

URGENT ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Positive aspects and challenges of the different options for the cash transfer and the delivering of food kits as humanitarian aid provision mechanisms during the outbreak



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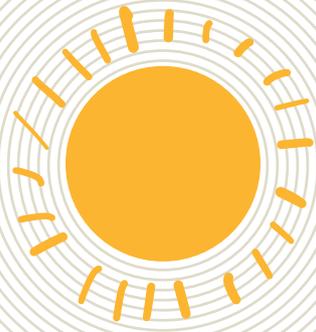
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1 INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Save the Children, in partnership with Action Against Hunger, CARE and World Vision, and thanks to the funding of Start Fund, implemented the project “Rapid response to the urgent unmet needs of the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela in the context of Covid-19”, with the purpose of providing a humanitarian response to Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Lima, a highly vulnerable population and one of the most affected by the pandemic, due to unemployment and confinement.

The project benefited 7,955 Venezuelan migrants and refugees who were in a highly vulnerable situation, from which 5,255 were assisted through cash transfers, and 2,700 people, through food kits. Fifty five percent of the population directly benefited by the project were women. Out of the 1,500 families who received the money transfer, 1,248 had women as heads of household. Additionally, by implementing a communications campaign aimed to prevent Covid-19, encouraging positive parenting, the healthy diet of children and pregnant women, and the prevention of gender-based violence, it was possible to reach a total of 33,316 people, making use of social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter.

On the other hand, due to the context in which the project was implemented, as well as the challenges, adaptations and innovations conducted to ensure the achievement of the objectives, the partner institutions made it their goal to systematize the experience and contribute to the strengthening of the action strategies and mechanisms during the delivering of

humanitarian assistance in the scenario of a pandemic and mandatory social lockdown. For this reason, the systematization of the project “Rapid response to the urgent unmet needs of the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela in the context of Covid-19” is defined as a process of critical interpretation of the conducted actions, with the purpose of generating significative knowledge and learning , that contributes to the creation of effective and innovative strategies regarding humanitarian response, related to implementation tools such as: i) the cash transfers; and ii) the delivering of food kits.





2. PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEMATIZATION:

To systematize the positive aspects and the challenges regarding the implementation of the cash transfers and the delivering of food kits, applied as humanitarian aid delivery mechanisms, in the framework of implementation of the project “Rapid response to the urgent unmet needs of the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela within the context of Covid-19”.

3. OBJECTIVE¹, AXES² AND MAIN QUESTIONS:



The systematization objective is the implementation process of the cash transfers and the delivering of food kits, conducted on April 28 and on June 26 of 2020, in Lima, Peru, carried out by Save the Children, Action Against Hunger, CARE and World Vision.

¹ Based on the definition of the systematization object, the field of experience is defined around the one we will carry out on the systematization exercise.

² The systematization axis (or axes) constitutes the guiding thread that crosses the experience, and that will be the center of attention of the reflexive process of the experience.

The systematization axes are:



The effective strategies and/or the innovative solutions adapted to the context of Covid-19.



The coordination mechanisms and practices between partners.

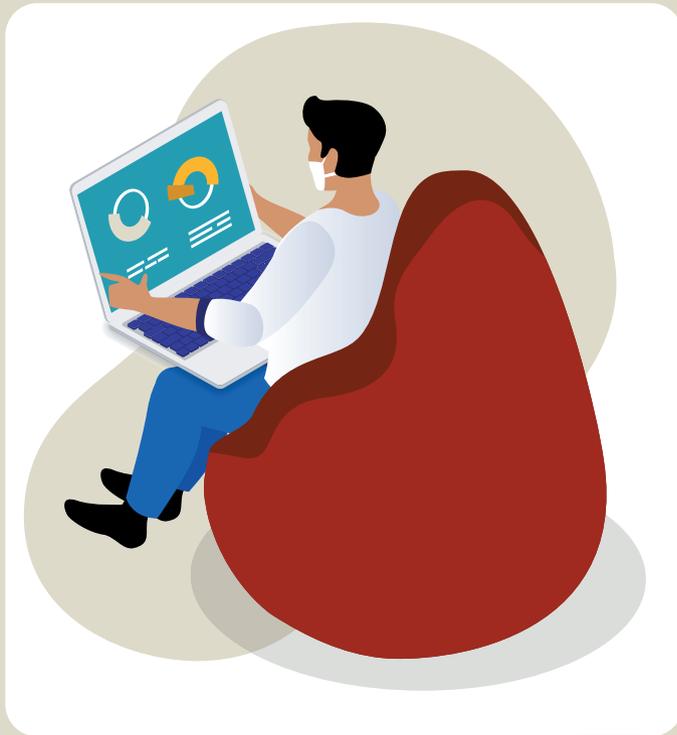


The challenges and learned lessons identified throughout the implementation process.

The systematization questions that guided the analysis process of the experience are:

SYSTEMATIZATION AXES	MAIN QUESTIONS
<p>Innovative solutions and/or effective strategies adapted to the context of Covid-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies and/or actions were key to ensure the implementation process of cash transfers and the delivering of food kits due to Covid-19? • What difficulties do we face in the implementation process of cash transfers and the delivering of food kits due to Covid-19? • What strategies were adapted during the process? How did the adaptation of said strategies occur? Which ones were effective? Which weren't? • Did these adaptation processes and innovative solutions contemplate the interests and necessities of women and children? In what way?

SYSTEMATIZATION AXES	MAIN QUESTIONS
<p>Mechanisms and practices of coordination among partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What effective coordination mechanisms were applied throughout the implementation process of cash transfers and the delivering of food kits? • How do these coordination mechanisms differ in the context of Covid-19 from those applied in a “normal” context? What did the main adaptations consist of? • How did these adaptations have an impact on the implementation process of cash transfers and the delivering of food kits?
<p>Challenges and learned lessons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What future challenges do the Covid-19 pandemic pose for the humanitarian aid tools such as the cash transfers and the delivering of food kits? Which can be foreseen or anticipated? How?



