

Supporting the uptake and scaling of Group Cash Transfers (GCTs)

Tip-sheet for GCT facilitating agencies

The objective of this tip-sheet is to support facilitating agencies¹ staff, volunteers and associates in **engaging beyond the Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) and GCT Communities of Practice (CoPs)** and to help address barriers in designing and implementing GCTs. The key actions are based on the “GCT Guidance and Tools,” and the supporting report, “Leveraging the Potential of Group Cash Transfers,” both by Key Aid Consulting (2021). This tip-sheet includes expert advice that was provided by actors with significant experience in developing, designing and supporting GCTs.

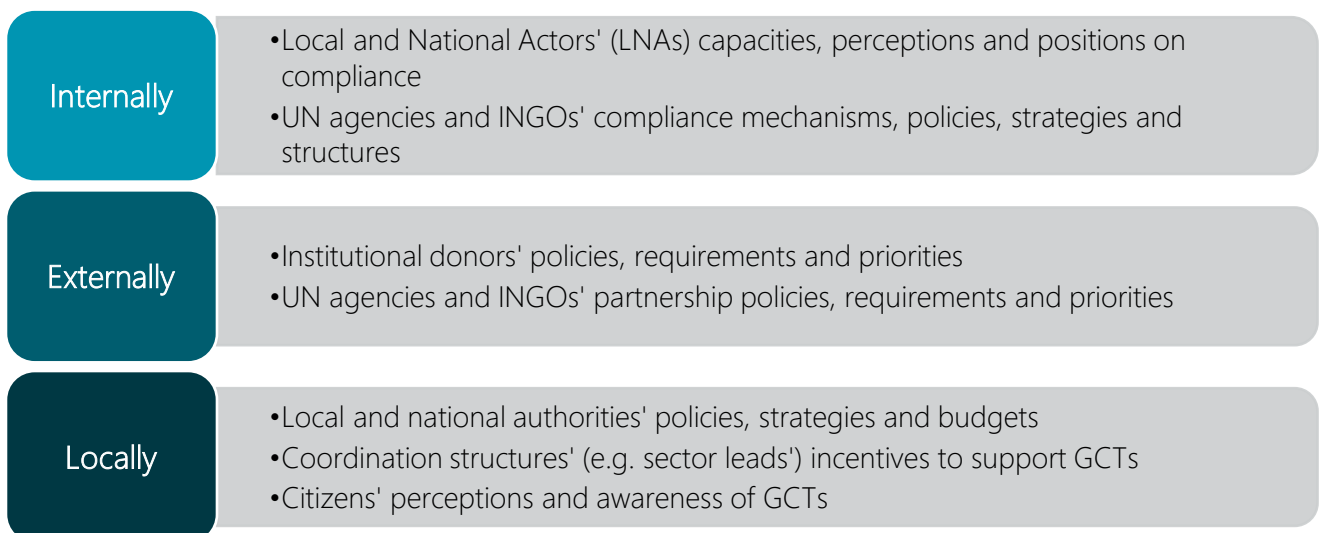
Overall Expert tips:



- When engaging in GCTs practitioners should imagine themselves in the shoes of the crisis-affected communities and reflect on the form of aid they would appreciate, or be frustrated by, if provided by external actors.
- Practitioners should keep an open mind and welcome unexpected approaches from the groups, and take note of positive deviations in order to adequately support the groups in experimenting and learning.

The tip-sheet is organised according to the levels presented in Figure 1, and the tips should be read as interlinked within and across the different levels of engagement.

Figure 1: Levels of engagement and targets



¹ The term “facilitating agency” refers principally to Local and National Actors (LNAs) that are engaged in supporting GCT projects, however, the term also encompasses any actor engaged in supporting GCTs, whether they are NGOs, INGOs or UN agencies.

