

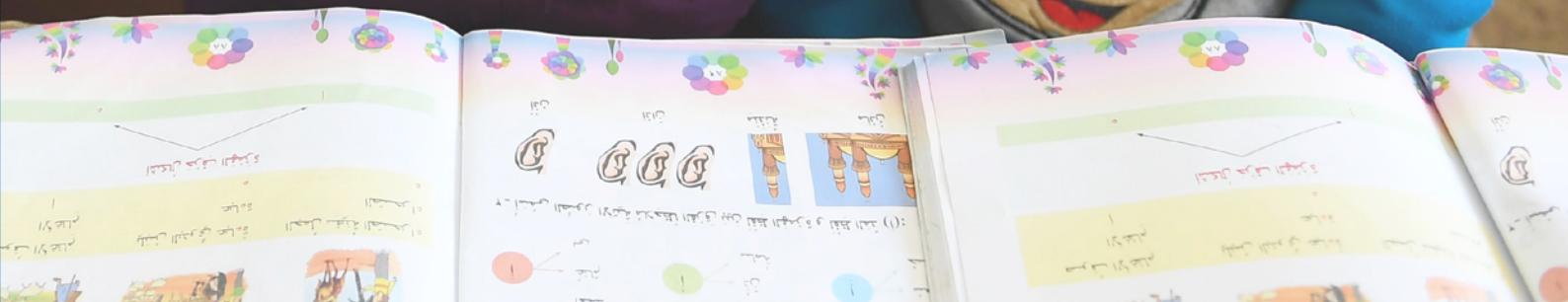


**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# UNHCR MENA PROTECTION SERVICE

Pilot Study Outcomes

Enhancing child protection services  
by incorporating Cash-based Interventions  
as part of comprehensive programming



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# Summary of Findings: Impact of Cash Based Interventions (CBI) on Protection Outcomes

September 2018 – April 2019

**Children account for 2.5 million (almost half) of the Syrian refugee population, and child protection remains a core element of UNHCR’s protection response.**

UNHCR has been promoting research projects aimed at assessing the contribution of different cash assistance modalities for enhancing child protection outcomes and improving the well-being of refugee children and their households. UNHCR cash assistance programs in the MENA region are some of the largest and most advanced cash programs in the world.<sup>1</sup> UNHCR distributed over US\$ 230 million in cash assistance across the region in 2018, reaching some one million individuals. CBI represent an important component of a much broader and integrated network of activities and services provided by UNHCR to provide protection and assistance to the most vulnerable. Existing vulnerability assessment tools such as the Vulnerability Assessment Framework in Jordan (VAF), Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR) and Egypt Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees (EVAR) used for identification of vulnerability focus mainly on socioeconomic factors, with limited weight given to specific protection needs such as child protection or prevention, risk mitigation and response to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). Separate pathways for CP and SGBV referrals have been developed to address the need to include families provided with child protection case management services among beneficiaries of cash assistance programmes. The region has a critical mass of data that can be analysed to better understand the impact of cash transfers on mitigating protection risks among children.

**Drawing on this evidence base, UNHCR has a comparative advantage in effectively delivering CBI as a protection tool that is informed and optimised based on robust protection data, and is well-integrated into complementary protection interventions, including case management and other assistance services.**

The following are the results from multi-country research launched in 2018 on refugee data in Egypt, Jordan and

Lebanon to study the impact of CBI on child protection outcomes. MENA Protection Service and the CBI Unit recently finalized this research project that aimed to demonstrate the impact of cash assistance modalities as a key protection tool to prevent and respond to child protection risks.

These studies were initiated in recognition of the fact that socio-economic vulnerability can increase significantly as the displacement of refugees becomes more protracted, leading to an array of protection concerns, including significant protection risks for children. The Syria crisis was identified as a particularly opportune context to examine as Syrian refugees are contending with increasing socio-economic vulnerability linked to increased indebtedness, the depletion of savings and limited livelihoods opportunities—a situation that has increased the vulnerability of women, girls, men and boys to a broad range of protection risks and negative coping strategies. In Jordan, for instance, 82% of Syrian refugees now live below the poverty line, and 79% resort to harmful coping strategies such as child marriage and child labour.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Lebanon has witnessed a sharp rise in a spectrum of severe negative coping strategies among displaced Syrian families, from 28% in 2014 to 67% in 2015, which include begging, the removal of children from school, child marriage, the worst forms of child labour and even survival sex.<sup>3</sup> As of 2018, nearly all (96%) of displaced Syrian families in Lebanon rely on some form of negative coping strategy to meet their basic needs.<sup>4</sup>

Noting the strong nexus between poverty and protection, the research in Lebanon focused on examining the impact of cash assistance as a key tool to prevent and mitigate child labour. While in Jordan and Egypt, the studies aimed to identify dynamics contributing to children’s exposure to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect (coded in UNHCR’s proGres-database as “LP-AN”)<sup>5</sup>, with a view to identifying profiles that are more susceptible to child protection risks. The studies have generated an invaluable analysis of household (HH)

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Cash Report <https://www.unhcr.org/5c5c5acc4.pdf>. The Syria and Iraq situations account for six of the ten largest UNHCR cash assistance programmes in the world (1. Lebanon, 2. Jordan, 4. Turkey, 7. Egypt, 8. Syrian Arab Republic, and 9. Iraq).  
<sup>2</sup> Care International, 7 Years into Exile: How urban Syrian refugees, vulnerable Jordanians and other refugees in Jordan are being impacted by the Syria crisis, June 2017, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017%20CARE%20Jordan%20Syrian%20refugees%20Summary%20final%20web%20%28revised%29%2016062017.pdf>.  
<sup>3</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-16, available at: [http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/01/20151223\\_LCRP\\_ENG\\_22Dec2015-full-versionoptimized.pdf](http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/01/20151223_LCRP_ENG_22Dec2015-full-versionoptimized.pdf).  
<sup>4</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017- 2020 (2018 update), available at: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LCRP2018\\_EN\\_Full\\_180122.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LCRP2018_EN_Full_180122.pdf)  
<sup>5</sup> LPAN: UNHCR ProGres-database needs code denoting children facing protections risks of Violence, exploitation, Abuse and neglect

copied strategies and the exposure of children to risks or incidents of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This results of these studies provide evidence of the need to strengthen identification of children at risk, to harmonize referrals and to standardize cash assistance

with protection-centred data, and to develop technical guidance on the design of UNHCR CBI, along with complementary protection interventions and services, to contribute to enhanced protection for children involved in child labour or facing other protection risks.

## Data Collection and Analysis

All three countries used a mixture of quantitative (HH survey data) and qualitative techniques (focus group discussions (FGDs), desk reviews and key informant interviews (KIIs)) for data collection and analysis. In Lebanon, the quantitative data used was taken from four data sources of families receiving different types of assistance: 1) regular multipurpose cash (MCAP); 2) one-off cash assistance as part of a response to protection incidents (PCAP); 3) one-off emergency cash assistance (ECA); and 4) protection services. In Egypt and Jordan, data sources were household data<sup>6</sup> and

case management information (urgent cash assistance (UCA) data, Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) data as well as from RAIS<sup>7</sup> and proGres<sup>8</sup> databases) to identify and profile those households that are more susceptible to child protection risks. In Jordan, this was analysed with a view to develop a CBI tool to be integrated into Best Interest Procedures to clarify where CBI would be appropriate in addressing child protection concerns in line with the Do No Harm principle, recognizing that CBI can sometimes produce unintended consequences.<sup>9</sup>

## Key Findings

### • One-refugee approach

Both Egypt and Jordan recommended the one-refugee policy and support. Egypt is already en route to implementing the recommendation of the one-refugee approach, i.e., aiming to support humanitarian interventions targeting all refugees irrespective of their country of origin and to apply the same standards, thereby aligning assessments, assistance and modalities being rolled out in 2019.

### • Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) analysis

All three studies found children living within female-headed households (FHHs) were at a higher risk of vulnerability to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation than other HHs, with boys being more susceptible than girls, particularly as the older boys in the HH faced the likelihood of being sent to work. It might be that the nature of abuse and exploitation against girls is more of a hidden nature as they are involved in domestic chores and hence not captured by the studies on child labour in public settings. Moreover, Principal Applicants (PAs) of families with children identified registered with the LP-AN specific needs code have lower educational attainment in Jordan and no income generating occupation. In Jordan FHHs receiving cash assistance over time experienced a decrease in vulnerability

### • Time elapsed since arrival

All three studies found that the duration of stay since arrival in the host countries plays a role in heightened vulnerability. Children who had just arrived in the host country are prone to exposure to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation/child labour. In Jordan children experiencing violence, abuse or neglect are nearly 12% more likely to have an informal arrival status (i.e. entered through unofficial entry points) than families in the random group. A higher percentage of cases having experienced violence, abuse or neglect were recorded in 2013, shortly after they entered Jordan.

<sup>6</sup> In Egypt this consisted of data collected previously through HH survey (EVAR) and BIA data from child protection case management; In Jordan this data was collected from ProGres, the refugee Registration database, RAIS (inter-agency coordination platform) and BIA data from child protection case management.

<sup>7</sup> RAIS (inter-agency Refugee Assistance Information System)

<sup>8</sup> proGres: UNHCR's Profile Global Registration System used for refugee registration

<sup>9</sup> For instance, field consultations confirm that community perceptions that all UASC are automatically eligible for cash assistance can actually incentivize high-risk behavior, such as refugee children leaving intact families to claim such assistance, along with potentially incentivizing high-risk movements by UASC and other children to countries of asylum if there are community perceptions that cash assistance is automatically available to all children of a particular profile.

- **Impact on structural drivers**

In all the three studies there was no direct, one-to-one link between CBI and child protection risks, but all studies found that cash has an indirect impact on mitigating structural drivers of child protection issues when part of a multifaceted response by improving access to services such as education, health, psychosocial support. In Lebanon, where the structural drivers identified for child labour include debt, size of HH, lost years of education, overcrowding in schools, age and gender characteristics (older/male children more at risk), living in FHHs or in HHs with a member having a disability, and the situation of children being unaccompanied or separated, it was found that cash increased access to skills development for caregivers and improved the supply side of schooling interventions (i.e. by increasing access and improving the quality of education provided). It was also noted that conditional cash assistance was more effective in addressing child labour than MCAP. In Egypt, almost all respondents (99%) claimed that they used UNHCR cash assistance to purchase food or to pay for rent (92%).

- **Impact on child well-being**

All three studies showed that CBI led to an increase in spending for food and better dietary diversity for children. CBI was also shown to have an inverse relationship with negative coping strategies by reducing stress within a HH, decreasing engagement in the worst forms of child labour like survival sex, and diminishing the risk of exposure to violence, abuse and neglect, thereby increasing the safety of children. In Jordan, the study found that removing HHs from MCAP exacerbates child neglect and trauma, as CBI had been reducing the psychological stress of parents having to eke out funds to fulfil basic needs. Furthermore, CBI was found to mitigate the severity of child labour, including the total number of hours worked. In Lebanon, for instance, HHs sent children to work for fewer hours as a result of receiving MCAP. In Egypt, data analysis showed that receiving cash decreased the likelihood of HHs using negative coping strategies. Ten percent of households not receiving cash assistance spent from their savings, while this figure was likely to be less than half if they received cash assistance. Hence cash assistance led to savings and asset formation. The most significant impact was observed among unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) who reported that cash allowed them to move to more physically secure areas, led to fewer incidents of violence, and allowed them to pay for their own food and transport, thus rendering them less susceptible to exploitation by others.

- **Schooling**

In Egypt, the study found that the high cost of education was cited as a reason for not attending school (38%). Violence, abuse and neglect was prevalent in HHs with lower education and among lower income earners. In Lebanon a positive correlation was found between HHs receiving MCAP and school enrolment rate within the HH. The provision of CBI led to an increased household income which in turn led to increased expenditure on education and associated costs (fees, materials, transportation, uniforms, shoes). Conversely, a discontinuation of cash assistance led to withdrawal of children from school thereby compromising long-term pathways to human capital accumulation.

- **Child marriage**

Only the study in Jordan examined the impact of CBI on child marriage. It found that MCAP might reduce vulnerabilities leading to child marriage and that a sustained amount of MCAP might delay the age of child marriage, but this area requires more research in order to be corroborated.

- **Amount of CBI provided**

All three studies concluded that the amount of transfer of MCAP was not enough to meet the beneficiaries' basic needs and had to both be complemented with additional funds and effectively integrated with other protection services, including case management, in order to have the most significant impact. In that sense, the cash received was helpful in meeting basic needs but not adequate when used alone. In Egypt, the study found that the impact of MCAP helped make children less vulnerable to incidents of violence, worst forms of child labour, including survival sex, etc. In Lebanon, receiving MCAP in

isolation from other interventions did not reduce child labour. However, in the presence of receiving supplementary assistance from other agencies, the impact of the assistance became statistically significant.

- **Duration of cash transfer**

In Jordan, one-off UCA had no effect (positively or negatively) overall in children's exposure to violence, abuse, or neglect. However, receiving MCAP over a longer time period was correlated with a decrease in the number of protection incidents reported. An exclusion from cash assistance, however, led to HHs withdrawing children from school as a first coping strategy. Moreover, it led to more violence against children due to an overall increase in psychological stress levels in the HH.

- **Impact of MPC on debt**

In Egypt, the most significant impact was observed among UASC who reported that, with cash assistance, they were able to pay for their own food and transport rather than becoming indebted, thus rendering them less susceptible to exploitation by others and at risk of violence. In Jordan and Lebanon, resorting to child labour was observed as a coping strategy against increasing indebtedness, especially among UASC, thereby raising an important concern about protection risks attached to accessing capital. In Lebanon, beneficiaries of MCA were found to be at a lower risk of indebtedness, which is a major structural driver of child labour.

- **Access to social networks**

Across the three countries, the studies found that, compared to refugees of other nationalities, Syrian and Iraqi refugees had better social networks which positively impacted their ability to leverage the cash assistance they received.

- **Impact on violence against children**

Across the three studies, MCAP led to mitigation of violence against children. In Lebanon, MCAP reduced the need for children to engage in child labour, thus making them less at risk of physical and sexual exploitation. In Jordan, MCAP appears to have an impact on decreasing family violence, but this requires further validation. In Egypt, MCAP reduced violence at home as children could afford to contribute to rent payments, and hence not forced to do household chores in their own house to offset living costs. It also allowed UASC to move to safer neighbourhoods thereby mitigating their exposure to places where they could become victims of exploitation and violence.

- **Conditional vs. unconditional cash transfers**

Studies in Egypt and Lebanon both found that conditional cash assistance contributes to greater positive impacts on a child's welfare, especially with respect to access to health and education. It was recommended to implement cash assistance with conditions attached for refugee children in Egypt to ensure a sustained outcome of keeping children in school as part of a broader protection and assistance strategy. By attaching conditions to cash assistance, the study indicated that follow up was required on monitoring the recipients to ensure that recipients remained as a part of the regular education system or linked to vocational training or other options leading to livelihoods.