4. INFORMATION SOURCES:

The main sources of information were:

SECONDARY SOURCES:

institutional project reports, institutional action protocols, the project document, post-distribution evaluation survey, communication products, virtual suggestion and complaint mailboxes, etc.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

individual and group interviews to the teams from the partner organizations, financial products providers, support networks, intervention allies and the beneficiaries of the intervention.



5. SYSTEMATIZATION METHODOLOGY:

The systematization methodology contemplated three key steps:

1

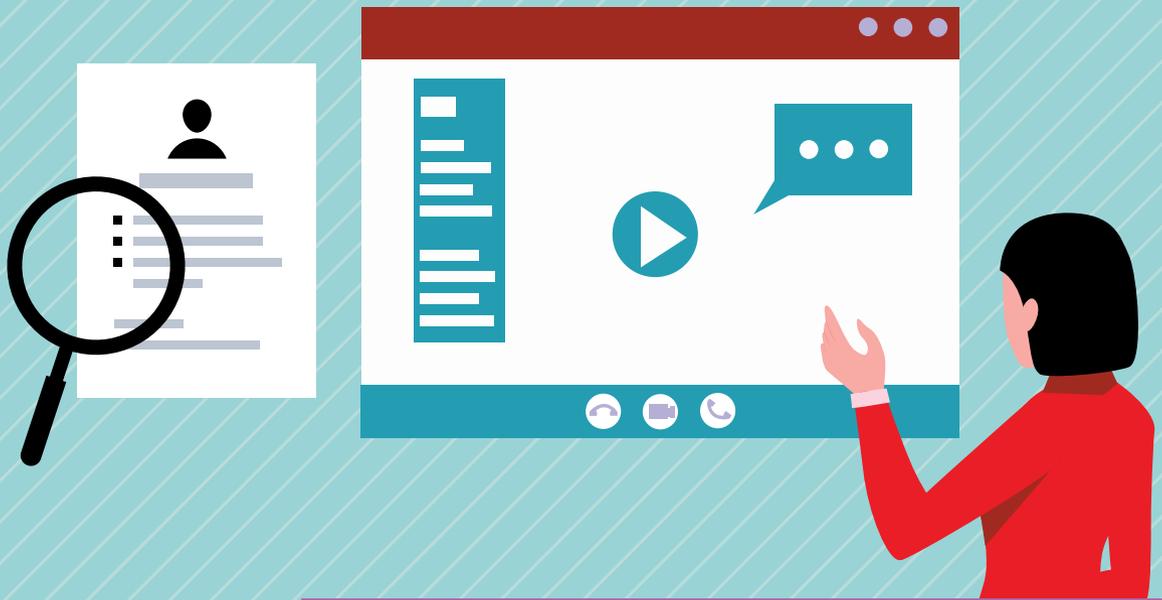
Mapping of key people related (directly and indirectly) to the implementation process of cash transfer and the delivering of food kits, carried out between April 28 and June 26 of 2020.

2

Reconstruction, regulation, classification and critical interpretation of the experience. The what, how, when, who and with whom, the key actions and strategies were carried out, was explored to ensure the implementation of the project with the purpose of counting with a detailed and global glance of the process. Likewise, based on the gathered information, the different aspects related to the systematization axes were organized and identified, in order to generate a collective process of analysis and critical reflection (institutional group interview and interinstitutional workshop), that allowed the identification of: i) innovative solutions and effective strategies adapted to the context of Covid-19; ii) coordination mechanisms and practices between partners; and iii) challenges and lessons learned .

3

Synthesis, drafting and feedback of the final report.



6. MAIN FINDINGS:

Given the context of the pandemic due to Covid-19, various processes were modified in the presence of a necessity to move from a face-to-face implementation strategy to a virtual and remote process within 45 days³, as well as in a national scenery with absolute mobilization restrictions for the partner institutions' personnel, beneficiaries, goods and service suppliers, public and private institutions in general, etc.

It's necessary to emphasize that, despite the established considerations during the process of project formulation to ensure its effective implementation in an emergency context, the particularities of the pandemic due to Covid-19 presented a challenge for the humanitarian aid institutions, as well as its coordination mechanisms, action strategies, humanitarian tools, organizational processes for hiring and procuring goods and services, and others. This called for a collision of a variety of

difficulties and limitations related to this emergency, as well as the adaptation of strategies and the establishment of innovative solutions that allow the effective and timely assistance to the migrant and refugee Venezuelan people in a vulnerable situation.

Hereunder, the main limitations and/or difficulties faced are described in general terms by various institutions during the implementation process of the project "Rapid response to the urgent unmet needs of the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela in the context of Covid-19". In turn, due to the reflection of experience, the consortium valued the relevance of incorporating these elements into the processes, mechanisms and strategies in emergency preparedness.



³ It is worth noting that the total that the entire implementation of the project was 60 days, although most organizations were able to achieve the implementation within the planned 45 days.

