to influence improvements in them through their governing bodies. They called for work to develop shared principles among donors and operational agencies.

Within the Norwegian Government Ministry of Foreign Assistance, the case for cash has now been made. They are now working to integrate cash into their work. They do not have specialist technical capacity, and so rely on their partners to identify appropriate and effective ways of using cash and voucher programming. Donors expect better collaboration among agencies, across mandates to make better use of Multi-Purpose cash grants. And donors should also be willing to change their ways.

DFID spoke about their commitment to CTP, more than doubling their commitment to aid delivered through cash and vouchers by 2025. DFID is ambitious for rapid change, for instance by experimenting with ECHO on changes in funding and operational models (such as 'single agency delivery' and independent monitoring) and actively promoting the use of multi-purpose cash grants (MPGs) which the current international system is currently ill-fitted to deliver. They set out six principles that guide their approach (see Box 1, below).

ECHO noted that they did not expect cash to "turn the existing humanitarian landscape on its head", but to help actors work better to their comparative advantages. BPRM made a similar point, recognising that humanitarian assistance needs the global framework that the UN provides.

Box 1: DfID's Principles

“The UK has committed to more than double our use of cash in crisis response by 2025, from a baseline of 14.5% in 2015. To support this, we are investing in evidence of what works where, and promoting the exchange of lessons. As per the Grand Bargain commitment on cash, **we are also testing new delivery models**, such as with ECHO in Lebanon.

To deliver on its commitment going forward, the UK will apply the following principles:

1. A choice of transfer and delivery model that is **driven by needs and appropriate to the context**. What the UK want to do in Lebanon is not a blueprint for what we might apply in other situations.
2. **Wherever feasible, preferring cash to vouchers**, and reporting on them separately. A Boston Consulting Group study shows that the purchasing power of beneficiaries in Lebanon increases by 19% with cash compared to vouchers, and that 90% of them prefer cash.
3. **A single transfer, covering as many needs as possible**. The UK will continue to support outcomes that cannot be achieved through cash. However, we want to reduce the inefficiency generated by multiple cash transfers for different purposes for the same beneficiary.
4. **Supporting governance and coordination that enhance effectiveness**, but also protection, accountability and transparency. To do this, the UK will wherever possible fund the delivery of cash separately from other functions - assessment, targeting, monitoring and evaluation - to minimise conflicts of interest. We will measure performance through outcomes rather than outputs, and promote beneficiary participation throughout the programme cycle.
5. Choosing implementing partners based on **a transparent appraisal of their comparative advantage and value for money in a given context**. This can include the private sector. But wherever possible, we want to favour national and local systems to promote sustainability.
6. Finally, we want to harmonise approaches and coordinate with other donors at the country level.”

A number of actors emphasised the need to keep quality and effectiveness in the equation, and not just focus on efficiencies.

It was noted that humanitarian agencies and donors should be careful about cash evangelism, especially within the US, as they can get more traction based on greater transparency. The sector needs to get ahead of the media, to anticipate and be prepared for any future scandal (Jeremy Konyndyk, CGD). The sector also needs to get better at explaining and managing risk (Patrick Saez, DFiD; Jeremy Konyndyk, CGD).

All donors agreed that cash needs to be contextually driven, and BPRM expressed the need to ensure that the local contextual conditions are appropriate for cash and that all programmes continue to meet established standards across sectors, e.g. Sphere.

An additional issue at the country level is the limited ability of national NGOs to access international funding directly through the surge or pooled funds. Currently they only get access to international aid through partnering with international humanitarian agencies. Within the collaborative sphere,

INGOs and donors need to see how they can work better with local and national NGOs (Deqa Saleh, Adeso).

2. Ensure cash is routinely considered, alongside other tools.

The Forum confirmed that cash is widely accepted at the policy level as a tool for humanitarian assistance. Participants were reminded that attendees of the Forum are already ‘converts’ – the CTP community of practice has a responsibility to consider the resistance that may still exist (for example in certain contexts or from certain sectors), and help provide solutions for others to move forward.