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## Conclusions

All three studies indicated that CBI in isolation is not optimum, but that CBI in combination with other services provided in a sustained manner reduces vulnerabilities and has a positive impact on children's well-being, development and on human capital accumulation. They concluded that the impact of CBI would be enhanced with inclusion of protection indicators in the targeting formula as well as in the post distribution monitoring. The results also indicated that income

generating initiatives, especially for caregivers and women, as well as supply side interventions related to schooling, and building community awareness would be instrumental in optimising the CBI response to mitigate child labour. Hence, CBI alone may not prompt effective behavioural change to ensure successful outcomes for better education or health of children. Likewise, accompanying services may need their own additional inputs in the form of infrastructure support to improve their quality and availability to recipients. Complementing cash transfers with programmes to improve access and quality of services aims to fill the gaps left by CBI alone to augment the income effects and result in a greater, positive impact on the welfare of children.

# Lebanon: Assessing the Impact of Cash Assistance on Child Protection

UNHCR's Cash-Based Interventions and Child Labour in Lebanon

September 2018 – April 2019

## Executive summary

- 1. Reducing negative coping mechanisms:** The study indicated that families who received the PCAP and MCAP cash assistance, along with the food and winter cash assistance, were substantially better protected from harmful coping mechanism; overall, households receiving cash assistance are overall more able to address structural drivers, such as schooling and indebtedness, which would in turn lead to the reduction of child labor.
- 2. Mitigating household debt, child labour:** cash led to reducing the economic vulnerability of the household and thereby decreasing the protection risk of being indebted, a risk factor for child labour. Receiving MCAP improved the conditions of some of the children in labour, being sent to work to a lesser amount of time during the period of receipt of MCAP.
- 3. Impact on schooling:** Assistance was successful in allowing the children to enter and remain in school, with reduced rates of child labour.
- 4. Modulation of cash assistance:** Across regions, the study indicated that a reduced but consistent amount of cash assistance was preferred over a sudden discontinuation of cash and of food and winter incentives, with no alternate services in place. A discontinuation of assistance would often result in them being indebted/ no longer able to pay for basic items.

## Background

Lebanon has the highest per capita concentration of refugees globally with UNHCR data (2018) showing that 951,629 registered Syrian refugees currently reside in Lebanon.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that more than 55% of these registered Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon are children aged below 18 years old.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, 76% of displaced Syrians in Lebanon currently live below the poverty line<sup>3</sup> and child labour is on the rise among refugees as a consequence of using children to help sustain the household and support its income. Child labour, which already existed in Syria and Lebanon prior to the Syrian conflict, has now reached alarming levels, with an estimate of more than 100,000 children currently working in Lebanon, among which more than 35,000 are Syrians.<sup>4</sup> The number of Lebanese children engaged in child labour increased threefold between 2009 and 2016.<sup>5</sup>

UNHCR is providing multi-purpose cash assistance to households as well as cash for the purposes of responding to specific protection needs. Such assistance can have positive results for children through its impacts on nutrition, health and education. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the role of cash assistance by researching the evidence on the linkages between cash assistance and child-related outcomes such as school enrolment; participation in household chores, engagement in child labour and exposure of children to protection risks. The research also explores potential additional service packages that may support cash-based interventions to address child labour.

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, 2018. Syrian Regional Refugee Response, Lebanon, available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017- 2020 (2018 update), available at <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/04/LCRP-EN-2018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Inter-Agency Coordination, 2018. In Focus: Child Labour in Lebanon, available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/67049>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid



## Core research questions

This study examines the association between UNHCR's cash-based interventions (CBIs) and child labour.

More specifically it explores:

- Impact of multi-purpose cash assistance programme (MCAP) and Protection Cash Assistance Programme (PCAP) on child labour prevention, reduction, and response in Lebanon;
- Impact of supplementary services that enhance the effect of CBIs on child labour prevention, reduction, and response in Lebanon; and
- A monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to serve as a guiding paradigm for UNHCR's work on child labour, especially in relation to CBIs and other supplementary services.

The study adopts a mixed-method approach where data from quantitative analysis is complemented with findings from qualitative assessments, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the effect of CBIs on child labour.

The qualitative assessments consisted of 41 individual interviews as well as 10 focus group discussions (FGDs). The quantitative analysis is split into two separate but complementary parts: (1) outcome monitoring surveys of the MCAP provided between March and July 2018, and (2) selected sample of child labour cases identified prior to November 2017 and followed through November 2018.

## Sources of data

The research combined quantitative and qualitative techniques for data analysis.

The quantitative analysis consisted of data from:

- **Outcome monitoring survey data** from the MCAP between March and July (inclusive) 2018. This was analysed against a control group of non-beneficiaries.
- **Selected sample of child labour cases** identified prior to November 2017 and followed through November 2018.
- **Protection Cash Assistance Programme (PCAP) data**<sup>6</sup>
- **proGres**<sup>7</sup> data including a sample of child labour cases and a control group i.e. child labour cases not receiving any form of assistance from UNHCR.

The qualitative analysis included data generated from the 41 individual interviews and 10 FGDs of PCAP beneficiaries mentioned above as well as key informant interviews (KIIs) with UNHCR staff and CP personnel at other agencies. Selection of interviewees and FGD participants accounted for the following characteristics: gender of child currently or previously engaged in child labour, gender of head of household (HH) with a focus on female HHs, separated and/or unaccompanied children, HHs with disability or serious medical condition, and the size of the household.

<sup>6</sup> PCAP is a time bound cash assistance provided to those who are identified as being subjected to a protection-related incident, mainly sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); it is accompanied by case management

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR's Profile Global Registration System

## Outcomes of cash assistance

- 1. Duration of cash assistance:** Across regions, respondents indicated that a reduced but consistent amount of cash assistance was preferred over a sudden discontinuation of cash and of food and winter incentives, with no alternate services in place. Several families reported receiving additional assistance from case management agencies which provided, in some cases, clothing for children and occasional financial assistance after they had stopped receiving PCAP or MCAP. These families were able to register/retain their children in school. However, a discontinuation of assistance would result in them being indebted/ no longer able to pay for basic items.
- 2. External factors:** factors like bullying, discrimination and violence in schools lead to drop outs. Improving social cohesion and understanding in schools is necessary to enhance retention.
- 3. Reducing coping mechanisms:** The study indicated that families who received the PCAP and MCAP cash assistance along with the food and winter cash assistance were protected from harmful coping mechanisms. Regarding the risk of not attending school, participants responded that assistance was successful in allowing the children to enter and remain in school. More in detail, a comparison between the previous and current beneficiaries of cash shows that receiving MCAP improved the work conditions of some of the children engaged in labour, where they were sent to work to a lesser amount of time during the period of receipt of MCAP. Most of those children ended up going back to longer working hours, however, when MCAP was discontinued.

The incidence of children no longer engaged in child labour was a higher priority (9.1%) among beneficiaries receiving cash and food assistance; the percent of children engaged in worst forms of labour was twice as high among non-beneficiaries than beneficiaries (4% vs. 2% in the cash group and 1% among the cash plus food assistance group). It allowed unaccompanied and separated children to move to more physically secure areas and hence led to fewer incidents of violence against them.

- 4. Impact of cash assistance on mitigating child labour:** Regression analysis and FGDs revealed that cash assistance influenced child labor indirectly through its impact on structural drivers such as poverty and indebtedness, schooling and harmful coping mechanisms. In other words, households receiving cash assistance would be able to address structural drivers, such as schooling and indebtedness, which would in turn lead to the reduction of child labor.
- 5. Reducing household debt:** Families are heavily reliant on cash. Receiving cash led to reducing the economic vulnerability of the household and thereby decreasing the protection risk of being indebted, a risk factor for child labour. Child labour is one of the coping mechanisms, especially in households poor enough to resort to debts, and children are sent to work to reimburse the debt,<sup>8</sup> especially in cases where the child is the sole breadwinner. In such cases, cash amounts were not enough and seemed to have a minimal impact on preventing child labour. Moreover, the cost of not letting children work was not offset by the cash amount. But it prevented them from being further indebted and prone to further exploitation by the landlords.
- 6. Amount and duration:** Recipients reported that if assistance were discontinued, they would be compelled to send the children back to work. The sample showed that they were less likely to pull out of school when they were receiving both multipurpose cash and complementary assistance from other agencies.<sup>9</sup> This indicates that while the amounts provided by UNHCR were not enough, they were still instrumental in ensuring that the children were not sent back to work. Likewise, the discontinuation of these incentives led at least the adolescent children, aged 10-16 years, to resume working to support their families, especially in rural areas where adult men found hard to find work.

