



HONDURAS CASE STUDY

**BONO ÚNICO - DEEPENING PREPAREDNESS
IN SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS
USING CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE
FOR FUTURE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**



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ABBREVIATIONS

CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance	MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning
CENISS	National Information Center for the Social Sector	NGO	Non-Government Organizations
COPECO	Permanent Commission for Contingency Planning	PIN	Personal Identification Number
EATMVT	Monitoring, Accountability, and Transparency Team	SEDIS	Secretariat on Development and Social Inclusion
FSU-RUP	National Single Socioeconomic Form of the Single Participant Registry	SENPRENDE	National Service for Entrepreneurship and Small Business
FSU-SE	Single Socioeconomic Form for the Economic Sector	SMS	Short Message Service
GDPR	General Data Protection Requirements	SP	Social Protection
GoH	Government of Honduras	SRSP	Shock-responsive Social Protection
HNL	Honduran lempiras	STSS	Secretary of Labor and Social Security
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization	UN	United Nations
	MoU Memoranda of Understanding	UNDP	United National Development Programme
		USD	United States Dollar



The following case study underscores how Honduras, a country with relatively limited Social Protection (SP) experience in emergencies, can enhance preparedness using humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) through close collaboration with actors such as Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations (UN). It also demonstrates how governments can learn how to overcome the challenges presented by the use of CVA to deepen preparedness for future emergency assistance in the context of repeated climate and social shocks.¹

The program reviewed here is *Bono Único*, a non-contributory SP program led by the Government of Honduras (GoH) and supported by [GOAL Honduras](#) and the [United National Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#). *Bono Único* provided humanitarian CVA to vulnerable Honduran households during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program used emergency preparedness measures to involve partners to strengthen transparency, accountability, data management, information sharing, and capacity-building to better integrate humanitarian CVA with existing SP mechanisms in Honduras. The case study then analyzes barriers and enablers to integrating humanitarian CVA and SP for preparedness and highlights challenges and opportunities for their use in the future.

BACKGROUND

Honduras is a country in Central America with a population of approximately 9.35 million people.² Approximately 60 percent of Hondurans live in urban areas. Poverty rates are high and educational attainment low across the country. These factors contribute to significant rates of out-migration. Honduras is also marked by high rates of violence. Additionally, the country is prone to earthquakes and devastating hurricanes and floods, which occur regularly. In part for these reasons, Honduras has long attracted humanitarian support.

In recent years, humanitarian support in Honduras increasingly includes CVA from INGOs and the UN. The GoH has also utilized CVA in SP programs, with initial experiences dating back as early as 2010. Since 2014, the GoH operated the non-contributory *Bono Vida Mejor*, which features a conditional cash transfer that targets households in extreme poverty with the stated goal of “creating opportunities for education, health, and nutrition.”³ When possible, the transfer is delivered to a woman in the household.

¹ This case study is a companion to a larger report, *Cash and Voucher Assistance within Social Protection Preparedness in Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic*. For more details on the recent history of CVA and SP in Honduras, and general mapping of CVA and SP in Latin America and the Caribbean, please see the main report.

² [The World Factbook: Honduras](#), CIA.gov. Accessed December 10, 2021.

³ CEPAL. (2021). *Bono Vida Mejor (ex Bono 10,000 Education, health and nutrition) (2010-) - Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes - Non-contributory social protection programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean database*.

PROGRAM INTRODUCTION: *BONO ÚNICO*

The GoH issued a decree in April 2020⁴ which included setting up *Bono Único*, offering a one-time transfer to eligible citizens; the program included the establishment of accountability and transparency mechanisms, as well. The decree was followed by a tender that was awarded to GOAL Honduras for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) and UNDP for technical support. The two agencies provided different aspects of support: identifying program recipients, developing MEAL tools, and establishing targeting methodologies. They also worked with a strategic committee to refine the e-voucher delivery mechanism and conduct market analyses to prepare for the CVA in Honduras. The GoH signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with each actor; addenda were added as new program requirements emerged.