The Forum heard from donors that they are committed to driving the cash agenda forward, and looking to fund cash transfer modalities. For example: the Grand Bargain and Good Humanitarian Donorship Cash Workstreams have both held initial meetings to identify priorities and develop workplans. The Grand Bargain Workstream is co-led by WFP and DFID; the Good Humanitarian Donorship workstream is co-led by the Norwegian Government and DFID.

Waheed Lor Mehdiabadi (UNHCR) and Paula Reed Lynch (BPRM) highlighted the importance of not only routinely considering cash, but of considering the response analysis, design and implementation of cash transfer programmes with a protection lens. Patrick Saez (DFID) also called for the need to consider the context to drive programme decisions. In response to questions, DFID suggested that a budget line for MPGs should be included in every Humanitarian Response Plan. World Vision International have committed to delivering 50% of their humanitarian aid as multi-purpose cash by 2020.

“We need to reinforce the case for cash within the current political climate among donors, including with the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. It can be strong, focused on efficiency, effectiveness and individual choice. The term “cash” is not helpful and has the wrong resonance. We need to manage the narrative in order to withstand hostile media in the event of a cash scandal.” Jeremy Konyndyk

3. Build sufficient capacity for cash transfer programming.

Cash Transfer Programming presents specific challenges for current actors in the Humanitarian sector including:

- The need to upgrade existing systems, procedures and approaches to include capacity to manage cash and voucher programmes;
- Cash can be used multi-sectorally, which challenges the sector-based delivery of assistance;
- The actual delivery of cash can be out-sourced to financial service providers, which can disrupt traditional approaches and funding mechanisms.

Investing in capacity and changed ways of working

Both Androulla Kaminara (DG ECHO) and Jeremy Konyndyk (CGD) highlighted that these challenges put a spotlight on the core functions of different agencies, and will help to crystallise greater specialisation and impact into the future. Points raised on ways forward included:

- Agencies need to keep investing in their own capacities, and operational agencies need to understand enough about donor intentions to plan their investments in capacity accordingly.
- INGOs are exploring better collaboration around cash through the Common Cash Delivery Platform, which aims to provide capacity through a modular approach broken down by stages of the programme cycle (Alex Gray, RI).
- There was general agreement about strengthening the use of private sector capacities, though noting that they reasonably need to make a profit to effectively deliver at scale.

This discussion was not solely about increasing the use of cash and voucher programmes, but increasing their impact, with a greater focus on what's best for beneficiaries. There are different views about what that looks like and how to get there, and different agencies are altering their ways of working to fit this model.

For example, Paula Gil Baizan presented key points from World Vision International's approach to institutionalising cash transfer programming. Their commitment to cash transfer programming is fuelling strategic change within the agency, driven by two major shifts: (a) talking about financial assistance, rather than cash programming – in order to resonate more strongly with existing values and practices; and (b) moving from being a pipeline to a platform – implying a different way of investing in cash transfer programming capacity where the delivery component is not valued more highly than other components.

Institutional investments in capacity need to be complemented with individual capacity building opportunities addressing different audience needs. CaLP's [individual capacity building programme](#) was presented at the following CaLP Members day.

Questions on long-term capacity

CTP on its own will not reform the whole humanitarian architecture. Questions arose about how agencies and donors should build long-term capacity and adapt to include CTP:

- How much political will and long term commitment is there to substantially reform existing organisational and institutional arrangements?
- Is the system too reliant on major agencies, which have become used to operating in a closed cycle of carrying out the assessment, delivering the aid, assessing performance? And, therefore:
 - What sort of changes within the system are needed to ensure a future using cash is appropriately resourced?
 - How ambitious should those changes be? Incremental reform, or more radical? And whose reform agenda?

4. Ensure the quality of cash transfer programming.

The Forum heard impressive case studies about the use of cash transfer programming, linking quality to the continued need to strengthen evidence and use of new operating models.