<sup>8</sup> Analysis as a result of FGDs with households and UASC

<sup>9</sup> This refers to assistance received from other agencies such as WFP

**7. Schooling:** The impact of cash on child labour was seen through its positive effect on level of schooling, retention in school, proportion of children going to school and preventing worsts forms of labour. The proportion of children going to school was 60% among households without child labour, as compared to 47% among households with child labour. Finally, those children not receiving cash assistance were more at risk of not attending school (89 % vs. 86%). Being at risk of not attending school also was associated with a higher prevalence of child labour (96.5% vs. 81.7%).

#### Children from households without child labour



#### Children from households with child labour

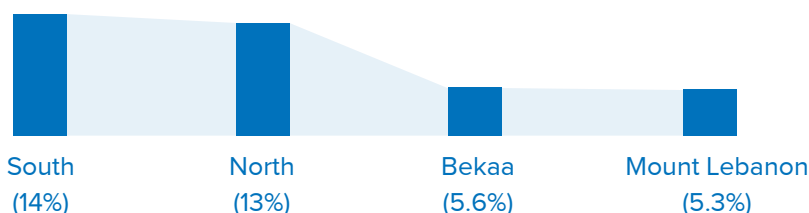


### Characteristics of refugee households: Child labour and other protection risks

#### Geographical differences:

A prevalence of child labour was seen in multiple sectors and spread unevenly in different areas of Lebanon.<sup>10</sup> For example, refugee children engaged in child labour in southern Lebanon mainly work in agriculture, such as orange picking. Agriculture is the third most hazardous type of work<sup>11</sup>, after mining and construction.<sup>12</sup> Landowners often recruit children, some as young as five years old, together with their parents to work and reside on the agricultural premises.<sup>13</sup> Child labour was seen as more prevalent in the South (14%) and North (13%) than in Mount Lebanon and Bekaa (5.3%, 5.6% respectively).

#### Child labour in Lebanon



#### Family size:

Households receiving cash were generally larger by one member than among the control group (6.7 vs. 5.7 members) than those not receiving cash. Similarly, the number of individuals in the age group of 3-18 years was higher among the MCAP group (3.8 vs. 2.6 individuals).

<sup>10</sup> This analysis was a result of the literature review

<sup>11</sup> This was further corroborated by the FGDs and KI

<sup>12</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2017: Child labour in agriculture in Lebanon, A guide for practitioners, available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7721e.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> International Labour Organization, 2012. Rapid assessment on child labour in North Lebanon (Tripoli and Akkar) and Bekaa Governorates, available at [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/arabstates/ro Beirut/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_210579.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/arabstates/ro Beirut/documents/genericdocument/wcms_210579.pdf)

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- Indebtedness:** Child labour was prevalent in households that had debts as a result of other essential expenses. In fact, it was used as a coping mechanism for indebted families. The effect of debt seemed to be aggravated among larger households as they need more money to survive.
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- Specific needs profiles:** Child labour was more prevalent among households with specific needs profile(s) such as: FHHs, single headed households, older age of head of household, household member with debt or with serious medical condition.<sup>14</sup> FGDs and KIs further revealed that children of caregivers without documentation and UASC, were likely to engage in child labour. Children from more educated parents were less likely to engage in child labour.
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- Age and gender:** An analysis of registration data revealed that most children engaged in child labour were male (84%) and older than 10 years.<sup>15</sup> Among them, child labour was more visible among older children (95% in the 11-16 years group vs. 88% among the 6-10 year-olds). During the study, 95% remained engaged in labour, 3% were engaged in worst forms of labour and 4% were identified as separated. Being a boy increased the odds of being a child labourer by 66%. FGDs revealed that most households perceived that girls were “not meant to go to work” as this would entail that they encounter sexual harassment at work or while commuting. However, not going to work does not translate into girls going to school, as they are likely to be involved in domestic chores.
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- School attendance:** Child labour was more prevalent among those who were not sending their children to school. The number of children going to school was higher among cash recipient HHs than among non-recipients (2.5 children in school compared to 1.8). Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries reported not sending their children to school due to a reduction in assistance. A higher percentage of beneficiaries reported not sending their children to school due to school expenses that they cannot afford (32% vs. 22% in the control group). Overcrowding in schools, differences in curricula, language barriers (Arabic vs. French as the language of instruction), the considerable non-acceptance rate of Syrian children, as well as bullying by peers and verbal abuse by teachers and bus drivers were cited as factors leading them to drop out of school and engage in work.
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- Lost years of education:** FGDs indicated that one factor contributing to child labour was that children did not go to school because they have been out of school for so many years due to the war and displacement, and when they attempt to enroll in school in Lebanon, they are often placed in class grades that are below their level, or are rejected. Some perceived work as a better alternative than going to school.

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<sup>14</sup> Quantitative bivariate analysis corroborated odds ratios > 1 for all these variables

<sup>15</sup> The quantitative analysis revealed that boys had a higher propensity towards child labour (95% vs. 91% in girls)

**Lack of legal documentation:**

Child labour was seen in households where male caregivers lacking documentation were less likely to go to work due to fear of being detained. They either end up not working or working irregularly. In such cases, child labour was reported as a source of survival family income. Few male adults reported having legal residency permits, either through UNHCR or through a national sponsor, with the latter being a costly affair with costs up to LBP 400,000 for a 6-month permit. Restrictions due to legal documentation were less visible among women where none cited a lack of documentation as barrier for their work or source of fear of movement from one area to another.

**Gaps and challenges**

1. The short time period allocated for data collection negatively impacted the representativeness of the sample by limiting the number of interviews that could be conducted and the opportunities for organizing FGDs in some locations due to competing priorities at the field level.
2. Similarly, the purposive sampling adopted may have introduced a degree of bias in the findings, especially at the level of the few current PCAP beneficiaries and current MCAP beneficiaries who started receiving cash assistance only a month or two prior to the time of the interview. Normally, a longer period of cash assistance is needed to start observing the effect of the latter on child labour prevention and reduction.

**Conclusion and next steps**

- The findings underscore the use of cash as a protection tool to improve child welfare, but also points to knowledge gaps, for instance regarding the interplay between cash assistance and other protection interventions that should be assessed more closely in the future.
- Strengthen cross-referrals between CBIs and protection services: Multi-purpose cash assistance should be complemented by protection services. It should be part of the overall case plan developed for identified children at risk, including those at risk of child labour.
- Addressing economic vulnerabilities in a sustainable manner: Given that cash assistance only reaches a minority of refugees, support to reducing the economic vulnerability of families should be complemented by other services leading to income generation such as skills training and basic equipment to ensure economic empowerment especially to FHHs.
- Improve the supply side of schooling: School retention is also supported by strengthening targeted interventions in schools such as improving the quality of schooling, social cohesion and understanding of cultural differences.
- Build community support: This will help in addressing some of the contributing factors to child labour such as female heads of households who are unable to work due to having to care for children and/or other dependents. Activities such as organizing peer-support groups will mobilize the strengths and resources of the community and provide them with training and much need skills for self-reliance.
- Additional costs should be supported: Cash assistance should consider all expenses related to education, including transportation, which are contributing factors for children not attending or dropping out of school and engaging in child labour.