Both GOAL and UNDP worked closely with the Honduran SP ministry, *CENISS* (National Information Center for the Social Sector) and *SENPRENDE* (National Service for Entrepreneurship and Small Business). The agencies also coordinated with Honduras's disaster management agency, the Permanent Commission for Contingency Planning (COPECO for its acronym in Spanish).⁵ Targeting and transparency-building took place in parallel, along with the development of new humanitarian CVA delivery and registration models (i.e., MEAL processes). This meant, as one key informant noted, that the GoH was “reviewing the application of [old] models while at the same time developing [new] ones”.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and administered by *CENISS*, *Bono Único* delivered a one-time transfer of 2,000 Honduran *lempiras* (HNL) (USD 80) on October 15, 2020. Recipients were identified through the National Single Socioeconomic Form of the Single Participant Registry (FSU-RUP) and the Single Socioeconomic Form for the Economic Sector (FSU-SE). Unlike *Bono Vida Mejor*, *Bono Único* targeted workers—self-employed or salaried—who were not collecting social security, who were unemployed or otherwise adversely impacted by the pandemic.⁶ To qualify for *Bono Único* participants could not already be enrolled in *Bono Vida Mejor*.⁷ *Bono Único* did not target the elderly or those living in extreme poverty who were not self-employed. This limited the population eligible for *Bono Único*; according to some key informants there seems to be a general feeling that recipients were not actually the most vulnerable.

Targeting initially focused on urban and peri-urban communities since these were most impacted by COVID-19 and typically suffer from the greatest rates of unemployment. Targeting was later expanded to include rural areas as COPECO gathered further vulnerability information from continuous assessments and monitoring which showed that the pandemic was affecting all areas of Honduras. This flexibility and adaptability allowed *Bono Único* to reach more citizens in need.

To ensure that recipients met eligibility criteria for the program, *Bono Único* used the FSU (Single Socioeconomic Form) to understand participants' geographic location, household demographics, and employment, education, and health information. Geographic and employment information were especially necessary to ensure that recipients were eligible for the program.

The delivery mechanism for *Bono Único* was by e-voucher; it could be used to purchase personal protective equipment, as well as foodstuffs and medicines.⁸ Recipients received a message on their cell phone that the voucher was ready. They could then use the voucher at various locations, including *Supermercados La Colonia*, *Banasupro*, *Farmacias Simán*, *Kielsa*, and *Del Ahorro*. The GoH was able to repurpose any funds that recipients did not ultimately spend.

Complementary programming to the humanitarian CVA in *Bono Único* included the delivery of masks, hand sanitizer, and other hygiene products to the program participants. The GoH set an upper limit cap for the *Bono Único* program at 500,000 recipients, yet it found that, of this population, only 150,659 met eligibility requirements.⁹ As of February 28, 2021, approximately 20,277 of 91,749 transfers remained to be redeemed.¹⁰ In an endline monitoring report, GOAL found that 90 percent of surveyed *Bono Único* participants were satisfied with the transfer.¹¹

Bono Único included multiple preparedness elements outlined as per the “building blocks” in the table below:

4 Government of Honduras. *Decreto Ejecutivo PCM-030-2020 No 35,222*. Accessed April 9, 2020.

5 COPECO also leads an information management roundtable in Honduras with OCHA.

6 *CENISS website*. Accessed December 10, 2021.

7 *Ibid.*

8 GOAL. (2021). “Informe de Monitoreo, Veeduria, y Transparencia.” Monitoring report. July.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

