



REPORT

CASH TRANSFERS PROGRAMS AND HUMAN MOBILITY: SHARING EXPERIENCES, DEBATES, AND LEARNINGS



MINISTERIO
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA
Y COOPERACIÓN



WORKSHOP

On April 27, 2023, the **Virtual Specialization Workshop on Cash Transfers Programs (CTPs) and Human Mobility** took place, organized by the Institute of Studies on Conflicts and Humanitarian Action (IECAH), in collaboration with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) and CALP Network.

The event was divided into the first part of shared experiences, discussions, and joint learning with individuals from different countries, followed by a sharing of analysis, proposed solutions, and areas for improvement.

Cristina Gutiérrez, Director of the Office of Humanitarian Action (OAH) at AECID, explained how strategic decisions are made to prioritize individuals in mobility situations and the challenges that need to be addressed.

Cash Transfers have been one of the commitments of the Grand Bargain in which significant progress has been made. It should be noted that the challenges posed by different humanitarian contexts also oblige us to improve and revise these modalities of assistance in complex situations. The large flows of human mobility urgently require a design of solutions focused on transforming the system for the benefit of the beneficiaries of these programs.

In the case of AECID, €7.2 million was allocated in 2021 to projects for displaced persons, of which €1.7 million were directed towards Cash Transfers Programs. In 2022, there was an increase, reaching €11 million, of which €2.2 million were directed towards CTPs. However, in addition to funds, it is important to consider the level of specific training among humanitarian actors.

The phenomenon of human mobility is not something new, and each person has their own motivations. Therefore, it is important to provide differentiated attention. Some individuals will have more capacity to move than others. Mobility assistance must be provided based on an understanding of the context in which they find themselves, as the risks can vary.

In the future, it is proposed to address Cash Transfers taking into account the importance of:

- Encouraging increased participation of actors in financial systems along migration routes.
- Optimizing monitoring through more innovative and creative digital solutions.
- Considering the temporality of the needs of people on the move.

Source: Study "Consultation on Cash and Voucher Assistance to Major Spanish NGOs funded by AECID", IECAH, 2019.

CTPs initially sparked debate, but they are now valued as a modality that "is here to stay," as evidenced by their increasing trend from 7.9% in 2015 to 19% in 2021.

[**See document**](#)

Holly Radice, representative of CALP, moderated the panel of experiences. The trend of displacement is increasing and worsening for various reasons, including climate change, which is expected to drive the number of displaced people to reach 200 million by 2050. The greatest humanitarian crises have always been marked by human mobility. Cash Transfers represent 20% of all humanitarian aid, having grown by 205% since 2015, therefore, the use of these programs in situations of human mobility is logical. "Can CTPs Reach People on the Move? Analysis of Cash Transfer Programs in the Context of Human Mobility in the Americas," CALP, 2022. This event is the third of the proposed workshops on the issue of human mobility and CTPs.

Israel Mozo, leader of the humanitarian response at Save the Children Mexico, explains the "Cash-Salud project" they have been carrying out since 2018, with the difficulties posed by the COVID-19 situation. Within the framework of this project, they have seven shelters, of which six implemented CTPs while only one shelter adopted the coupon methodology.

[**See document**](#)

Insa Sané, Regional Coordinator for Migration and Displacement at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Africa, described how the IFRC's 2021-2025 planning emphasizes the importance of global leadership in cash for the IFRC and its National Societies, including the goal of providing 50% of all humanitarian assistance using cash and/or vouchers by 2025.

Makar Boubacar Sissao, representative of the Red Cross in Mali, explained the long history of using Cash Transfers to assist people affected by armed conflicts, natural and climate-related disasters, and/or other situations of violence in meeting their basic needs and supporting their recovery efforts through the Malian Red Cross.

[See document](#)

Francisco Astudillo, representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), presented the approach of the IOM agency regarding the experience of using Cash Transfers in different countries where they work, with a focus on Myanmar, Thailand, Ukraine, and neighboring countries.

[See document](#)

Diego Prado, Deputy Regional Representative of CALP in the Americas, reaffirmed that the phenomenon of human mobility is not something new, and differentiated attention should be given to each case. It is important to identify the profiles of people who are on the move, their motivations, displacement trends, and triggers of vulnerability. Inquire about the needs and expectations of the population through assertive and empathetic care.