This included an overview of the major [Emergency Social Safety Net Programme](#) run by the Turkish Red Crescent Society, WFP and the Turkish Government with other partners including UNHCR and funded by ECHO. The programme is assisting 1.3 million refugees, using a bank card that is uploaded monthly. It provides unrestricted cash to meet basic needs. In this programme, beneficiaries prefer cash to other forms of aid, and this preference is growing as they become more familiar with it. Women in particular appreciate the discretion, dignity and convenience of unrestricted cash. The programme has found that cash has not created intra-household divisions. But, they have found that they need to inform the local community throughout the programme and keep reinforcing local understanding and support.

The programme is jointly designed and implemented by the operational partners, to the extent that they share an office, in order to address detailed operational issues together as they come up. Collaboration with government created opportunities, in terms of scale and impact, and required changes in approach, for instance in following government leadership when making key decisions around transfer size and using beneficiary data. The government sees the programme as a Social Cohesion Programme. NGOs have focused on complementary programming, for instance by supporting excluded groups to engage with the programme. Other agencies are piggy-backing on the same card and payments system, such as UNICEF who are using it for conditional cash payments for education.

The presenters concluded that, even for a huge programme of this scale, “the problem is bigger than we are...so we are trying to learn as we go” (Orhan Hacimehmet, Turkish Red Crescent and Jonathan Campbell, WFP).

CARE spoke about their work with World Vision International, and funded by DFID, to implement the largest mobile money programme ever undertaken in Zimbabwe, reaching over 400,000 recipients over a period of 22 months. [Read more on CARE’s program here](#). They have recently published the full evaluation. Abel Whande emphasised the benefits of adjusting their programme to deal with the liquidity crisis, based on a strong monitoring and evaluation system, and with active engagement and support from their donor. This included developing a strong system for engaging with beneficiary communities, adapting to using more “e-cash” on mobile phones and reducing the expectation that beneficiaries would use paper cash, supporting the grain market, and negotiating to reduce the cost of SIM cards provided by the private sector. (Abel Whande, CARE)

There was strong commitment at the Forum that in the quest for efficiency, programme effectiveness and accountability should not be lost. Two points emerged from the discussions on quality: the need for common standards and principles for quality cash programming, and the added value of common delivery mechanisms (see below).

5. Strengthen coordination of cash transfer programming.

Host government leadership

The growing leadership role of national governments in meeting humanitarian need was discussed, particularly in response to national disasters. Dr Sithamparapillai Amalanathan (Sri Lankan government) spoke about the role of the Ministry of Disaster Management in coordinating disaster response activities, in response to floods, landslides and drought. They have identified the poorest families using existing data and a community bank network, which covers 40% of the population and can identify affected people quickly, at scale. He noted that “social safety nets offer a powerful means of providing humanitarian assistance”. He also recognised challenges. For instance, the government is currently developing a single oversight body across 12 different safety net programmes, which involve a number of different ministries (e.g. Finance, Social Services, Disaster Management).

Gabriel Fernandez spoke about the Liberian Government’s work towards developing a single national registry, following the Brazilian example and building on their experience in the Ebola crisis, to ensure that cash can be given to targeted beneficiaries swiftly in an emergency. He noted that “cash works” as “the poor are not irresponsible”. And he described practical challenges that they face, such as in the quality of roads.

ECHO noted that “We’re still exploring the relationship between humanitarian CTP and central banks” (Androulla Kaminara, DG ECHO).

Common delivery mechanisms

There was wide agreement that agencies should share common delivery mechanisms, in order to realise efficiencies for beneficiaries as well as donors and agencies. There was agreement on moving away from multiple, independent, overlapping payment mechanisms. Different types of delivery model were discussed, including: a single agency overseeing one consolidated programme; a common delivery mechanism that is open to all agencies; and use of a range of payment solutions in any context that can interact with each other.

UNHCR described the potential benefits that could be created by a lead humanitarian agency contracting a financial service provider to provide a common service that is accessible to all humanitarian actors. This can build on UNHCR’s experience in Jordan and elsewhere. It would provide a common platform for delivering cash based assistance, that any humanitarian actor can access and benefit from. It can also provide a single mechanism for beneficiaries to access assistance from multiple agencies. It could be based on a set of standards that define how the approach is managed, and enable an inclusive and collaborative approach. It could be a smart entry point that has ripple effects and drives wider change and collaboration across actors (Waheed Lor Mehdiabadi, UNHCR).

