

“Inclusive and Integrated Humanitarian Action for Community and Home-Based Internally-Displaced Persons of the Marawi Siege”

CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE

CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The strategy and intervention aims to assist families of internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by the Marawi siege in the selected project areas living in homes of relatives and friends, or in other community, religious and/or academic facilities outside of government-recognized and managed evacuation areas, through the provision of cash grant assistance. This assistance to the affected families makes available to them cash or cash equivalent that would enable them to procure needed goods and services based on their situation and choice, without need to return or repay the amount given.

Cash grant assistance was recommended as a strategy and intervention to help the affected families because:

- Local financial system is functional.
- Needed goods are available in the local market in ample quantity and quality at reasonable prices.
- It allows flexibility for families to determine priority among their diverse and multiple needs
- It is logistically efficient and safe, as transportation concerns
- Security risks (for the funds, for the staff and for the beneficiaries) are manageable
- It affirms their dignity and promotes empowerment, as families are trusted and supported in identifying and addressing their priority needs

SELECTED PROJECT AREAS FOR CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE

The Cash Grant Assistance will be given and distributed in the selected project implementation areas In Iligan City and Lanao del Norte:

- Barangay WEST PANTAR, Municipality of Pantar, Lanao del Norte
With IDP families staying in the West Pantar Madrassah and homes of local barangay residents
- Barangay TOMAS CABILI, Iligan City
With IDP families staying in the Al-Noor Madrassah and homes of local barangay residents
- Sitio TORIL, Barangay UBALDO LAYA, Iligan City
With IDP families staying in an abandoned private building in the area

INITIAL CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE

Selection of Beneficiary Families

The cash grant assistance beneficiaries were based on the community profiling done by the project. These were families with completed, validated and processed profile done through the community census using Kobo Toolbox. The community census were done by local volunteers, most of whom were college students, school teachers and professional IDPs who were trained on the enumeration tool. Data validation and processing were done by a team from the Information Technology Department of the Iligan Medical Center College (IMCC) working with project staff members.

Allocation for the Beneficiary Families Based on Situation and Need

The cash grant assistance was tailor-fitted to the situation and need of the beneficiary families based on the family profile.

Emphasis was given on the vulnerability and special needs of each of the family members, based on the community census conducted, giving attention to the following:

- Disability
- Age (elderly and infant/ toddlers small children)
- Pregnancy
- Chronic and debilitating illness, both communicable and non-communicable
- Malnutrition

With the available profile of and information on the beneficiary families, allocation per family was computed based on a standard amount (Php 2,000) for each of the affected family with an additional amount (Php 500) for each member with vulnerability and special needs.

With this formula, the initial cash grant assistance involved:

- Total Cash Grant Assistance of PhP 3,542,000.00
- Range of Cash Grant Assistance allocation from PhP 2,000.00 to 5,000.00
- Total Number of Beneficiary-Families at 1,508 families
- Average Cash Grant Assistance of PhP 2,348.81

Community Consultation Process

Community consultation-assemblies were conducted in the project implementation areas to discuss the cash grant assistance scheme and plan.

Points emphasized in the consultation assemblies were:

- The project will implement cash grant assistance.
- Beneficiary selection was based on the community census conducted by the project.
- The cash grant assistance amount would not be uniform, but will be based on a standard amount per family, with additional allocation for each family member with vulnerability and special needs.

- Distribution will be done through a financial intermediary.
- Distribution system will use claim coupon system giving cognizance to IDP families without legal documents.
- The claim coupons will be distributed by the Project Community Facilitators and the local community leaders one day before the actual distribution schedule.
- There will be post-distribution monitoring for the beneficiary families.
- Questions, feedback, complaints and suggestions can be channelled through the Project Community Facilitators, local community working group members and other project staff, including those from ICESDEV, PHILSSA and ALTERPLAN

The schedule of the community consultation assemblies conducted in the project areas was as follows::

- November 10 morning: Sitio Toril, Bgy. Ubaldo Laya, Iligan City
- November 10 afternoon: Bgy. West Pantar, Municipality of Pantar, LDN
- November 11 morning: Bgy. Tomas Cabili, Iligan City (Home-based IDPs)
- November 11 afternoon: Bgy. Tomas Cabili, Iligan City (Madrassah-based IDPs)

Distribution System of the Initial Cash Grant Assistance

The distribution of the initial cash grant assistance involved direct cash transfer involving a financial intermediary. Palawan Express Pera Padala (PEPP).

