



# Integrating Cash Transfers into Gender-based Violence Programs

Executive Summary, November 2015



Photos: M. Hutchinson/IRC

*Cash transfers that are flexible and paired with psychosocial activities and Gender Group Discussions can build women's resilience to, and even mitigate, gender-based violence.*

## BACKGROUND

The scope and complexity of the Syrian crisis has catalyzed a massive humanitarian response, including the unprecedented scale-up of cash transfer programming (CTP). In 2013, the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) in Jordan began using unconditional, unrestricted cash transfers as a tool to build beneficiary resilience to gender-based violence (GBV). This case study identifies lessons learned from the IRC approach, and provides recommendations to improve how cash is used to mitigate GBV risks in emergencies.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does the integration of IRC's unconditional cash assistance, case management, and gender discussion group (GDG) services contribute to women and girls' safety and support a reduction in negative coping mechanisms? Has cash assistance exacerbated protection risks in any way?
2. How can existing tools and processes be improved to better determine or measure vulnerability to GBV? How can existing tools be improved to determine whether the provision of cash can/cannot mitigate the identified risks and increase safety? What other considerations and information should be collected to ensure effective targeting for cash and/or improve upon the current targeting methods?
3. How can monitoring tools and systems be strengthened to measure how IRC cash assistance and related services have contributed to improving the safety and empowerment of women and girl recipients of cash?

## METHODOLOGY

- Literature review
- 10 focus group discussions with 72 women and men (cash and non-cash beneficiaries)
- 5 individual interviews with women cash beneficiaries
- 14 key informant interviews with IRC staff and external protection stakeholders

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## KEY FINDINGS

### Protection outcomes

- Resilience to GBV is supported by receiving both cash transfers (CT) and WPE services, rather than cash alone.
- Receiving cash and attending Gender Discussion Groups (GDGs) can result in a decrease of domestic violence.
- The impact of CTP tends to be limited to the distribution duration, while GDGs and Psychosocial services (PSS) usually offer a more sustained protection impact
- Cash associated with individual GBV case management can be lifesaving in preventing an imminent threat of violence from occurring and in ensuring immediate health, safety and security once violence has occurred

### Resilience to GBV

- Reduced tensions within the household
- Women feeling strong and able to negotiate
- Beneficiaries feel listened to, can share their problems and solutions
- Skills acquired in dealing with changing dynamics among family members

***“All [of] our arguments are about the lack of income and the things I request. During the 6 months, the cash reduced conflict between us.”***

Woman in IRC’s Jordan program

## CHALLENGES



- Targeting women as CTP recipients may be seen as undermining men’s power and place women at risk of violence
- CTP can, in some instances, contribute to social tensions between refugees and local communities
- Using quantitative targeting criteria alone limits ability to assess and target women based on vulnerability to GBV
- Cash transfers without protection activities limit the potential to mitigate GBV
- Providing a standard CT amount limits responsiveness to GBV specific needs and/or for more sustainable solutions

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Integrate CTP and GBV programming:
  - More sustainable protection outcomes
  - Mitigate beneficiaries’ exposure to risks from receiving CTPs
2. Make cash transfers conditional upon participation in psychosocial activities and GDGs
3. Use different cash modalities depending on need and vulnerability
4. Allow option to tailor CTP amount and duration for cases where a specific amount has directly contributed to protection
5. Ensure beneficiaries’ personal information is protected by financial service provider, particularly for protection cases