TABLE 1: BONO ÚNICO'S PREPAREDNESS ELEMENTS ACROSS SOCIAL PROTECTION BUILDING BLOCKS

BUILDING BLOCKS	PREPAREDNESS ELEMENTS
 <p>STAKEHOLDERS AND INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>GOAL and UNDP helped build COPECO's capacity to deliver CVA while also developing norms and protocols with COPECO.</p> <p>CENISS's creation of new data collection and protection mechanisms, such as self-registration, and new transparency initiatives, such as the Monitoring, Accountability, and Transparency Team (EATMVT), which led transparency meetings and other accountability initiatives within <i>Bono Único</i>.</p>
 <p>DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS</p>	<p>UNDP worked with SENPRENDE, CENISS, and the Secretary of Labor and Social Security (STSS) to centralize data on the target population through a multidimensional vulnerability index connected to the FSU and spearheaded by UNDP.¹²</p> <p>Use of the FSU-RUP, by CENISS, which also developed the multidimensional vulnerability index and included frequently updated recipient data.</p>
 <p>CVA DESIGN</p>	<p>COPECO along with GOAL developed a tool within KoBo Toolbox on market analysis and assessment as a result of the implementation of <i>Bono Único</i>. The tool can be used to consider the extent to which CVA can be used with civil protection programs and through COPECO, despite its lacking a mandate to deliver CVA.</p> <p>This tool helped sensitize COPECO to humanitarian CVA and better understand the viability of using it, as well as the resources needed to do so effectively. This toolkit can also be used for future emergency response.</p>
 <p>DELIVERY SYSTEMS¹³</p>	<p>A government decree at the start of the pandemic mandated that <i>Bono Único</i> include a monitoring and transparency element managed by an external learning partner(s).</p> <p>The GoH (via CENISS) worked closely with GOAL and UNDP on monitoring and implementation of CVA delivery through existing government SP vendor networks, call centers, and online registration and information systems, which bolstered government transparency.</p> <p>UNDP promoted a change from phone number data collection to a self-registration on the CENISS webpage. They worked with the Universidad de los Andes and University of Oxford to build a targeting index that strengthened this self-registration system.</p>
 <p>COORDINATION AND FINANCING</p>	<p>Government decree led to MOU signed between GOAL and the GoH to offer monitoring support and technical assistance to <i>Bono Único</i> which was carried out with close collaboration and coordination through various meetings and workshops.</p> <p>The GoH coordinated between its ministries and private sector entities to reduce duplication and exclusion errors of recipients within GoH SP programs.</p>

12 UNDP. (2020). *Focalización de transferencias a población vulnerable por el COVID-19 en Honduras. Notas de Política no1.*

13 For the purposes of this report, "delivery systems" includes delivery mechanisms as well as financial service providers and registration portals.

DISCUSSION

LESSONS LEARNED FROM *BONO ÚNICO*



STAKEHOLDERS AND INSTITUTIONS

Through *Bono Único*, the GoH was able to develop new platforms for transparency and for data management, which can be used in future preparedness. This includes the self-registration online platform for *Bono Único*, which “allows citizens to provide, revise, and modify their information according to the open government standards ... of transparency, accountability, participation, and open public data.”¹⁴ The self-registration platform also included detailed instructions and audiovisual assistance to allow citizens to understand their transfer, and to register themselves in the FSU—which in turn, helped the GoH collect more up-to-date data on citizens in need, and increase transparency to citizens on *Bono Único* eligibility.

However, despite this enhanced transparency, institutional trust and governance continued to pose a challenge. This resulted in hesitancy on the part of INGOs to collaborate with the GoH in some cases due to concerns about neutrality, impartiality, and independence. Though *Bono Único* made great strides in transparency, both through the EATMVT and open online data mechanisms, these initiatives are only a first step. As one key informant noted, “it would be possible to work together [with the GoH], but it ... would have to show more transparency, and [this context] is non-existent.” Such sentiment may be rooted in different targeting priorities, funding sources, and politics.



DATA AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The FSU-RUP proved an especially useful preparedness tool for scaling up and expanding *Bono Único* rapidly at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, CENISS already had approximately one million households in its census, which it had surveyed through mobile devices and door-to-door “community brigades” to gather more reliable data. CENISS was also able to obtain citizen consent for data collection and use, in accordance with Honduran data protection laws.

Yet “community brigades” were not an option in the face of COVID-19 due to public health restrictions. Therefore, the GoH switched to the online self-registration format. The long-form FSU was adapted to a shorter, more condensed version (FSU-SE) for ease of recipient. There were a host of features to make the data in the system more secure: consent forms, PIN numbers sent to e-mail, and SMS communication about security and PIN codes. Each of these data management elements could be used across other emergency interventions, which are key to preparedness actions.