# Jordan: Assessing the Impact of Cash Assistance on Child Protection

Strengthening the Use of Cash-Based Interventions<sup>1</sup> within the Best Interest Procedures for Refugee Children in Jordan

June 2020

## Executive summary

- 1. Correlation between HHs receiving cash and the likelihood of children being exposed to VAN.** Sustained and consistent monthly basic needs cash assistance reduces the structural drivers of violence, abuse and neglect by increasing access to essential services including food, medical care and/or education, and improving and the overall socioeconomic situation of the family/HH<sup>2</sup>, thereby having a favorable impact on child well-being.
- 2. Longer-term impact of cash on mitigating the risk of VAN among children within families** could not be clearly identified due to the lack of relevant time series. However, qualitative assessment showed that **violence among children depends on factors such as access to services and resources and emotional and material support, among others.**
- 3. Duration of cash assistance and protection incidents:** The study observed that the longer the duration of assistance, the more it led to a decrease in the number of documented protection incidents. Similarly, the longer the duration of cash provided, the less likely children are to become child parents. Cash to cover basic needs provides HHs with relevant support that could mitigate the risk of a child spouse being exposed to domestic violence.
- 4. Cash provision is best used within the framework of comprehensive services.** Cash used in conjunction with these services, in particular when part of case management, lead to a greater impact on a family's coping strategies.

## Background

Between September 2018 and April 2019 when this research was carried out, Jordan hosted some 750,000 refugees out of which over 650,000 were refugees from Syria, according to UNHCR registration data. Half of the refugee population is below 18 years and over 82% of all Syrian refugees live under the Jordanian poverty line.<sup>3</sup> Socio-economic challenges combined with limited access to public services increase tensions within refugee families and contribute to negative coping strategies. Existing cash-based intervention (CBI) tools, including the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF),<sup>4</sup> focus mainly on Basic Needs/Social Transfer programmes which concentrate on socioeconomic factors rather than specific protection needs related to child protection (CP) or sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Separate pathways for CP and SGBV referrals are being developed to address the need to include families receiving CP case management services into cash assistance programmes.

<sup>1</sup> According to its Policy on Cash-Based Interventions (CBI), UNHCR defines cash-based interventions as "all interventions in which cash or vouchers for goods or services are provided to refugees and other persons of concern on an individual or community basis. The concept does not include cash or vouchers provided to governments or other state actors or payments to humanitarian workers or service providers. The term can be used interchangeably with Cash Based Transfers and Cash Transfer Programming." For more information on CBI, including the Policy on Cash-Based Interventions, see <https://www.unhcr.org/cash-based-interventions.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Urgent Cash Assistance in comparison does not show a strong effect (positive or inverse correlation) on child refugees' exposure to VAN.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF) Population Report of 2017 – The Vulnerability Assessment Framework is an inter-agency initiative to put in place a system that supports the humanitarian community in Jordan: 1. establish a profile of vulnerability among Syrian refugee households and enables monitoring of changes in vulnerability over time; 2. target assistance in a more efficient and equitable manner, based on the application of common vulnerability criteria; 3. strengthen coordination and decision-making of the delivery of humanitarian assistance. For more information on VAF see: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/working-group/54>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

## Core research questions

The main objective of this research is to analyse contributing factors for violence, abuse and neglect at household (HH) level,<sup>5</sup> and assessing the impact of existing cash programmes on children at risk of exposure or exposed to violence and neglect. The outcomes of the research will be used as evidence to support the use of cash assistance as a combined tool, and part of a broader assistance system, to mitigate specific protection risks for partners providing case management services. Core research questions included:

- What could be potential contributing factors mitigating, increasing, or decreasing violence, abuse and neglect (hereinafter referred to as VAN) and other CP concerns amongst refugee children in Jordan, i.e. what are the common factors or characteristics within households where children are recorded as being at risk of violence, abuse and neglect?<sup>6</sup>
- How does the provision of cash assistance impact VAN within the family?

## Sources of data

The research is mainly based on quantitative data analysis from four different UNHCR data sets:

- **Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS)** data on protection services for children with case management services who were subjected to abuse or neglect;<sup>7</sup>
- **proGres**<sup>8</sup> data including a random sample of families where no VAN was identified for any of the children in the household (HH), serving as a control group;
- **RAIS**<sup>9</sup> data on cash assistance provided on a monthly basis to recipients to meet basic needs and;
- **RAIS** data of HHs receiving urgent cash assistance (UCA) to address emergency protection concerns through a one-off cash grant.

## Outcomes of cash assistance

The study showed the following impact of cash assistance on households (short, medium and longer-term):

1. **Given the complexities of family circumstances impacted by violence, war and displacement, cash provision is best used within the framework of comprehensive services.** Comprehensive protection and assistance interventions would apply an age, gender and diversity approach, and include individual and group counseling, psychosocial support, positive parenting skills training, and referrals to medical and educational services. Cash used in conjunction with these services, in particular when part of case management, would lead more effectively to a positive impact on a family's coping strategies by creating an enabling environment and systemic approach to protection.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that both the terms "family" and "household" are used in this report, primarily because of the language used in the sources of data collected. While a "household" may include members who are not related, the terms are relatively comparable for the broader purposes of this study.

<sup>6</sup> This is referred to as LP-AN by UNHCR and is a specific needs code in UNHCR's registration system

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR provided an anonymized dataset containing 74 data points including a total of 21,992 individuals. Of these, 10,718 individuals were obtained from the CPIMS database and included 2,979 exposed to abuse, violence or neglect (LP-AN).

<sup>8</sup> "proGres" is UNHCR's "Profile Global Registration System".

<sup>9</sup> "RAIS" refers to the "Refugee Assistance Information System" and is the main coordination and de-duplication tool for assistance delivery in countries across the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq). Over 200 partners are actively using RAIS.

- 2. An inverse correlation between HHs receiving cash and the likelihood of children being exposed to VAN.** Sustained and consistent monthly basic needs cash assistance reduces the structural drivers of violence, abuse and neglect by increasing access to essential services including food, medical care and/or education, and improving and the overall socioeconomic situation of the family/HH<sup>10</sup>, thereby having a favorable impact on child well-being. This outcome is substantiated further by CP data that points towards child marriage as one of the most pressing concerns in the community, the core cause for its surge country-wide being attributed to deteriorating socioeconomic conditions of refugees and reduced levels of humanitarian assistance.<sup>11</sup>
- 3. The longer-term impact of cash on mitigating the risk of VAN among children within families cannot clearly be identified from the current analysis due to the lack of relevant data over time.** However, qualitative assessment based on information obtained through focus group discussions (FGDs) shows that violence among children depends on several factors, including:
  - a. the extent to which harmful traditional practices and gender norms might result in inequality,
  - b. access to services and resources,
  - c. emotional and material support, and prospects.
- 4. Cash assistance is more effective when complemented with comprehensive CP services:** When provided, however, cash assistance is overall correlated with a decrease in the likelihood that a family would be documented as having had a case of VAN. Here, case management and separate pathways for referrals to cash assistance play a particularly important role, i.e. families where children were exposed to VAN might have able providers/earners, but protection concerns often also need to be addressed through a wide range of services that would mitigate stressors within the HHs.<sup>12</sup>
- 5. Duration of cash assistance:** The study observed that the longer the duration of assistance, the more it led to a decrease in the number of documented protection incidents. Similarly, while assessing the impact of cash on child marriage<sup>13</sup> or child parenting, the longer the duration of cash provided, the less likely children are to become child parents. While cash is not seen to have a direct impact on reducing child marriage, it had an overall positive impact on access to services, including health and education thereby mitigating the potential negative consequences of child marriage. As CP and SGBV data show, child marriage is often associated with higher levels of domestic violence, particularly when the age gap between the spouses is large. Cash to cover basic needs provides HHs with relevant support that could mitigate the risk of a child spouse being exposed to domestic violence.

