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**IN PROGRESS:**

# COORDINATION BETWEEN CASH WORKING GROUPS (CWGS) AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS IN THE AMERICAS

**AUGUST 2022**



**GRUPO DE TRABAJO  
TRANSFERENCIAS  
MONETARIAS**



Plataforma de Coordinación  
Interagencial para Refugiados  
y Migrantes de Venezuela



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Cover photo: María Jerónimo Jiménez, a young mother from the indigenous community of Chicoy, Todos Santos, Huehuetenango, Guatemala, poses with her daughter Hilary Cruz Jerónimo (3 years old) and son Isan Cruz Jerónimo (6 months old). © UNICEF Guatemala/ Patricia Willocq.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ADESS</b>	Administradora de Subsidios Sociales (Dominican Republic)	<b>MIES</b>	Ministerio de Inclusión Económica y Social (Ecuador)
<b>AVSI</b>	Asociación de Voluntarios para el Servicio Internacional	<b>MIGOBDT</b>	Ministerio de Gobernación y Desarrollo Territorial (El Salvador)
<b>CABEI</b>	Central American Bank for Economic Integration	<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>BEm</b>	Benefício Emergencial de Preservação do Emprego e da Renda (Brazil)	<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>CAD</b>	Cadastro Único (Brazil)	<b>OCRT</b>	Organisational Cash Readiness Tool
<b>CDUR</b>	Consejos de Desarrollo Urbano y Rural	<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>CENISS</b>	Centro Nacional de Información del Sector Social (Honduras)	<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>CONRED</b>	Coordinadora Nacional para la Reducción de Desastres (Guatemala)	<b>OPHI</b>	Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
<b>COPECO</b>	Comisión Permanente de Contingencias (Honduras)	<b>Pa'Ti</b>	Program in favor of the Self-Employed (Dominican Republic)
<b>CUA</b>	Consortio Cash for Urban Assistance (Colombia)	<b>PNPPS</b>	The National Policy for Social Protection and Promotion (Haiti)
<b>CVA</b>	Cash and voucher assistance	<b>RCWG</b>	Grupo Regional de Transferencias Monetarias (R4V)
<b>CWG</b>	Cash Working Group	<b>REDLAC</b>	Regional Group on Risks, Emergencies and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>DG ECHO</b>	Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (Europe)	<b>RMRP</b>	Refugees and Migrants Response Plan
<b>DRC</b>	Danish Refugee Council	<b>R4V</b>	Regional Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela
<b>FASE</b>	Fondo de Asistencia Solidaria al Empleado (Dominican Republic)	<b>SEDESOL</b>	Secretaría de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social (Honduras)
<b>FICR</b>	Federación Internacional de la Cruz Roja	<b>SINAGER</b>	Ley del Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos de Honduras (Honduras)
<b>FLACSO</b>	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales	<b>SISBEN</b>	Sistema de Identificación de Potenciales Beneficiarios de Programas Sociales (Colombia)
<b>FUDELA</b>	Fundación de las Américas	<b>SIUBEN</b>	Sistema Único de Beneficiarios (Dominican Republic)
<b>MCWG</b>	Multisector Cash Working Group (Guatemala)	<b>STPTM</b>	Secretaría Técnica del Plan Toda Una Vida (Ecuador)
<b>HDVI</b>	Haiti Deprivation and Vulnerability Index (Haiti)	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>HIAS</b>	Immigrant Aid Society (Haiti)	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>IDB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank	<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IVM</b>	Índice de Vulnerabilidad Multidimensional (Honduras)	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>MEAL</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning	<b>UTSAN</b>	Unidad Técnica de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional (Honduras)
<b>MEB</b>	Minimum Expenditure Basket	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>MIDES</b>	Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (Guatemala)		
<b>MIDIS</b>	Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social (Peru)		



## I INTRODUCTION

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) cash and voucher assistance (CVA) whether conditional or unconditional, has been gradually implemented since the 1980s and increased in the 1990s. Various impact evaluations carried out on these programs (Araujo & Macours, 2021; Bastagli et al., 2016; De Rock *et al.*, 2018; Galasso & Ravallion, 2004; Ordóñez-Barba & Hernández, 2019; Paul Schultz, 2004) identify positive impacts of creating basic standard of living conditions, and in maintaining and building the human capital of recipient families. The adoption of CVA as a means of social protection and poverty reduction strategies has been widespread in the region since the early 2000s.

CVA forms a crucial aspect of non-contributory social protection systems, providing support to vulnerable households that lack access to social security systems, which primarily serve those with formal employment. These social security systems provide benefits based on the previous contributions made by the recipients. In the context of responses to different types of humanitarian crises, the use of CVA is also beginning to be considered as a viable alternative, both for immediate response activities and in livelihood recovery processes (Ark Yildirim & Smyrl, 2021; Bailey & Harvey, 2015; Creti & Jaspars, 2006; Cross *et al.*, 2018; World Bank, 2016.) The widespread application of CVA in humanitarian contexts dates back to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. In the LAC region, one of the earliest experiences of government-led CVA implementation in emergency situations was in response to the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador.

In crisis-prone scenarios, social protection often employs modifications to its existing programs through adaptive social protection. These modifications may or may not involve CVA and may involve the participation of humanitarian actors. These are: horizontal expansions (when the number of participants in a program is increased), vertical expansions (when the value or duration of benefits for existing participants is increased) and design adjustments (when adjustments are made to the design of existing programs).

Recent regional developments in LAC, including the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and large-scale human mobility, combined with the region's inherent vulnerability and susceptibility to natural disasters, social inequality, economic crises, poverty, and corruption, have subjected social protection to a severe test. These developments have brought to light the limitations and difficulties faced by national social protection, health, and emergency response systems in addressing the complexities of these crises.

They have also demonstrated the importance of establishing linkages with humanitarian actors to provide a deeper and more comprehensive response to affected populations.

One notable regional example of humanitarian coordination during disasters is the Regional Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants in Venezuela (R4V). This initiative has enabled collaboration at the national and international levels, prevented duplication of efforts, fostered partnerships, and effectively connected various institutions and programs to the needs of the millions of individuals who have fled Venezuela. It is noteworthy that the Regional Cash Working Group (RCWG) initially co-chaired by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) from 2019 to 2021, played a critical role in the implementation of the plan. Since 2021, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Save the Children have led the group.

The regional CWG has three objectives: (a) to provide technical support to national responses through CVA, (b) to promote coordination among organizations and sectors working with CVA, and (c) to facilitate knowledge sharing among national cash working groups. These aspects have been very useful and, in some cases, have enabled significant progress to be made in achieving more and better results through joint efforts.

In recent years, efforts have been made by UN organizations and governments to integrate CVA into the social safety nets programs, which in turn has made it possible to strengthen the levels of coordination, mainly through the CWGs. These initiatives promoted by Latin American CWGs, humanitarian actors and governments are linked to both local and global processes. At the global level, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, where the Grand Bargain was signed plays a part in this conversation.<sup>1</sup> The Summit recognized the relevance of humanitarian CVA and invited, where appropriate, to use it to link with local or national social protection programs and regulations (3rd Core Commitment). In addition, the Grand Bargain states that both humanitarian organizations and donors should commit to strengthening social protection programs – national and local – to better respond to crises and increase the resilience of households and communities (10th Core Commitment).<sup>2</sup> The importance of local actors to promote development processes, coordination and greater participation of all actors and CVA recipients in different humanitarian and crisis responses is the central axis within a common donor approach to humanitarian CVA.

In this regard, regional meetings were held to evaluate and define the relevant mechanisms according to each experience and to advance the appropriate coordination processes between social protection systems and humanitarian CVA. In this effort, in 2021 REDLAC and the RCWG convened and a meeting, conformed of CashCap, WFP, SPACE and OCHA. This meeting was entitled “Linking cash transfers with social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean”. In the same spirit, the course “Linking social protection and Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance Programs” organized by Action Against Hunger and the CALP Network, with the support of CashCap/Norcap and UNICEF (in Guatemala) and GOAL and CALP (in Honduras) in June and July 2022, respectively, were relevant.

There are also several regional studies that have examined coordination on this topic, as well as systematizations of local experiences that highlight various lessons learned, windows of opportunity, and challenges that need to be addressed. An important milestone in promoting coordination between CVA and social protection systems in countries is the new global CVA policy of the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) released in 2022; it promotes the linkages to and preparedness of social protection systems as an element to be considered when defining funding priorities.<sup>3</sup>

This current systematization includes an overview of countries that have CWGs or maintain other types of coordination spaces (i.e., working groups or thematic forums) focused on linking humanitarian CWGs with social protection, and that are part of the CALP Network and/or the RCWG-R4V.<sup>4</sup> It also outlines the examples of CVA in social protection in the study countries and presents governments' CVA responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through these responses, the governments of several countries promoted the use of CVA in collaboration with various agencies of the United Nations System (UN) and international organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> The Grand Bargain includes several changes in the way donors and aid agencies work. These changes include reducing earmarked grants, increasing multi-year funding, and harmonizing reporting requirements on the one hand, and increasing transparency, reducing administrative costs, and conducting more joint needs assessments on the other. Signatories have also committed to expanding cash programming, strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, promoting greater participation of affected people in decision-making, and increasing support to national and local actors. The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need (2016). CashCap/NorCap. (2022). Exercise for the identification of linkages of cash and voucher assistance with the social protection system. Iteration 1- Colombia.

<sup>2</sup> CashCap/NorCap (2022). Exercise for the identification of linkages of cash and voucher assistance with the social protection system. Iteration 1- Colombia.

<sup>3</sup> CashCap/NorCap (2022). Exercise for the identification of linkages of cash and voucher assistance with the social protection system. Iteration 1- Colombia.

<sup>4</sup> CALP. (n.d.). Americas Cash Working Groups (Web page).

This systematization is intended to contribute to the objectives of the R4V RCWG in terms of coordination between the CWG and national and subnational governmental entities, by compiling historical and current evidence in LAC and proposing concrete recommendations. The aim is to provide a basis for coordination strategies for social protection systems and CVA. This systematization intends to generate a mapping and overview of the initiatives and scope of coordination efforts in each country studied. In addition, three in-depth case studies of CWGs in Colombia, Ecuador, and Guatemala have been prepared.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was employed to organize the data, primarily relying on qualitative data collection and analysis, but also utilizing supportive quantitative studies and information. The process began with a thorough review of relevant literature, academic articles, research, technical reports, and the outputs of local CWGs, as well as online information from various countries and governments on their social protection systems.

To gather local insights and to gain a comprehensive perspective, a survey was distributed to the CWGs and completed by the leader or co-leader of each country group. The survey was filled out by the CWGs of Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Venezuela, and Honduras.