The FSU-RUP faced various challenges. One key lesson learned through *Bono Único* was that the FSU-RUP database alone was not sufficient for validating recipient eligibility. This was due to recipients frequently updating their data. Recipients often changed their cell phone numbers, which were the primary forms of identification. To help resolve this issue, the GoH and UNDP worked with the Universidad de los Andes and Oxford University to build a multidimensional targeting index which could verify eligibility across multiple criteria. Offering multiple platforms for updating data (e.g., self-registration and call centers) helped CENISS to ensure that recipient data in FSU-RUP was more accurate, as well as more inclusive of the most vulnerable Hondurans.¹⁵

However, some stakeholders had slightly different perspectives on GoH’s data management practices. INGO key informants noted that sharing data posed a challenge, as they often worked with highly sensitive groups (i.e., political activists or survivors of sexual gender-based violence) that require nuanced treatment of their data. Internal data

¹⁴ [CENISS website](#). Accessed December 10, 2021.

¹⁵ Note that this effort is temporarily stalled due to a lack of “political appetite” for expanding the program this year.

protection policies within certain INGOs may not permit them to share their registries because of confidentiality requirements. INGO respondents added that, to their knowledge, the GoH does not verify eligibility at the municipal level. They expressed concerns that the targeting priorities of the GoH differed from those of INGOs due to INGO concerns about exclusion errors of certain communities not targeted by the government. For example, *Bono Único* required users to have active e-mail addresses and cell phone access, which not all Hondurans enjoy. Some INGO respondents felt that the GoH's approaches to this programming were different from theirs (i.e., adherence to the humanitarian principles of accountability and compliance).



DELIVERY SYSTEMS¹⁶

Data collection and management challenges that emerged throughout *Bono Único* encouraged the GoH to make changes to registration processes, ultimately strengthening the program and contributing to future preparedness. To ensure those without internet access could be part of the program, CENISS operated a toll-free call center managed and supported by UNDP. Through this call center, potential recipients could update their personal information and submit feedback. A little over half (57 percent) of recipients surveyed by GOAL indicated that they knew of the call center number that they could call to resolve problems related to *Bono Único*.¹⁷

The GoH actively attempted to involve all relevant stakeholders so that information reached everyone involved with *Bono Único*. This coordination across various stakeholders worked to the GoH's advantage. It signaled that the GoH was open to learn and receive feedback and resulted in deeper collaboration and capacity-building from the partners. For example, UNDP worked to offer capacity-building, data management, and customer service (e.g., case management and referrals) training activities, allowing CENISS to improve service delivery via the phone and online. Collaborating with UNDP strengthened CENISS's technical knowledge. Indeed, the GoH noted that the self-registration element was "a very positive exercise in transparency, brought to bear at every step and in all moments [of the *Bono Único* process.]" The GoH considered self-registration as one of the most successful elements of *Bono Único*—"the most well received, better than we expected. These activities, offered through multiple channels, helped to foster credibility in the government, and *Bono Único*, from the Honduran population, according to GoH key informants.

Beyond registration processes, *Bono Único* also helped strengthen the GoH's network of vendors. Participants could redeem *Bono Único* at local convenience stores and supermarkets, which have continued to offer opportunities to redeem e-voucher as service providers in CVA and SP programs. *Bono Único* used the same system and delivery platforms as existing GoH SP programs, including *Bono Vida Mejor* and transfers for persons with disabilities and populations impacted by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. This allowed for additional scalability, consistency, and sustainability in GoH CVA delivery.



CVA PROGRAM DESIGN

A common problem identified by multiple key informants was that the number of actors that were simultaneously working on CVA in Honduras made it difficult to know which actor can or should take the lead on using humanitarian CVA in shock-responsive SP (SRSP). In Honduras, this could be a combination of CENISS, SEDIS, and COPECO, with support from NGOs or the UN. The GoH will still need support to build capacities, specifically on transparency and inclusion issues. For this reason, the GoH and other key humanitarian stakeholders face numerous challenges in designing and implementing a shared vision of humanitarian CVA in Honduras, especially as related to transfer type, targeting, and recipient identification.

Key informants suggested that the GoH continues to demonstrate a preference for in-kind distributions in emergency contexts, due to anxiety that sudden market shifts and small-scale corruption could make CVA riskier than in-kind

¹⁶ A Vertical expansion is an increase the benefit value or duration of an existing SP program. A horizontal expansion is when new recipients are added to an existing SP program. CaLP. "Working with Cash-based Safety Nets in Humanitarian Contexts: Guidance note for humanitarian practitioners" 2016.