## Characteristics of refugee households: Children experiencing violence, abuse and neglect at home and other protection risks

Several demographic aspects within the HH are identified as contributing to VAN, including being a single-headed HH, lower educational levels among caregivers as well as limited income earning opportunities within the family. Overall, the analysis showed an inverse correlation between cash assistance and the occurrence of VAN. HHs receiving longer-term cash assistance showed less prevalence of violence, abuse, neglect.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Urgent Cash Assistance in comparison does not show a strong effect (positive or inverse correlation) on child refugees' exposure to VAN.

<sup>11</sup> Source of data: GBV and Child Protection IMS data (Inter-agency data on child Protection and GBV).

<sup>12</sup> As there are several cash inclusion and referral modalities for protection cases, including standard referrals for home visits through UNHCR's partner MINDSET or separate referral for exceptional inclusion in basic needs/social assistance through CP staff, this caseload should be further analysed.

<sup>13</sup> Although outside of the scope and data set used for this study, background information from research on child marriage in Jordan, albeit not specifically focusing on refugees, found the prevalence of child marriage generally declines as wealth increases. This might be attributable to the particular vulnerabilities faced by refugees. To fully understand these inconsistencies, however, further research would have to be conducted. See UNICEF, A Qualitative Study on the Underlying Social Norms and Economic Causes that Lead to Child Marriage in Jordan (2019), pp. 43-44, available at <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/1796/file/Jordan-Reports.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Note that the data used is based on where case management is provided and does not represent country-wide prevalence of child protection concerns.



**Family size:**

Large HHs are directly correlated with higher exposure of VAN against children. In a considerable number of households, if one child has been exposed to VAN, other children in that household have also been exposed to such incidents. By contrast, families with larger family sizes show overall less socio-economic vulnerability. This could be attributed to additional family members, possibly including children, assisting the family to cope.

**Gender:**

Over half (55%) of all children subjected to incidents of VAN are boys. Higher levels of vulnerabilities are also recorded amongst HHs who have boys. As it is widely accepted that incidents among girls often go unreported due to gender norms that keep them at home (which makes it difficult to be aware of and access services), instill fear of stigma, etc., it is possible that there could be more VAN among girls than the data reflect, warranting further research in this area. The overall sample shows that approximately 30% of all households are headed by a female (FHH). FHHs are more commonly reporting incidents of VAN among their children, and there is a higher likelihood of protection events being recorded in progress among FHHs than among random households. FHHs also reported increased challenges to access services. Women and girls are still especially at risk in early stages following arrival to the country, but those receiving cash show a decrease in their vulnerability with time, thus indicating that Basic Needs cash interventions have a positive impact on pulling at-risk women out of vulnerability.

**30% of all households are headed by a female (FHH)**


- more commonly reporting incidents of VAN among their children
- higher likelihood of protection events being recorded in progress
- reported increased challenges to access services

**Geographical differences:**

The analysis refers to a higher number of incidents of violence reported in Mafraq and Zarqa Governorates (which host the two main camps) than in other governorates. This was confirmed by data analysis conducted by the CPIMS Task Force in 2018 indicating that in Mafraq Governorate (including Zaatar Camp) and Zarqa Governorate (including Azraq Camp), more children were identified and provided with child protection service. Higher numbers were identified in camps which is attributed to an overall more effective outreach mechanism that has been established in the camps and to frequent home visits. Harsh living conditions and instability of shelters might also contribute to stress, frustration and lack of hope which in turn might trigger VAN. HHs and families in camps are more easily accessible. However, with 85% of the refugee population residing in urban areas, this support strengthening of ongoing efforts to ensure better outreach to the urban refugee community.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Note that in Jordan only urban registered refugees receive cash and the camp population is not reflected in the analysis. Given that a high number of cases were identified in camps due to stronger systems, further analysis is required on the needs of camp population with regards to cash and its impact.

### Entry to the host country through official vs. unofficial border points:

Given the entry routes to Jordan over the past nine years of the Syria crisis, 80% of refugees entered Jordan irregularly through the northern border crossing points.<sup>16</sup> Among HHs arriving through unofficial border crossing points and those arriving legally (through Queen Alia International Airport or through the Jaber Border crossing), significant differences are observed. Those with irregular entry status were exposed to a higher prevalence of VAN than those entering through official border crossing points. It is possible that the overall sense of cumulative insecurity that results from the risks faced during flight when approaching and crossing an unofficial border point, resulting in irregular entry status and an absence of documents, initially, might have increased stress among households, thereby triggering manifestations of frustration, emotional distress and VAN. To fully understand these findings, however, further research would have to be conducted.

### Education:

The sample population showed overall low educational attainment, with less than six percent of Principle Applicants<sup>17</sup> of the analysed data holding anything more than a secondary school education. There are considerable levels of incidents of VAN reported in schools, while domestic violence is largely underreported. Although outside of the scope and data set used for this study, relevant background research on child marriage in Jordan, albeit not specifically focusing on refugees, indicates that education remains a strong preventative factor against child marriages.<sup>19</sup> Incidents of VAN against children whose parents/caregivers have a higher educational degree is reported less frequently. Thus, higher education amongst parents/caregivers appears to have a favourable impact on positive, non-violent communication and parenting. This supports the need to sustain ongoing programmes to increase parental capacity to protect children, e.g. through good parenting classes, parental counseling, child marriage peer support groups, etc.

### Occupation and income-earning opportunities:

The clear majority (68%) of parents/caregivers of all sampled households do not have any income. The analysis shows a slight correlation between the existence of violence within a family and a family's access to income-earning opportunities. Children whose parents have work opportunities are less exposed to violence at home. However, the data analysis also shows that children might face neglect, other risks or higher vulnerability within and outside of the family space if they are living in households where parents or caregivers work, as they are probably left alone for longer periods of time.<sup>20</sup>

**The clear majority (68%) of parents/caregivers of all sampled households do not have any income.**



<sup>16</sup> From mid-2013-2016, entry into Jordan through official border crossings was increasingly restricted. Border crossings were progressively closed from the western entry points, located near larger cities in Jordan and southern Syria, towards the eastern border points. Many Syrians began to traverse the deserts of eastern Syria to enter Jordan until the whole border was closed in 2016. The majority crossed through unofficial border points for various reasons, including fear of approaching actors controlling the Syrian side of the border, and restrictions imposed by the authorities controlling the Jordanian side of the border. Those who entered into Jordan, including through unofficial border points, were subsequently registered jointly by UNHCR and the Jordanian authorities. The Jaber crossing was reopened in 2018, but access remains restricted.

<sup>17</sup> The person registered as the "Principle Applicant" in proGres is usually the head of a household or a family, or the central person filing an asylum claim.

<sup>18</sup> While analysis on VAN against children should be based on data reflecting the perpetrator, the location and the form of violence, current data recorded in proGres or/CPIMS does not include the necessary details, resulting in a mix of data on children exposed to VAN at home as well as in public spaces.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF, A Qualitative Study on the Underlying Social Norms and Economic Causes that Lead to Child Marriage in Jordan (2019), p. 9, available at <https://www.unicef.org/jordan/media/1796/file/Jordan-Reports.pdf>. See also UNFPA, Marrying Too Young-End Child Marriage (2012), available at <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MarryingTooYoung.pdf> (noting a similar correlation in other development and displacement settings).

<sup>20</sup> Particularly if both parents/all caretakers work, or if single parents/caretakers work.

**Coping strategies:**

Refugees reportedly deplete their resources as time elapses following their arrival in Jordan. This is reflected in the analysis where it was observed that HH vulnerability increases for those who have stayed in Jordan for an extended number of years and are not receiving cash. Contrarily, refugees with family members abroad show less vulnerability given the potential network of resources in the form of material support and remittances.