For the case studies, in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in Colombia, Ecuador, and Guatemala to explore their specific experiences, major contributions, challenges, perspectives, and advancements, as well as the crucial aspects of the coordination processes in each country. Additionally, interviews with the leaders of the RCWG and CALP were essential to complement the overall understanding of the situation.

### LIMITATIONS

This study provides a preliminary look into a complex issue and is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather it contributes to mapping the situation at the regional level, and documenting and analyzing the connections between CWGs and national social protection systems. Due to limitations in time, this study focuses on the coordination mechanisms from the perspective of CWGs (humanitarian and international aid organizations) and not from the perspective of governments in the region. A future study could complement these findings by including the perspective of government entities at the country level.

Despite efforts to include as many of the relevant humanitarian agencies and organizations as possible through group or individual interviews, time limitations prevented a more extensive data collection and prevented reaching all relevant actors. In some countries, information had to be obtained from secondary sources and could not be properly validated with the individuals responsible for coordinating the CWGs. This was the case for Haiti, Peru, Mexico, and Honduras.



# 3 MAPPING OF CWG AND SOCIAL PROTECTION COORDINATION

## 3.1 BRAZIL

### Core social protection programs

At the federal level, the Brazilian government has a main active conditional CVA program, the *Bolsa Família* (Family Grant),<sup>5</sup> currently called *Auxílio Brasil* (Aid Brazil) (as of November 2021).<sup>6</sup> This program has been operating since 2003 by merging several interventions with similar objectives (e.g., *Bolsa Escola* (School Scholarship), *Bolsa Alimentação* (Food Stipend), *Cartão e Alimentação* (Food and Voucher), and *Auxílio-Gas* (Gas Aid)).<sup>7</sup> In addition, Brazil has two non-contributory pension programs: *Benefício de Prestação* (Cash Benefit Program),<sup>8</sup> since 1996 and *Previdência* (Social Welfare),<sup>9,10</sup> since 1993.

### Government response to COVID-19 through CVA

As part of the social protection response to COVID-19, three new federal CVA programs were developed: *Auxílio Emergencial* (Emergency Aid),<sup>11</sup> *Benefício Emergencial de Preservação do Emprego e da Renda* (BEm, Emergency Benefit to Preserve Income and Employment )<sup>12</sup> and *Lei Aldir Blanc* (Emergency Bonus for Cultural Workers). Similarly, several operational adaptations and expansions, both horizontal and vertical, were made to existing programs with CVA participation, such as the *Bolsa Família*, for which a horizontal expansion of benefits was granted.

### Humanitarian coordination and CWG with the government

The Brazilian CWG has a focal point for CVA in connection with the R4V. Although local CWG exist in some areas, they are not present throughout the entire country. The Brazilian focal point reported that there has not been a formal, systematic collaboration with the government beyond specific projects. The CVA implemented by the humanitarian actors linked to R4V mainly target migrant population. However, the number of eligible people exceeds the capacity of the humanitarian sector; they have worked in coordination with the government, especially to facilitate their access to social protection programs through registration in the *Cadastro Único* (CAD, Single Registry) which corresponds to households on the social registry.

The most notable experience in terms of coordination between the humanitarian sector and the Brazilian government's social protection was *Operação Acolhida* (Operation Welcome). This is a strategy with a humanitarian focus, designed and implemented since 2018 between the Brazilian Navy, Army, and Air Force, together with several government agencies and humanitarian actors, mainly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>13</sup> The goal of the strategy is to relocate Venezuelan migrants and refugees in border states, mainly Roraima, to other cities in the country with the intention of facilitating their integration into society in more developed areas.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The results obtained by Brazil were of high impact, in addition to being a pioneer in the subject. "Bolsa Família, which in a decade of operation managed to reduce poverty in Brazil by half (from 9.7% to 4.3%), thanks to its vast reach and coverage – some 50 million low-income Brazilians, or a quarter of the population." For more information see: World Bank (2014). *Cómo reducir la pobreza: ¿nueva lección de Brasil para el mundo?* (Web page).

<sup>6</sup> IDB. (2017). *Brasil-Bolsa Família*.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Citizenship/Brazil (2022). *Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil*. (Program website)

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Citizenship/Brazil (2022). *Benefício de Prestação Continuada (BPC)* (Program website)

<sup>9</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare/Brazil. (n.d.). *Programa Renda e Oportunidade* (Program website)

<sup>11</sup> Presidency of the Republic/Brazil. *LEI Nº 13.982*. April, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> CAIXA. (n.d.). *Benefício Emergencial de Manutenção do Emprego e da Renda – BEm 2021*. (Program website)

<sup>13</sup> COMMIT. (2018). (Web page)

<sup>14</sup> IOM. (2021). *La OIM sigue asistiendo en reubicación voluntaria de venezolanos; la "Operación Acogida" celebra el pasaje aéreo entregado número 10.000*. (Global Communication)

## 3.2 COLOMBIA

### Core social protection programs

Since 2021, the Colombian government maintains two active programs with CVA, which are conditional: Más Familias en Acción (More Families in Action)<sup>15</sup> and Jóvenes en Acción (Youth in Action)<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, there are unconditional programs such as the Programa Colombia Mayor,<sup>17</sup> which has been operating since 2012, replacing the previous program Protección Social al Adulto Mayor (Social Protection for the Elderly). The later program targeted the elderly population living in extreme poverty and began in 2003. Similarly, there is the Tax Refund Program<sup>18</sup> which consists of providing low-income families with resources to mitigate the impact of the tax levied on the consumption of products and services.

### Government Response to COVID-19 through CVA

As part of its response to COVID-19, Colombia implemented five temporary or one-time programs with CVA: the *Programa de Ingreso Solidario* (Solidarity Income Program)<sup>19</sup> in addition to economic compensation for COVID-19 patients who had to remain in compulsory hospitalization, and the *Apoyo al Empleo Formal* (Formal Employment Support)<sup>20</sup>, *Apoyo para el Pago de la Prima de Servicios* (Payment of the Allowance for Services)<sup>21</sup> and the *Mecanismo de Protección al Cesante* (Mechanism of Protection for the Unemployed) programs.<sup>22</sup> There have also been operational adjustments, and horizontal and vertical expansions of existing programs with CVA, as in the cases of *Más Familias en Acción Mayor* (More Families in Action) or *Colombia Mayor* (Better Colombia).<sup>23</sup>

### Humanitarian Coordination and CWG with the government

The process of CWG coordination with the government was relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when efforts were channeled by both parties to migrants who could not benefit from social protection programs in Colombia. In this context, an initiative and discussions were launched to identify potential gaps and legal barriers for vulnerable people receiving assistance; these led to greater trust and better sharing of information on potential CVA recipients.

The CWG developed proposed formats to facilitate the development of personal data management agreements, all within the framework of a humanitarian assistance. The document suggested that lists drawn up by local authorities should be shared with humanitarian actors after they have informed them of the geographical areas in which they intend to operate to minimize duplication. A successful experience from the crisis during the pandemic is that it allowed the extension of social protection for migrants from Venezuela and other groups affected by humanitarian crises.

The close collaboration between the CWG and public institutions facilitated the implementation of initiatives by some organizations based on their mandates, leading to a stronger connection and coordination with the social protection system and government. One experience in this regard is the coordination between WFP and three Colombian government agencies: *Prosperidad Social* (Social Prosperity), *Gerencia de Frontera* (Management of the Border) and *Autoridad Nacional de Gestión del Riesgo* (National Authority of Risk Management). Evidence from the pandemic revealed gaps in social protection coverage in Colombia; so a pilot was designed and implemented jointly by the three agencies as a horizontal expansion of the government's CVA programs within the Venezuelan border region of Arauca. Several challenges arose, such as the insufficiency of the transfer amount to meet basic needs, which was aligned with the values of the government programs. Other challenges included the difficulty of maintaining contact with the recipients due to their high mobility. Nevertheless, the joint program represents an important step forward in linking humanitarian actors and social protection.

<sup>15</sup> Prosperidad Social/Colombia. (n.d.). [Más Familias en Acción](#) (Program website)

<sup>16</sup> Prosperidad Social/Colombia. (n.d.) [Jóvenes en Acción](#) (Program website)

<sup>17</sup> Prosperidad Social/Colombia. (n.d.). [Colombia Mayor](#) (Program website)

<sup>18</sup> Prosperidad Social/Colombia (n.d) [Devolución del IVA](#) (Program website)

<sup>19</sup> Presidency of the Republic/Colombia. [Legislative Decree 518](#). April 4th, 2020

<sup>20</sup> [Presidency of the Republic/Colombia. Legislative Decree 639](#). May 8th, 2020

<sup>21</sup> [Presidency of the Republic/Colombia. Legislative Decree 770](#). June 7th, 2020

<sup>22</sup> Ministerio del Trabajo/Colombia. (n.d.). [Mecanismo de Protección](#). (Program website)

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF. (2022). [Protección social y respuesta al COVID-19 en América Latina y el Caribe: Innovaciones en los sistemas de registro y pago](#)

Another highlight is the program *Círculos de Aprendizaje* (Learning Circles)<sup>24</sup> developed by World Vision Colombia and UNICEF.

This educational program is designed to address the effects of the pandemic and was requested by the Colombian government for humanitarian support. The objective is to increase access and ensure continued enrollment in the primary and secondary education system for vulnerable children and adolescents who face multiple challenges, such as high levels of educational deficiencies, child labor, poverty, domestic violence, etc. To achieve this, the program includes a CVA component to address the basic needs of the targeted population, with the aim of promoting access to education and reducing dropout rates. In addition, to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the program, the CWG and UNICEF maintain inter-agency training and coordination roundtables, as well as advisory and technical support processes for the government.



Implementation of 2022–2023 Social Protection Objectives by NGOs, Cash and Voucher Assistance Consortia and the United Nations System in the CWG Sub-Group. Author: CWG Colombia/December 2021.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF. (n.d.). [Círculos de aprendizaje](#). Colombia (Web page)

## EXTENDED CASE: CWG COLOMBIA

In recent years, the CWG Colombia has made significant progress in terms of coordination with the government. The CWG was formally established in 2016 with the aim of promoting coordinated and effective responses through CVA interventions to the multiple humanitarian crises affecting the country, including natural disasters, forced displacement, conflict victims, migrants and returning Colombians, which have affected more than 2,000,000 people to date.<sup>25</sup>

The national CWG coordinates with nine local CWGs located in La Guajira, Arauca, Norte de Santander, Santander, Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Antioquia, the Caribbean, and Bogotá. It also has four subgroups: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) subgroup, Response Analysis subgroup, Protection subgroup, and a social protection subgroup.

The social protection subgroup began its work in August 2021. Initially led by the CWG Coordinator, the subgroup was supported for eight months by an expert from CashCap/Norcap<sup>26</sup> who carried out preliminary consultations with interested organizations,<sup>27</sup> an action plan workshops,<sup>28</sup> drafted a terms of reference, worked with the resource library,<sup>29</sup> and completed exercises to identify linkages between CVA and social protection.<sup>30</sup> The subgroup is currently led by the WFP and the International Rescue Committee.

