

Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
CASH FOR WORK PROGRAMMING

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Rohingya Refugee Response: Context and Introduction

900,000 Rohingyas currently live in Bangladesh as a result of state sponsored violence in Rakhine State. The speed and scale of the influx has resulted in a critical humanitarian emergency. The Rohingyas who fled to Bangladesh came with very few possessions and have used the majority of their savings on transportation and constructing of shelter. They are now reliant on humanitarian assistance for food, and other life-saving needs. Basic services that were available prior to the influx are under severe strain due to the massive increase in population. In some of the Camp sites that have spontaneously emerged, there is no access to water and sanitation facilities. Combined with increasing population density, there is a high risk of an outbreak of disease¹. Given the scale and diversity of needs at the household level, among both Rohingyas and local populations, Cash Based Interventions (CBIs) have the potential to address the humanitarian response in a cost-efficient manner, while addressing the range of needs. While partner agencies are implementing a number of programs supporting the community with cash stipends in exchange of their contribution, these engagements should not be mistaken with *cash for work programming*. Therefore, this guideline intends to explain what is *cash for work programming* and what principles apply to this operating context.

What is Cash for Work programming?

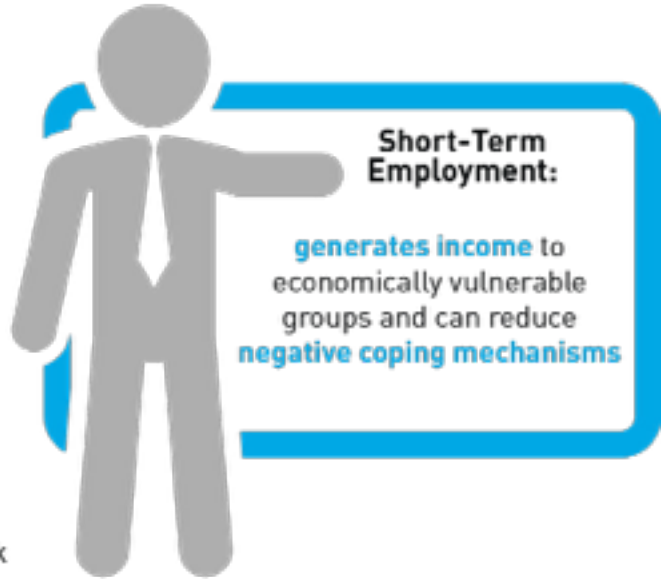
Cash for Work (CfW) is a cash based intervention (CBI) utilised in recovery situation through the provision of *short term*² livelihoods opportunities. Cash for Work can be described as an instrument engaging vulnerable refugee families and host communities in temporary activities in exchange of cash payments which contribute to meet emergency needs. While CfW is one of a number of modalities used within cash transfer programming, CfW is not a panacea³ solution; there are pitfalls that are important to avoid. CfW needs a programmatic approach and a clear system that does not cause harm and address specific risks that can stem from this approach by clear mitigation measures. The financial resources provided by Cash for Work programming are short-term in nature and the positive results can endure far beyond the end of program activities. CfW programming enabled many individuals with an income and can mitigate negative coping strategies such as (trafficking, human exploitation and sexual and abuses). Cash for Work provides assistance not only in the form of the restoration of livelihoods but through economic stimulation which is an impetus for affected individuals to reinvest back into their current environment. CfW is also a powerful tool for positive change however it is important to follow the guidelines discussed in this document to minimise harm in the response.

¹ <https://www.iom.int/news/un-migration-agency-warns-trafficking-labour-exploitation-sexual-abuse-rohingya-refugees>

² In Bangladesh the maximum amount for engagement is 32 days

³ <http://webviz.redcross.org/ctp/docs/en/3.%20resources/1.%20Guidance/1.%20Key%20documents/ICRC%20CTP%20SOP%202015%20presentation.pdf>

Key Advantages of using Cash-for-Work programming



Cash for Work:
One of the stringers **advantage** of cash for work is that it enables individuals to spend money according to their **needs and priorities**

What to consider in the design of CfW project

Once an assessment has ascertained that CfW is an appropriate intervention, the first step is to develop an overall programmatic objective. This will define and prioritise the purpose of CfW, while facilitating monitoring, clarifying results and developing effect and impact indicators. There are three general objectives underpinning CfW programs, and any or all may apply:

- *Emergency Needs* – The goal is to supply people with cash when food and necessary household goods are readily available in the markets but communities do not have the necessary or sufficient assets to obtain them.
- *Improvement of Assets or Community Projects* – The goal is to improve basic assets or to accomplish a community-defined project. Unlike the activities that may be implemented under the previous objective, projects in this category are chosen according to their usefulness and sustainability.
- *Refugees Economic Development* – The goal is to reintroduce cash flows into beneficiary communities, revitalise local markets, and restore basic economic functions. The availability of short-term employment helps to prevent the selling off of fundamental assets and engage in negative coping strategies.

