

Making Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming Safer and More Accountable to Women and Girls

RECOGNIZING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RISKS IN HCT INTERVENTIONS

As with all humanitarian interventions, distributing cash in emergencies can introduce and/or exacerbate safety risks for women and girls. Such risks include exposure to various forms of gender-based violence (GBV): intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and denial of resources, among others. GBV risk analysis, mitigation measures, and ongoing monitoring of safety considerations are basic elements of ensuring a Do No Harm approach. Additionally, integrating GBV risk mitigation into humanitarian cash transfer programming (HCT) better equips these programmes to safely reach the targeted population and meet the programmatic objectives.

HOW DOES UNICEF INCORPORATE GBV RISK MITIGATION IN HCT?

As the designated interagency lead on GBV risk mitigation, UNICEF has made significant progress on integrating GBV risk analysis and mitigation measures into all of the Agency's humanitarian response work, including HCT. UNICEF's Key Considerations for GBV Risk Mitigation in Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming provides practical, field-tested guidance for all UNICEF staff and partners to ensure GBV risks are proactively identified and addressed within all elements of the Agency's HCT programming. Some of the core recommended activities include:

- 1. Conduct a GBV risk analysis:** identify the potential GBV risks and barriers to accessing services and -- particularly for women and girls -- in relation to HCT.
- 2. Consult with women, girls, and local organisations who work on their behalf** throughout design and implementation of HCT.
- 3. Train HCT staff and partners** on GBV risk mitigation and how to safely respond to disclosures of GBV.
- 4. Disseminate information on GBV referral pathways and available services** to UNICEF staff and partners -- and, where appropriate, to HCT recipients and community members -- to ensure that GBV survivors who choose to disclose their experience can access services and support.
- 5. Establish effective and trusted accountability mechanisms**, such as grievance redress mechanisms or complaint and feedback systems, that are safe, confidential, and accessible to HCT recipients and community members.
- 6. Take action to prevent SEA** through training and awareness on codes of conduct, reporting mechanisms, investigation/disciplinary processes, and data protection.



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CASE STUDY: EMERGENCY CASH TRANSFER PROJECT IN YEMEN

UNICEF Yemen has made it a priority to incorporate GBV risk mitigation into its humanitarian cash programming. Recognising that recipients of cash transfers in Yemen are among the most vulnerable individuals and families in the country, in early 2021, UNICEF undertook a GBV risk analysis within cash programming and used the findings to develop a GBV risk mitigation action plan. Within this plan, UNICEF identified the following programmatic priorities:

- Ensuring all payment teams include women staff/volunteers through an enforceable clause in the contracts;
- Incorporating GBV risk mitigation into training manuals for HCT service providers;
- Setting up separate queues for women and men at payment sites;
- Ensuring call centres have an adequate number of female operators and training all call center staff on how to safely and appropriately respond to disclosures of GBV;
- Including messaging on SEA within community outreach materials for radio, social media and print;
- Promoting the active participation of women in community-level meetings (for example through women-only discussion groups) to ensure they receive accurate information on the targeting, payment amounts and modalities, and how to lodge a complaint.
- Convening regular consultations with women regarding their experience accessing HCT programming and when traveling to/from cash delivery sites;

The GBV risk mitigation action plan is accompanied by third-party monitoring arrangements, which include women-only focus group discussions and consultations that cover topics such as the hours of operation of the cash distribution points, their perceptions of safety when travelling to and from the cash delivery locations, and their involvement on household financial decision making. The information gathered through these consultations is regularly analysed to inform programmatic adaptations as needed.

SCOPE AND SCALE OF UNICEF'S HCT PROGRAMMING

In 2020, nearly half of UNICEF's humanitarian response operations utilised cash transfers. During this period, UNICEF's humanitarian cash-based programs reached 48 million households, covering 81 million children in 71 countries. Of these, 45.5 million households were reached through the provision of technical assistance to scale up government social protection programmes to address the needs of some of the most vulnerable families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, 2.5 million households in 50 countries were reached through UNICEF's humanitarian cash transfers (HCT) programs, 591,000 of which were reached through direct funding via national social protection programmes. A further 1.9 million households were supported through implementing partnerships with local financial service providers and civil society organisations.

For more information on UNICEF's GBV Risk Mitigation work in Humanitarian Cash Transfers, please contact **Christine Heckman** checkman@unicef.org, **Kariane Peek Cabrera** kpeekcabrera@unicef.org, or **Ruth Graham Goulder** rugraham@unicef.org.