One of the key objectives of the subgroup is to “identify the best alternatives to overcome the current barriers to access for the migrant population and other communities excluded from social protection.”<sup>31</sup>

The efforts of the social protection subgroup in Colombia are guided by a general objective, which is to “identify and facilitate the implementation of measures that promote linkages between CVA programs and the social protection system in order to promote access to social protection for the population in vulnerable situations”<sup>32</sup> and by four specific objectives: (i) to collectively assess and analyze the structure and functioning of the social protection system in order to identify practical linkages that can be established between humanitarian cash transfers and the national social protection system; (ii) to strengthen the capacities of the subgroup’s member organizations and agencies; (iii) to generate evidence, manage knowledge and develop guidelines for advocacy and operational issues; and (iv) to provide strategic coordination and management of the subgroup.<sup>33</sup> To accomplish its goals, the CWG’s social protection subgroup developed an Action Plan for 2022<sup>34</sup> which outlines pathways and activities for each specific objective. The participating agencies and organizations, both government and international cooperation, each have assigned responsibilities and roles to play in the implementation of this plan.

The Colombian government has taken important steps towards the inclusion of the migrant population from Venezuela, but there is still a long way to go, not only in the relationship with the government, but also in the recognition by private entities (such as financial institutions, among others) of the regularization and inclusion processes managed by the government, processes that are required as a basis for the implementation of certain programs with CVA.

For the first objective, the CWG and the government reached an agreement to conduct a mapping of key players and programs within the social protection system in Colombia, analyze the barriers to access for targeted population groups, identify practical connections between social protection and humanitarian CVA, and enhance community involvement and accountability to the population.

For the second objective, activities revolve around three axes: i) formal training; ii) exchange of experiences; and iii) development of local pilots linking social protection and humanitarian CVA.

<sup>25</sup> R4V. (n.d.). [Grupo de Transferencias Monetarias - Colombia](#). (Web page)

<sup>26</sup> For more information on the launch of the subgroup, the action plan and the tools developed with the support of CashCap see: [Ejercicio para la identificación de vínculos de las transferencias monetarias con el sistema de protección social](#)

<sup>27</sup> [2021.10\\_Informe consulta preliminar subgrupo PS.pdf](#) – Google Drive

<sup>28</sup> [2021.12.07\\_Resumen taller plan acción 2022.pdf](#) - Google Drive, [Validación plan acción y TDR 2022 - SurveyMonkey Dashboard](#)

<sup>29</sup> [07-Resource Library](#) - Google Drive

<sup>30</sup> [04\\_PRODUTO FINAL\\_iteración 1](#) - Google Drive

<sup>31</sup> ToR of the social protection subgroup of Colombia (Internal document)

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> CWG Colombia. (2022). [Plan de acción Subgrupo Protección Social - CWG Colombia](#).



For the third objective, the key activities are: mapping existing experiences in linking social protection and humanitarian CVA; systematizing existing experiences to consolidate a mechanism for future reference and consultation; knowledge management and dissemination to establish a common base between government and humanitarian actors; developing research on the experience base and for future projects; and jointly developing advocacy guidelines to harmonize the response to different crises.

Finally, the lines of action for the fourth objective are: promoting alliances and coordination pathways for the design of government and humanitarian actor programs; strengthening coordination with the humanitarian system; and strengthening internal coordination of the subgroup.

By April 2022, with the need to identify the most appropriate routes to link humanitarian actors and social protection, a first exercise was carried out with humanitarian and social protection actors.<sup>35</sup> This resulted in a set of tools for assessing the social protection landscape in the country, as well as a mapping of government agencies and programs of potential interest to humanitarians.<sup>36</sup> The mapping provides a first assessment of the challenges to humanitarian–government linkages in the context of CVA from the perspective of humanitarian actors.<sup>37</sup>

This process revealed the need to carry out future early diagnostic iterations, ideally before designing new humanitarian response programs, taking the perspective of the targeted populations and the government into perspective, to obtain responses with better results at the level of humanitarian–government actors’ coordination for the beneficiary population, and in line with the real conditions of the country’s social protection system.

Humanitarian actors identified a wide range of barriers to support these links. The main barriers identified, those that received more than 50 % of mentions are as follows.

	Type of barriers	Barrier characteristics
1	Policies	Lack of knowledge of certain vulnerable groups of the institutional framework for their inclusion in social protection processes and insufficient financing for the inclusion of excluded groups.
2	Design	Lack of a better understanding of the territory to close the urban–rural gap; problems with the design of the vulnerability diagnosis and lack of flexibility in targeting criteria.
3	Implementation	Insufficient support for population registration, lack of valid proof of identity for enrollment in social protection programs and lack of strategies to bring program offerings closer to the population.
4	Socio-cultural	Stigma against marginalized groups and a lack of social norms to assert rights.
5	At the household or individual level	Lack of information on programs and eligibility requirements and high mobility of the population in the territories.
6	Capacity limitations	Exposure to different forms of violence, low levels of education and overburdened care responsibilities.
7	Structural disadvantages	Territories with weak communication systems, absence or limited presence of government services and low levels of economic development.

<sup>35</sup> CashCap/NorCap. (2022). [Ejercicio para la identificación de vínculos de las transferencias monetarias con el sistema de protección social. Iteración 1- Colombia](#)

<sup>36</sup> CWG Colombia. (n.d.). [Listado de programas de Gobierno.](#)

<sup>37</sup> CashCap/NorCap. (2022). [Barreras de acceso a la Protección Social. Perspectiva de los actores humanitarios.](#)

Colombia sets a positive example in linking humanitarian actors with the government social protection systems, resulting in better and more sustainable responses that better meet the needs of the affected population. These linkages demonstrate improvement not only in terms of scale, but also in terms of complementarity.

One of the most notable examples is the Cash for Urban Assistance (CUA) consortium (Action Against Hunger, the Danish Refugee Council, and the Norwegian Refugee Council), which developed the *ADN Dignidad* (DNA Dignity) program to support the Venezuelan migrant population and the Colombian returnee population in their integration into society.<sup>38</sup> The CUA consortium, in collaboration with the CWG Colombia, has advanced the development of government guidelines for the delivery of CVA to the target population. These guidelines define the amounts, time frames, conditions, and targeting criteria, to ensure that the provision of assistance does not undermine the national social protection system. The establishment of these guidelines was achieved through a process of constructive dialogue and advocacy between the relevant parties.

Parallel to these initiatives is the Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD),<sup>39</sup> which by 2019 led the CWG's MEAL subgroup. The CCD, composed of nine NGOs, working with UNHCR and WFP developed a set of targeting tools to achieve a certain parity with the Colombian Government's system for the identification of potential beneficiaries of social programs (SISBEN.) The operational cycles between humanitarian organizations were improved and aligned to share information and avoid duplication. The work carried out through networks, consortiums and working groups succeeded in establishing coordination and exchange strategies between CVA humanitarian actors and the Colombian government.<sup>40</sup>

#### **Obstacles and challenges in CWG coordination – social protection:**

- It has been a challenge to get people to consider the importance of linking humanitarian CVA and social protection and to demonstrate how to achieve it technically.
- Fragmentation of the social protection system in country.
- The outreach process has been an effort to understand the actions taken by the government by both humanitarian actors and the CWG, and to clarify the government's perspective of humanitarian actors.
- Maintaining interest in the positive experiences to ensure their continuity.

#### **Strengths and opportunities for CWG–social protection coordination:**

- The pandemic provided an opportunity for a shift in the government's attitude towards humanitarian actors and led to a revitalization of coordination and information exchange among participants in the process. This has been crucial in planning actions and enhancing future interventions, with the CWG being viewed as strategic partners in these efforts.
- Acting as a block within the CWGs has facilitated the decisive entry of various key actors and their support for international cooperation.
- The co-leaderships in the CWG are diverse and allow for a more contextual reading, contributing relevant elements to the proposals from the local level and better implementation.
- The government has designated staff<sup>41</sup> to take over the coordination processes with the CWGs, which greatly benefits the sustainability of the spaces and the construction of the proposals.

<sup>38</sup> ADN Dignidad. (n.d.). *Sobre ADN Dignidad*. (Web page)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.collaborativecash.org/colombia>

<sup>40</sup> RED LAC. (2021). *Vinculando las transferencias monetarias con los sistemas de protección social*. Systematization document.

<sup>41</sup> Open-ended contracts in government institutions

### 3.3 ECUADOR

#### Basic social protection programs

Ecuador's basic social protection programs is implemented by the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES). The use of CVA began in 2003 with the *Bono Solidario* (Solidarity Voucher) later replaced by the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (Human Development Voucher)<sup>42</sup>, which is still in effect and includes the Pension for the Elderly and the Pension for Persons with Disabilities. Since 2010, the MIES has also administered the Joaquín Gallegos Lara Grant,<sup>43</sup> which is aimed at people with disabilities. Since 2011, the Ministry of Public Health has also implemented the *Programa Cero Desnutrición* (Zero Malnutrition Program)<sup>44</sup>, which is part of the Comprehensive Territorial Nutrition Intervention Strategy and includes a dynamic of accompaniment and awareness-raising, in addition to a conditional transfer aimed at families living in poverty with children in early childhood and pregnant women.

#### Government response to COVID-19 through CVA

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country implemented three social assistance programs based on temporary CVA: the *Bono de Contingencia/Bono de Protección Familiar* (Contingency Voucher/Family Protection Voucher)<sup>45</sup> for the emergency, the *Bono de Apoyo Nutricional* (Nutritional Support Voucher)<sup>46</sup> and *Plan de Emergencia de Alimentación de Canasta Solidaria* (Food Emergency Basket Solidarity Plan.)<sup>47</sup> In this context, several ministerial agreements and emergency measures were signed to address the situation in the areas of social protection, access to services and labor market protection.

#### Humanitarian coordination and CWG with the government

For the period 2019–2022, cooperation for sustainable development was agreed between the UN and the government of Ecuador, focusing on four priority areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, and Peace.<sup>48</sup> For the first of the aforementioned areas, one of the main axis of the cooperation is to ensure comprehensive social protection, based on national data showing unequal access to both contributory and non-contributory social security.<sup>49</sup>

Within the framework of this cooperation agreement and the humanitarian crises that have affected Ecuador in recent years, the United Nations System Interagency Group for social protection in Ecuador, which is part of the United Nations Country Team in the country, worked with the government, in particular with the MIES and the national legislature, to respond to the health emergency and the growing wave of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. In this context, a comprehensive social protection strategy was developed, focusing on the articulation of the contributory and non-contributory systems to extend the coverage of the social protection system.<sup>50</sup> The UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group provided support and technical training to government agencies, and a technical roundtable was developed, led by the Technical Secretariat of the *Plan Toda Una Vida* (All One Life Plan) and composed of UN agencies, several government ministries and other stakeholders (including academics, NGOs and other international organizations, such as the World Bank and Inter Development Bank (IDB)).<sup>51</sup> The joint strategy aims to improve the coverage and quality of Ecuador's social protection system for more vulnerable populations, including nationals belonging to sectors historically excluded from the system and migrant and refugee populations. Observations were also made on the draft law on the National System of Social Protection and Promotion, as requested by congress.

