2015 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment

Scaling-up Humanitarian Cash Transfers for the Future

DFID and OCHA
08.15 Thursday 18th June
Room Room XXIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

This is one of the side-events to be convened during the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, in keeping with this year’s theme: *The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness.*

**Background and objectives**

There is significant evidence that multi-sector cash transfers, in the majority of contexts, are a more efficient and effective way to meet the needs of people affected by humanitarian crises than through the delivery of vouchers and in-kind assistance, such as food aid. Transferring cash has key advantages over vouchers and in-kind assistance:

- empowerment and flexibility through choice of a range of goods and services;
- greater efficiency, particularly in delivery, and effectiveness;
- broader economic impacts through multiplier effects, and;
- beneficiary preference

Furthermore, cash can more aptly bring together humanitarian and development financing through, for example, scaling up national social protection mechanisms as part of an early response. Cash, as a modality, is playing an ever increasing role in post-disaster recovery. There is growing interest in this agenda among donors, academia and innovators, private sector, the UN and implementing agencies. There are also a number of high level processes coalescing around humanitarian cash transfers: the UK funded High Level Panel; the EU-ECHO 10 Common Principles and through the Innovation Pillar of the World Humanitarian Summit.

This ECOSOC session will present and test a bold new future for transferring cash in different emergency contexts. It will stress test this model and steps to achieve it, identifying higher level blockers and possible accelerators. The objectives will be:

- Raise awareness of political, institutional, cultural and capacity issues in scaling-up cash transfers;
- Reach shared understanding of key blockers and accelerators;
- Agree a way forward to achieving this vision (for example, how to engage with the WHS, high level political backing, more concerted engagement with private sector)

**Discussion points**

Against this backdrop, the side-event will focus on the following suggested questions:
1) How might the humanitarian system be adapted to deliver multi-sector cash more efficiently and effectively to save lives and protect and build livelihoods?
2) What are the higher level blockers preventing this and what are the opportunities?
3) What are the key actions required to take this forward over the next year, 5 years and 10 years?

**Intended outcomes/conclusions/recommendations**

1) An increased understanding of the high level issues of scaling-up cash transfer in responding to emergencies. Why are vouchers and in-kind responses still the default?
2) A commitment and set of clear recommendations to take this agenda forward.

**Format**

Panel Discussion:

**Chair:** Claus Sorensen, Director General, ECHO or

**Moderator:** Wendy Fenton, ODI, Coordinator, Humanitarian Policy Network

**Panel composition:** Tara Nathan, Mastercard, rep from Segovia/ GiveDirectly, Degan Ali, reps from UN (OCHA, WFP, HCR

**Session on vision:**

- Tara Nathan, Executive Director, Public Private Partnerships, Mastercard
  
  **BIO:** Responsible for the global innovation and commercial development of the MasterCard Mobile Payments Gateway. She was previously head of Citigroup's Citicards cross-sell business. She spent 7 years in the U.S. Foreign Service in Taiwan, Japan and China. Mastercard is investing heavily in card technology for delivery of e-vouchers using chip and pin technology and tablets for offline transactions, and is working with a number of NGOs to do this, notably Mercy Corps and IRC. They are piloting an e-voucher programme using this technology in Yemen from February 2015, and have sponsored the E-Voucher Learning Action Network (E-LAN), a network of NGOs set up to work on e-cash coordination.

**Session on blockers and accelerators:**

- Degan Ali, Executive Director of Adeso.
  
  **BIO:** Degan has over 10 years of experience managing development and humanitarian programs, particular in the areas of food security, livelihoods, and water, sanitation and hygiene. During that time, she has also developed considerable expertise in developing and implementing cash based interventions, often in difficult and insecure environments. Prior to her experience with Adeso, Degan managed counter-trafficking programs with IOM and has also worked with FSNAU/FAO, Amnesty International, and the Jane Addams Hull Association in Chicago, Illinois.

Reps from UN TBC
Background Material


World Humanitarian Summit: http://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/


Cash and Learning Partnership: http://www.cashlearning.org/

Contact

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