MAIN LIMITATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES FACED DURING THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT “RAPID RESPONSE TO THE URGENT UNMET NEEDS OF THE MIGRANT AND REFUGEE POPULATION FROM VENEZUELA IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19”

Regarding the context and the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the project

- Adjustments on the organization and management mechanisms that would allow acting in a mandatory social lockdown scenario, based on the virtualization of all the programmatic, administrative, financial, and logistics operations.
- Arrangements on the coordination mechanisms and the institutional and interinstitutional organization that were carried out in parallel to the humanitarian response and the implementation of the Start Fund project.
- Limitations in the availability of some foods highly accepted by the beneficiary population, related to their cultural preferences, as well as the increase in costs from the suppliers.
- Mandatory social lockdown measures decreed by the National Government, that took place consecutively and didn't contemplate the action from the humanitarian aid institutions and its response during the pandemic.
- Limited supply, experience, and responsiveness from the financial sector in an emergency context for the provision of massive/group cash transfer services, aimed at the migrant and refugee population in a vulnerable situation.
- Social mobility restrictions that involved access restriction to the institutional operation centers, as well as restrictions for the allocation and/or distribution of equipment to the required personnel for the fulfillment of their functions related to the humanitarian aid response.
- Reviewing and adaptation of the processes for hiring goods and services suppliers, considering its limitations for the allocation of goods and services due to the effects from the pandemic, the mandatory social lockdown and the stagnation of economic activities in the country.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price volatility for the procurement of goods and services, as well as its quality; for example: communication services, purchase of food, procurement of phone chips, hiring of internet services, etc.
<p>Identification, access and communication with the beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High mobility and rotation of the phone numbers of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, as well as reduced access to internet and/or mobile phones, due to the lack of economic resources to acquire them. • Lack of a standardized database and updated information of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in a highly vulnerable situation. • Expectation and demand of the non-migrant population to get monetary and/or food assistance. • The need to go from a face-to-face assessment process and an ID validation to a digitalization and virtualization, guaranteeing the data security of migrants and refugees. • Social mobility limitations to get into direct contact with Venezuelan migrants and refugees in a vulnerable situation, who were not previously registered in an association or organization, as well as those without access to mobile and home phones, internet, etc. • Reduced CBI platform capacity to count on real time updated information that allows to avoid the duplication of beneficiaries, as well as to know when they received the cash transfers, which will allow us to assess their inclusion in the current project.

Interinstitutional and institutional coordination mechanisms

- Difficulties for the setting of institutional synchronic coordination for the rapid decision making and harmonization of the project implementation processes.
- Limitations for the operative coordination and exchange of information and/or complementary necessities of the beneficiaries, due to the reduced implementation period of the project and the processes of readjustment and programmatic implementation of the institutions.
- Physical adaptation process for remote working, as well as the harmonization of work activities in an emergency context with the care and domestic work at home, by the team members of each institution.



6.1. Regarding effective strategies, innovative adaptations and solutions applied to the implementation of money transfers and food kits in the context of Covid-19

The diverse innovative adaptation strategies and/or solutions proposed, based on the institutional experience and action protocols for humanitarian aid of each one of the organizations, were organized in the following manner for methodological purposes:

PRELIMINARY PHASE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CASH TRANSFERS AND FOOD KITS

This phase makes reference to all the activities and processes developed since the confirmation of approval for the project, until the moment before the phone contact with the beneficiaries and the implementation of the cash transfer or the delivery of the food kit.

Process and/or key actions	Adaptation strategies and/or innovative solutions
<p>Hiring processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding the <i>personnel hiring processes and the formation of the project teams</i>, the reassignment of personnel with experience in these kind of interventions inside the institution was prioritized, as well as the hiring of personnel who had worked in previous cash transfer projects carried out by the institution, thus guaranteeing their knowledge about the organizational culture and operation, in addition to their expertise in the application of humanitarian aid tools. On the other hand, in the specific cases in which external personnel was hired, in addition to looking for experience in the application of humanitarian aid tools, it was also required to count with basic equipment to begin operating remotely immediately. • Regarding the <i>hiring of goods and services suppliers</i>, we resorted to the institutional supplier's portfolio, evaluating the prices adjustments, responsiveness, as well as the timely availability of products and services. For that purpose, the hiring and quality control processes were adjusted, guaranteeing the compliance of institutional rules and procedures established during an emergency and humanitarian aid context. For example, in the case of food procurement, the supplier's service that was hired, in addition to complying with the requirements, had the permits and safe-conducts to distribute the products in the scenario of mandatory social lockdown. • In the particular case of <i>financial products</i>, the relevance of applying the same money transfer mechanisms that was used in previous projects (in a non-pandemic context) was evaluated, such as the use of electronic cards. However, given the pandemic and mandatory social lockdown context, the institutions (in all cases) opted to use a different financial product than the one used in previous projects.

Among the prioritized criteria to define the best financial product were: i) the offer of products from the financial institutions with which a framework agreement was held; ii) the availability of accessible payments and close to the beneficiaries; iii) the level of exposure and risk of contagion for the beneficiaries; iv) the accessibility of the beneficiaries to the payment points; v) the provision of the financial service without limitations related to the migrant condition of people, be it regular or irregular; vi) the available cash turnover for the payment; and others. That way, existing products, such as money orders and checks (BCP), remittances (Interbank) and quick cash (Western Union) were chosen. Likewise, in some cases, in order to fulfill the beneficiaries' need of having an ID, the use of an ID was replaced by giving them an identity code (code for the remittance collection), so as to not limit the beneficiaries' access to the transfer.

- Regarding the procurement of food products, the standard content of the food kits was established, taking into consideration the nutritional criteria and standards according to the Sphere Handbook and the food kit proposed by the National Institute of Civil Defense (INDECI), as well as the average of family members, its characteristics in terms of the project's eligibility criteria, food practices of the beneficiaries and the inclusion of hygiene products related to the prevention of Covid-19. In turn, aleatory verification mechanisms for the quality content of the food kits were implemented, such as previous visits to the prioritized places for the distribution of food kits.

Beneficiary database

Regarding the selection of beneficiaries:

- The inclusion criteria of beneficiaries established by the technical committee of the project were: i) families of Venezuelan migrants living in poverty or extreme poverty and ii) families lead by Venezuelan women living in poverty or extreme poverty and iii) Venezuelan families with children and iv) Venezuelan families in vulnerable situations related to previous projects implemented by the institution and who are not benefited by any project at the moment of implementation of Star Fund.