This gave rise to discussion including:

- This “common service” approach presents an alternative to the funding model being tested by DFID and ECHO. It has the potential to enable more collaboration among operational

agencies, rather than competition. But, it may not generate the full breadth of efficiencies that are possible, as different agencies would still incur duplicate management costs. Any decision on which model to use would need to be determined by a sensitive understanding of the context. There may be benefits from having different agencies managing smaller programmes, and using different payment platforms, in certain circumstances for instance where access or infrastructure is limited.

- Recognition that DFID and ECHO's new approach in Lebanon has delivered a necessary jolt to the system, forcing agencies to re-examine established ways of working. (Alex Gray, RI)
- Consensus that it is ineffective to have dozens of independently managed, overlapping small programmes and that there are many options between that and a 'single agency' approach.
- If delivery of cash assistance is brought under the management of a single agency, then will that risk creating a monopoly, and will other agencies lose their direct relationships with beneficiaries? What implications will that have in terms of protection, and other aspects of humanitarian assistance? (Nisar Majid - Feinstein International Centre, Matthew Keyes - ECHO). How can agencies like UNHCR retain relationships with government if they are not bringing any assistance? (Waheed Lor-Mehdiabadi, UNHCR)
- Examples from the Turkish Red Crescent, WFP, CARE and UNHCR all emphasised the crucial need for trust among operational partners. They spoke about the time it takes working together to build up a robust and trusting relationship with another agency. It was noted that there can be a tension between this trust and the competition generated by funding models that focus on a single delivery agency.

Coordination among international actors

There is an urgent need to clarify the location of and responsibility for coordinating cash transfer programmes in the international humanitarian architecture¹. The Norwegian government raised this issue and called for donors to fund coordination of cash, integrated into larger programme proposals rather than as stand-alone earmarked funds.

ECHO recognised that coordination challenges the overlapping mandates of agencies, and for that reason is political. Whilst cash can contribute to advances in the system and new ways of doing things, it cannot resolve these underlying tensions. The nature of multi-purpose grants should encourage humanitarian actors to break down silos, and drive up collaboration. This reinforces the need for central coordination of cash during an emergency response.

¹ See the June 2017 GPPi paper on [Cash Coordination in Humanitarian Contexts](#) for a current overview of the issues, and CaLP's Discussion Note: [Improving the Coordination of Cash Transfer Programmes](#)

6. Strengthen the evidence base and invest in innovation.

A vast amount of innovation and investment is already taking place, around every aspect of humanitarian assistance – from new technologies like biometrics and mobile money, to new funding models and new partnerships between government, donors, aid agencies and private sector.

The following points were discussed:

- Better dialogue is needed between humanitarian agencies and private sector firms, in order to identify specific needs that private sector firms can design products to meet.
- There is a collective need to develop new models for funding core functions to replace the previous approach of a blanket ~7% overhead on total programme costs. This approach is no longer viable in large scale cash transfer programmes, when the immediate cost of delivery should be well below 1% of the value delivered.
- There is a need to build evidence on which operational models work best in which contexts, based on a common set of standards for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.
- The evidence base needs strengthening from collective experience.

Jeremy Konyndyk (CGD) highlighted the need for humanitarian actors to reinforce the case for cash within the current political climate among donors, including the USG. The message should be strong and focused on efficiency, effectiveness and individual choice. But for this there needs to be evidence.

Elias Sagmiester (Ground Truth Solutions) spoke about supporting accountability with a new approach to collecting and publishing powerful data on community perspectives, called the Cash Barometer. More detail: www.cashbarometer.org. Currently, data is available on beneficiary perspectives from Afghanistan. Data from other countries will be added.