¹⁷ GOAL. (2021). "Informe de Monitoreo, Veeduría, y Transparencia." Monitoring report. July.

support. Furthermore, GoH respondents noted that COVID-19 made targeting inclusivity more difficult, as some vulnerable households which had not been targeted with SP before slipped into poverty as a result of the pandemic. This created tracking and data monitoring challenges. On the other hand, INGO stakeholders suggested that GoH SP targeting procedures were not accurate enough to always comply with the humanitarian principle of independence. INGOs also noted that GoH does not verify eligibility at the municipal level; without this step, inclusion and exclusion errors may be more prevalent. INGOs expressed concerns that GoH's targeting priorities differed from theirs; that gap on collaboration with the GoH would generate exclusion errors for certain communities not targeted by the government for political or non-political, reasons. For example, *Bono Único* required users to have active e-mail addresses and cell phone access, which not all Hondurans enjoy. INGOs insisted that municipal-level validation of recipients' vulnerability was necessary to address issues such as this digital divide. INGOs also noted that they often use different criteria than GoH identification mechanisms (including the new multidimensional vulnerability index).

The fact that GoH and INGO validation and identification processes differ may make it difficult to consolidate GoH and INGO programs in the short term. Yet more critically, uncertainty about validation, exclusion errors, and equity in identification underscores a sense of mistrust between INGOs and the GoH; that makes collaboration more challenging. As a result, potential aid recipients may fall through the gap created by these challenges to effective collaboration.



COORDINATING AND FINANCING

Bono Único represents a unique case win which program funding and coordination with external actors were included in the plan from the start. The national decree was an excellent example of coordination and financing on the part of the GoH.

However, in later stages, coordination across various stakeholders proved mixed, even with the GoH taking important steps to institutionalize collaboration. On one hand, CENISS and the GoH successfully leveraged a coordination campaign to sensitize over 83 organizations, including churches, INGOs, local NGOs¹⁸ and other government institutions to *Bono Único*. This required a significant effort. The GoH also fostered accountability by sending SMS messages to recipients informing them of when and how to redeem their transfers; it also coordinated with telephone companies to verify and validate recipients' numbers to ensure they were correct and actively working. Finally, the GoH convened roundtables and meetings with other government ministries involved in active SP programs (including in the transportation and agriculture sector) to compare registry lists, with the goal of limiting duplication of government provided humanitarian CVA.

CONCLUSIONS

Bono Único offers various lessons learned to both GoH and external stakeholders. The following section highlights key barriers and enablers to success in *Bono Único*. It then offers challenges and opportunities for future preparedness for humanitarian CVA in GoH SP programs.

¹⁸ It is notable that no local NGOs were interviewed in this study.

LESSONS LEARNED

ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

BARRIERS to success in *Bono Único* primarily included collaboration with INGOs, data transferability, concerns about exclusion errors and duplication, and financing. These include:

- + The government remains skeptical about CVA and regulatory norms prevent it:** The GoH continues to prefer in-kind assistance to CVA in emergencies. This preference is in the face of a changing landscape for humanitarian response that favors CVA. As a result, advocacy, sensitization, and capacity-building on the potential benefit of humanitarian CVA in the GoH's preparedness actions may still require considerable investment, with support from actors outside of the government. Also critical, COPECO, the GoH agency in charge of emergency response, has no legal instruments to permit its use of any CVA, despite an interest to do so. To date the norms to permit the use of CVA by the agency have been ad hoc. Additionally, it remains wary to fund preparedness measures for shocks that may not occur.
- + Multiple and sequential programs confuse recipients:** Key informants also noted that GoH SP programs, despite advances, can still be confusing for some recipients. Short-term or humanitarian transfers such as *Bono Único* may occur concurrently with other SP programs, often delivered through the same agency or central distribution platform but with different names (even though previous initiatives may not have concluded). This may be since initiatives are linked to different funding sources; if the GoH receives a contribution from a new donor, they often announce and open a new program. Overlapping programming can cause confusion and frustration for recipients who may not understand the limits of program eligibility, which programs are active, and which have concluded.
- + Data protection regulations obstruct interoperability between different organizations:** INGO and UN stakeholders may face trouble using national social registries, as data sharing, validation, and data protection concerns can prohibit certain actors from relying on government data, especially when working with politically vulnerable groups. Furthermore, internal laws and mandates may prohibit INGO and UN actors from sharing personal data of recipients¹⁹ or vice versa; Honduran data protection laws may not allow external actors such as UNDP to manage citizen ID cards. This can contribute to delays in humanitarian CVA implementation and inhibit collaboration. Additionally, the Honduras data protection laws are not in line with General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR) or other more restricted data protection laws.
- + Greater transparency and accountability are still required:** For both INGOs and program participants, there is an opportunity to increase communication, trust-building, and accountability. The participation of local NGOs was underutilized though these actors have a strong role to play such programming. While transparency mechanisms in *Bono Único* were one important way to do this, further work is needed to sensitize both INGOs and recipients to new accountability measures in the GoH, such as those put in place through *Bono Único*. There is an opportunity to deepen these efforts in the coming year, as Honduras continues to revise and reform its SINAGER Law ("*Ley del Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos*") to include SP actors and other important CVA stakeholders to further streamline communication, coordination, and transparency for CVA in SP. Doing so is a critical preparedness measure—one that the GoH has already begun to implement through *Bono Único*. Aligning targeting criteria between government and humanitarian actors is a challenge; it is a process that may take several years. However, the commitment to this process could be mutually beneficial for the different stakeholders and especially for the people of Honduras, as it will be clearer who is eligible for what and which agency offers what type of support.

¹⁹ A data sharing agreement was signed between UNDP and CENISS and between GOAL and CENISS, that allowed for GoH to share data after obtaining authorization from citizens. However, this is a persistent concern for many organizations, not only in Honduras.



GERMAN ADALID MEJÍA
ISA FATHER OF 2 AND
AN ENTREPRENEUR
WHO BENEFITED FROM
CASH ASSISTANCE FROM
GOAL'S HUMANITARIAN
RESPONSE TO NORTH
ATLANTIC MAJOR STORM.
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- + Duplication of registries leads to inclusion and exclusion errors:** INGOs acknowledge that failure to share their recipient data risks duplicating government humanitarian CVA efforts. Without deeper collaboration, it may be difficult for INGOs and the GoH to identify where potential for duplication or targeting exclusion errors exist. Minimizing duplication between government SP- and INGO-managed humanitarian CVA is therefore an important step to building preparedness to effectively reach the greatest number of Hondurans with CVA; it remains unclear which actor will take the lead on this issue. However, in offering multiple platforms for updating *Bono Único* data and convening roundtables of government ministries to avoid duplication, CENISS and the GoH took important steps toward ensuring that recipient data in FSU-RUP was more accurate, as well as more inclusive of most vulnerable populations.
- + Infrastructure barriers mean that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work:** Lastly, practical infrastructure barriers—low cell phone or internet penetration, remote rural communities—can contribute to exclusion errors of the most vulnerable populations in targeting. It is unclear how many potentially eligible people may have been excluded because of these barriers. While these barriers are known, it is important to account for these in the program design and mitigate the impact on the population. It is unlikely that one delivery mechanism, targeting, or verification means will work in Honduras.

ENABLERS primarily relate to data and information management, new citizen transparency initiatives, and the GoH's emphasis on coordination and MEAL. These include:

- + The government built on what was in place and sought assistance strategically:** The decree mandating *Bono Único* at the outset of the pandemic was a key enabler to this action, along with the inclusion of monitoring and transparency elements managed by a learning partner. As one key informant stated, "it bears underlining that the SP system in Honduras was not prepared to respond to emergencies—but (the GoH) were intelligent in not starting from zero and seeking ... support," particularly in requesting external assistance in targeting, data management, and MEAL.
- + Pre-existing relationships and trust allowed for innovation:** GOAL's pre-existing relationship with the GoH served as an enabler for collaboration and encouraged trust. Establishing multiple platforms for updating data (i.e., self-registration, call centers, online registration access, relying on a FSU-RUP) can build confidence that registration data is accurate. It may also minimize exclusion errors.
- + Existing databases permitted rapid scaling-up and targeting:** The existence of a frequently updated, central social registration database, such as the FSU-RUP and corresponding multidimensional vulnerability index was cited as one of them most important aspects of the program. This allows for quick scaling-up of programs, facilitates targeting, and can be leveraged in existing SP delivery mechanisms for *Bono Único* in an emergency context.