In turn, complementary and exclusionary criteria for money transfers were included, such as: i) that a member of the household has to have an ID that allows the collection of the transfer according to the terms established by the financial institution and the Superintendency of Banks, Insurance and Pension Fund Administrators (SBS) (whether it is expired or not); ii) access to mobile phones and social media, such as WhatsApp and Messenger. On the other hand, in the case of the food kits distribution, it was contemplated that: i) the beneficiaries of the food kits had to live in the prioritized districts with a high population of Venezuelan migrants; and ii) the access to mobile phones and social media, such as WhatsApp and Messenger.

It should be stressed that the distribution of cash transfers and food kits did not match the characteristics of the beneficiaries, rather the priorities and experience of the organization of the consortium. This way, Action Against Hunger distributed food kits, while CARE, World Vision and Save the Children implemented the cash transfers.

- In all of the cases, the reviewing of the database of previous interventions carried out by the institution was prioritized in order to identify the population groups that meets the inclusion criteria for the project “Rapid response to the urgent unmet needs of the migrant and refugee population from Venezuela in the context of Covid-19”. In turn, the access to the database, in which Venezuelan migrants and refugees in a vulnerable situation were registered, was coordinated with allied organizations, support networks, and public and private organizations. The main organizations consulted were: Associations of Venezuelan migrants and refugees, the Venezuelan Embassy in Peru, IOM, Women’s Emergency Centers, the Health Department, the migrants and refugees Work Groups, etc.
- Regarding the creation of the final database by the institution:
 - The whole process of collecting, updating, and validating the information of the beneficiaries was centralized and digitized via mobile phones and the submission of forms through WhatsApp.
 - The remote access to the UNHCR’s CBI platform was coordinated for the registration of the project’s beneficiaries, as well as for the verification of non duplicity of beneficiaries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of potential beneficiaries, who could replace the people who fall behind and/or who do not manage to finalize the transfer, was created, aiming to respond immediately and to reach 100% of the beneficiaries.
<p>Institutional Coordination</p>	<p>Once the project teams were established, in several of the institutions the following actions took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing the key information of the project (target population, inclusion criteria, duration of the project, etc.) with the institution's personnel, with the purpose of guaranteeing the centralization of information and the timely referral of internal and external queries and consultations. • Sharing the project's characteristics and implementation periods with areas directly involved with its implementation, with the purpose of identifying the needs of support, products and available services, as well as predicting the potential limitations as consequence of the context of intervention; for example: logistics (supply chain), treasury (funds habilitation and distribution), programs (complementary actions and referral of queries for information to the project team), communications (establishment of standardized messages to contact the beneficiaries, media pieces for the effective collection of transfers, media campaign, etc.) monitoring and evaluation, and others. • Establishing, in the project team, the virtual collaborative tools that allow the storage, update, simultaneous, synchronous and asynchronous access to the key information of the project; for example: the beneficiaries database, the number of contacts made, the status of the collection transfer process, etc. Furthermore, the use of coordination, collaboration and communication platforms was prioritized, such as: Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Drive, etc. • Identifying the monitoring, evaluation and reporting needs, associated to the implementation of the project, as well as the digitalization of the related procedures and the required tools for that purpose (such as is the case of the verification of the beneficiary's documents, the receipt confirmation documents of the cash transfers, the affidavits, etc.)

- The biosecurity and distribution protocols in the context of the pandemic due to Covid-19 were updated in relation to the distribution of food kits. Furthermore, the mechanisms that allowed the habilitation of safe-conducts were explored in an adjusted modality that, in turn, would offer the possibility of preparing the distribution points, mobilizing and equip the personnel and volunteers with the necessary equipment, as well as guaranteeing the biosecurity measures for the beneficiaries. Likewise, it was coordinated with the health establishments to refer the people possibly infected by Covid-19 identified during the process of the food kits distribution, after taking the beneficiaries' temperature and identifying the symptoms during the brief talks when the food kits distribution took place.

In turn, the distribution points in the selected districts were looked into, guaranteeing that these were used only once, in order to avoid the conglomeration of people that weren't summoned.



DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF THE MONEY TRANSFER AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD KITS

In this phase, all of the activities and processes linked to the communication with the beneficiaries and the implementation of the cash transfer and the distribution of food kit are being referenced to.

Key process and/or action	Adaptation strategies and/or innovative solutions
<p>Communication and information related to the cash transfer</p>	<p>With the purpose of matching the needs for accountability and a bidirectional communication that appeared during the process of phone contact, data validation and collection of cash transfers by the beneficiaries, several of the organizations established mechanisms that had a key role in building trust and safety with the target population, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning multiple and exclusive communication channels to answer questions, suggestions, doubts and complaints; for example: an exclusive phone line to contact the project team, an institutional email account for the project, WhatsApp, etc. These communication channels were particularly relevant to solve problems during the collection of cash transfers. Likewise, the institutions' websites and social media had information and contact details of the project, in order to allow the beneficiaries to verify the accuracy of the information, given by the project team, at all times. • Standardizing the messages for the beneficiaries with key information about: i) the institution and its contact details; ii) the project, the inclusion criteria for the beneficiaries and the number of transfers to be implemented; iii) verification mechanisms of the information provided; iv) the process to follow for the updating and validation of information, collection of transfer or food kit, and others. In all cases, the communication with the beneficiaries was made through phone calls and WhatsApp. In the same way, it was sought to maintain communication with the same person from the beneficiary family throughout the contact process, money transfer/distribution of the kit, evaluation and post-distribution.