Who to involve?

It is essential to work very closely with the support structure provided by ISCG field coordination cell and Communication with Communities coordination team. They will provide support with information sharing about the project with relevant stakeholders. In many areas, CfW is a relatively new form of programming, and a lack of knowledge about the principles of the program can create suspicion on the part of some community or government stakeholders. Therefore, the community should be made fully aware that CfW is being provided during a limited time-frame for a specific and limited purpose. There should be no expectations from the community members that the program will run indefinitely, nor should CfW be regarded as a long-term source of employment. It is recommended to organise an initial meeting in the area of the intervention to present project and inform how the targeting will be conducted. The selection criteria should be clear and the information session should reach all forums of the community. It is also very important for implementing partners to underscore the importance of broad community participation (not only community leaders) in the processes of selecting projects and programmatic activities. Partners should liaise with relevant government officials, prior to the onset of activities to inform that CfW is a temporary form of relief and is not meant to serve as “employment” in the traditional sense.

How can the community support with project implementation?

The process of choosing participants for CfW activities relies essentially on the initial assessment, community consultations and target areas for proposed activities. Partners are encouraged to coordinate with the CwG and consult 4Ws that are updated regularly in order to avoid duplications.

The initial appraisal may involve discussions with the local government and community structures (maji and women support groups) and NGOs. If underlying tension between various groups is noted, agencies should attempt to balance the number and the type of CfW activities as part of a “Do No Harm” strategy. Other themes to consider when selecting communities include:

- *Interest and receptivity* – The community must be supportive of the program activities.
- *Limit of support* – This level must be within the agency’s capacity to address.
- *Commitment of local government officials* – The support of local leadership is crucial to the success of the program.

Strengthen Community-Based Group

To facilitate CfW project implementation - especially targeting, supervision, and monitoring - the implementing partner can identify a committee to act as a liaison between them and the community. If no structures exist, it may be necessary to establish one for the purposes of the program, with the vision that this group could continue into recovery and development programming. Participation in this committee should be voluntary.

Oversight responsibilities with regard to CfW activities may require a community-based group/s or the (new committee) to meet frequently. This discussion should include the implementation and monitoring of projects, hosting joint meetings with implementing partners to review progress on projects and address emerging concerns. Following the initial assessment and identification of target, community mobilises will invite local leaders to an introductory meeting to explain CfW programming, solicit feedback, and build relationships.

ISCG team (CwG and field coordination) can help partners assess if the existing local leadership structure is sufficient to assume programmatic responsibility. If so, this is preferable to heighten local credibility and avoid duplication or competition with existing authority structures. If the community expresses a wish to establish a new CfW representative group, then the agency can use a mobilisation methodology to create a cohesive and representative committee. This process follows a standard mobilisation methodology.

How should agency enrol participants?

Transparency should be at the forefront of all CfW activities. Agencies should provide information to community on organisational procedures, structures and processes so they can make informed decisions and choices. CfW should have a participatory approach and engaged with the community leaders (maji) in order to understand the needs in the area. When enrolling participants on project, agency should consider the following :

- What activities, where and what are the responsibilities
- Qualification for some roles required? (supervisor, master builder...)
- Duration of the project and each activities(if there are several cycles)

- Rotation cycle and working hours (5 hours per day for 16 or 32 days max)
- How will participants receive payments (everyday or every week); how are payments organised ?
- Contact of agency's program manager is shared with participants
- Age requirements and terms and conditions of position
- Provision for appropriate protective gear & Information on complaints mechanism
- Cash-for-Work beneficiaries are guaranteed a set amount of working days, this will depend on the nature of the work but should not exceed (32 days)

The rotation allows every household affected by the shock to recover by earning a temporary income. Rotation of participants will be determined by each NGO/INGO's according to the activity.

Selection Criteria

While the communities and their leaders can decide who participates in the program, the agency can present initial targeting criteria. Self-targeting helps ensure the program reaches the economically disadvantaged, since only those who have no other means of income will accept the lower wages of CfW programs. Targeting criteria will depend on the overall project goal and the primary assessment of the social/religious/ethnic composition of the community. To ensure that the most vulnerable groups are reached it is important to:

- Ensure that physically and socially vulnerable groups including female-headed households, elderly and persons with disabilities are provided with alternative means of assistance on the project through cash vouchers, grants or lighter tasks that avoid heavy labor. Agency should plan for babysitting services for single parents households with young children.
- Consider if it would be more beneficial for the community to employ fewer workers from the most needy families for a longer period (32 days) or to spread funds over a larger segment of population for a shorter period.
- Set age limits for individuals participating in the activities—while all agencies should be committed to child labor prevention, economic conditions in areas of CfW implementation should be given strong consideration.

Note: Whenever appropriate, there should be equal opportunities for both women and men to join CfW activity. All staffs and selected participants should strictly adhere to Humanitarian Code of Conduct principles while exercising their responsibilities.