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion/Ecuador. (n.d.). [Transferencias monetarias no contributivas \(Bono de Desarrollo Humano\)](#) (Program website)

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion/Ecuador. (2021). [Bono Joaquín Gallegos Lara](#) (Web page)

<sup>44</sup> Ministry of Public Health/Ecuador. (n.d.). [Campaña desnutrición cero](#) (Web page.)

<sup>45</sup> Presidency of the Republic/Ecuador. [Executive Decree No. 1022](#). March 27th, 2020

<sup>46</sup> Presidency of the Republic/Ecuador. [Executive Decree No. 1157](#). Sept. 24th, 2020

<sup>47</sup> General Secretariat for Communication of the Presidency. (2020.) [El plan alimenticio Canasta Solidaria beneficiará a más de ocho millones de ecuatorianos](#) (Official Programme Communication)

<sup>48</sup> United Nations Ecuador. (2019). [Marco de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Sostenible ONU-Ecuador 2019-2022](#)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> ILO. (2020). [Naciones Unidas trabaja con Ecuador en la construcción de una estrategia integral de protección social para enfrentar la COVID-19](#) (Press Room)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

## EXTENDED CASE: CWG ECUADOR

The CWG in Ecuador is present in 10 municipalities of the country through local working groups.<sup>52</sup> It is composed of 53 members including UN agencies, NGOs, the International Red Cross Movement, among others.<sup>53</sup>

Ecuador ranks as the third highest in terms of hosting migrants and refugees from Venezuela in the region. The CWG has made significant strides in developing a coordinated approach to support the technical and operational capabilities of government agencies, as well as providing direct assistance to affected populations through humanitarian CVA. This is in response to the migratory crisis especially during the ongoing pandemic.<sup>54</sup>

In the CWG, cooperation and coordination with the national social protection system has not been prioritized. Despite evidence of a favorable environment for this at both the national and sub-national levels of government, as well as within the capacities of the CWG agencies, these efforts have mainly been driven by the mandates and *ad-hoc* responses of the agencies themselves in response to crisis situations. This is particularly evident in the case of the migration crisis, the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are some examples of these experiences.

As part of the National Strategy for Social Protection Against COVID-19, UNHCR worked closely with MIES and other organizations with established presence in the country including HIAS, FUDELA, and AVSI. In general, UNHCR works in partnership with MIES to integrate the migrant and refugee population into national social protection policies and plans, mainly through technical assistance for the development of regulations, management and strengthening of assistance and care in this area. Since the government's attention to social protection is exclusively for Ecuadorian citizens, work has been done to align humanitarian CVA with the transfer amounts established for national citizens and to extend the scope of social protection benefits to population groups not covered by government programs. Similarly, efforts have been made to provide direct multi-purpose cash assistance for access to public services guaranteed by the government for the migrant and refugee population. A limitation encountered in the integration of humanitarian programs into the social protection system is the MIES platform for the delivery of cash transfers to foreign citizens, which humanitarian agencies have used local partners and national financial institutions.

One experience worth highlighting regarding the integration of the migrant and refugee population into the national social protection system is the 2018–2021 pilot project led by UNHCR–HIAS in collaboration with MIES around the *Programa de Acompañamiento Familiar del Gobierno* (Government's Family Assistance Program).<sup>55</sup> The objective of this program was to address the needs of families living in poverty and extreme poverty who are recipients of the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* (Human Development Voucher). The pilot plan developed by UNHCR and HIAS aimed at facilitating the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the program. To achieve this goal, the potential for a joint implementation of the Humanitarian Graduation Model for the Migrant and Refugee Population and the Family Accompaniment Program was evaluated. This led to adjustments in the transfer values, the implementation of the Human Development Voucher, and the calculation of humanitarian cash transfers. The targeting and registration mechanisms were also streamlined to ensure harmonization. Additionally, the implementation of the UNHCR–HIAS Graduation Model was standardized with the Family Accompaniment Program to solidify its integration into the national social protection system.

<sup>52</sup> R4V. (n.d.). [Coordinación GTRM local - Ecuador](#) (Web page)

<sup>53</sup> R4V. (n.d.). [GTRM-Ecuador. Grupo de Trabajo para Refugiados y Migrantes](#) (Web page)

<sup>54</sup> R4V. (2021). [Capítulo Ecuador - RMRP 2022](#) (Web page)

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion. (n.d.). [Acompañamiento familiar](#) (Web page)



Another noteworthy accomplishment was the creation of a COVID-19 response program for migrant and refugee communities in partnership with the government's *Bono de Protección Familiar* (Family Protection Voucher) initiative. The CWG collaborated with organizations such as UNHCR, HIAS, AVSI, and FUDELA to distribute CVA to at-risk individuals and families, addressing their specific protection needs during the pandemic. A targeting and registration mechanism was established by UNHCR; the amounts and operational mechanisms were aligned with the government's Emergency Family Protection Voucher to integrate attention to the non-national population into Ecuador's social protection system.

UNICEF's response to the dire migration crisis affecting individuals from Venezuela, particularly children and youth, and its impact on Ecuador highlights the importance of collaborative efforts between humanitarian organizations and social protection programs. Since 2018, UNICEF has been working with other UN agencies and NGO partners to implement the Comprehensive Protection Program for families with children and adolescents from Venezuela who are in an irregular migration status. The program incorporates various components including CVA. As part of this program, several Comprehensive Support Spaces have been developed in border areas, mainly in Tulcán and Manta. The implementation and management of these spaces have been carried out in collaboration between UNICEF and the municipalities. Currently, the program is working on processes for local governments to take over the full management of these spaces, which should contribute to strengthening the government's capacity to provide comprehensive services to the migrant population.<sup>56</sup>

Another experience is from with the Nutritional Support Voucher also during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, the coordination initiative came from the government, which requested international assistance. The response was provided by the WFP, in collaboration with the MIES and other executive agencies. They designed and delivered a non-contributory voucher with a 1,000-day outlook, consisting of a one-time payment of USD 240.

#### **Obstacles and challenges in CWG coordination – social protection:**

- The CWG has not made coordination with the social protection system a priority.
- Links with the government have been at the level of individual agencies, resulting in fragmented efforts.
- Coordination with the government, especially around CVA, occurs in specific contexts, which does not lead to long-term institutionalization.

#### **Strengths/opportunities for CWG–social protection coordination:**

- The regulations and institutions of the Ecuadorian state, both at the national and local levels, are conducive to coordination with the humanitarian sector, especially with the UN, which is an element that the CWG can build on to coordinate with the social protection system.
- Although the 2008 Constitution prohibits discrimination against individuals of any nationality, regardless of their migratory status, the social protection system in Ecuador only caters to its citizens, leaving a significant gap in social protection for migrants. This highlights the need for coordination and cooperation between the government's social protection system and the initiatives of the CWG to address this issue and fill the gap in coverage.
- Experiences at the agency-level have established links with the government that can be used for their general institutionalization or replication in other parts of the country, especially based on the significant territorial extension enjoyed by the CWG with its local CWGs.

<sup>56</sup> UNICEF. (2021). [Un lugar para promover los derechos de los niños, niñas y adolescentes](#) (Web page)

## 3.4 EL SALVADOR

### Basic social protection programs

The Government of El Salvador has two active CVA programs within the framework of social protection. A conditional cash transfer – *Programa de Apoyo a Comunidades Solidarias* (Program to Support Communities of Solidarity in El Salvador)<sup>57</sup> and since 2009 a non-contributory social protection program – *Nuestros Mayores Derechos* (Our Greater Rights).<sup>58</sup>

*Programa de Apoyo a Comunidades Solidarias* in El Salvador is a leader at a regional level in terms of coordination between humanitarian actors. Operating under the name of *Programa Red Solidaria* since 2005; it was reconceptualized in 2009 and took on its current name. This program is one of the few in LAC that brings together government entities, family support NGOs, and other local actors on a formal basis for implementation. The program was designed using a poverty mapping tool developed through collaboration between the government, academic institutions, and humanitarian organizations such as FLACSO-El Salvador Program, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Technical Secretariat of the Presidency, and the Ministry of Economy.<sup>59</sup>

### Government Responses to COVID-19 through CVA

The Salvadoran social protection response to COVID-19 through CVA focused on the *Bonos de Compensación 300* (Compensation Vouchers 300) program.<sup>60</sup> In addition, operational adjustments were made to existing programs that did not include CVA; several measures were enacted to protect the labor market, protect first responders, and ensure human rights in the context of the pandemic.

### Humanitarian Coordination and CWG with the government

In El Salvador, coordination efforts between the government and the humanitarian sector have mainly been at the level of individual operations of the humanitarian agencies operating in the country, not at the level of the CWG. This is precisely the challenge that needs to be addressed in the country: to transfer the important experience of coordination in specific programs between the social protection system and cooperating agencies and organizations to the CWG as a whole. This could make it possible to pool efforts and resources, expand the attention schemes vertically and horizontally, and promote their sustainability.

In addition to the aforementioned program, there have been other relevant experiences in the country at the level of integration of humanitarian CVA in social protection for emergency response. In 2019, GOAL, in coordination with the Ministry of Governance and Territorial Development (MIGOBTD) assessed the government's capacity to integrate CVA in national responses to disasters and emergency crises, as well as to integrate CVA in national disaster response systems.<sup>61</sup>

The evaluation was performed using the Organizational Cash Readiness Tool (OCRT)<sup>62</sup> and was a follow-up to commitments made with the government during a meeting in 2018. At that meeting, the pilot was socialized around four axes: i) the development of an OCRT; ii) the development of a market study and a workshop using the EMMA/PCMA methodology; iii) a mapping of the partners involved in CVA; and iv) the establishment of a working group of CVA implementing agencies.<sup>63</sup>

As a result of the commitments and coordination efforts between the government and GOAL, the OCRT evaluation report presented a number of specific recommendations. It also included a draft action plan to strengthen the government's capacity to integrate CVA into disaster preparedness and to work in coordination with local humanitarian actors and partners.