- The number of contacts with the beneficiaries of the money transfers varies among institutions; however, four key moments were identified: i) initial contact to provide information about the institution and the project, inclusion criteria and contact details confirmation; ii) submission of survey to update information and the request of sustaining information; iii) the sending of information related to the collection of the cash transfer and communication material related to the collection process (tutorial for the collection at the financial entities, information about the location of the places of payment) and to the protection measures against Covid-19; and iv) the sending of post-distribution virtual evaluation, as well as the information of the media campaign.

In some cases, in order to guarantee the reception of the information provided, the communications were broadcasted making use of at least two parallel channels; for example: text messages and WhatsApp.

- In light of the cases that presented difficulties for the cashing of the transfers, personalized communication processes were created, focused on giving clear, timely and updated information about the causes that made the cashing difficult and the measures that were being taken for its resolution. For this reason, the daily reports from the financial institution were requested, regarding the number of implemented transfers and the difficulties presented for its cashing.
- In light of the difficulties presented during the implementation process of the transfers, most organizations created friendly materials with “frequent questions” that were shared with the beneficiaries. Some of the frequent difficulties found were: i) loss of ID by the person chosen to cash the money in the beneficiary family, ii) lack of information of the person or institution that issued the cash transfer; iii) people blocked by the financial entity due to homonym problems or problems with the financial system external to the humanitarian aid institution; iii) lack of cash in the payment points; iv) difficulties to find a payment agent or point established by the financial entity; and v) mistreatment and discrimination motivated by xenophobia from the payment agent staff, who in some cases, was not aware of the financial product that was being implemented.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to count with updated information and answer immediately, in most cases, a daily data triangulation was programmed through: i) the report of transfers by the financial institution; ii) the confirmation received from the beneficiaries; and iii) the complaint and difficulty reports about the cashing by beneficiaries.
<p>Communication and information related to the distribution of food kits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A day before the distribution of food kits, each one of the beneficiaries received key information about: i) the protection measures against Covid-19 during the moving and picking up of the food kits; ii) the weight and content characteristics, so that they could ask for someone else's assistance when picking it up; iii) timetables and forecasts to avoid agglomerations and to guarantee discretion during the pick up. In turn, the beneficiaries were asked to carry backpacks or dark bags to help conceal the food kits they received from view, in order to avoid the agglomeration and demand of low-priority people when distributing the food kits. • The application process was established through group messages in non-mass media, in order to avoid agglutination of low-priority people as beneficiaries of the food kits. • At the distribution center, the biosecurity conditions, resources, and the materials necessary for the signature and photographic records, the entry control, and others were established before starting the distribution process of food baskets. • During the distribution process, physical contact between the volunteers and the beneficiaries was avoided, the entry to the distribution center was controlled by restricting the access to not more than six people, and information on how to avoid getting infected by Covid-19 was given, as well as emphasizing the need to verify the content of the food kits and the expiration dates of the products.

Response to information and protection needs by the beneficiaries

- Each organization contributed to the drafting of the media material based on their institutional experience, which was shared among the people responsible for the media component of each one of the organizations for its validation, and later for the distribution to most beneficiaries through digital means, addressing topics such as: encouragement of positive parenting, prevention of gender-based violence, prevention of violence against children and teenagers, prevention measures against Covid-19 infection, hygiene and balanced diet practices for children and pregnant women.
- In response to the beneficiaries' concerns about topics that were not addressed directly by the project, in some cases, the allied organizations managed to provide information on complementary topics such as eviction, health, deportation, etc.

AFTER THE PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF MONEY TRANSFER AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD KITS

Process and/or key actions

Adaptation strategies and/or innovative solutions

Accounting

- The verification of the cashing of transfers occurred mainly through WhatsApp messages from the beneficiaries and the NGOs. However, there were some cases where this happened basically through reports from the financial institution.
- The post-distribution survey was sent through the messaging services, this served to gather key information on the level of satisfaction from the beneficiaries, the quality of the assistance provided, the relevance that the money transfer and the food kit had in meeting their needs, as well as other relevant aspects.
- Once the money transfers and the food kits were given, the communication channels remained opened in order to receive photos and/or messages sent by the beneficiaries to help answer their questions regarding the conclusion of the project, as well as to thank the team and institution.

6.2 Regarding the integration of interests and needs of women and girls

Fifty five percent of the population directly benefited by the project were women. Out of the 1,500 homes that received the money transfer, 1,248 had women as heads of household and out of the 700 that received the food kits, 532 had women as heads of household. This was due to the fact that one of the purposes was to meet the needs of women and girls during the project implementation process, for which the following criteria were established:

1

Prioritizing women and girls in the inclusion factors for the beneficiaries, which means prioritizing families with women as heads of household, with girls or lactating and/or pregnant women. In turn, one of the organizations, in particular, prioritized the database of a previous project implemented by the organization that targeted migrant and refugee, women who were heads of household, victims of violence, and/or single mothers.

2

Prioritizing messages that addressed gender-based violence in the implementation of the media campaign, meaning, designing and broadcasting media pieces in response to the significant increase in the cases of violence against women, as well as feminicides. During this process, the information to prevent violence against women and girls, as well as to identify the services available to report and/or access to public protection mechanisms, was emphasized.

On the other hand, through the communication mechanisms established during the contact with the beneficiaries, it was sought to count with referral channels, in the face of possible violence situations reported by the beneficiaries who were responsible for cashing the transfer and/or receiving the food kit.

6.3 Regarding the coordination mechanisms and practices between the partner institutions of the implementation of the project

The project was under the responsibility of the consortium lead by Save the Children Peru and integrated by Action Against Hunger, CARE Peru, and World Vision, and counted with the following interinstitutional coordination mechanisms:

1

The *technical committee of the project*, integrated by people responsible for the coordination of the project, as well as by managerial team members of the four organizations linked to the humanitarian response. This committee met at specific times for the decision making related to: i) the coordination of the project's design; ii) the definition of the prioritization criteria of the beneficiaries; iii) the coordination with UNHCR for the training of the teams on the use of the platform to verify the non-duplicity of beneficiaries; and iv) the analysis of the advancements of the implementation process of the project.