**Gaps and challenges**

1. Data obtained currently through Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) does not sufficiently allow UNHCR to apply impact-based analysis to CP when assessing whether cash assistance is in the best interest of the child. This area requires the inclusion of additional data points and analysis in the BIA and further research, preferably over a longer time period.
2. As CP case management is subject to heightened data protection standards for reasons of safety and confidentiality and is thus isolated from RAIS and basic biodata, and because CP case management data includes considerable narrative analysis, it is difficult to cross tabulate data sets.
3. Quality of information within case management procedure needs to be upscaled and information on cash inputs at various stages of the case management process need to be included;

**Conclusion and next steps**

- The study showed that protection risk levels among children exposed to VAN vary greatly. Identification and documentation of neglect, which is a failure to provide necessary care, requires a high level of technical skills and remains underreported. There is a need to ensure that violence, abuse and neglect are broken down and addressed separately and assess the correlation of cash on each of them i.e. violence/abuse and neglect.
- The study indicates that cash interventions can be an effective tool if part of diverse protection and assistance interventions. It has a positive impact on a family's access to essential and life-saving services, hence contributing to the physical safety and emotional well-being of family members, including children. It is assumed that the level of psychological distress is reduced through the use of cash as an assistance modality. Family composition and diverse networks also play an important role in reducing protection risks as they provide social support and include remittances through family members located either in the country of origin (COO) or in a third country, display higher resilience and are less associated with documented cases of VAN. A higher number of VAN incidents was observed among FHHs who provide for a large number of dependents and face challenges in coping with the impact of forced displacement, strained resources, separation from family members and spouses, gender inequality as well as the right to engage in livelihood opportunities legally as refugees. This outcome is clearly supported by qualitative case management data and has been shared as part of the year end CPIMS Task Force report for 2018.
- Finally, the study also indicates that the analysis of direct links between the provision of basic needs cash assistance and its impact on several violence-related Specific Needs Codes could be optimized by increasing the extent to which protection case management and assistance data sets inform each other. Adjustments could be made to strengthen the data collected by UNHCR and partners. The use of the Child Protection module in proGres v4 for case management would allow for key data points to be available in proGres. By incorporating information about cash assistance, that is available in RAIS into protection case management records, the monitoring and follow-up of case management services, as well as the impact that cash assistance has on it could be enhanced.

# Egypt: Assessing the Impact of Cash Assistance on Child Protection

Strengthening the Use of Cash-Based Interventions within the Best Interests Procedures for Refugee Children in Egypt

September 2018 – April 2019

## Executive summary

The research assessed the actual, verifiable impact of existing cash-based interventions (CBI) on children exposed to or at risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. It also analysed the factors contributing to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.

The research findings will drive the planning for a second phase to develop a CBI-eligibility tool to be integrated into CP assessments and that will aim to collect both qualitative and quantitative information on children experiencing or at risk of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation to inform cash-based programming.

**Impact of cash on violence and stress levels:** the study found a positive correlation between households receiving cash and a decrease in the likelihood of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) being exposed to violence<sup>1</sup>. The majority of respondents noted that cash assistance helped them in reducing their level of stress significantly or moderately.

**Meeting basic needs:** the analysis showed that cash was helpful in addressing some of the survival needs of UASC, although it was not enough to cover all their basic needs.

**Impact of cash on child labour:** drawing on the data collected through the EVAR, the correlation between cash assistance and reduction in child labour was found to be weak, which could be partially attributed to the fact that the amount of cash provided was insufficient to fill the income gap, as well as other protection-related factors.

## Background

As of December 2018, the total number of refugees registered with UNHCR was 244,910<sup>2</sup> (including those from Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Eritrea). Refugee arrivals in Egypt were relatively stable between 1990 and the late 2000s. Since 2011, due to the conflict in Syria, thousands of displaced Syrians fled to neighbouring countries, and Egypt became host to a significant number of Syrian refugees. In the same period, there were 4,176 UASC registered with UNHCR, of which the largest number consisted of unaccompanied children.

The situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt is characterized by challenging socio-economic conditions which negatively impact refugee protection, self-reliance and inclusion, especially regarding access to employment, public education, and health services. Recent increases in the costs of living have impacted the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers, and stretched their capacity to meet their basic needs, leading many to resort to harmful coping strategies. UASC are among the most marginalized, and vulnerable to heightened protection risks while possessing limited resources.

<sup>1</sup> Source for this section: FGDs and EVAR 2018

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR Egypt Monthly Statistical Report – December 2018, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/unhcr-egypt-documents>

In order to determine which households receive cash assistance, UNHCR conducts vulnerability assessments such as the EVAR (Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees)<sup>3</sup> on a regular basis. The EVAR focuses on demographic and socio-economic factors. A separate, qualitative assessment is undertaken as part of the child protection (CP) case management process, where UASC and other children-at-risk undergo a best interests assessment (BIA). The BIA, which is a CP-specific assessment does not collect quantitative socio-economic data. If the assessment results indicate it would be in their best interest to be provided with monthly cash assistance, children are provided with cash assistance until the child turns 18. This cash assistance is provided through the CP partner and is part of an integrated case management service.

### Core research questions

The primary objective of this study was to assess the impact of cash assistance along with other protection services on violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as other CP concerns among refugee children in Egypt. The research study aimed to identify factors that impact positively or negatively on CP.

### Sources of data

The analysis made use of a desk review conducted in two main parts: first, a review and an analysis of all data provided by UNHCR Egypt on CP risks in order to see the strength of the correlation between CP issues (violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation) and cash assistance. The second part included a review of all existing CP and CBI reports and other related reports in Egypt to assess potential correlation between cash and CP issues.

In addition to the desk-review, the research team reviewed three sets of data obtained through the following tools:

- **Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees (EVAR) 2018;**
- **A sample of 17 Best Interest Assessment (BIA) Forms; and**
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 20 UASC and in-depth interviews with 72 UASC.**

In addition, preliminary findings from the UNHCR-UNICEF Winterization Assistance Post-Utilization Survey were used to corroborate some of the analysis.

### Outcomes of cash assistance

1. **A positive correlation between households receiving cash and a decrease in the likelihood of UASC being exposed to violence<sup>4</sup>:** The majority of the UASC reported that violence decreased slightly after receiving cash assistance enabling them to contribute towards the rent and food instead of doing domestic chores which was exposing them to abuse from other household members. Cash assistance also allowed older UASC to move to more secure neighbourhoods and pay off debts. Moreover, it led to a decrease in violence outside the house, as most children reported that they can at least use transportation instead of walking in the street, thus avoiding

<sup>3</sup> The Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees (EVAR) is conducted on an annual basis.

<sup>4</sup> This document refers to data collected during the most recent Egypt Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees (EVAR) 2018 that is pending publication.

<sup>4</sup> Source for this section: FGDs and EVAR 2018

street violence. Children also reported that they started to feel safe, at least inside their homes, after receiving cash assistance. When asked about their degree of satisfaction with the cash assistance, the majority (around 85%) reported that they are satisfied, as they are now in a better situation than before getting the cash assistance. The majority of respondents noted that cash assistance helped them in reducing their level of stress significantly or moderately (25% and 62%, respectively).

