



Cash can contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment

In 2018, WFP conducted a multi-country study that demonstrated that interventions – programmes, projects, operations etc. – using cash-based transfers (CBTs) as an assistance modality can promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The countries in which case studies were conducted were Bangladesh, Egypt, El Salvador, Jordan, Mali and Rwanda.

Empowering impacts are achieved when an initiative utilising CBTs ('cash-based initiatives') fosters promotive and transformative changes; that is, where women, men, girls and/or boys have enhanced income and capabilities and causes of social inequities, exclusion and inequalities are addressed.

The multi-country study documented examples of CBTs with promotive and transformative impacts:

- i) reducing or preventing violence (Bangladesh, Egypt, El Salvador);
- ii) strengthening decision-making, autonomy and mobility (Bangladesh, El Salvador, Rwanda);
- iii) increasing skills and knowledge (Bangladesh, Egypt, El Salvador);
- iv) improving livelihoods and income earning capacities (Bangladesh, El Salvador);
- v) reducing social exclusion and increasing social capital (Bangladesh, El Salvador); and (vi) promoting women's leadership (Bangladesh).

ACTIONS SUPPORTING EMPOWERMENT

The following observed actions supported empowering impacts:

- i) ensuring that gender and age analyses influence the design and implementation of CBIs;
- ii) designing and implementing integrated CBIs with a range of programme activities to lead to promotive and transformative changes (Bangladesh and El Salvador);
- iii) ensuring that there were no barriers in women's participation because of the conditionalities of attendance (Bangladesh) and mitigating some barriers to participation by providing child care, transport costs, and off-setting the opportunity cost of attending programme activities (El Salvador);
- iv) ensuring that the CBIs are implemented for an appropriate duration, noting the length of time required for promotive or transformative changes (Bangladesh and El Salvador);
- v) designing livelihoods and vocational activities based on rigorous livelihoods or labour market analyses, with gender integrated (Bangladesh and El Salvador);
- vi) equipping beneficiaries (women and/or men) with business and entrepreneurial skills and to make business decisions (Bangladesh and El Salvador);
- vii) enhancing beneficiaries' (women's and/or men's) personal empowerment (self-confidence, self-perception, autonomy, status, decision making, etc) (Bangladesh and El Salvador);
- viii) promoting savings schemes or access to finance so that women and men can save for consumption, periods of hardship or livelihoods (Bangladesh, Egypt and Rwanda);
- ix) including behaviour change communications to contribute to transforming social norms – such as on “women's work”, women's mobility and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work (Bangladesh) and on gender, sexuality, violence and citizenship (El Salvador);
- x) equipping women and men to navigate through change and conflict in their households and communities, such as through awareness-raising, role plays and access to a 'resource person', as social norms shift, such as where women gain or expand livelihood activities (Bangladesh, El Salvador);
- xi) including actions that build horizontal and vertical social capital, with examples including peer support groups, local oversight committees, voluntary work and community projects (Bangladesh and El Salvador); and
- xii) teaching women how to sign their name (Bangladesh).

FOUR FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENTS

In summary, for CBIs to be equitable, there are four fundamental components.

A CBI needs to:

- i) be informed by gender and age analyses, possibly supplemented with pilots;
- ii) design or adjust programme features to promote equitable and empowering impacts;
- iii) promote learning and behaviour change for equitable decision-making over the use of transfers; and;
- iv) ensure that monitoring is gender-responsive.

For a CBI to be empowering, it needs to be designed and implemented as an integrated programme with a range of programme activities to promote gender equality and empower women.

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Access the full report at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102755/download/>

And the summary report at <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000102949/download/>