2

The *communications work group*, comprised by the people responsible for the communications of each organization, who for the most part, kept a fluid exchange through WhatsApp; and who also maintained the conditions to quickly define tasks, such as: i) the design and the validation of media pieces for the prevention of gender-based violence; ii) the exchange of complementary media pieces, designed by each organization based on their expertise; iii) positioning strategies and sharing channels of the media pieces.

3

The *monitoring and evaluation work group*, formed by the people responsible for following up on the activities established in the project, and also for doing the reports related to the intervention. The coordinations were carried out in order to respond to the following activities: i) definitions of the roles in the creation of reports; ii) characteristics of the key information to be recorded and the reporting tools; iii) following on and exchanging of information related to the progress of the project; iv) elaboration, validation and testing of the digital version of the post-distribution survey; and v) drafting of the final report.



7. LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF THE MONEY TRANSFERS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOOD KITS DURING COVID-19

7.1 About the design of the project and its intervention components:

The drafting process of the project Start Fund contemplated two key moments. The first was linked to the identification of the needs of migrants and refugees in the context of a pandemic and the mandatory social lockdown; the second was related to the request of the funds activated by Start Fund for humanitarian aid. In this context, it was beneficial to have the coordination mechanisms that allowed the partner organizations to exchange ideas, to give and receive feedback from the drafting process of the project.

In turn, the relevance of reviewing and analyzing the action protocols and the procedures associated to the cash transfer and/or distribution of food kits was identified, with the purpose of assessing its viability in the context of the pandemic, particularly on the situation of a mandatory social immobilization, in order to anticipate the institutional adjustments that would be required for each of the different areas involved.

Similarly, both verifying the response capacity of personnel, external consultants and/or suppliers and service providers, and their level of impact by the emergency conditions was key in this phase, as well as assessing the response capacity and/or adjustment of the financial system for the projected start date of the intervention.

In view of the role of women in the assistance of vulnerable families and the social protection strategies implemented through humanitarian aid tools such as money transfers and food kits, it is furthermore considered relevant to plan for a quick analysis of the needs, interests and possible effects of their involvement,

as it happened in the project, in order to prioritize: i) setting up specific inclusion criteria prioritizing women and girls; ii) determining communication products aimed at meeting their specific needs; and iii) identifying specific nutritional needs (for pregnant women, nursing women, etc.). It is also considered important to assess the possibility of including: i) measures to ensure a safe access to payment and/or food kit pickup centers; ii) identifying and creating a database with referral and/or relevant information channels; iii) 24/7 communication channels to assist, include and/or refer women benefiting from transfers or food kits to services that will ensure their safety, integrity and/or protection.



7.2 Lessons learned regarding agency arrangements to implement Start Fund projects in the contexts of the pandemic and mandatory social lockdown:

Personnel assignment and/or hiring process



The identification of the team of professionals, within the organization's personnel and through the development process of the project, created favorable conditions to carry out the implementation process appropriately. Some key criteria for their preselection and later assignment to the project were their background knowledge and experience in: i) Start Fund projects; ii) cash transfer projects; iii) the operation of implementing agency; iv) assisting migrant and refugee population; v) full-time commitment, particularly for the tasks of project coordination, activation and/or assignment of payment methods, monitoring the payment process to beneficiaries, agency and inter-agency coordination, etc.



In the cases where there were no professionals who could be reassigned within the organization to implement the project, it was important to have an updated roster to hire specialized professionals with background experience in projects of the same kind, ensuring constant support to the management team associated with humanitarian aid, particularly during the start of the project.



Although some of the project teams were part of organizations with experience in remote work, the need arises to consider and/or take specific coordinating measures that provide harmonization of work activities, caregiving responsibilities, domestic work and (direct or indirect) impact on the personnel due to the pandemic. It is also important to assess the conditions of physical adjustment to remote work regarding issues such as Internet access, equipment and material conditions to carry out remote tasks, etc.



Agency coordination



Upon receiving the approval confirmation from Start Fund, it was essential to organize “project startup meetings” that involved different areas related to project activities, with the purpose of designating roles, responsibilities, conditions and strategies to ensure the centralization of project data, as well as a timely response capacity to the requirements for its implementation.



The coordination process with the logistics and communication areas became a key element of the process to ensure coordination and promptness in recruitment and procurement. To that end, it was relevant to review and update the databases and/or framework agreements with providers and/or consultants in order to assess their response capacity in the context of the pandemic and mandatory social lockdown. It was also necessary to establish faster and more simplified purchase and recruitment processes.



It was important to coordinate and ensure prompt and simultaneous training for all project teams on the use of the CBI platform and Kobo to record and verify the data of beneficiaries.



The implementation of the project furthermore revealed the need to create operational protocols that respond to remote implementation scenarios under mandatory social lockdown restrictions. There is also a clear need to adapt and/or incorporate action mechanisms including the use of (synchronous and asynchronous) virtual tools that can:

✓ Ensure a bidirectional communication with the beneficiaries of the project to validate data, provide guidance in the payment processes, receive and solve questions, enquiries, complaints, and/or recommendations, etc.

✓ Verify the data of beneficiaries of humanitarian aid projects in a remote and updated manner, ensuring data protection and potentially reducing duplicity, under-coverage and leaks related to other interventions of the agency itself and/or other agencies.

✓ Standardize data triangulation mechanisms for payment codes and confirmation between areas (finance and/or logistics plus the programme team).