Community Responsibilities: (in consultation with the communities)

The community group members could assist agency in the definition of selection criteria for beneficiaries. They could also be utilised in disseminating information on project and objectives and maintaining order on payment days through controlling crowd. The community group could also be utilised in facilitating FGD to discuss the suggestions provided in the complaint mechanisms system. In addition to this main set of activities, a second complementary line of intervention might be articulated, if necessary. If during the application process, especially vulnerable cases are detected with genuine protection concerns i.e. (child labour). These cases should be referred to UNHCR child protection (CP) cell for case management assistance. The agency should also approach CP if in doubt.

CfW activities should also as much as possible prioritise *People with Special Needs* (PSNs) and Women to access to CfW opportunities. Three main cross-cutting components should be taken into consideration in any CfW activity:

- A. Is the program promoting any gender specific policy by involving female in the activity. It is ensuring the support of especially vulnerable female-headed households, if not why?
- B. Specific identification of suitable tasks for female beneficiaries should be encouraged. This enable participation without undermining the protection scenario of the whole household and does not reinforce stereotyped gender roles while the visible feature of the CfW related activities is maintained.
- C. Each agency with their specific vulnerable criteria should be shared to the CwG to consider for harmonisation, if applicable. Their specific selection criteria should take into account the following considerations: persons/households whose capacity to meet basic needs are compromised by specific vulnerability should be considered primary target for any category. Exceptions should be considered for tasks that require challenging physical effort.

Child Labour Law

According to the Child Labor Law of Bangladesh, the minimum legal age for employment is 14. Children under 14 may not engage in any type of work or similar arrangement. The National Child Labor Elimination policy of 2010 prohibits engagement in hazardous work below the age of 18 and a government order issued in Bangladesh in 2013 identifies 38 processes/activities hazardous for children⁴.

- Involving children in productive activities should be managed on a case by case basis and should be provided with consideration for the child's specific needs, taking into account that:
- Children between the ages 14 and 18 can engage in productive activities, which are recognised as being positive for the development and mental health of young people and their fami-

⁴ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms_486739.pdf

lies. Productive activities can include: community mobilisation work or Child Friendly Space facilitation, among others.

- Some children 14-18 years of age may also have child-caring responsibilities and/or have been exposed to trauma, making it not appropriate for them to engage in work.
- Children should not be required to work more than 20 hours a week in any type of productive activity.
- The work does not prevent his/her access to education, vocation training opportunities, or conflicts with access to other life-saving or basic services.

The above applies to all organisations operating within the humanitarian response across refugee camps and host communities, including contractors and sub-contractors, considering that it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure child workers are aware of their rights and working conditions when engaged in productive activities. It is the organisation's responsibility to ⁵verify the age of the child and register any unregistered minor; lack of knowledge is not a defence. Agencies wishing to engage children in productive activities can contact the Child Protection Sub Sector for technical advice. Actors should also include in their procurement and work guidelines a commitment that contractors comply with these guidelines.

Implementation Requirements

- A well-established beneficiary communication and accountability mechanism.
- A database which allow agencies to tract beneficiaries and zone covered.
- Regular monitoring of work conditions to ensure workers are safe from exploitation sexual abuse and harassment.
- Regular updates of 4W's.

Note: In the case of hazardous materials being utilised, the program should provide clear instructions on how it will be used.

What do donors think of CfW?

Donors are generally interested in funding CFW projects, particularly those involving refugees and host communities for the dual social cohesion and livelihoods aspect. In theory, donors are willing to invest in CfW projects if they have a rights based approach. However, projects should only be branded *cash for work* when it respects all of the core elements highlighted in this guideline. Failure to do so, might reduce the likelihood of funding by interested donors.

Rotation: A roster of skilled workers in each zone should be kept so that all the actors in the camp can easily identify one if a need arise to access their skill. This could also help as a broader contingency plan.

⁵ In the instance when this is not possible use the community structure to validate the approximate age of the child.

Prevailing Rate

The ISCG has drafted an '*Incentive payment Scheme*' document to outline rates for workers' engagement in paid projects. This document outlines the different types of work (skilled, unskilled...), the length of engagement and rates for all cohorts. This document needs further approval from the Heads of Sub Office, however the flat rate of BDT 250/day for 5 hours of work is currently being utilised by all implementing partners.

Note: The rates can be revised if the humanitarian community deems it is too in comparison to the current MEB which outlines the living expenses inside the camp.

The following options for how to organise payments for CfW:

The payment could be organised on output-based i.e. a quantifiable amount of work that was produced by participants so people can leave once they have completed the task; or it could be based on numbers of attendance. It is important to keep track of an attendance sheet to ensure that each worker is paid according to the work s/he has done. The daily rates may be more useful, especially for jobs which do not have a quantifiable output. Group-based – instead of monitoring each individual, a group of people is given a task to achieve together (i.e. land prep for communal gardens, use existing systems/farming groups); this simplifies administration and supervision; gives the group certain flexibility.