CHALLENGE BRIEF DRA CALL FOR PROPOSALS ON SAFETY AND PROTECTION

1. MAIN DETAILS

- Organisation Name: Stichting Vluchteling/ The International Rescue Committee
- Contact person and details for further information: Dieuwerke Luiten, Senior Programme Officer, +31 70 346 89 46, dieuwerkeluiten@vluchteling.nl; Mary Boyle, Grant and Budget Officer, +1 904 303 2078, mary.boyle@rescue.org

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

How can we tackle barriers that exist to access services related to safety and protection for the most vulnerable people in need of these services?

3. CURRENT CHALLENGE

At the end of 2017, 35.6 million children were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict and generalized violence. Of these, 173,800 were unaccompanied or separated; a grossly conservative estimate capturing only registered refugees with UNHCR and those seeking asylum.

As the scale of displacement grows, the humanitarian community is striving to find more efficient and effective ways to meet basic needs and ensure the safety for displaced populations. In-line with the Grand Bargain commitments, cash and voucher assistance (CVA) is increasingly viewed and used as an effective and efficient tool to achieve outcomes and maintain the dignity and autonomy of crisis-affected populations.

IRC and other humanitarian actors have made significant organizational commitments to use cash as a modality to deliver outcomes across all sectors. IRC’s violence prevention and response programs have particularly innovated program models building the evidence base for the use of CVAs towards protection outcomes, including to meet the unique needs of adolescents and unaccompanied children.

Despite this, the lack of robust evidence and tested models on the use of CVA for adolescent populations in humanitarian settings is a major gap for international and local NGOs delivering assistance as well as for donors and governments that fund assistance and generate policy. Particularly, much controversy and confusion remain about whether adolescents should be targeted, and if so, how to do so safely and effectively.

---

2 As defined by The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP): Cash and Voucher Assistance refers to all programs where cash transfers or vouchers for goods or services are directly provided to recipients. In the context of humanitarian assistance, the term is used to refer to the provision of cash transfers or vouchers to individuals, household or community recipients (www.cashlearning.org/resources/glossary#CVA)
In the absence of clear guidance and approaches to target adolescents with CVA in both acute and protracted contexts, child protection advocates are concerned that the growing number of displaced adolescents, including those unaccompanied and heads of households, will not be able to meet their survival and development needs, increasing their risks of sexual exploitation, trafficking, and a range of negative health and psychosocial outcomes.

4. IMPACT GOAL

CVA is recognized as a one of the most significant innovations in humanitarian aid to empower conflict-affected populations to take control of their lives. However, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action notes little to no programming targets that directly benefits adolescent girls and boys with CVA. While cash targeting caregivers and families can indirectly benefit adolescents, there remains a gap in meeting adolescents’ specific needs. The gap is even greater for adolescents who are unaccompanied or heads of households as they can neither directly access nor indirectly benefit from CVAs. Emerging evidence indicates the power of cash to amplify the impacts of violence prevention and response programming targeting adolescents. It also indicates that the combination of cash with protection programming as opposed to stand-alone cash assistance, will have a longer lasting, deeper impact on safety outcomes.

The child protection sector has identified CVA targeting adolescents as an urgent priority for research and practice, and is committed to the development and testing of cash and protection models that achieve measurable outcomes, carefully consider and mitigate risks, and are tailored to age and gender. The global dissemination of resulting guidance would significantly increase the scale and reach of CVAs and increase protection for the growing number of displaced adolescents, in particular those who are unaccompanied and heads of households. Our ambition is to shake up the status quo and move from adolescent exclusion to inclusion. From vulnerability to safety.

This is relevant for the DRA as the DRA 2018 – 2021 strategy lists Innovation and Learning, including in CVA, as one of four strategic objectives. The DRA strategy commits to support innovative approaches to the delivery of cash as part of Grand Bargain commitments and to enable INGOs to add value in how cash can be most effectively provided.

5. ASSUMPTIONS MADE

The first assumption we made is that there will be continued support for cash in the humanitarian and donor communities—both as articulated in Grand Bargain commitments but also in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

---

Secondly we assume that humanitarian actors want to prioritize adolescents, including unaccompanied and separated adolescents in their delivery of protection and safety related assistance and services.

Our third assumption is that evidence will demonstrate feasibility, acceptability and impact of cash based interventions targeting adolescents.

6. RISKS IN PURSUING THIS CHALLENGE

CVA for adolescents is controversial because of the perceived risks and barriers related to age, including capacity to understand risks and provide consent as well as increased vulnerability to exploitation or abuse as a result of receiving cash. Cash itself is not inherently risky, but designing a CVA intervention without an age, gender and diversity lens as well as appropriate feedback and child safeguarding mechanisms can lead to unintended consequences.

IRC is both a leading CVA and Child Protection humanitarian implementation organization, with prior experience in providing CVA directly to adolescents and therefore uniquely placed to develop safe ethical and effective adolescent friendly and participatory CVA interventions.

7. NEXT STEPS

SV/IRC envisions co-leading on this innovation with a strategic partner or leading a small consortium to deliver on this innovation. SV/IRC wants to work with partners who bring diverse expertise:

- partners that bring expertise in research and policy
- partners that can bring a strong inclusion lens, in-line with IRC’s commitments around diversity and inclusion;
- partners that bring expertise in participatory approaches to design and implementation with children and adolescents.

Next steps:
- Scoping exercise: a mapping of IRC Cash and Protection models has already been undertaken. This will be expanded to look at Cash and Protection models targeting adolescents at a global level and across sectors. At the same time, scoping of regions/countries for development and testing as well as partners will take place.
- Evidence review: The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, which IRC is a member of, published in March 2019 a review of existing evidence and opportunities for CVA and child protection programming. The proposed challenge is in alignment with the gaps and opportunities prioritized.
- Partner Selection
- Determining partnership approach in consultation with partner(s)