✓ It is necessary to ensure biosafety measures and conditions in order to set up and access distribution points, particularly for food kits, as well as biosafety protocols to promptly distribute equipment and protection materials for the project's personnel, volunteers and/or allies who participated in the response.



7.3 Lessons learned regarding financial products to assist the migrant and refugee population in the contexts of the pandemic and mandatory social lockdown:

- In order to ensure the implementation of the project within the established period of time, it was essential to concentrate the response on the use of some financial products of the agencies under a framework agreement and/or have experience in inter-agency action. This prevented initiating bureaucratic procedures to put in place new recruitment processes and harmonize recruitment policies of the project's implementing organization and the financial institution.

In this regard, it was crucial to take into account that: i) the financial product should be accessible, friendly and/or applicable to the migrant and refugee population, regardless of their regular and/or irregular status in the country; ii) a broad network of payment methods should be ensured in the areas where beneficiaries reside; iii) the volume of available cash in the network of payment methods should allow beneficiaries to collect it without having to go back a second time and/or look for another payment center.

- Having structured mechanisms and/or smooth interaction protocols with financial institutions facilitated a quick project implementation in processes such as: i) data verification and limitations in access to the financial system for beneficiaries; ii) payment difficulties at financial institutions; iii) access problems of beneficiaries to payment points; iv) cash availability in payment points, among others. In this regard, a focal point of the financial institution, as well as the implementing organization of the project, facilitated a quick response to centralize communication and solve unexpected situations and/or payment problems.



On the other hand, the processes of recruitment and implementation of financial tools carried out during the project's implementation revealed at least two points of improvement that require strengthening for the implementation of this kind humanitarian aid tools:



Ensure that the financial institution creates or receives friendly and easily accessible information for the personnel regarding the payment process of money transfers, especially about topics of humanitarian aid so as to prevent any kind of discrimination to migrants and refugees, avoid cases of xenophobia and ensure a prompt access for the beneficiaries of the project.



Explore advantages, disadvantages, and viability of different financial products available for money transfers to migrants and refugees in vulnerable situations, which include testing products in “normal” settings, as well as analyzing viable payment methods for people with irregular status and/or without any type of valid documentation in the country.

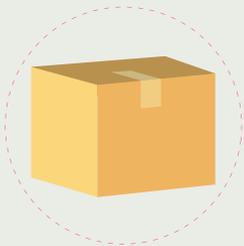


Assess the suitability of the recruitment processes with financial institutions in the context of emergency and with short-term projects such as those from Start Fund, with the goal of establishing contingency mechanisms and/or viable solutions during their implementation.

7.4 Lessons learned regarding the process of identification and communication with migrant and refugee population in the contexts of the pandemic and mandatory social lockdown:



- In order to respond quickly to the project's demands, it was essential to have a database of migrant and refugee populations in vulnerable situations with updated data gathered from previous interventions and/or those in coordination with allies. Where this was not the case, databases of allied organizations were used, in which the data was confirmed to be out-of-date or, in some instances, incomplete, delaying the process of creating a preliminary database of beneficiaries of the project.



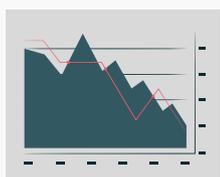
- It was very important to develop a communication protocol based on key moments of interaction with beneficiaries, and have clear information on the steps to follow, schedule and means of communication. Additionally, adapting to the schedule availability of beneficiaries was crucial, as well as providing agency information and verification channels that would ensure the possibility to verify the information given via telephone.
- The agency mechanisms for bidirectional communication (hotline and WhatsApp) were essential in that the beneficiaries could have relevant and timely information about the project, as well as participation criteria, duration, transfer amount, payment methods, mechanisms and/or difficulties during transfer payments, available ways to submit complaints, suggestions, questions, enquiries, etc. They, in turn, allowed to reduce uncertainty and/or distrust among beneficiaries when dealing with problems that may have occurred during the payment process.
- It was very important for beneficiaries to ensure friendly and clear information on the operation of payment methods of financial institutions, their location, and features of the payment methods. In this regard, there were friendly communication materials (tutorials, step-by-step booklets on collecting options and processes, as well as lists of frequently asked questions) available, which were massively disseminated among the beneficiaries in order to reduce difficulties and/or limitations they may have faced during the payment process. Additionally, it was important to randomly test whether the communicative information being shared was properly reaching the beneficiary population.
- It was crucial to maintain a smooth communication with the beneficiary population, particularly in the cases where payment difficulties occurred. This smooth communication also ensured a higher participation from the beneficiary population in the post-distribution survey.

This experience furthermore revealed the importance of establishing common criteria for data recording with allied organizations and/or support networks for migrants and refugees in order to have updated databases that also include areas with a higher level of vulnerability, with no access to organizations for migrants and refugees, mobile phones and/or Internet.

Similarly, the bidirectional communication with the beneficiary population revealed the need to have complementary communication materials that could respond to their information needs, and/or timely referral to access it, regarding topics that directly affect life sustainability and protection in the contexts of the pandemic. For example, lists of official numbers in case of emergency; access to protection, health and education services for migrants and refugees with regular and/or irregular status; contact and protection

centers in cases of violence against women and children; action mechanisms against potential cases of deportation; existing regulations concerning topics of eviction, access or maintenance of basic services; social and emotional support strategies for children and/or families in the context of social lockdown; hygiene and healthy and balanced diet practices for vulnerable people at home; interventions and/or services that could facilitate the recovery of livelihood, access to work, etc.