<sup>57</sup> IIPPE-UNESCO. (2018). *Documento Base Comunidades Solidarias*. Government El Salvador

<sup>58</sup> El Salvador's government. (2015). *Remisión información sobre propuestas concretas, medidas prácticas, mejores prácticas y enseñanzas adquiridas que contribuyan a la promoción y protección de los derechos y la dignidad de las personas de edad*

<sup>59</sup> IIPPE-UNESCO. (2018). *Documento Base Comunidades Solidarias*. Government El Salvador

<sup>60</sup> El Salvador's Government. (2020). *Más de 1 millón de familias ha recibido compensación económica del Gobierno* (Web page)

<sup>61</sup> GOAL. (2019). Applied to the National Civil Protection System of El Salvador in coordination with the Ministry of Governance and Territorial Development. I MIGOBTD

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

The most important experience, also at the level of individual humanitarian agencies was the 2018 Drought Response developed jointly by WFP and the Salvadoran government.<sup>64</sup> The drought response initiative aimed to mitigate the impact of food insecurity on vulnerable populations. The main difficulties identified in the response were of a regulatory nature, requiring the adaptation of operational guidelines and legal bodies to institutionalize the response to emergencies in social protection. Another challenge was the lack of coordination of the registration of recipients' data needed to implement humanitarian CVA, which led to efforts to create a single registry. In response to this and with the need to act quickly, coordination between government agencies and WFP sought to standardize criteria and indicators for identifying and targeting the population, streamline delivery mechanisms, create a single registry of social program participants, monitor the program, and build government capacity to respond to emergencies through CVA.

These efforts, prompted by the 2018 drought, laid the groundwork for the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis with humanitarian CVA. However, it is important to continue efforts to institutionalize the coordination mechanisms that are currently maintained with individual agencies and transfer them to the CWG in El Salvador.

## 3.5 GUATEMALA

### Basic social protection programs

Guatemala has three active conditional transfer programs and one non-contributory pension program. For conditional transfers, since 2021 is the *Bono Social* (Social Voucher)<sup>65</sup> under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES). Also conditional and since 2012, is the *Bolsa Social* program<sup>66</sup> under the responsibility of the Vice Ministry of social protection; lastly is the VIDA program, under the responsibility of MIDES and the Vice Ministry of social protection, active since 2017. The non-contributory pension program of the Guatemalan government is the *Aporte Económico del Adulto Mayor* (Economic Contribution for the Elderly)<sup>67</sup> which has been operating since 2005 under the responsibility of the Directorate of Social Welfare.

### Government Responses to COVID-19 with CVA

The Government of Guatemala's response to social protection through CVA took the form of a new social assistance program: the *Bono Familia de Quetzales 1 mil* (Family Voucher 1 thousand Quetzales).<sup>68</sup> There were also two new labor market protection programs with CVA: *Fondo de Protección del Empleo* (Employment Protection Fund)<sup>69</sup> and the *Programa de Apoyo al Comercio Popular* (Popular Commerce Support Program.) In addition, operational adjustments were made to existing programs such as the Social Voucher and the School Lunch Program, as well as a vertical expansion of the Energy Subsidy and the One-time Voucher for retirees and pensioners, and other support programs that do not involve CVA.

<sup>64</sup> RED LAC. (2021). [Vinculando las transferencias monetarias con los sistemas de protección social](#). Systematization document

<sup>65</sup> Ministry of Social Development. (n.d.). [Programa Bono Social](#) (Web page)

<sup>66</sup> Ministry of Social Development. (n.d.). [Programa Bolsa Social](#) (Web page)

<sup>67</sup> Ministry of Labor and Social Security/Guatemala. (n.d.). [Programa del Aporte Económico del Adulto Mayor](#) (Web page)

<sup>68</sup> Ministry of Education/Guatemala. [Acuerdo Ministerial No. 825-2020](#). March 19th, 2020

<sup>69</sup> Congress of Guatemala. [Decreto N° 13-2020: Ley de rescate económico a las familias por los efectos causados por el COVID-19](#). April 7th, 2020

## Humanitarian Coordination and CWG with the government

The interest in coordination between the humanitarian sector and the social protection system in Guatemala has made important progress in recent years especially in responding to multiple crises such as natural disasters, migration, and others.

A notable experience has been the coordination between local governments, Community Urban and Rural Development Councils (CDUR) and local organizations to respond to the lack of outreach and awareness of government-led programs with CVA in response to hurricanes *Eta e Iota*. This technical assistance and advisory effort are framed in the identification of the limits and normative capacities of the Guatemalan governmental structure. According to previous studies, one of the main obstacles to link humanitarian actors and the government in response to and recovering from crises is at the regulatory level. The fact that MIDES is the main entity managing social protection but does not have the legal mandate to manage emergencies, rather the National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) does; this mandate limits hinders interventions with CVA in crisis contexts.

It is necessary to promote the creation of competencies and capacities for emergency response in MIDES; this is an issue that requires technical advice to make the government aware of basic needs for more adequate responses through CVA and to establish links with the humanitarian sector. Thus, based on these lessons, it was possible not only to socialize information, an effort promoted by humanitarian actors, but also to carry out interventions through CVA in a total of 2,151 households within the framework of *Bono Familia*, through humanitarian agencies with the support of local governments and CDUR.<sup>70</sup>



Humanitarian practitioners participating in the workshop “Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) – The Fundamentals” for program staff in Guatemala, held jointly by Action Against Hunger and CALP Network in June 2022.

<sup>70</sup> CALP. (2022-c). Programas de Transferencias Monetarias en el marco de los sistemas de protección social



At the agency level, humanitarian actors who are members of the Guatemalan CWG have progressed in coordinating with the social protection system. For example, UNICEF worked with MIDES to develop new targeting mechanisms that strengthened the government's MEAL and information and data management systems. UNICEF also supported MIDES in working with implementing partners to make its administrative processes, design and delivery systems more effective for CVA, which had a direct impact on the success of *Bono Familia*.<sup>71</sup>

Another notable experience is GOAL's effort to integrate humanitarian CVA into social protection, as in the *Bono Familia* example above, and also in the *Bono Social*. In this effort, MIDES was supported to strengthen its emergency response capacities through a capacity development plan<sup>72</sup> that provided specialized courses for government personnel – particularly from the Coordination and Organization Department, Social Assistance Department, Social Prevention Department, Social Promotion, and International Cooperation Department – on tools for coordination and information exchange between social protection and humanitarian CVA especially for emergency response.

## EXTENDED CASE: MCWG GUATEMALA

The objectives of the Multi-sectoral Cash Working Group (MCWG) to coordinate with social protection systems are driven by the requirement to establish a systematic approach to coordinating not only with high-level government entities, but also to enhance coordination capacities at the local level and among implementing actors. Additionally, the objective is to bolster the crisis preparedness and response abilities of both government and humanitarian organizations.

The MCWG of Guatemala has taken the initiative to make initial and important steps towards a solid coordination with the social protection of the government. The MCWG has been consolidating since 2016, but it is not until 2021 when Action Against Hunger took the lead, that it began to include linkages to social protection as one of the main lines of action. From there they created a committee for reactive social protection led by GOAL. To date, there are four committees within the MCWG: financial inclusion, market assessment and response analysis, financial services mapping and reactive social protection.

Currently, the MCWG has the permanent participation of representatives of the Government of Guatemala in the meetings, in particular the Director and Deputy Director of Cash and Voucher Assistance of MIDES. In addition, progress has been made in terms of technical assistance and training spaces with the government entity in charge of social protection, MIDES, and the Secretariat of Food Security. Both entities have recognized the MCWG as an important and relevant agent for dialogue and linkages. However, interviews with MCWG actors revealed that this recognition and the advanced linkages have not been institutionalized, so that one of the most important limitations in this regard is the high turnover of key government personnel, which in times of transition would lead to instability on those advancements, the difficulty of establishing work paths and long-term actions, and the need to rebuild coordination with the government from the grassroots.

It is worth mentioning that the Guatemalan MCWG is still working on establishing links and coordination mechanisms with the government and there has been some progress in designing programs and integrating humanitarian CVA into the social protection system. These efforts should lead to concrete experiences and initiatives in the future. In this sense, an important step was the realization of a workshop on social protection in June 2022, promoted by the MCWG with the support of the CALP Network, CashCap/Norcap and UNICEF, with the participation of several government agencies. During the workshop, the attendees were informed about the foundations, guidelines, and past experiences of the MCWG. The work plans for 2022 were presented and the next steps towards coordination with social protection were discussed. The team evaluated potential starting points and assessed the capacities of the agencies and government to measure impact. The proposal to utilize CashCap for cooperation with governmental organizations was also presented. Similarly, the need to follow up the workshops of this type and the work within the committee for reactive social protection was defined.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Social Development. (2021). [Mides implementa Plan de Desarrollo de Capacidades \(Web page\)](#)

The MCWG has also made important progress in providing technical advice to the government's *Bono Familia* social protection program.<sup>73</sup> In this regard, several actions have been taken to disseminate information on CVA to the population, to evaluate and promote appropriate government interventions with CVA, and to promote the MCWG as a reference for technical advice to the government. This was accomplished through MIDES' involvement in the MCWG and a request for technical support from the government to the MCWG. In addition, "information capsules" on financial and nutrition education were developed and disseminated through public media.

In summary, just as the MCWG has taken the first steps to coordinate with the government's social protection system, the government has also recognized the MCWG as a key reference for strengthening its own response capacity, and as an appropriate and strategic partner. The government recognized its limitations and has requested support from the humanitarian sector. This recognition and the government's request to deepen cooperation with the MCWG are the first signs of success and good results in the implementation of the government's programs with CVA. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of institutionalizing these linkages for sustained and long-term efforts, as well as in terms of integrating humanitarian CVA in the context of social protection.

#### **Obstacles and challenges in CWG coordination – social protection:**

- The main challenge identified by key informants is the high turnover of government personnel in charge of social protection.
- There is lack of regulations linking government institutions mandated with social protection programming with those mandated for emergency response. This means that there are multiple interlocutors with whom to coordinate; this limits efforts to create a structural institutionalization, at the government level, that is conducive to coordination with the humanitarian sector and social protection.
- The political situation also poses a challenge for coordination efforts. As the presidential elections in Guatemala are approaching, it is important to further solidify coordination efforts between the MCWG and the social protection system to adapt to any potential changes brought by new authorities.

#### **Strengths/opportunities for CWG–social protection coordination:**

- The committee for reactive social protection is a step that demonstrates the MCWG's commitment to coordination with the government and a formalization of efforts in this area.
- There is interest on both sides; the government of Guatemala has shown interest in recognizing its own limitations and the need to work with the humanitarian sector, particularly with the MCWG.
- The MCWG has achieved recognition and participation in government agencies, particularly MIDES, the agency responsible for social protection in the country. This is largely due to the co-leadership, knowledge, and experience within the CWG.