NEXT STEPS

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite promising collaboration in scaling up challenges remain for linking GoH and non-government actors to build future preparedness. Challenges include:

- ▶ **Regulatory frameworks need changing:** Currently, Honduran regulation is an obstacle to using humanitarian CVA for preparedness in SP in Honduras. COPECO indicated interest in including CVA contingency planning in its emergency response preparedness but has not in part because it does not have the mandate to do so. This may change with upcoming legal reforms in Honduras.
- ▶ **Sustained momentum in face of changing governments:** Elections were held in Honduras in November 2021, after which, as is commonly the case, government and administrative personnel changes can occur as a result. This turnover can make program continuity difficult, especially as new staff may have limited experience with CVA and require extensive training. Furthermore, new governments may end programs that are associated with previous administrations; this can contribute to confusion and slow preparedness measures. Even with changes to regulatory frameworks within the GoH's agencies to use humanitarian CVA in preparedness, there will need to be more advocacy for national budget earmarking. Budgets will not only need to account for the cost of the transfers, but also to pay for the necessary capacity-building and updates to systems (e.g., MEAL, delivery systems) for all actors involved. These are long-term preparedness steps that must be taken to equip the GoH to work effectively at the onset of emergencies, as opposed to responding to events as they occur.
- ▶ **Sustained financing for preparedness:** Key informants expressed challenges in advocating for adequate financing for preparedness activities in Honduras, though this frustration was not specific to *Bono Único*. The key informants agreed that the GoH is sometimes reluctant to earmark budget items to prepare for an emergency that may or may not occur, and that it could be difficult to make a political case for CVA preparedness. The GoH could consider approaching donors to support such pre-emptive measures through international funding to government.
- ▶ **Lead GoH agency on SRSP:** In Honduras, this could be a combination of CENISS, Secretariat on Development and Social Inclusion (*SEDIS* for its acronym in Spanish), COPECO, along with the support of NGOs or the UN. The GoH will still need assistance to build capacities, specifically with regard to transparency and inclusion issues. This is likely to only be achieved after a long process of improving communication and collaborative effort; so it is crucial that efforts to build trust are supported in order to put in place sustainable systems prepared to respond to emergencies.
- ▶ **Revisiting coordination efforts:** These coordination efforts helped bolster the transparency of the program in the eyes of the Honduran citizens and establish open intra-governmental communication. However, it strained UNDP Honduras resources to offer technical support across multiple programs, including *Bono Único*, during the program roll-out. This speaks to the need for additional coordination and delegation of tasks between implementers.
- ▶ **Continued trust-building with the public:** Strengthening recipient trust in processes such as self-registration or using call centers may take time and sustained efforts to demonstrate transparency. The GoH requires, as one key informant noted, a more "robust or unified structure of follow-up [with recipients] to strengthen confidence that [CVA] can be cashed out." Almost all programs, including *Bono Único*, are advertised as GoH-sponsored in public, but do not mention the funding sources (i.e., if there have been contributions from the World Bank or foreign governments). This can pose challenges to deepening transparency, both with potential external partners and citizens. Future actions may help foster greater credibility and transparency by disclosing

sources of funding for government programs such as *Bono Único*. NGOs may play a role in facilitating this information dissemination, supporting recipients to access it if they choose, among other steps. However, various key informants felt that trust and transparency with the Honduran population would be better served by making eligibility and section criteria clearer with the general public.