Joanna Macrae (GiveDirectly) spoke about experimenting with different ways of doing cash, answering the questions 1) How much should be given? 2) Who should it be given to? And 3) How often? Their pilot in Kenya did a randomised controlled trial comparing the effects of giving small monthly payments versus larger lump sums. Monthly payments increased food security, but providing people with the same amount of money but as larger lump sums, enabled them to invest in durable assets and to increase their earnings. Joanna Macrae asked if similar benefits would be achieved by sizing transfers differently in some humanitarian settings, for example, in the aftermath of natural disasters and in some protracted refugee settings. She also underlined the need to strengthen links between humanitarian and development cash actors.

These examples highlighted the need for humanitarian organisations to collect the right data to learn how to programme better, and continue to make the case for cash. Evaluations should be frank and highlight failures as much as success to support learning. There is a need for better explanations and management of risks (Patrick Saez, DFiD; Jeremy Konyndyk, CGD), and better recognition that there is a different political resonance if cash is misappropriated compared to other types of aid going astray (Jeremy Konyndyk, CGD).

Cash is changing the way agencies respond, and in the current context of an explosion of different technologies, including the use of biometric data, mobile money and many others, there is a clear need to document and share experiences.

Engaging the private sector

Finally there was some consideration of how humanitarian actors can engage better with private sector firms. Ian Taylor from MasterCard spoke about a willingness among private sector firms to develop better ways of responding to the needs of humanitarian agencies. He emphasised that: (a) private sector firms reasonably need to make profit, and (b) humanitarian agencies need to be clearer on the services and products they would like to receive from private sector firms. He also spoke about how changes in financial legislation may decrease barriers to entry for Financial Service Providers, which should reduce costs and enable innovation. MasterCard has significant links to humanitarian actors that can be built on. And they are developing a wide range of technologies, for instance making use of biometric cards that use thumb prints and can store a wide range of data such as around family details. He noted that advances in data analysis around “big data” available through electronic payments can help improve aid and transparency. He closed with a call for better dialogue and engagement between private sector firms and humanitarian actors, in order to strengthen practical collaboration.

ANNEX I: SOURCE MATERIALS

Event Agenda & individual presentations

The full discussions that are summarised in this report are all available as videos. If you were not able to attend the Global Cash Forum, or wish to explore topics in more detail and hear directly from the speakers, you can watch the live presentations:

- View [full recording of the Global Cash Forum](#)

The following agenda contains hyperlinks to individual presentations from the Global Cash Forum.

| Time | Session |
|-------|--|
| 09:00 | <p>Opening</p> <p>Welcome comments from CaLP</p> <p>Nigel Timmins, Humanitarian Director, Oxfam International and Chair of CaLP Board</p> |
| 09:15 | <p>Keynote Presentation</p> <p>A vision for the potential for cash and how that can be realised to support people affected by crises.</p> <p>Androulla Kaminara, Director, DG ECHO</p> |
| 09:45 | <p>Formal Welcome</p> <p>Manuel Bessler, Assistant Director General and Head of Humanitarian Aid Department, SDC</p> |
| 09:50 | <p>Looking to the Future</p> <p>Examining trends in the humanitarian sector in the next five years, and how these will affect cash transfer programming, from three perspectives: humanitarian, governmental and technological.</p> <p>Introduction</p> <p>Jennifer Welsh, Professor and Chair in International Relations, European University Institute and Senior Research Fellow, Somerville College, University of Oxford.</p> <p>Gabriel Fernandez, National Social Protection Coordinator, Liberian Government</p> <p>Ian Taylor, Vice President, Business Development, Government & Public Sector, MasterCard</p> <p>Chaired by: Christina Bennett, Head of the Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI</p> <p>Q&A</p> |
| 11:00 | <p>Operational Modalities – Panel Discussion</p> |