<sup>73</sup> RED LAC. (2021). [Vinculando las transferencias monetarias con los sistemas de protección social](#). Systematization document

## 3.6 HAITI

### Basic social protection programs

Haiti recently adopted the National Policy for Social Protection and Promotion (PNPPS) 2020,<sup>74</sup> under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST) with the support of international cooperation and humanitarian actors for its operationalization in the country. To date, the government has maintained a single conditional transfer program, active since 2012, called *Ti Mannam Cheri*.<sup>75</sup> The program is aimed at the schooling of children in extreme poverty and includes a microcredit mechanism for mothers to be invested in labor activities. The program is run by the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

### Government responses to COVID-19 through CVA

The Haitian government's response to social protection was through a program with CVA via the *Mon Cash* mobile money platform. The program targeted families in rural and urban areas.<sup>76</sup> In addition, operational adjustments were made to several in-kind transfer programs.

### Humanitarian coordination and CWG with the government

The humanitarian sector's coordination with the Haitian government is mainly aimed at strengthening the social protection system and the government's capacity to respond to crises.

The Haiti CWG<sup>77</sup> was established in 2016 in response to the crisis during Hurricane Matthew.<sup>78</sup> While no specific subgroup is created for coordinated work with social protection, the TORs of the CWG establish several relevant points on the relationship with the government and social protection. The first of these is the main objective of establishing the CWG: the CWG will seek permanent and sustained attention to several key issues including social protection.<sup>79</sup> The same document also states that a Steering Committee will be formed, which will include a limited number of UN agencies, humanitarian NGOs and Red Cross members, as well as two representatives of the Haitian government.<sup>80</sup>

In 2018, OCHA funded the program *Préparation institutionnelle pour les transferts monétaires en réponse humanitaire* (Institutional Preparation for Cash Transfers in Humanitarian Response) which aimed to improve the capacity and preparedness of CVA implementing actors in the country. This program assessed the possibilities for coordination between the government and humanitarian actors and found that there was limited coordination at the general level with a high degree of local variation in the relationship between humanitarian actors and government agencies.<sup>81</sup>

Other responses have taken place, such as for the 2021 earthquake, resulting in an operational guide for response through CVA.<sup>82</sup> These established links with international agencies and the private sector in addition to the government, particularly for delivery mechanisms. Perhaps the most structural response in the case of Haiti is the *Kore Lavi* program,<sup>83</sup> which aimed to reduce child malnutrition. The goal was to develop a replicable social protection system to serve as a foundation for the government in its fight against malnutrition. The program started in 2013 and lasted until 2019, primarily led by CARE, with support from Action Against Hunger, WFP, World Vision, together with the Government of Haiti.<sup>84</sup> One of the most important results of the program, in terms of social protection capacity building was the development of the Haiti Deprivation and Vulnerability Index (HDVI) as part of the national vulnerability targeting system.

<sup>74</sup> PNPPS busca dar una respuesta integral para reducir la pobreza, la desigualdad y mejorar la autonomía de la población del país, de forma duradera. Para más información: ECLAC. (2022). *Estimación del costo de las transferencias monetarias en el marco de la Política Nacional de Protección y Promoción Social (PNPPS) de Haití* (Web page)

<sup>75</sup> SocialProtection.org. (2022). *Ti Manman Cheri* (Web page)

<sup>76</sup> Haiti Libre. (2020). *Haiti - Social: 75,608 personnes sur 1,5 million bénéficiaires prévus ont déjà reçu une aide financière de l'État* (Press release)

<sup>77</sup> It is called Cash Based Transfer Working Group (CBTWG) in Haiti.

<sup>78</sup> Mercy Corps. (2018). *Aller de l'avant avec Cash en Haïti: Une revue des transferts monétaires au cours de la réponse au cyclone Matthew*

<sup>79</sup> Groupe de Travail sur les Transferts Monétaires. (2016). *Termes de Reference*. Haiti (Internal document)

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Mercy Corps. (2018). *Aller de l'avant avec Cash en Haïti: Une revue des transferts monétaires au cours de la réponse au cyclone Matthew*

<sup>82</sup> Humanitarian Response. (2021). *Guide Opérationnel du Cash Réponse Séisme au Sud D'Haïti*

<sup>83</sup> USAID. (n.d.). *Kore Lavi. A safety net to sustain life in Haiti*

<sup>84</sup> RED LAC. (2021). *Vinculando las transferencias monetarias con los sistemas de protección social*. Systematization document

The impact of coordination between the humanitarian sector and the government on social protection has been positive. Therefore, working to strengthen and build on these links is one of the axes of the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan,<sup>85</sup> to strengthen the government's capacity to guarantee protection needs and access to basic services within the socio-political and economic framework of the country, as well as to respond to the different crises and internal conflicts.

## 3.7 HONDURAS

### Basic social protection programs

Since 2014, the government of Honduras has implemented a conditional CVA program, *Bono Vida Mejor* (Better Live Voucher).<sup>86</sup> The program previously operated from 2010–2014 under the name *Bono 10.000 Educación, Salud y Nutrición* (Voucher 10,000 Education, Health, and Nutrition.) It aims to reduce poverty and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty through a strategy focused on education, health, and nutrition, in coordination with other employment and family finance programs.<sup>87</sup>

### Government Responses to COVID-19 through CVA

In Honduras there were three new social protection programs in response to the COVID-19 crisis: one used cash transfers *Aportación Solidaria Temporal para los Trabajadores* (Temporary Solidarity Contribution for Workers).<sup>88</sup> Another was a voucher redeemable for food, medicines, and medical supplies *Bono Único* (Single Voucher);<sup>89</sup> the last used in-kind food transfers *Honduras Solidaria* (Honduras Solidarity.) Also, multiple operational adaptations were made to existing programs, such as the introduction of digital payments in the *Vida Mejor* (Better Life) program and the *Bono Discapacidad* (Disability Voucher,) in-kind transfers under the National School Feeding Program, among others that do not involve CVA.

### Humanitarian Coordination and CWG with the Government

The CWG in Honduras was established in 2017 with the aim of coordinating CVA with the government. Although initial efforts have been made, it has not been successful so far. However, the CWG has established cooperative relations with several key government entities. For instance, the CWG works with the Secretary of State for Risk Management and Contingencies through the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO) to update information on vulnerable communities and weather conditions. The CWG also maintains relations with the Technical Unit for Food and Nutritional Security (UTSAN) to share information on food security in crisis-affected areas. The CWG has also approached the Secretary of Development and Social Inclusion (SEDESOL) to build a technical roundtable for CVA. The goal of this relationship is to link humanitarian CVA with the social protection system.

Efforts are underway to integrate humanitarian CVA into the social protection system, but the challenges remain. Key stakeholders have identified several barriers including low interest in collaboration, limitations in working with the government, and government-related resource constraints. Additionally, there are issues with data management by the government and difficulties in accessing necessary information.

Despite these limitations, humanitarian actors in Honduras have intervened through humanitarian CVA in recent years, particularly in the aftermath of the crises resulting from Hurricanes Eta and Iota and the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly in response to the pandemic, humanitarian actors initiated broad processes to finance and implement CVA in Honduras. This has been in coordination with governmental entities, mainly the National Center for Social Sector Information (CENISS) and COPECO; the CWG of Honduras was particularly relevant in this coordination.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Humanitarian Response. (2022). [Mise à Jour - Plan de Réponse Humanitaire Haïti](#)

<sup>86</sup> Government of Honduras. (n.d.). [Bono Vida Mejor](#) (Web page)

<sup>87</sup> The outlook is described until December 2021.

<sup>88</sup> Congress/Honduras. [Decree No. 33-2020](#). April 3, 2020

<sup>89</sup> MPPN. (2020). [Honduras lanza innovador programa de transferencia para responder al COVID-19](#) (Web page)

<sup>90</sup> CALP. (2022-c). [Programas de Transferencias Monetarias en el marco de los sistemas de protección social](#)





Oscar Portillo, in charge of the preparation of national response systems in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, while facilitating the workshop “Linking Social Protection and Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Program.” © GOAL Honduras/2022.

Through coordination among humanitarian actors, mainly the Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council and UNICEF, progress has been made in strengthening institutional capacities linking humanitarian action with social protection and to integrate humanitarian CVA in Honduras. Examples include the establishment of contingency planning committees promoted by the Red Cross, the development of a government protocol on internal displacement promoted by the Norwegian Refugee Council, and UNICEF’s support to the government in strengthening social protection capacities. The government’s initiative was also evident in the internal strengthening of the normative and institutional bases, such as the SINAGER<sup>91</sup> law, for cooperation with humanitarian actors and the implementation of humanitarian CVA in the social protection system.

Humanitarian actors in Honduras have worked to prepare for the integration of humanitarian CVA into the social protection system in Honduras. Examples include the Norwegian Refugee Council, which provides electronic vouchers to families belonging to certain vulnerable groups with school-age children; UNICEF which provides unconditional cash transfers to returning migrants, selecting recipients with the support of CENISS.<sup>92</sup>

The most notable example of humanitarian CVA coordination in social protection in Honduras is the *Bono Único* (One-time Voucher) implemented in response to COVID-19; it targeted the most vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic with a one-time transfer via electronic voucher redeemable for food, medicines, and medical supplies. The program reached 260,000 people. The main humanitarian actors were UNDP, which was invited by the government, and with the support of GOAL. The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) collaborates with CENISS on the program.<sup>93</sup> UNDP mainly supported the development of the targeting and selection process using the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index; while GOAL focused on supporting MEAL processes.

<sup>91</sup> ECLAC. (2009). *Ley del Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos (Decree No. 151)*. Observatory of Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean

<sup>92</sup> CALP. (2022-c). *Programas de Transferencias Monetarias en el marco de los sistemas de protección social*

<sup>93</sup> MPPN. (2020). *Honduras lanza innovador programa de transferencias para responder al COVID-19* (Web page)

## 3.8 MEXICO

### Basic social protection programs

The Mexican government maintains four active basic social protection programs that include CVA. The conditional transfer program, the Benito Juárez Welfare Scholarships program<sup>94</sup> has been active since 2019; it replaced the education components of the PROSPERA program, which was active from 2014 to 2019. Other previous conditional programs with CVA were *Oportunidades* (1997–2014) and *Prepa sí* (2007–2019). As for non-contributory pensions, the following are active: *Pensión Alimentaria* (Food Pension) for people over the age of 68 residing in Mexico City,<sup>95</sup> since 2001; *Pensión para el Bienestar de las Personas Adultas Mayores* (Pension for the Welfare of Older Adults)<sup>96</sup> since 2019; and *Pensión para el Bienestar de las Personas con Discapacidad Permanente* (Pension for the Welfare of Persons with Permanent Disability)<sup>97</sup> since 2019.