Special arrangements with PEPP was done to allow cash transfer to beneficiary IDP families even for those without legal IDs. This was done through claim coupons produced, distributed and validated by project staff and volunteers. The claim coupon included family codes (from the project team) and transaction codes (from PEPP) as security measures against fraud and error. Project staff are available in the claim center to ensure an orderly process and as additional system for verifying the beneficiary/ claimant.

Negotiations with PEPP also resulted in the reduced service charge for the financial transactions of distributing the cash grant assistance to the beneficiaries. Instead of service charge based on the amount being transferred, a much-reduced flat transaction service charge was agreed on.

PEPP and the project agreed on the specific PEPP branch to handle the cash transfer and distribution. Location for that branch was ensured to be near the three communities of the IDP beneficiaries and to the establishments where they can potentially purchase their family needs.

The beneficiaries were given particular area-based schedule to ensure that claiming will be efficient and orderly, and the waiting time for claiming minimized. It is ensured that claiming will be done during day-time, in a location that is accessible by public transportation, and that travel of the beneficiaries can be done by group. The system also provided for express transactions for the elderly, PWDs and beneficiaries with special needs.

This system addresses potential risks for the cash to be distributed, for the staff handling the distribution, and for the beneficiaries claiming the cash grant assistance.

Distribution was done from November 28 up to the December 2017.

Feedbacking and Complaints Mechanisms

The main feedbacking and complaints mechanisms were the Project Community Facilitators and the community leaders organized among the IDP families as local working committees in the areas.

Being Maranaos and IDPs themselves, they serve as organic links with the IDP families for all project concerns, including the cash grant assistance. They were also mechanisms to promote communication and coordination with the IDP families and to ensure cultural and religious sensitivity of project interventions and activities.

The involvement of project staff from ICESDEV, PHILSSA and ALTERPLAN ensured that there are extra venue for feedbacking and complaints in cases where Community Facilitators and local leaders maybe involved in the feedback or complaints.

Most of the feedback where expression of gratitude from among the beneficiary IDP families and the complaints were from families not included in the beneficiary list.

There was suggestion that for beneficiaries from West Pantar, there should be given transportation subsidy to help defray transportation cost from Pantar to Iligan City.

Monitoring of Utilization of the Cash Grant Assistance

After the distribution done for the initial cash grant assistance done in November – December 2017, a quick scan of the cash grant utilization was done through the Community Facilitators and the local leaders. In January 2018

It was found out that the utilization of the cash grant assistance among the IDP beneficiary-families involved:

- Food
- Medicine
- School needs of family members who are studying
- Other needed household items such as cooking utensils, blankets

Initial Cash Grant Assistance Summary

Community	Number of Beneficiary-Families	Cash Grant Assistance Distributed
Barangay WEST PANTAR Mun of Pantar, LDN	209	519,000.00

Barangay TOMAS CABILI Iligan City	1,026	2,401,000.00
Sitio TORIL, Bgy Ubaldo Laya Iligan City	273	622,000.00
TOTAL	1,508	3,542,000.00

ADDITIONAL BENEFICIARIES FOR THE INITIAL CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE

Verification Process

During the first project cash grant distribution, as part of the feedback and complaints process, several families had asked to be reconsidered as beneficiaries.

Upon verification in the communities and with the Kobo-based data done in December 2018 up to January 2018,, twenty (20) families, all from Barangay Tomas Cabili, Iligan City were added as additional beneficiaries of the initial cash grant assistance.

Allocation of Cash Grant Assistance for the Additional Beneficiaries

Using the same formula for the initial cash grant assistance, additional cash grant assistance involved

- Total Additional Cash Grant Assistance of PhP 42,500.00
- Range of Cash Grant Assistance allocation from PhP 2,000.00 to 2,500.00
- Total Number of Beneficiary-Families at 20 families
- Average Cash Grant Assistance of PhP 2,125.00

Distribution System for the Additional Beneficiaries

Because of the small number of beneficiaries, the project staff decided to just make direct cash distribution to the twenty (20) additional beneficiary-families.

Again, the distribution was done in day-time by the Project Community Facilitators, assisted by the local leaders, with proper documentation of the receipt of the cash grant assistance by the additional beneficiary-families.

