



How cash-based interventions can promote gender equality and women's empowerment

The WFP 2018 study on The Potential of Cash-Based Interventions to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment sought to explore how Cash-based interventions (CBIs) can contribute to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, as ends in themselves and for food security and nutrition outcomes.

The study confirmed the potential of CBIs to promote gender equality and empower women. Programmatic and institutional actions that can be taken for equitable and empowering impacts are outlined in this brief.

EQUITABLE PROGRAMMING

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.



Gender and age analyses and gender-responsive pilots

- Undertake comprehensive, participatory gender and age analyses, also attending to issues of protection, nutrition and livelihoods.
- Pilot the CBI with a small caseload to identify impacts on control and decision making around the CBT, transfer use, workload and time-use, mobility, livelihoods, savings and indebtedness.

Programme features

Named recipient and authority to transact

- Establish a process by which a named recipient is selected or nominated. Do not automatically assign the 'household head' (commonly a man) as the named recipient. Ensure that the process of determining the "named recipient" is informed by participatory gender analyses and protection assessments.
- Where a household is targeted and as appropriate, have multiple named recipients or at least one woman and one man per multi-adult household.
- Where appropriate in conditional transfers, and where restrictive gender roles will not be reinforced, name the individual who fulfils the conditionality as the recipient. Where it is a "named recipient" – so not plural – determine if alternate persons should be permitted to carry out transactions. In some circumstances, a CBI may be designed for individual targeting to redress an inequity or inequality. In other circumstances, having authorised alternates can promote shared control, decision-making and workloads.
- Monitor the effects on control and use of the transfer, as assumptions made when designing the CBI may not hold.

Information and communication

- Use communication channels that are safely and directly accessible to women and men.
- Use multiple communication channels to not rely exclusively on technology-based channels, like mobile phone text messages.
- Do not assume that information received by one person will be transmitted at all or accurately to other persons, including within a household.
- Check that information has been accurately received and understood by women and men or the intended persons.

Transfer modality and value

- Ensure that selection of the transfer modality and size enables equitable control and use of the CBT by women and men (particularly for household-targeting).
- Consider the effects of transfer modality and size on other outcomes, such as wellbeing, dignity, conflict, violence, time use, workload, livelihoods and savings as experienced (differently) by women and men – and make decisions that support equitable and empowering impacts.
- Select the transfer modality (in-kind versus CBT) that most effectively meets lifecycle needs, as vary by gender and age.

Transfer duration and timing

- For CBIs with promotive and transformative functions, use a transfer duration that reflects the duration required for women and men (and girls and boys) to realise the desired changes.
- For seasonal transfers, ensure that the timing of the transfer occurs when beneficiaries are likely to be most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition and so use negative coping strategies, which requires attention and response to differences between women and men.

Committees and complaints and feedback mechanisms

- For non-targeted interventions, ensure that women and men are equally represented on committees (and all decision-making entities), with equal sharing of roles (including decision-making roles) and provided with training and/or mentoring. In some contexts, there may need for women-only committees to provide women with the space to participate and take decisions.
- Ensure that beneficiary women and men both know their women and men committee members.
- Ensure multiple mechanisms to lodge a complaint or provide feedback, and not solely rely on a phone hotline or one contact person.

Learning and behaviour change for equitable decision-making over the use of transfers

- Design awareness-raising messages that effectively challenge restrictive gender norms and tackle gender inequalities.
- At a minimum, include learning on decision-making over the CBT and using the CBT to make decisions to improve the food security and nutrition of all household members (based on lifecycle needs).
- Ensure awareness-raising and education directly reaches both women and men using safe and accessible communication channels.
- Identify means of reaching women and men if there is minimal (direct) beneficiary contact.
- Include awareness-raising on rights and/or services, such as for gender-based violence, health and finance.

Gender-responsive monitoring

- Collect monitoring data at the individual level, and not solely household or institutional levels.
- Systematically disaggregate person-related data by sex and age.
- Use gender-specific indicators to track impacts.
- Use qualitative processes to understand women's and men's personal accounts of change.
- Revise the CBI based on learning from the gender-responsive monitoring.

EMPOWERING PROGRAMMING

For CBIs to be empowering, they need to be designed and implemented as an integrated programme with a range of programme activities to promote gender equality and empower women.

