

Conditional Cash Transfers

Cash Working Group, June 2016

Advocacy message

Immediate term: A humanitarian conditional cash waiver.

Refugees and migrants who have preregistered and have received International Protection Applicant Cards with one year expiry dates would be exceptionally allowed to undertake skilled or unskilled tasks specified and remunerated by humanitarian agencies until their asylum claims have been fully lodged.

Long term: An amendment of Greek law.

Refugees and migrants who have preregistered and have received International Protection Applicant Cards to be allowed to seek employment.

Problem statement

Since the closure of the Greece and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) border, there is an urgent need to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers in Greece across the country can access markets, facilities, services and assistance to meet their basic household needs. Overall, people of concern (POCs) increasingly lack the financial means to access markets due to the extended duration of their stay in Greece without the ability to work. Without livelihoods or regular sources of income, including depleted resources and savings, most lack the economic ability and purchasing power to buy essential household items and access services critical to their survival and well-being. These are further exacerbated by seasonal hazards (e.g. winter, summer) and leave households vulnerable to risks and forces them to extreme negative coping mechanisms, such as to:

- Seeking illegal labor and work (with underpaid and/ or exploitative wages if remunerated)
- Reliance on inconsistent remittances from family abroad
- Child labor.
- Increase of indebtedness and borrowing from camp members and local businesses.
- Involvement in begging, anti-social behavior, survival sex and protection concerns.

Conditional cash transfers/ grants/ programmes:

Conditionality pertains to any prerequisite or qualifying conditions that a beneficiary must fulfil in order to receive a cash transfer (e.g. activities or obligations that must be fulfilled before receiving assistance). Conditionality can in principle be used with any kind of cash or voucher assistance, depending on the objectives and design of the programme. A conditional transfer requires beneficiaries to undertake a specific action/ activity (e.g. attending school, participating in a training, providing translation services, supporting with health or education activities, volunteering, building a shelter, undertaking labour intensive work – such as setting up tents/ offloading and loading trucks/ distributing assistance, cleaning up camp sites) in order to receive assistance. Cash for Work, Cash for Trainings and Cash for Assets are all names and forms of conditional transfers. In all occasions, national and local considerations around skilled and unskilled labour and their equivalent wage rates must be taken into account.

Unskilled labor: Cleaners, crowd control, movers/loaders or daily workers, community based committees.

Skilled labor: interpreters, teachers, health workers (doctors), lawyers.

Conditional cash assistance may be considered an appropriate response when:

- Populations are not allowed to legally work but are static.
- Assets can be rehabilitated or created and maintained through public or community works.
- Target population has the capacity, skills and interest/ willingness to undertake the workⁱ.
- Equipment and technical supervision can be provided (as required).

ⁱ Source: Cash transfer programming in emergencies Cash transfer mechanisms and disaster preparedness in the Philippines By Gregoire Poisson 2011

ⁱⁱ The work requirement should not disrupt people's own survival and livelihood recovery strategies. Work can also disrupt care for children.)