



Cash-Based Interventions & Gender Equality

A multi-country study

Background

Over the past decade, the World Food Programme (WFP) has increased its use of cash-based transfers (CBTs) to assist persons who are food insecure. In 2017, WFP provided 1.3 billion USD in cash transfers to 19.2 million people, across 61 countries, representing 30 percent of the total food assistance provided.

Also central to WFP's work is gender equality - as an important goal in itself and because it is needed to achieve SDG 2. For WFP, "a world with zero hunger can be achieved only when everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and equal voice in the decisions that shape their households, communities and societies" ([Gender Policy 2015-2020](#)).

Given the importance of (i) cash-based interventions (CBIs) to humanitarian and development assistance and (ii) gender equality to sustainable and empowering changes, along with finite resources, it is critical that WFP programming and operations be evidence-based and guided by reliable and credible information.

Study focus

The WFP study that is currently underway seeks to examine how CBIs can contribute to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), as ends in themselves and for food security and nutrition outcomes.

The study is guided by the five research questions.

- i) What GEWE outcomes have been achieved through or by CBIs?
- ii) How can CBIs contribute to GEWE, as ends in themselves and as needed for sustained food security and nutrition outcomes? Which programme features - programme governance or planning processes, transfer, conditionalities, complementary interventions, technology etc. - are essential for GEWE outcomes?
- iii) What are the apparent causal linkages that may explain how and why CBIs contribute to achieving GEWE outcomes?
- iv) Where CBIs are used, how are/can market-related engagement (e.g. retailer engagement, markets for change, market support) contribute to GEWE?
- v) What are the institutional factors that enable the CBIs to contribute to achieving GEWE outcomes?



Men's focus group discussion in Cox's Bazaar, identifying the changes and causal relations

The study combines a literature review, qualitative research conducted in six countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, El Salvador, Jordan, Mali, Rwanda) and a [survey](#) of CBI practitioners. Study findings will be reviewed during a WFP learning workshop in November 2018. The global study report is expected to be available in March 2019.

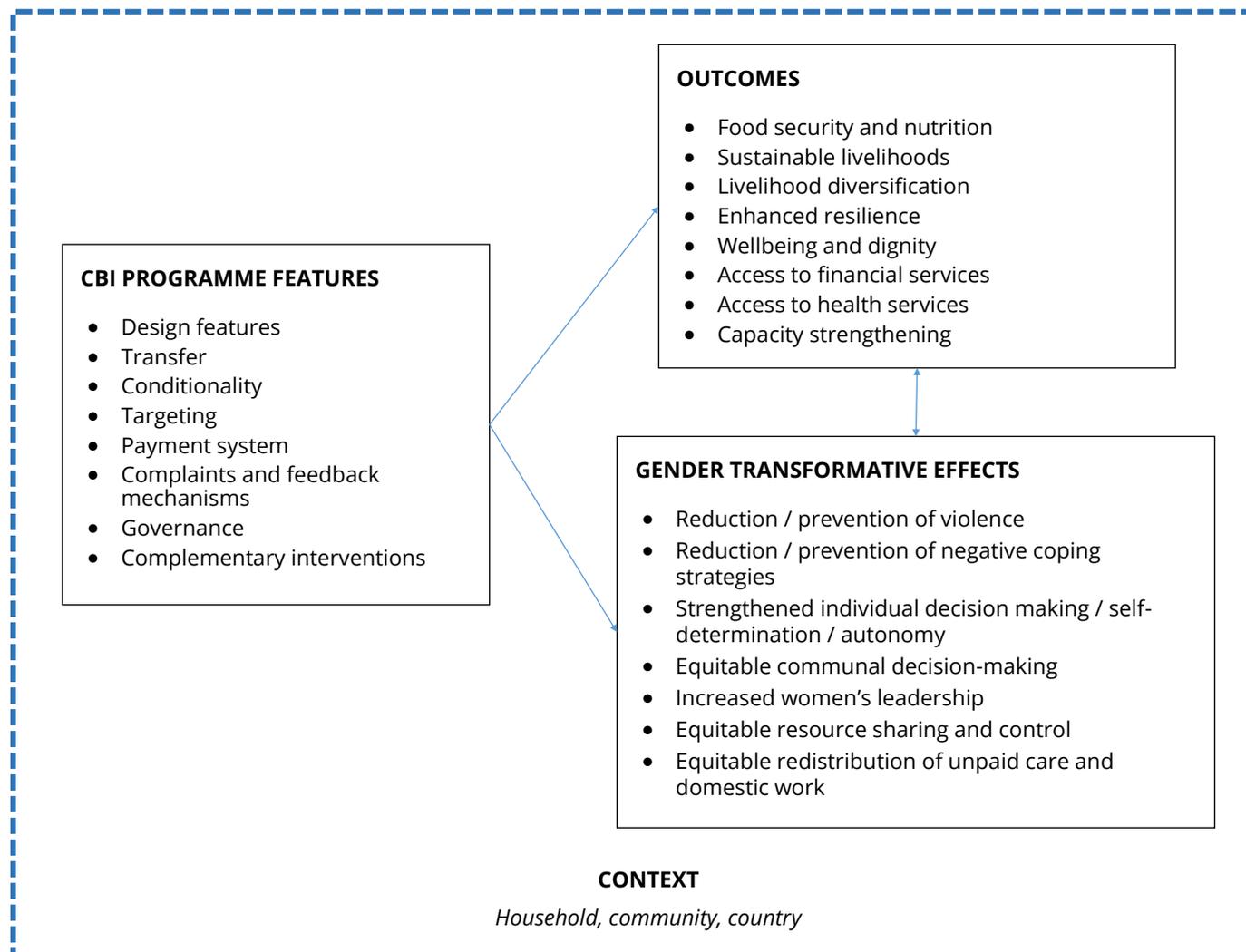


Figure 1: Conceptual model

To guide the study, a conceptual model was developed based on a review of the literature addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in relation to cash-based initiatives. The conceptual model proposes causal linkages that may explain how and why CBI features may contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes.

The assumptions underlying the conceptual model are that:

- CBIs contribute to outcomes, such as food security, nutrition and sustainable livelihoods;
- CBIs can have gender-transformative impacts and can reinforce gender inequalities;
- gender transformations influence outcomes;
- in the absence of gender transformations, outcomes will not be equitable or sustainable;
- contextual factors – at the household, community and national levels – influence gender (roles, relations, responsibilities, rights etc.) and outcomes.

The conceptual model assumptions are explored and tested in the six countries through focus group discussions, key informant interviews and review of secondary information. Using the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, study teams in each of the six countries ask women and men (in gender-segregated groups) to identify the changes that have taken place in their lives and what programme features they believe led to the changes.