Internally: Enable facilitating agencies to set strategic and organisational goals for GCT programming

→ Engage senior management to ensure GCTs are considered at strategic levels

- ✓ Having mainstreaming CVA already be part of the organisational strategy provides a basis for including GCTs in strategies and policies. Highlight that GCTs are a CVA approach and complementary to individual and household CVA. GCTs are already considered part of CaLP's definition of CVA – they just need to be operationalised.
- ✓ Present the GCT evidence² and the available guidance to senior management or in board meetings to get buy-in. Potentially ask operational colleagues to join, if they are supportive of GCTs.
- ✓ Develop and commit to a plan to upgrade staff skills in GCTs using the guidance and tools.

→ Advocate with finance, procurement/supply chain, and internal audit departments on how to adjust compliance measures to GCTs³

- ✓ Upgrade your own understanding of compliance measures in your organisation that may impact GCTs, to be able to speak about relevant issues.⁴
- ✓ Present the draft tools and supporting guidance – and potentially adjust the tools in collaboration with finance and procurement departments to capture their expectations.
- ✓ Provide insights on the empowerment aspects for supported groups, including the transfer of agency and decision-making as critical in psychosocial recovery, resilience and ownership.
- ✓ Commit to upgrading the capacity of supported groups, for example by providing training on financial management and technical support for procurement, as needed.
- ✓ Commit to strengthening the capacity of finance, compliance and management teams to support learning on how GCTs can help strengthen accountability.

→ Advocate for investing in creating an evidence base on GCTs⁵

- ✓ Design a funding strategy for GCTs – for example, request funding from your own organisation's flexible funding or innovation funds to start with smaller-scale GCTs, and/or include GCTs in the organisation's wider CVA and humanitarian programming.
- ✓ Engage MEAL colleagues in designing process and impact studies, learning reviews, and evaluations to capture learnings from programmes that include GCTs.
- ✓ Encourage GCT teams (staff/community volunteers) to engage with supported groups to identify relevant indicators to measure impact (e.g. social cohesion, resilience, gender, and protection).
- ✓ Capture evidence on processes, risk management, and accountability structures, as this learning is necessary to present to donors alongside the impact of GCTs.
- ✓ Share learning and evidence internally and externally (for example, via CaLP's library).



Expert Tip: GCTs can be piloted or simply used at a smaller scale to help facilitating agencies gain first-hand experience before scaling-up. This also helps to refine and strengthen evidence on the evolving practices of GCT.

² [Local to Global Protection](#). (2020); [The Cash Learning Partnership](#). (2020).

³ For engagement with this level, see the *GCT Guidance Sections I.1., III.1.3., III.2.2., I.V., IV.1.2.*; and *Tools 8, 9, 11, 15*.

⁴ For inspiration, see CaLP. (n.d). [Cash and Voucher Assistance and Risk in Financial Management and Compliance Briefing note](#).

⁵ For engagement with this level, see the *GCT Guidance Sections IV.2.1., IV.2.2.*; and *Tools 1, 16, 17, 18*.

Externally: Enable external actors' support for GCTs to increase funding and soften compliance measures

→ Discuss how donors can soften upward accountability structures and support the necessary risk management capacity strengthening for LNAs

- ✓ Present the guidance and tools to donor staff to show that there are available risk management processes and tools that can be used to ensure facilitating agencies' accountability to donors.
- ✓ Ensure that donors understand the differences in accountability from supported groups (horizontal with communities), and that in which the facilitating agency engages (accountability to donor through reporting). The groups are not accountable to the donor. Similar to unrestricted, household-level CVA, donors must let go of getting detailed reporting on GCT expenditures.
- ✓ Share how other donors have supported the GCT approach and which directives were set on accountability, compliance and risk management.



Expert tip: The recipients of GCTs must have ownership of the funds and not feel like they are implementing a donor's initiative. This ownership process requires space for things to go wrong, using a "safe to fail approach." This does however require donor acceptance, and hence advocacy with donors must highlight this point.