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| | <p>Cash creates opportunities for delivering aid in different ways. These have the potential to reduce costs, drive innovation, strengthen linkages beyond aid and enhance coverage. They can also disrupt existing ways of working and challenge existing interests. This session will review a range of real-world experiences in order to inform future innovation.</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p><u>Dr Sithamparapillai Amalanathan, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management, Sri Lanka</u></p> <p><u>Waheed Lor-Mehdiabadi, Chief of Cash-Based Interventions, UNHCR</u></p> <p><u>Orhan Hacimehmet, Coordinator Of Kizilaykart Cash Based Assistance Programmes, Turkish Red Crescent and Jonathan Campbell, Deputy Country Director, WFP, Turkey</u></p> <p><u>Abel. S. Whande, Team Leader, Cash Transfer Program, Care International in Zimbabwe</u></p> <p>Chaired by Ben Parker, Senior Editor, IRIN</p> <p><u>Q&A</u></p> |
| 13:30 | <p>Scaling Up Cash In East Africa – Panel Discussion</p> <p>This year, the UN declared that more than 20 million people face the threat of famine in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. This session will discuss practical opportunities and obstacles to scaling up the use of cash transfer programming in East Africa, with a focus on Somalia.</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p><u>Deqa Saleh, Cash and Social Protection Advisor, ADESO</u></p> <p><u>Ernesto Gonzalez, Regional Advisor for cash-based programmes, WFP Bureau for Central and Eastern Africa</u></p> <p><u>Alex Gray, Global Humanitarian Director for Relief International</u></p> <p><u>Nisar Majid, Independent Researcher, Consultant and Visiting Fellow, Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University</u></p> <p>Chaired by: Christina Bennett, Head of the Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI</p> <p><u>Q&A</u></p> |
| 14:30 | <p>Significant updates</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p><u>Elias Sagmiester, Programme Manager, Ground Truth Solutions: Cash Barometer and community perspectives of CTP in Afghanistan</u></p> <p><u>Joanna Macrae, Director, European Partnerships, GiveDirectly: First long-term trial of a Universal Basic Income, Kenya</u></p> <p><u>Paula Gil Baizan, Global Humanitarian Director Cash-Based Programming, World Vision International: Changing from a pipeline to a platform</u></p> |

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|-------|--|
| | <p>Emily Henderson, <u>Humanitarian Adviser, DFID: Grand Bargain and GHD cash work-streams</u></p> |
| 15:30 | <p>Donor Perspectives – Panel Discussion</p> <p>Major donors have made substantial commitments to scale up the use of cash. They are putting them into practice in a variety of ways, with the aim of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of aid. This session provides the opportunity to discuss different donors’ visions for cash over the coming years.</p> <p><u>Introduction</u></p> <p><u>Paula Reed Lynch, Director, Office of Policy and Resources Planning, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</u></p> <p><u>Patrick Saez, Senior Adviser, Humanitarian Policy and Partnerships, DFID, UK</u></p> <p><u>Ingunn Vatne, Minister Counsellor and Head of the Humanitarian team, Permanent Mission of Norway in Geneva</u></p> <p><u>Jeremy Konyndyk, Senior Policy Fellow, Centre for Global Development</u></p> <p><u>Androulla Kaminara, Director, DG ECHO</u></p> <p>Chaired By Thabani Maphosa, Vice President for Food Assistance, World Vision International, World Vision US</p> <p><u>Q&A</u></p> |
| 17:15 | <p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Alex Jacobs, <u>Director, CaLP</u></p> |



All recordings and content from the Global Cash Forum can be found on CaLP’s website:
<http://www.cashlearning.org/what-we-do/global-cash-forum>



This report summarises current developments in Cash Transfer Programming (CTP), as captured at the recent Global Cash Forum, held in Geneva in June 2017.

In recent years, CTP has emerged as one of the most significant innovations in humanitarian response. Major donors and agencies have made public commitments to increase its use, for instance through the Grand Bargain. Now, work is under way to build the sector-wide capacity to turn those commitments into action. The objective of the event

The Global Cash Forum, organised by the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) and designed to complement other initiatives such as the Grand Bargain, featured a wide range of lively discussions and a keynote speech by Androulla Kaminara (Director, DG ECHO) on ECHO's vision for the future of cash programming in humanitarian response.

CaLP is grateful for financial support for the Forum from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.