



# EVALUATION IN ACTION: Understanding the Long-Term Impact of Unconditional Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

HAEC-Funded Impact Evaluation

## Background

The Venezuelan humanitarian crisis is one of the world's largest displacement crises, with over 8 million people displaced. Colombia currently hosts more than 1.82 million Venezuelans, 60% of whom suffer from poverty and economic vulnerability, putting pressure on host communities and public services. In response to this crisis, the Cash for Urban Assistance Consortium implements the ADN Dignidad program to provide Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) to over 250,000 affected individuals, supporting household consumption and promoting social and economic integration in host communities.

This USAID/Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)-funded program, implemented by Action Against Hunger (AAH), Danish Refugee Council, and Norwegian Refugee Council, targets vulnerable populations, including Venezuelan migrants, Colombian returnees, Colombian internally displaced persons (IDPs), and mixed migrant host community members. The program aims to improve access to basic food, non-food items, and shelter through the provision of six months of unconditional MPCA transfers.

## Evaluation Overview

Initially, the implementation team was interested in evaluating the short-term effectiveness of the program in improving food security for participants. To answer this question, in May 2023, the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) completed an impact evaluation on the program's first phase. The study found that the program contributed to significant improvements for several quality of life dimensions for program participants.

However, the team was left wondering if these improvements would last over time. To answer this question and explore whether the impact of the unconditional MPCA interventions remain over a year after implementation, the team secured additional funding from the Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle (HAEC) to conduct a second round of the impact evaluation. Once again, AAH collaborated with 3ie to conduct a **regression discontinuity design (RDD) impact evaluation**. This quasi-experimental design allowed the team to compare groups just above and just below an eligibility threshold to evaluate the program's impact. The primary reach question for the evaluation was:

What is the **impact of unconditional multipurpose cash assistance** on migrant's food security **12+ months after the intervention**?

## Quick Facts

### TITLE

Understanding the Long-Term Impact of Unconditional Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

Impact Evaluation

### EVALUATION METHODS

Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD)

### EVALUATION ARMS

- 1. Treatment group:** 1,532 households above the eligibility threshold
- 2. Control group:** 1,658 households below the eligibility threshold

### COUNTRY

Colombia

### DONORS

USAID/BHA

### PARTICIPANTS

250,000 migrants, refugees, returned, and host community members

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Action Against Hunger, Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council

### EVALUATION/RESEARCH PARTNERS

3ie, HAEC



## Navigating Evaluation Constraints

In humanitarian contexts, there are often many research implementation challenges, including insecurity, limited access to areas, and population movement. For this evaluation, population movement, particularly out-migration, raised concerns about attrition and its potential to undermine the representativeness of the sample. Initially, the team opted to use remote data collection methods (i.e., phone surveys) to reach this population on the move; however, there was a high non-response rate.

The research team adopted several new strategies to address these challenges. First, the team implemented intensive tracking to minimize attrition risks, ensuring that participants remain engaged and reachable. Additionally, the team offered incentives to participants for their time and cooperation, such as phone credits, to motivate response. In cases where phone surveys were not feasible, the team conducted in-person follow-ups on a random sample, allowing for data collection from a more diverse range of participants to minimize potential bias. By strategically addressing these challenges through a combination of methodological adaptations and participant engagement strategies, the study can gain accurate insights into the impact of the ADN Dignidad program.



## Evaluation Purpose & Audience

The evaluation will provide evidence to inform implementation and scale-up decisions on assistance to Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and the region. Additionally, this research will contribute to the evidence base on the effectiveness of unconditional multipurpose cash assistance within humanitarian assistance efforts.

## Context and What's Next

For this evaluation, the research team uses targeting data from AAH collected between November 2021–April 2022. The ADN Dignidad team delivered the first tranche of cash transfers between July and October 2022. Households received monthly cash transfers for six months, after which, they graduated from the program. 3ie conducted the first short-term impact evaluation one and three months post-intervention and then conducted a second impact evaluation on the long-term impacts 13 and 16 months post-intervention, in September and December 2023.

For further information, contact Vivian Lorena Ordoñez, Operations Manager of the consortium, at [vordonez@co.acfspain.org](mailto:vordonez@co.acfspain.org) or visit [Action Against Hunger's website](#) with any questions.

## Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle

This brief is brought to you by the Humanitarian Assistance Evidence Cycle (HAEC) Associate Award. HAEC works to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency food security activities funded by the USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) by increasing the use of cost-effective and timely impact evaluations in humanitarian contexts.

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This brief is part of HAEC's Evaluation in Action series highlighting ongoing impact evaluations from around the world. Do you have an ongoing impact evaluation in a humanitarian context that you want to share?



Photo Credit: Jenn Gardella / Save the Children