→ Advocate with technical staff in donor organisations on the benefits of using GCTs

- ✓ Request meetings with relevant donors' technical staff. If possible, bring in a senior member of your organisation (or supporting agency) and emphasise the strategic-level support in your organisation.
- ✓ Use the introduction section of the guidance and the report to present the strengths and impacts of the GCT approach, and ensure that donors know that GCTs are part of CaLP's definition of CVA.
- ✓ Present the existing evidence base and highlight the current and emerging practices of using GCTs in various settings, including sudden-onset crisis, protracted crisis, refugee, and conflict settings.⁶
- ✓ Highlight that GCTs are meant to be complementary to individual and household CVA, as well as other intervention modalities,⁷ and not a replacement.

→ Advocate with finance staff and policymakers in donor organisations

- ✓ Prepare a basic overview of compliance measures from specific donors that currently create barriers or challenges for using GCTs (tailor this to the donor you are talking to!).
- ✓ If the technical donor staff are already supportive of GCTs, ask them to join the meeting. If possible, get their support on developing advocacy messages to put forward to policymakers.
- ✓ Ensure that your organisation's senior management lead on engaging with policymakers. Consider getting further support from humanitarian networks for this (e.g. national humanitarian platforms).
- ✓ Ask for donor staff's inputs on the specific tools – and understand any necessary adjustments that they would require when engaging in GCTs. If barriers persist, discuss alternative solutions, such as limiting the GCT transfer value or transfer smaller amounts to individual members (to pool after).



Expert tip: If compromises on funding risk affecting the decision-making power that GCTs yield to affected communities, facilitating agencies must be ready to turn down funding.

⁶ See for example, Local to Global Protection. (2020). <https://www.local2global.info/resources>.

⁷ Psychosocial support, livelihoods support, advocacy etc.

Locally: Enable support for GCTs through strengthening coordination and relevant local accountability structures

→ Create an awareness of GCTs in national coordination structures

- ✓ Due to the multisectoral nature of GCTs, it may not be possible to situate GCT projects within the existing sector/cluster coordination. If there is an active Cash Working Group (CWG), seek its advice on where to coordinate and report on GCT activities. (see *GCT Guidance Section V.*)
- ✓ Advocate with sector/cluster leads, and at the intersectoral level, for GCTs to being considered in humanitarian response plans.



Expert tip: Despite the difficulty in framing GCTs with the cluster coordination system, GCT actors should share lessons and learning generated through GCT activities with different clusters in order to provide space for local innovation and initiative in any sector.

→ Create an awareness among other local actors about the benefits of “horizontal accountability” mechanisms^{8,9}

- ✓ Use the tools and guidance to support the set-up of “horizontal accountability” mechanisms – ensure that these are discussed with, designed, and led by crisis-affected communities.
- ✓ Engage other local, national and international actors in sessions to discuss accountability measures, how they are established, and how they can be further supported (e.g. through training groups to understand existing referral mechanisms).

→ Strengthen the capacity of supported groups

- ✓ Strengthen group leadership and members’ capacity on gender, protection, and inclusion, as well as on how their GCT initiatives can be responsive to various needs, risks, and capacities in their context. Wherever possible, work through local organisations and local champions (e.g. male champions in the community) during the situation analysis phase.
- ✓ Strengthen group members’ capacities for financial management, either through training or hands-on support, to lay a foundation for ongoing and future activities the groups may implement.
- ✓ Link supported groups to other relevant actors that can help ensure the quality implementation of GCTs (e.g. government departments, services or other agencies working in the area). However, it is important that the groups maintain ownership of the projects.

Expert tips:



- Past groups who were supported with GCTs can be introduced to newly supported groups to share best practices in defining leadership structures and implementing GCT projects from start to finish.
- Facilitating agencies, through staff and/or volunteers should tap into relevant skills available within the locality (e.g. doctors, engineers, traders etc.), who are willing to offer free services to the supported groups.

⁸ For engagement with this level, see the *GCT Guidance Section IV.1.; and Tools 13, 14, 15, and 16.*

⁹ Horizontal accountability means that supported groups are accountable to their own communities/the wider collective, rather than towards the facilitating agencies.