[See document](#)

The following are the topics addressed during the final debate of the event, in which participants were divided into small groups and engaged in a brainstorming activity within a panel divided into different selected themes for discussion: identification and people on the move, monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL), and localized risks in Cash Transfers Programs (CTPs).

IDENTIFICACION AND PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Some of the solutions proposed by the participants in the working groups were:

- Identification through direct service delivery.
- Conducting migration monitoring to understand the reasons and main needs of migrants in transit.
- Building identification criteria in collaboration with other organizations.
- Harmonizing selection/eligibility criteria (socioeconomic models).
- Delivering assistance on Border A before entering the next country (e.g., Colombia before crossing into Central America, where more challenges are identified).
- Identification through information points or interventions with Information Counseling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) attendees.
- Integrating a diversity perspective.

On the other hand, the main difficulties identified when identifying people on the move are:

- In the case of minors, they fear being identified and placed in residential care.
- Inability to track individuals (Post-Distribution Monitoring, follow-up): loss of contact/phone numbers/stay addresses.
- Risk of exclusion due to lack of accessibility: individuals with disabilities or chronic illnesses.
- Existence of obstacles to assistance in countries where regulations do not allow access to the financial system for individuals in irregular status.
- Fear/rumors of forced return, mobility during the night, through unofficial transit routes (also known as "trochas").
- Fear of being identified, as invisibility, becomes a protective element in cases of internal displacement.
- Identifying people on routes or in places where digital tools are not available.
- Inability to verify the person's identity.
- Donors request unnecessary information.
- Pressure from governments to assist individuals identified by their national systems. The ethical dilemma regarding humanitarian principles.

- Remote and hard-to-access areas are often preferred to evade border controls.
- Lack of personnel and capacity for organizations to have a presence (often the market is non-functional or does not even exist).

MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING - MEAL

As improvement proposals, the working groups suggested:

- Providing regional active-use chips by the organization until monitoring is carried out.
- Implementing Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) for the transient population.
- Using WhatsApp.
- Consulting the intention of spending the multipurpose cash transfer.
- Monitoring the nutrition of children under 5, pregnant women, and lactating mothers to identify and refer cases of acute malnutrition.
- Creating bots (on WhatsApp) for collecting feedback.
- Card with monitoring to track the use of vouchers.

The main challenges in this regard are:

- In long-term programs, the amount provided must cover periods longer than the project's duration, making it impossible to track.
- Losing contact with beneficiary individuals.
- People in transit stay in humanitarian assistance locations for only one day.
- Insufficient shelter capacity given the magnitude of the transient population flow.

RISKS

In order to address the existing risks in human mobility, the following measures are proposed:

- Building safety manuals and information management regarding the delivery of Cash Transfers.
- Awareness campaigns for host populations.
- Training and evaluation on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PEAS).

However, it is important to consider the complications that may arise from the use of Cash Transfers Programs in situations of mobility:

- Lack of resilience and access to sustainable livelihoods. CTP assistance, for example, provides access to income but is not sustainable.
- Risks of gender-based violence and other forms of abuse.
- Inflation (projects with budgets in dollars/euros vs. local currency, depending on the donor).
- Coyotes (also known as smugglers) target people in transit, particularly at the border.
- Lack of functional markets.
- Migrants in transit are exposed to theft and abuse by local authorities along the route.
- Stigma in supermarkets when using cards that identify them as migrant population.
- Excessive charges in host/transit populations.
- Fraud and identity theft.

CONCLUSIONS

Reviewing the debate and the experiences shared by all participants, we observe that the main challenges lie in concerns related to the gender approach. It is noted that the majority of cash or voucher funds used in Cash Transfers Programs, often end up in the hands of men. The implementation of a gender-focused program is questioned, and the focus is placed on migrants who do not want to be identified. Additionally, concerns are raised regarding the pull effect associated with using CTPs in dollars.

On a positive note, it is emphasized that there is a unique identification form that includes routes, needs, and personal data of individuals.

However, we must not forget the existing challenges, such as the infiltration of armed individuals, the difficulty of protecting personal data, and the impediments in proper identification, which further complicate subsequent intervention. Furthermore, accountability in CTPs is complex as maintaining continuous contact with beneficiaries to justify the use of funds provided is challenging.

Currently, efforts should be made to establish joint identification criteria among organizations, reducing the risk of excluding individuals with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and implementing Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) mechanisms. It is also necessary to formalize the creation of safety manuals and information management in Cash Transfers. Additionally, flexibility in CTP's should be considered to achieve greater effectiveness and sustainability of these programs.