Integrated programming

- Design integrated programmes with a range of activities to lead to promotive and transformative changes.
- Ensure that there are no barriers to the participation of women and men, including in relation to any programme conditions. Mitigate barriers to participation by, for example, facilitating access to care services, providing transportation costs and off-setting

the opportunity cost of attending programme activities.

- Ensure that the CBIs are implemented for an appropriate duration, noting the length of time required for promotive and transformative changes.

Livelihoods programming

- Design livelihoods and vocational activities (training, asset grants or loans, market linkages) based on rigorous livelihoods or labour market analyses, in which gender and age are integrated.
- Provide activities designed to equip beneficiaries (women and/or men) with capacities to establish or expand their own businesses (individually and/or collectively).
- As necessary, include literacy and numeracy training.

Addressing social norms and intra- household conflict

- Include social and behaviour change communications (SBCC) to support transformations in restrictive social norms, such as related to "women's work", women's mobility, and redistribution of unpaid household work). The SBCC programmes need to target women and men as well as 'gatekeepers', such as mothers-in-law or religious and community leaders.
- Equip women and men to navigate through change and conflict in their households (e.g. through awareness raising and role plays) as women gain or expand livelihood activities.
- Include actions that build horizontal and vertical social capital. Examples include peer support groups, local oversight committees, voluntary work and community projects.

INSTITUTIONAL ACTIONS

For programming using CBTs to systematically contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, an implementing institution needs to (i) be technically competent, (ii) have adequate guidance, tools and resources, and (iii) systematically undertake and use gender analyses.

CBI and gender capacities

A cited barrier to effective programming using CBTs and addressing gender inequalities is lack of staff capacities. 'Gender-in-cash' is a growing area of competence for humanitarian and development actors. Cash programming and gender capacities can be strengthened by:

- training a cadre of employees as cash-in-gender specialists;
- bringing necessary CBT and gender expertise 'around the table' to collaborate on designing and implementing CBIs that are equitable and empowering, while simultaneously exchanging ideas and strengthening each other's capacities;



- developing a training module – possibly combining online and in-person components – that foster learning on gender in CBIs for employees and partners;
- recruiting gender advisors who have experience in cash programming and recruiting CBT advisors who have gender expertise; and
- developing a roster of specialists that have gender-in-cash expertise.

Guidance, processes, tools and resources

Guidance and tools need to be regularly updated to reflect evolving thinking and practice on CBT, integrated programming and gender equality outcomes. For example, there is a need to understand and monitor the food security and nutrition of individuals, as well as the contextual factors that influence the food security and nutrition of individuals. This means seeing and understanding the different women, men, girls and boys involved in a CBI.

Potential actions relating to guidance, tools and processes include:

- keeping CBT manuals, tools, guides updated by drawing on most recent thinking on gender equality programming;
- applying and developing, as needed, individual-level indicators (and processes to measure them);
- documenting and sharing good practice examples and lessons learned;
- curating a list of the most useful resources relating to gender and cash and disseminating to relevant employees and partners; and
- supporting gender and CBT advisors at country, regional and global levels in their advisory and cross-learning roles.

Gender analyses and pilots

To design CBIs that are equitable or empowering, the critical first step is comprehensive, participatory (and

context-relevant) gender analyses. For the needed gender and age analyses to be conducted, gender advisers need adequate knowledge of cash-based programming, while CBT advisers need basic understanding of gender and gender analyses.

Even where analyses are undertaken, not all impacts of a programme can be anticipated. Piloting a CBI with a small caseload can allow an organization to observe intended and unintended effects on women and men (and boys and girls) – such as related to CBT control and use, workload and time-use, mobility, savings, livelihoods, resiliencies and indebtedness – and gender equality. Pilots, and particularly those that integrate gender, can also foster acceptability (or even demand) for a programme or a new CBT modality.

Potential actions to systematise comprehensive and participatory gender and age analyses and programme pilots include:

- ensuring that CBT gender analyses and protection assessments are of high quality by resourcing them with experienced cash-in-gender expertise or, where such expertise is not available, ensuring that the analyses are undertaken jointly by both gender and CBT advisers, over an adequate time period;
- sharing examples of terms of reference and reports for high-quality CBT gender and age analyses;
- sharing examples of terms of reference and reports for pilots that are designed to have equitable and empowering outcomes;
- building the capacities of gender and CBT employees in analysis and programming through cross-learning and mentoring; and
- ensuring that the comprehensive and participatory gender and age analyses, and resulting pilots, are used to inform programming.

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/>

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