Summary of the Additional Beneficiaries for the Initial Cash Grant Assistance

Community	Number of Beneficiary-Families	Cash Grant Assistance Distributed
Barangay TOMAS CABILI Iligan City	20	42,500.00
TOTAL	20	42,500.00

SECOND CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE

In December 2017, after the project monitoring, updating and assessment, with some amount still available, especially from the contingency fund, it was suggested that a second cash grant assistance be given. A suggestion was to prioritize livelihood recovery, but this would mean a higher cash grant amount to a smaller number of beneficiary-families. Another suggestion was to focus on education needs of children.

In January 2018, monitoring of the utilization of the first cash grant assistance was done and situation in the communities was done, especially in the light of closure of the igovernment-managed evacuation areas and initial return of IDP families in communities in the outskirts barangays of Marawi City and in the government resettlement areas.

In the monitoring by project staff and discussions with local leaders, now organized into the “*Lombay Ka Marawi (Arise, Marawi) Federaton*”, it was discovered that many of the families had not been receiving any assistance anymore from government, NGOs and other groups since January 2018. Many of the families had been relying on their own income from livelihood and employment opportunities that been erratic and unsteady in the past months. Many appreciate the supplemental feeding that is being done by the project, in partnership with Feed the Children Philippines (FEED). The frequency of the feeding had been increased from two times a week to three or four times a week to address the dire situation of many families.

It was then agreed that a second cash grant distribution be done for all the IDP families in the initial cash grant assistance who had still remained in the three (3) selected project areas.

Verification and Updating of the Beneficiary Families for the Second Cash Grant Assistance

The Project Community Facilitators and the Lombay-Ka Marawi leaders undertook verification of the project beneficiary list, checking the remaining families in the project areas as well as those who had returned to Marawi City or relocated elsewhere.

The verified and updated list served as the revised beneficiary list for the 2nd Cash Grant Assistance. A total of 985 families were identified to have remained in the project areas from the original IDP families that had participated in the community census. Breakdown of the 985 beneficiaries involve:

- 208 families in Bgy. West Pantas, Municipality of Pantar, LDN
- 617 families in Bgy. Tomas Cabili, Iligan City
- 160 families in Sitio Toril, Bgy. Ubaldo Laya, Iligan City

Allocation of Cash Grant Assistance for the Second Cash Grant Assistance

For the 2nd Cash Grant Assistance, the proposed amount was Php 1,600.00 as basic amount for all beneficiary family with additional Php 300.00 per identified vulnerable family member.

Picking up one of the recommendations from feedback in the initial cash grant assistance. Because of the distance of Barangay West Pantar from Iligan City, it was further proposed that additional Php

200.00 be given to all Barangay West Pantar beneficiary-families as transportation subsidy for the claiming of the cash grant assistance.

With this formula, the initial cash grant assistance involved:

- Total Cash Grant Assistance of PhP 1,838,700.00
- Range of Cash Grant Assistance allocation from PhP 1,600.00 to 3,100.00
- Total Number of Beneficiary-Families at 985 families
- Average Cash Grant Assistance of PhP 1,866.70

Distribution System of the Second Cash Grant Assistance

Distribution System for the 2nd Cash Grant Assistance

In the monitoring of the utilization of initial cash grant assistance, the identified priority needs of the IDP beneficiary-families were:

- Food
- Medicine
- School Needs
- Household Items

For medicine needs, the project had initiated a referral system with local DOH/ MHO as well as an emergency medical fund for needs that could not be addressed by DOH/ MHO.

So, expected needs that families would use their cash grant assistance would be food, school supplies and household items.

With the lesser amount involved and the identified key needs, the project staff agreed that instead of another cash grant assistance through the Palawan Express Pera Padala (PEPP), a local supplier (who can supply the identified priority needs aside from medicine) be engaged for a cash voucher system where beneficiary families can get needed goods and items amounting to their allotted cash grant assistance.

This would be a simpler and safer system that would:

- Maintain flexibility to address diverse and multiple needs of the beneficiary families
- Have no transaction cost or service charge
- Ensure efficient, peaceful and orderly distribution among beneficiaries
- Address financial risk, as cash grant allotment can be directly converted to goods with almost no handling of cash, minimizing risk of loss and theft, and there is full documentation of all transactions

The selected local supplier was the Golden Star Supermarket and Department Store as:

- It offers the widest range of items covering the priority needs of the beneficiary-families
- Prices are reasonable across the priority needs of the beneficiary families
- The store is fully secured by security guards and CCTV system.
- The location is in the city center, fully accessible to the beneficiary families

- Provision of ample space for project staff and community leaders to verify claimants and document the distribution
- Payment arrangement that involves initial payment of half the total cash grant allotment with the final payment done after the distribution and validation of the distribution list and amount

The distribution was done in March 26 up to April 2, 2018.