7.5 Lessons learned regarding response and interinstitutional mechanisms in the contexts of the pandemic and social lockdown:



- From the beginning of the project, it was important to establish clear interinstitutional coordination mechanisms among project partners; this facilitated the distribution of roles and responsibilities, the identification of complementarity and non-duplicity points, and helped develop strategies for information exchange and/or coordination between specialists regarding key products or processes of the project, as was the case of the communications campaign. In this regard, it is important to ensure that the established agreements with the technical committee and work groups are promptly shared among all personnel in charge of carrying out the project's actions.
- The importance of having remote accompanying and exchange mechanisms was revealed during the implementation process of associate agencies, so as to share adjustments, improvements, good practices, and recommendations during the implementation process regarding financial products, limitations in access to the beneficiary population, contact details and/or referrals to deal with other information needs of the beneficiary population, socialization of materials, etc.
- There was a need to create standardized mechanisms and/or criteria for information recording and data protection of the migrant and refugee population, as well as filters, verification and validation mechanisms for inter-agency data. Strengthening non-duplicity verification mechanisms, both for implementing money transfers and distributing food kits, was also a pressing need.

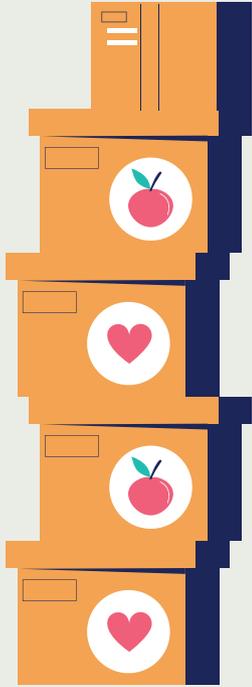


8. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After gathering the positive aspects, lessons learned, and identifying the challenges faced to implement humanitarian aid tools (such as money transfers and distribution of food kits), the following recommendations are suggested for future interventions, everything available to do in emergency preparedness:

- Establish mechanisms for interinstitutional coordination and political impact on the nation, which would allow international cooperation organizations to respond immediately to emergencies and identify, locate and provide humanitarian aid to Venezuelan migrants and/or refugees in vulnerable situations in Peru.
- Analyze and feedback human resource policies and their adaptation to remote work in order to ensure mechanisms that consider the harmonization of work activities, caregiving responsibilities, domestic work and (direct or indirect) impact on the personnel in the context of the pandemic and mandatory social lockdown, as well as the wellbeing and mental health of teams directly related to assisting and communicating with migrant and refugee population.
- Update improve and/or strengthen inter-agency tools and/or mechanisms that support humanitarian aid actions, such as UNHCR's CBI platform, in order to respond to demands in the contexts of emergency such as those created by the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, create inter-agency platforms that allow remote access to updated information about projects in progress and/or the provision of relevant information or referral for the migrant and refugee population to get assistance and/or access to reliable and verified information.
- Establish standardized mechanisms to record, update, document and validate information of the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population in vulnerable situations, as well as common procedures to validate information that would reduce leaks and under-coverage when implementing humanitarian aid tools, such as money transfers and distribution of food kits.





- Promote the development of strategies that allow a coordinated action between humanitarian aid organizations, associations and support networks for migrants and refugees in vulnerable situations in order to have an updated record of contact details, status and location data of groups at higher levels of exclusion and vulnerability, particularly those without access to information and/or resources to contact humanitarian aid organizations.
- Strengthen groups and organizations for migrants and refugees, and provide them with protection conditions that allow them to effectively participate in responding to the emergency and implementing different humanitarian aid mechanisms.
- Ensure that the humanitarian aid tools, such as money transfers and/or food kits, take into account the information need on life sustainability for migrants; whether as part of the project and/or for timely referral on topics such as: access to protection services; health and education for migrants and refugees with regular and/or irregular status in the context of emergency; support channels and care and protection centers in cases of violence against women and children in the context of mandatory social lockdown; action mechanisms against potential cases of deportation in the context of emergency; existing regulations regarding eviction, access or maintenance of basic services; social and emotional support strategies for children and/or families in the context of social lockdown; hygiene and healthy and balanced diet practices for vulnerable people at home; interventions and/or services that may facilitate the recovery of livelihood for migrant and refugee population in vulnerable situations.
- Integrate strategies in work groups to gather evidence, exchange experiences and identify (cost-effective) financial tools that allow massive and prompt assistance to the migrant and refugee population in vulnerable situations. This includes identifying strengths and weaknesses in the finance sector, as well as exploring financial products that respond to vulnerability profiles of the migrant and refugee population in urban settings.

- Promote the engagement of the finance sector in the humanitarian response, becoming a strategic actor in the implementation of money transfer tools. In this regard, it is necessary to promote their involvement in creating financial products for humanitarian aid aimed at migrants and refugees that can adapt to different emergency scenarios and remote applicability, and that can be tested in “normal” contexts.
- Given the importance of gender dimensions and involvement of women, teenagers and girls in all actions aimed at ensuring protection to families in the context of the pandemic, it is crucial to take their needs and interests into account when designing this kind of initiatives to establish inclusion criteria for beneficiaries, as well as security and accessibility measures for money transfers and/or distribution of food kits.
- Ensure mechanisms to collect input from women, teenagers, and girls in this kind of intervention, as well as their interests on how to participate in the implementation process of this kind of humanitarian aid tools. It is also important to ensure the collection of input from women, children, and teenagers in the accountability and assessment processes for the projects, with the purpose of drawing attention to their participation and the impact of these humanitarian aid tools on their lives.
- Promote and influence the development of a strategy across sectors and agencies to facilitate dialogue and interaction between several public and private actors, regarding the assistance and procurement of humanitarian aid to Venezuelan migrants and refugees in vulnerable situations due to the effects of the pandemic, prioritizing coordination from the perspective of territory and the participation of key organizations and institutions such as the National Superintendence of Migrations, the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, the Ministry of Labor, local and regional governments, organizations for migrants and refugees, churches, organizations for international cooperation and humanitarian aid.





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