### Government Responses to COVID-19 through CVA

For the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mexican government launched a program that included CVA the *Bono COVID* (COVID voucher)<sup>98</sup> which targeted health workers working with patients affected by this disease. The bulk of the response, including new programs, adaptations, and expansions of existing programs, focused on labor market protection through credit programs, loans and facilitation mechanisms for payments such as mortgages, debts, etc.

### Humanitarian coordination and CWG with the government

The experience of coordination between the humanitarian and social protection sectors in Mexico is not very extensive. The only case referred to<sup>99</sup> is an initiative of UNHCR and IOM focusing on the migrant, stateless, and asylum-seeking populations. CVA is not integrated with social protection but rather to promote the targeted population's access to government social protection guarantees, mainly in the areas of health and education. The program, developed mainly by UNHCR, consists of a maximum of four monthly transfers intended to cover as much as possible the basic needs of the people of concern during their asylum application process (i.e., when they can access temporary employment and social protection). Where more extensive assistance is required, the case is referred to the National Agency for Refugees, so as not to take over state responsibilities or create a parallel system. The logic of the program is to facilitate the preparation and management of the recipients' access to the government's social protection offering; the UNHCR program is more of a guiding and facilitating one and not strictly complementary or linked to the government social protection system.

<sup>94</sup> Government of Mexico. (2022). *Becas Benito Juárez* (Web page)

<sup>95</sup> Mexico City. (n.d.). *Pensión Alimentaria para Adultos Mayores de 68 Años que Residen en la CDMX* (Web page)

<sup>96</sup> Secretariat of Welfare/Mexico. (2019). *Programa para el Bienestar de las Personas Adultas Mayores* (Web page)

<sup>97</sup> Secretariat of Welfare/Mexico. (2019). *Programa Pensión para el Bienestar de las Personas con Discapacidad* (Web page)

<sup>98</sup> Mexican Social Security Institute. (2020). *Trabajadores del IMSS que atienden a pacientes con coronavirus reciben Bono COVID-19* (Web page)

<sup>99</sup> RED LAC. (2021). *Vinculando las transferencias monetarias con los sistemas de protección social*. Systematization document

## 3.9 PERU

### Basic social protection programs

Since 2005, the Peruvian government has had a conditional program with CVA called *Juntos – Programa Nacional de Apoyo Directo a los Más Pobres* (Toguether – National Program of Direct Assistance to the Poorest.)<sup>100</sup> There are also two non-contributory pension programs: *Programa Nacional de Asistencia Solidaria 65* (National Solidarity Assistance Program – Pension 65)<sup>101</sup> since 2011, and *Programa Nacional de Entrega de la Pensión no Contributiva a Personas con Discapacidad Severa en Situación de Pobreza* – (National Program for the Provision of Non-Contributory Pensions to Persons with Severe Disabilities in a Poverty Situation) – CONTIGO.<sup>102</sup> The responsible and executing agency for these three programs is the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS).

### Government Responses to COVID-19 through CVA

In terms of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Peru was one of the Latin American countries that took the greatest measures in labor market protection, assistance, and social security; between new programs, adaptations, and expansions of existing programs, a total of 22 measures were taken in response to the pandemic. New social assistance programs through CVA included: the *Bono Familiar Universal* (Universal Family Voucher)<sup>103</sup> the *Bono Yo Me Quedo en Casa* (I Stay at Home Voucher)<sup>104</sup> the *Bono Rural* (Rural Voucher)<sup>105</sup> and the *Bono para independientes* (Voucher for the Self-Employed.)<sup>106</sup> Existing CVA, such as the *Juntos* and *Pension 65* programs, were also adapted with the introduction of advance payments.

### Humanitarian Coordination and CWG with the Government

The CWG of Peru has been operational since 2018 and is linked to the R4V platform; it has around 90 different member organizations.<sup>107</sup> In December 2020, the Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) was launched for the first time, which has been renewed and will remain in force until 2022.<sup>108</sup>

Peru is the country with the second largest number of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. This humanitarian crisis has required greater attention in terms of social protection and humanitarian assistance. As part of the humanitarian response to the migration crisis, the CWG carried out a Joint Needs Assessment; this assessment found that the main obstacles for the Venezuelan migrant and refugee populations are the lack of documentation and difficulties in regularizing their migratory status. The latter obstacle leads to additional problems such as limited access to services and rights, difficulties in finding safe housing, informality of work, food insecurity, etc.<sup>109</sup> Monitoring by the Danish Refugee Council and the Jesuit Migrant Service also identified the same problems of legal documentation. It creates obstacles for Venezuelan populations in Peru to access to rights and services, especially health.<sup>110</sup>

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, which increased the risks and side effects of the migratory waves from Venezuela, there have been important advances in the response of both the government and humanitarian actors, as well as in the coordination between both parties to the human mobility crisis. The main government response to the migratory crisis and the discriminatory barriers against the Venezuelan population was the Temporary Residence Permit and the Humanitarian Migration Quality. Both served as alternative regularization mechanisms for refugee claimants with the aim of mitigating the consequences of informality statuses for the migrant and refugee populations. Another experience was the release of USD 3 million from the World Bank and the government of Canada to the government Peru; the money was used to strengthen the Peruvian government's capacity for the integration and inclusion of the migrant population from Venezuela.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Government of Peru. (n.d.). [Programa Nacional de Apoyo Directo a los más Pobres - JUNTOS](#) (Web page)

<sup>101</sup> Government of Peru. (n.d.). [Programa Nacional de Asistencia Solidaria Pensión 65](#) (Web page)

<sup>102</sup> Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social/Peru. [Programa CONTIGO](#) (Web page)

<sup>103</sup> El Peruano. [Emergency Decree No. 052-2020](#). May 5, 2020

<sup>104</sup> El Peruano. [Emergency Decree No. 027-2020](#). March 16, 2020

<sup>105</sup> El Peruano. [Emergency Decree No. 042-2020](#). April 18, 2020

<sup>106</sup> Ministry of Economy and Finance/Peru. [Emergency Decree N° 033-2020](#). March 27, 2020

<sup>107</sup> R4V. (n.d.). [GTRM - Perú](#) (Web page)

<sup>108</sup> R4V. (2022). [GTRM Perú: Línea de Tiempo \(2018-2021\)](#)

<sup>109</sup> R4V. (2021). [RMRP 2022 - Perú](#)

<sup>110</sup> OCHA. (2022). [Monitoreo de Protección Perú: Snapshot](#) (April – June 2022)

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

## 3.10 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

### Basic social protection programs

Since 2012, the government of the Dominican Republic has maintained active a single social protection program through conditional CVA. Initially called *Progresando con Solidaridad* (Progressing with Solidarity). The program is now called *Supérate* (Overcome.)<sup>112</sup> It is a program for families living in poverty; it includes cash transfers, targeted subsidies, socio-educational support, and mechanisms for accessing social protection rights and services. The *Supérate* program has been both the backbone of the Dominican social protection response to crises, such as COVID-19, and an important reference point at the regional level for coordination between government and humanitarian actors.

### Government responses to COVID-19 through CVA

The Dominican Republic's social protection system responded with several programs with CVA to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the population. Three new programs with CVA were developed: the *Quédate en Casa* (Stay at Home) Program,<sup>113</sup> the *En Favor de los Trabajadores Independientes "Pa' Ti"* (In favor of Independent Workers, for You) program,<sup>114</sup> and the *Fondo de Asistencia Solidaria al Empleado "FASE"* (Employee Solidarity Assistance Fund).<sup>115</sup> In addition, expansions and operational adaptations were made to existing programs primarily based on in-kind transfers.

### Humanitarian Coordination and CWG with the government

Even though there is no CWG in the Dominican Republic, coordination between the humanitarian sector and government social protection is a reference point at the regional level; it is so much so that during the interview process for this systematization it was mentioned by several key informants in other countries. The Adaptive Social Protection Roundtable was established in 2018, bringing together UN and government agencies, and the Dominican Red Cross. However, despite the high level of coordination and the involvement of humanitarian actors, it has been noted that the focus of the roundtable's work is not solely humanitarian. The roundtable primarily coordinates technical assistance for the government's CVA, which may not be specifically designed to respond to humanitarian crises or events.

Perhaps the most successful experience in terms of coordination between the humanitarian sector and the government on humanitarian CVA was the expansion of the *Supérate* program within the framework of the *Quédate en Casa* program,<sup>116</sup> which emerged as a response to COVID-19. *Quédate en Casa* consists of an increase in quotas and in the number of recipients of the *Comer es Primero* (Eat First) program; the extension of the benefit was for two months and enrollment is automatic through the identity card. Coordination with the humanitarian sector took place through UNICEF and resulted in a related program called *Inclusión Población Infantil (IPI)* (Inclusion of the Child Population).

The objectives of the *Quédate en Casa* program were: to implement complementary CVA for 2,700 families with children and adolescents with disabilities; to evaluate the effectiveness of government systems for CVA during large-scale emergencies; and to strengthen advocacy for the protection of children's rights in the regular social protection system.<sup>117</sup> UNICEF provided support mainly through advocacy and technical assistance on the humanitarian CVA and for the inclusion of children with disabilities into the social protection system.

<sup>112</sup> Presidency of the Dominican Republic. (n.d.). [Programa SUPÉRATE](#) (Web page)

<sup>113</sup> Social Policy Cabinet/Dominican Republic. (n.d.). [Beneficiarios al Programa Quédate en Casa](#)

<sup>114</sup> Treasury/Dominican Republic. (2020). [Más de 200mil trabajadores serán beneficiados con el Programa de Asistencia al Trabajador Independiente \(PA·TI\)](#). Official communiqué

<sup>115</sup> IBDO. (2020). [Fondo de Asistencia Solidaria al Empleado - FASE. Guía de Aplicación](#)

<sup>116</sup> CALP. (2022-b). [Estudio de caso de la República Dominicana "Inclusión de Población Infantil: Integración de programas de transferencias monetarias humanitarias en los programas de protección social existentes para responder a la pandemia del COVID-19"](#)

<sup>117</sup> RED LAC. (2021). [Vinculando las transferencias monetarias con los sistemas de protección social](#). Systematization document

The main challenge of the program was contacting the targeted population, as this was done automatically through the contact records of the Unified System of Beneficiaries (SIUBEN); sometimes the contact information was not up to date. On the other hand, targeting through identity documents was also recognized, by the key informants, as one of the main challenges to make social protection universal in the country; it leaves out the migrant and undocumented population in general.

It should be noted that these experiences were possible based on extensive coordination processes between the humanitarian sector and the government. Both UNICEF and WFP have played a key role in this regard. Both organizations have worked closely with the agency in charge of the *Supérate* program, the *Administradora de Subsidios Sociales* (ADESS, Social Subsidies Administrator). WFP's efforts were mainly aimed at strengthening the Dominican social protection response capacity in the event of emergencies. In the context of the pandemic, a market and vulnerability analysis of the SSN was carried out to determine the possibility to provide and guarantee food security in times of COVID-19. For its part, UNICEF has been working closely on social protection in the country since 2018 to include children with disabilities in government social protection programs.