Second Cash Grant Assistance Summary

Community	Number of Beneficiary-Families	Cash Grant Assistance Distributed
Barangay WEST PANTAR Mun of Pantar, LDN	208	390,100.00 + 41,600.00
Barangay TOMAS CABILI Iligan City	617	1,127,900.00
Sitio TORIL, Bgy Ubaldo Laya Iligan City	160	279,100.00
TOTAL	985	1,838,700.00

SUMMARY OF ALL CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE

Project Areas	INITIAL CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE (Direct Cash Transfer)			SECOND CASH GRANT ASSISTANCE (Cash Voucher System)		
	Num of Families	Amount Given	Average /Family	Num of Families	Amount Given	Average /Family
Brgy WEST PANTAR, Mun of Pantar	209	519,000.00	2,483.25	208	390,100.00 + 41,600.00	1875.48 + 200.00
Bgy. TOMAS CABILI, Iligan City	1,046	2,443,500.00	2,336.04	617	1,127,900.00	1,828.04
Sitio TORIL, Bgy. Ubaldo Laya, Iligan City	273	622,000.00	2,278.39	160	279,100.00	1,744.38
TOTAL	1528	3,584,500.00	2,345.88	985	1,838,700.00	1,866.70

SOME LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Cash Grant Assistance, in its various strategies and approaches, is an effective and empowering way of assisting disaster-affected families, given the right situation, plans and implementation.**

The project was able to experiment with various strategies and approaches for cash grant assistance:

- For the initial cash grant assistance, cash grant distribution through a financial intermediary
- For additional beneficiaries for the initial cash grant assistance, direct cash distribution
- For the second cash grant assistance, cash voucher system through a local supplier

Each of the strategies and approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages, depending on the situation, objectives and intention of the cash grant assistance, taking into account key factors:

- Form, quantity and quality of relief assistance already provided by other humanitarian players such as government and other NGOs
- Amount of cash grant assistance to be distributed as a whole and per beneficiary family
- Number of beneficiaries and claimants
- Peace and order situation
- Functionality of the local market and financial system

Cash grant assistance minimizes need for extensive and complex procurement, packaging, warehousing and transportation system.

Cash grant assistance affirms dignity of the beneficiary families as they are trusted to identify and prioritize their needs and use the cash grant assistance to address these prioritized needs.

Observation during the distribution process, feedback received from beneficiary-families, and monitoring of the utilization of the cash grant assistance have shown that there had been minimal leakage and that utilization of the cash grant assistance had been proper addressing the needs of their families.

Cash grant assistance has maximized local leaders in planning and designing the strategies/ interventions and the assistance had helped strengthen community organizing among the beneficiary-IDP families.

- 2. The Project Cash Grant Assistance Scheme innovated with targeted allocation scheme that allowed increased allocation for families with more special needs, and ensured that the scheme would not cause undue conflicts within the community.**

The cash grant assistance scheme involved a basic allocation for each family with additional amount for members of the family with special needs (such as elderly, children, PWDs, pregnant women, those with chronic, debilitating illnesses), Thus the cash grant assistance involve different amounts for each family, depending on the number of members with special needs. This was made possible by the community profiling activity that provided a clear number of family members and their

situation that was basis for the computation of the cash grant assistance, and also the consultation and planning process that addressed cultural and religious sensitivity and promoted participation of the beneficiaries and community leaders, ensuring right information were shared, discussed and understood by the beneficiaries and avoiding undue conflicts within the community.

3. Factors that facilitate effective and empowering Cash Grant Assistance include the community profiling done, organizing among the beneficiary families, and implementation of consultation, feedbacking and complaints mechanisms.

There were several factors that facilitated effective and empowering Cash Grant Assistance.

- a. The community profiling/ household survey provide with needed information on the family and their special needs, laying clear basis for the identification of beneficiaries and computation of the cash grant assistance allocation.
- b. The hiring of project community facilitator and staff from among the IDPs themselves, such as students, teachers and professionals, enhanced the cultural and religious sensitivity of the project staff and the project strategies/ interventions.
- c. The conscious effort to engage local leaders, involve them into working groups and teams, build their capacities and develop/ strengthen/ sustain community organizations had help in the downward and upward flow of information, feelings and perspectives among the IDPs and the other stakeholders.
- d. The hiring of local staff members from among the IDPs and the efforts on community organizing facilitated the establishment and implementation of consultations, feedbacking and complaints.