- 2. Impact of cash assistance in meeting basic needs, reducing financial burden:** Almost all respondents indicated that they use cash assistance to purchase food (99%) or to pay for rent (92%), even though it does not fully cover all their basic survival needs. In addition, only seven percent of children used the cash to purchase clothes or shoes, while only one percent managed to make any savings. The analysis showed that cash was helpful in addressing some of the survival needs of UASC, although it was not enough to cover all their basic needs. The result was further confirmed after analysing the data from the post-utilization survey of the winterization assistance provided jointly by UNHCR and UNICEF at the end of 2018, where the majority of the UASC reported that cash assistance helped in improving their living conditions significantly or slightly (74%). Similarly, 86% reported that the cash assistance reduced their financial burden and 94% reported that it had positively impacted their living conditions.
- 3. Impact of cash assistance on child labour:** The EVAR questionnaire includes a set of questions on the incidence of refugee child labour including the type of work, working hours per week, and exploitative working conditions. Drawing on the data collected through the EVAR, the correlation between cash assistance and reduction in child labour was found to be very weak, which could be partially attributed to the fact that the amount of cash provided was insufficient to fill the income gap, as well as other protection-related factors.
- 4. Duration and amount of cash assistance:** The average duration of receiving cash assistance among UASC is almost 10 months.<sup>5</sup> Almost 50% of UASC interviewed for the study had received less than EGP 5,000 (US\$ 294) in total from UNHCR as basic needs/immediate protection support. Twenty-four percent have received between EGP 5,000 and EGP 10,000 (US\$ 588); and 28% received more than EGP 10,000. FGDs revealed that the amount of cash assistance was not only insufficient but needed to be complemented with other protection services.

Subsequently, in April 2019, the cash assistance value for UASC was revised by UNHCR Egypt to cover 56% of the minimum expenditure basket.<sup>6</sup> Shortly thereafter, UNHCR and WFP Egypt worked jointly on the inclusion of UASC in food assistance. Based on a rights-based approach and UNHCR's protection mandate with respect to children of concern, this resulted in a high priority for food assistance being given to all unaccompanied children registered with UNHCR with over 3,300 children jointly targeted by both agencies.

- 5. Characteristics of refugee households:** Protection risks for UASC and other refugee children
- 6. Household characteristics:** More than half of refugees and asylum-seekers (53%) in Egypt are Syrians followed by Sudanese, who represent around a quarter of the registered refugee population in Egypt (as of end-2018, when data was analysed).<sup>7</sup> Almost one-third of households have one or two children while 20% of households have three to four children. Only four percent of households have five or more children. In terms of household composition, unaccompanied children reported sharing accommodation with other refugees (non-relatives). A quarter of them were living in households with five members, and 40% with six or more members. Interestingly, exposure to violence was less likely among children within larger households.<sup>8</sup> Families with larger family sizes showed less likelihood of exposure to violence among children. This could be attributed to additional family members enabling the family to cope better.

<sup>5</sup> Note: most UASC who are assessed as in need of cash assistance continue receiving the grants until they turn 18

<sup>6</sup> As of January 2019, UNHCR developed a household minimum expenditure with a value US\$ 89.50

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR Egypt Monthly Statistical Report – December 2018, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/unhcr-egypt-documents>

<sup>8</sup> Source data is EVAR 2018 and evidence corroborated by FGDs

### Number of children per household



7. **Duration in the host country:** Most UASC have been living in Egypt for one to two years. The interviews revealed that the more recent arrivals (less than one year) were more likely to experience violence, due to lack of immediate support mechanisms and social networks. With time, these networks were built and there was a slight resilience observed among the children.
8. **Protection risks:** Most UASC reported that they had lost their connection with their family members and relatives in their country of origin and felt afraid and isolated as they do not trust other people. Some of them reported that they were beaten in the streets or experienced theft even by flatmates. A few were subjected to harassment and bullying in the street. Moreover, qualitative data from the BIAs of the interviewed children indicated that living conditions for most were inadequate. Most children reported sleeping on the floor, either using a mattress or directly on a rug. Moreover, some cases were suffering from poor ventilation in their accommodation. Almost 9 in 10 of the interviewed children had experienced one or more acts of violence in the past year (i.e. emotional (75%), physical (80%), or economic (30%)).
9. **Education:** Eighty-nine percent of refugee children aged 6 to 17 years were attending school, while 11% were not attending school. Among those not attending, 40% were not attending due to high cost of education; 15% were not aware of procedures of registration; and 14% were facing challenges due to lack of proper legal documentation. A few mentioned late timings of the second school shift, or that they were suffering from disability or a serious medical condition.<sup>9</sup> In-depth interviews with UASC showed that, while three-quarters of children had attended school in their country of origin, only one-third of children had ever attended school in Egypt, indicating that this significant drop in schooling was rather a result of displacement and not necessarily related to receiving, cash assistance or the insufficient value of assistance.
10. **Incidence of child labour:** As indicated from the study, only three percent of accompanied children aged 5 to 17 years reported that they were working, either for someone else, for a household member, or in a business belonging to a household member, with most of the working refugee children being male.<sup>10</sup> Data also indicated that around three-quarters of working children age 15 to 17 years were more likely to leave school for work. Eighty-five percent of working refugee children were working for more than 43 hours per week. They were engaged in different types of work: two-thirds were engaged in full time work, while one-third were engaged temporarily in casual work, and a few were also engaged in seasonal jobs. Twenty-six percent of working children were likely to be exposed to carrying heavy loads; 45% to dust, fumes or gases; and 11% to heat or humidity. Around one third of the children were exposed to other hazards as a consequence of their working conditions.<sup>11</sup>
11. **Impact on exposure to violence:** Based on in-depth interviews with UASC and quantitative analysis, the study showed a slight correlation between receiving cash assistance and reduction of violence.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, UASC reported that the amount of money they receive helps to pay the rent and hence makes them less susceptible to violence. However, the amount is low, so they still had to live in slum areas with limited services. In some of these neighbourhoods, these children are also subjected to violence in the streets where neighbours know they are alone, and no one can support them if they are humiliated or abused.

<sup>9</sup>/10/11 Ibid

<sup>12</sup> The correlation was not very strong due to the small number of sample size analyzed in the study

## Gaps and challenges

1. The main challenge was that EVAR data as collected at the household level included rather limited data points on violence against children. Moreover, all UASC cases with BIAs were not part of the EVAR sample, therefore the different datasets were not inter-operable or linked and were thus not comparable.
2. All children interviewed through FGDs were receiving cash assistance from UNHCR. The study was not able to establish a control group which could be used to compare both situations of receiving and not receiving cash.
3. While information on cash assistance is included in CP case management documentation, this information also needs to be stored in a manner which enhances age-sensitive programming and allows it to be more user-friendly for statistical analysis.
4. Based on feedback from UASC interviewed for the study, strengthened follow-up on each child's situation through a case management agency is needed, including in relation to cash assistance and basic needs.

## Conclusion and next steps

- The study concluded that CBI can have an overall positive impact on CP as part of a more comprehensive response. **Based on the same analysis, it was recommended to increase the amount of the cash assistance, to link it with other cash assistance (from other agencies) and to complement it with CP services.**
- As a follow up to this research, a more detailed analysis on the impact of CBI on reducing violence is suggested, including as part of broader protection and assistance service provision. In this regard, a comprehensive questionnaire should be developed to include questions on children's exposure to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation (both emotional and physical aspects), at home, school, and in public, as well as socio-economic factors related to household composition, environment, housing characteristics, income, expenditure, and the cash assistance received. A comprehensive survey should be designed to investigate if the cash amount is sufficient to guarantee acceptable minimum living conditions that may lead to reduction of violence and mitigate other risks.



### **Credits**

Sophie Etzold, Rasha Batarseh, Rita-Flora Kevorkian, Steven Choka, Bernadette Muteshi, Amit Sen, Pallavi Rai, Holly Berman, Giuseppe Simeon and Annalaura Sacco at UNHCR, as well as Shadi Saleh, PhD MPH, Hani Dimassi, PhD, Fatimah El Jamil, PhD, and Nour El Arnaout, MPH at the American University in Beirut, and the consulting teams at Mindset in Jordan and El-Zanaty & Associates in Egypt.

### **Links**

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

<https://www.nolostgeneration.org/>

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/54589a6a4.html>

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