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Cash-based Transfers and Gender Impact Evaluation Window

With the growing global popularity of cash transfers as a modality for both humanitarian and development assistance, the need to understand the impact of such interventions is becoming increasingly important. Programmes often target women or women-headed households as recipients of cash transfers, under the assumption that this is an effective way of achieving food and nutrition outcomes in target populations. However, solid evidence, particularly in humanitarian and fragile settings, is needed to learn what works best, where and for whom.

The Gender Office recently published a study titled *The potential of Cash-Based Interventions to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*. This study established a conceptual framework with qualitative evidence outlining the potential casual pathway between cash programming and gender empowerment outcomes. In collaboration with the Gender Office and CBT Programme Teams, OEV has developed a new approach to build upon this research and support country offices to produce evidence that informs the design and implementation of cash programming: the Cash-based Transfers and Gender Impact Evaluation Window.

What is the window?

The window is an OEV led initiative to coordinate a portfolio of impact evaluations on cash transfers and gender equality outcomes across WFP country programmes. It allows country offices to learn what works in a way that informs their own programming and also contributes to a global evidence base.

Participation in the window means country offices receive expert advice and support from OEV and from a dedicated technical specialist in country. OEV will also provide co-funding to carry out the impact evaluation.

What is an impact evaluation?

For WFP, an impact evaluation is a type of analysis that uses data from at least two groups of people — targeted beneficiaries and a comparison group — in order to understand the results caused specifically by a programme.

Data is collected primarily at the individual or household level to measure expected or unexpected programme outcomes.

For WFP, most impact evaluations will be conducted ex-ante; that is, it is an impact evaluation design that is built in to the planning of the programme and involves at least baseline and endline data collections.

What are the benefits of participating in the window?

- Effective, efficient, equitable and empowering programming that supports sustained change.
- Timely production of **rigorous evidence** around key questions of country programming
- Increased support to strengthen the programme's **results-based monitoring** system
- Opportunity for **national capacity building** in impact evaluation
- Information to **improve outcomes** in future programming
- Valuable and compelling material for **current and future funding and implementing partners**

What types of questions can we answer?

While the specific research questions for each impact evaluation will largely depend on country office interest, some possible questions for the window are:

To what extent do interventions using CBTs contribute to, or compromise, progress towards gender equality outcomes or the empowerment of women and girls? Under what conditions?

How do programme design features mediate or mitigate the impact of CBTs on gender equitable outcomes?

How does the timing, size and duration of CBTs affect GEWE and other intended outcomes?

Who can participate?

Any WFP country office with upcoming programmes which have a cash-based component are invited to express interest. The programme does *not* need to have an explicit gender focus or targeting approach, although this is welcomed.

The window is best suited for programmes that **start September 2019** or later, though programmes with earlier implementation dates may also be considered.

Timing

Country offices have until **20 March 2019 to express interest**. OEV will follow up with country offices to conduct an initial phone-based feasibility assessment by **1 April**.

OEV will then host a **workshop** for country offices and impact evaluation partners to work together on the impact evaluation planning and concept notes. Concept notes will be reviewed and approved by the end of May.

After the concept note is approved, the timing of the impact evaluation depends on the timing of programme implementation. Preparation and contracting for data collection will take place as soon as possible. The baseline data collection will then take place in the months leading up to the **programme start date**.

The duration of each impact evaluation depends largely on the programme and outcomes of interest. A midline data collection will take place in the **first or second year of implementation**, with an endline data collection in the **second or final year of the programme**.

OEV aims to analyse the data and produce results at a **timing useful for informing programme and policy decisions**.

Finally, after a sufficient number of impact evaluations are completed, OEV will conduct a synthesis of the results. This will allow the window to explore additional questions about what works in different contexts and why.

Roles and Responsibilities

For Country Offices:

Upon approval of the concept note, OEV will begin discussions with the country office to solidify the design and the tools for data collection. Country office feedback is crucial at this stage in order to ensure the impact evaluation is both feasible and useful for programme teams.

Before and during implementation of the programme, country teams will work closely with OEV to collect data that complements existing M&E needs, and to ensure adherence to the impact evaluation design throughout the programme.

Country teams will be responsible for liaising with data collection firms and supervising the baseline, mid-line, and end-line data collection.

For OEV:

OEV will provide the additional capacity needed, including managing the planning and design stages of all impact evaluations in the window, and providing technical guidance throughout the lifecycle of the window. OEV will manage the data analysis and production of window outputs, as well as their dissemination.

Funding

Country offices participating in the window commit to funding the data collection activities of the impact evaluation. While the most likely source of this funding is the programme M&E budget, OEV both encourages and supports country offices to leverage any donor interest to garner additional funding support.

The remaining costs will be funded by OEV, including the analysis and technical support.

Oversight

OEV will establish a WFP Steering Committee to oversee the functioning of the window. The Steering Committee will be supported by a Reference Group and a Technical Advisory Group to draw on global expertise and capacities.

The Window in Context

This window contributes to a new Impact Evaluation Strategy for WFP, which aims to support WFP in delivering operationally-relevant evaluations that also contribute to thought leadership in the humanitarian space.