## 3.11 VENEZUELA

### Basic social protection programs

In Venezuela, the Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP) have been established since 2018 with the aim of reducing vulnerability through the distribution of food aid subsidized by the government. There are also a variety of social vouchers implemented since 2017 through the *Carnet de la Patria* (Homeland Card) with different target populations, amounts, and timing. Broadly speaking, these include regular and special transfers, some of which are linked to the social protection system (e. g., related to childbirth or to address special needs).<sup>118</sup> There is also a non-contributory pension program, through the *Gran Misión en Amor Mayor* (Great Mission in Greater Love)<sup>119</sup> since 2011.

### Government responses to COVID-19 through CVA

The social protection response to the COVID-19 pandemic included new programs with CVA, most of which were one-time transfers. The new vouchers were *Bono Disciplina y Solidaridad* (Discipline and Solidarity Voucher), *Bono Unidos por la Vida* (United for Life Voucher), *Bono Disciplina y Voluntad* (Discipline and Voluntary Voucher), *Bono Padre Bolívar* (Father Bolívar Voucher), *Bono Victoria de Carabobo* (Carabobo Victory Voucher), *Bono Cuidar y Cuidarse* (Take Care and Take Care of Yourself Voucher), *Bono Semana Santa 2020* (Holy Week 2020 Voucher), *Bono Normalidad Relativa* (Relative Normalcy Voucher), *Bono Quédate en Casa* (Stay at Home Voucher) and *Bono Especial Médicos y Médicas de la Patria* (Special Voucher for Doctors of the Country). In addition, operational adjustments were made to the food aid programs.

### Humanitarian coordination and CWG with government

The Venezuela CWG has been operating since 2019 and currently has two small committees: an advocacy committee and a technical committee. While the former channels advocacy efforts with the government to promote the use of humanitarian CVA in the country, the latter maintains the technical preparatory work among the group's members.

<sup>118</sup> Aponte, C. (2019). *Los nuevos programas prioritarios del sector social en Venezuela 2016-2019*. Observatory of Social Programs

<sup>119</sup> Venezuelan Institute of Social Security. (n.d.). *Gran Misión en Amor Mayor* (Web page)





Members of the CWG Colombia develop the work plan for the Social Protection subgroup 2022–2023. CWG Colombia / December 2021.

## 4 KEY FINDINGS

In general, several trends are observed in the coordination between government social protection actors and the humanitarian sector. As a starting point, among all the countries covered in this study, all governments have adopted at least one program with CVA as part of their social protection systems usually in the form of conditional transfers; also there are more than one type of CVA in the governments' basic social development interventions. Many of these programs, in place since the 1990s and early 2000s, have been extensively and rigorously evaluated. They have had positive impacts at various levels. In other words, there is recognition of CVA as a public policy modality, both for the modality's effective application and positive impact on human capital development. For example, in all the countries studied, CVA has been integrated into the non-contributory component of social protection systems.

Another relevant trend is the inclusion of CVA in the response to various crises or emergencies at the level of government actions. This was evident in the context of the global emergency resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, the social protection systems of the countries covered in this study incorporated humanitarian CVA into their pandemic responses at an unprecedented degree. Most developed new programs to include populations not regularly covered by non-contributory benefits, but there were also numerous operational adaptations and expansions of existing CVA (UNICEF, 2022.) In some contexts, the efforts by government actors were coordinated, supported, and/or complemented by the humanitarian sector.

The overall relationships between the CWGs in the countries covered in this report and their respective government social protection systems are nascent; there are generally promising first steps, as well as specific experiences of significant progress. In most cases, the CWGs are in the process of consolidating the links.

A good general understanding of the main challenges in linking CVA in the humanitarian and social protection sectors has been achieved; although there are not always complete answers, initial avenues for action have been identified at the level of the CWG. Previous studies<sup>120</sup> have identified three main challenges: (i) the lack of coordination between the actors involved, (ii) the inadequacy of social protection systems to respond to crises, and (iii) the lack of experience in social protection on the part of humanitarian actors.

Coordinated action, efforts to share data, establish systems for registration and shared data management, and joint work to establish CWGs, roundtables and other collaborative spaces are a precise response to the challenges identified above. Technical advice and advocacy support to national social protection institutions, as well as efforts to develop capacity-building opportunities to link the humanitarian and social protection sectors can respond to the other two challenges.

The perspective of humanitarian actors in the cases studied here show that, at the level of individual agencies, there is generally a high level of interest and multiple initiatives to coordinate relations with governments social protection agencies. These relations have been oriented towards the development of social protection capacities (e.g., training processes), the implementation of administrative procedures and the establishment of registration and data management systems. These efforts have not detracted from coordination aimed at the design and implementation of CVA implemented by governments.

There is little experience of the successful integration or design and implementation of humanitarian CVA into social protection. The work with government agencies to implement humanitarian CVA tends to focus on specific areas, situations, and interventions. The general trend in the region on the development of humanitarian CVA tends to be in response to the Venezuelan migration crisis and within the framework of the response of the regional CWG and the R4V platform. Although there are certain cases in which other humanitarian crises have been addressed by CVA, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, armed conflicts, nutrition, and food insecurity, among others. Humanitarian CVA is not integrated into social protection systems, but rather follows a comprehensive dynamic with the aim of providing humanitarian assistance to populations excluded from social protection for different reasons.

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<sup>120</sup> CALP. (2020-a). [El Estado Global de los Programas de Transferencias Monetarias 2020 – Capítulo 8: Vinculando los PTM y la protección social](#) (Web page)

## MAIN CHALLENGES/LIMITATIONS

The main limitation to coordination between CWGs and social protection systems is the difficulty to establish links in consistent and structured ways. There are many reasons for this. First, the political context in each country and the level of development or maturity of national social protection systems (i.e., considering existing legislation and the degree of fragmentation in each country), often sets the framework for coordination and allows or does not allow entry points for humanitarian actors; this is particularly relevant, for example, for discussions on assistance and integration of refugees and migrants. Next, the turnover of officials in government agencies affects the ability to build trust, if these processes are not institutionalized. Similarly, limitations in the prioritization of the issue in public agendas and variations in government budgetary availability for these types of programs are issues. As a result, the strategy has been to open a space for dialogue through training, technical assistance, and advocacy. Additionally, to support the strengthening of social protection capacities including links with CWGs and the humanitarian sector in general.

On the humanitarian coordination side, there are also many challenges. In general, the current structure of humanitarian funding works to the detriment of the medium- and long-term processes required to work with governments. For example, there is significant turnover of staff responsible for coordinating CWGs, usually due to the short funding cycles that sustain positions in humanitarian organizations.<sup>121</sup> Because of these constraints, very few contexts have coordinators fully dedicated to CWGs. The latter has a negative impact as fostering links with government requires independence and sufficient time to dedicate to the work of collective representation. The cases highlighted in this study, Colombia and Guatemala, are exceptions where the coordinators are fully or substantially dedicated to the CWGs. Moreover, in both contexts, these coordinators have received financial and/or technical support from experts to lead specific participatory processes with the government. Finally, the timing and objectives of some humanitarian funding may not be conducive to the kind of emergency preparedness and capacity building that would enrich the role of humanitarian actors in relation to governments.

Although social protection is not central to many humanitarian actors work because it does not fall directly within their agencies' mandates, the gradual inclusion of the topic allows for the creation of more sustainable processes, improves the quality of technical assistance provided to governments, and facilitates coordination spaces. Similarly, there has been a growing exchange of personnel between cooperation agencies and governments who have worked at both levels; this greatly improves knowledge systems and procedures of both sides and facilitates coordination. This is the case in Guatemala and Colombia, where the leaders or co-leaders of the CWGs previously worked in public institutions related to social protection.

Another important challenge is related to the different internal capacities to engage with governments. At the individual level, some agencies and organizations, usually because of their specific mandates, have considerably more in-house expertise and capacity than other members of the same CWG. In contrast, most actors' humanitarian responses through CVA tend to be *ad hoc* and uncoordinated with social protection programs, which are more comprehensive in nature.

Given these disparities, it is advisable to establish common work within the CWGs so that the individual efforts of some agencies converge and ultimately contribute to more efficient and sustainable results from both a humanitarian and a development perspective.

The landscape of coordination between CWGs and social protection systems is varied at the regional level. However, the outlook is positive. To build on the progress made in previous years, it is crucial to increase opportunities for sharing experiences and lessons learned regionally. This will allow the successes achieved in some countries to inform and benefit those where coordination with the government is less developed or a lower priority.

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<sup>121</sup> See DG ECHO Thematic Policy Document No 3 Cash Transfers Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations for more on this topic.

## MAIN STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES

Although few of the CWGs in the countries studied have subgroups, committees or other spaces specifically dedicated to coordination with social protection systems, many have developed several tools, processes, and reference actions for other countries: in Colombia, which has a subgroup on social protection within the CWG; Guatemala, which has a committee on reactive social protection; Honduras, where a technical roundtable on the CVA has been established with the government and the CWG; the Dominican Republic has an adaptive social protection roundtable with the participation of humanitarian mandate actors; and Brazil, has a focal point for social protection.

Some CWGs have successfully established themselves as valuable partners to their governments and social protection agencies in enhancing social protection systems and designing CVA to respond to crises. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Venezuelan migration crisis have played a role in facilitating and speeding up coordination efforts to integrate CVA responses within a humanitarian context that are aligned with the principles of social protection and the exercise of rights.

In general, there is a growing participation of government agencies in charge of social protection in CWGs; these agencies are also interested in participating in common spaces for training and complementary work. Initially, the initiative for coordination between CWGs and governments came from the humanitarian sector. While this is still the case in some instances, there is growing interest from governments and more experiences where the initiative is taken by both parties. Technical assistance and training have also proved effective in terms of governments' interest in recognizing their weaknesses and limitations and in requesting support from the humanitarian sector and from CWGs.

The information suggests that while the regional trends show early steps being taken towards linking and coordinating between CWGs and national social protection systems, the actions taken so far have had a positive impact on the humanitarian sector. These actions are relevant and appropriately targeted to meet the needs of each national context.

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# ANNEXES

## ANNEX I. LIST OF CONTACTS

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A survey was sent to the leaders and co-leaders of the CWGs in Latin America and the Caribbean to obtain a first reading of their internal organization, an outline of the link between the CWGs and local governments, and the leaders' and co-leaders' perspectives on the main advances and challenges in this regard. Of the 11 countries that make up the list of CWGs in the region and to which the survey was sent, responses were received from seven. Therefore, the data obtained from this instrument and presented in the document cannot be considered a complete overview of the regional panorama, but rather refer to the general situation of the countries that responded.



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