- ▶ **Including and linking with INGOs and local NGOs from the outset of the process:** Local organizations often have the greatest contextualized presence in disaster-affected communities but are largely excluded from the humanitarian CVA and SP dialogue in Honduras. In the *Bono Único* experience, local actors played a minimal role, which was restricted to efforts to sensitize local communities to build trust. Local actors could be engaged in various other capacities to build trust, while building their capacity on humanitarian CVA. The CWG could be one forum to achieve this, but local organizations' participation in the CWG remains limited. While the GoH has requested help from INGO implementing partners, one key informant noted that in their organization, this was only with support "designing pamphlets—but no concrete technical support."

Despite these challenges, there are nevertheless, there are notable opportunities to strengthen the incorporation of to using CVA in SP preparedness in Honduras. These opportunities include:

- ▶ **Openness to change:** The GoH has an appetite for collaboration, learning, and improvement. UNDP noted that the GoH stated that it valued its accountability, both in the accessibility of its data and the transparency of its internal processes. New administrations may also be open to the use of humanitarian CVA for preparedness in SP, buoyed by this successful experience.
- ▶ **Involving NGOs and other ministries in preparedness from the outset:** INGOs and local NGOs can be involved at an earlier stage of preparedness discussions, to build trust, collaboration, and transparency across the humanitarian ecosystem in Honduras. One INGO key informant expressed a desire for greater co-responsibility in humanitarian CVA project execution "from the moment of planning government [CVA] transfers." Including NGOs and the CWG at the planning stage provides the opportunity for deeper relationship-building and capacity-building related to the humanitarian principles behind the partnership, such as through horizontal expansion and vertical top-ups, or alignment with NGO programs. Greater collaboration may also contribute to stronger and more centralized leadership on humanitarian CVA in Honduras. COPECO has expressed an interest and need for working inter-institutionally with other GoH ministries for preparedness. This includes assessing mayors, localities, and municipalities for inclusion in disaster preparedness. Further localizing humanitarian CVA and SP preparedness work supports GoH commitments to the Grand Bargain.
- ▶ **Using data collection tools as predictors:** The FSU-RUP data can be used to make predictions about future horizontal and vertical expansions of SP and humanitarian CVA, though no such use has been planned to date.
- ▶ **Ongoing analysis of past emergencies through a market lens:** GOAL, alongside the GoH, is already conducting analysis of past emergencies to inform the size and scope of future responses. GOAL's work also includes developing more flexible norms and regulations. These may include developing a "universal decree" for adapting CENISS and COPECO mandates to allow for quick CVA deployment, data sharing, and standardized CVA delivery platforms and other types of policy reforms through sustained advocacy and legal assistance.
- ▶ **Establishing new bilateral and national-level agreements:** There is a need to develop new bilateral, national-level pre-agreements with GoH actors to provide technical humanitarian CVA support. This will also help the GoH to develop a common language of "resilience" across its SP and CVA programs. GOAL's current efforts to do so aim to standardize CVA across GoH ministries, before moving toward policy reform and deeper levels of technical assistance to integrate CVA and preparedness into the national SP system. Currently, GOAL is relying on its own internal frameworks and capacity-building training materials to do so and will continue to contextualize the materials for the GoH and advocate for their use.

- ▶ **Continue momentum on regulatory changes:** GOAL and COPECO will present a new draft of COPECO's operating norms to the GoH for possible review, in decree form, by the end of 2021. The development of these tools is critical for deeper transparency. As one key informant noted, in Latin America, establishing strong tools also helps to manage transparency concerns: "Building strong tools and market analysis that are verified is also a way of building credibility and showing this credibility and MEAL to donors because even if governments are not transparent, tools can be." The experiences with the helpline used in *Bono Único* could serve as a means for wider GoH use of feedback or accountability mechanisms beyond a specific program.

As one key informant noted, "CVA is a tool... and it is important to take steps to identify how this [tool] can be incorporated into different [emergency] response modalities." Through *Bono Único*, the GoH has taken important steps toward integrating this tool into government SP programs to make them more shock-responsive and to enhance preparedness.



THIS CASE STUDY IS A COMPANION TO A LARGER REPORT, CASH AND VOUCHER ASSISTANCE WITHIN SOCIAL PROTECTION PREPAREDNESS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO, AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC.

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE RECENT HISTORY OF CVA AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN HONDURAS, AND GENERAL MAPPING OF CVA AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, PLEASE SEE THE MAIN REPORT.

