

Income and economic strengthening

Objective

Improve families' economic security and stability, thereby reducing child maltreatment and maternal intimate partner violence.

Rationale

Income and economic strengthening interventions can benefit children by reducing child maltreatment and decreasing maternal intimate partner violence. Reducing violence between caregivers minimises the likelihood that children witness such violence and suffer the consequences, including the potential that children themselves become victims or perpetrators of violence.

In addition, increasing women's access to economic resources strengthens household economic status in ways that can prevent the abuse and neglect of children. For example, improved access enables women to increase investments in their children's education, thereby improving school attendance (a protective factor for violence against children).



Family economic stability and empowerment and access to financial resources allow parents to invest in children's health and education, increase families' economic resilience, and reduce financial stress. Cash transfer schemes often target the most vulnerable families, based on income or other factors, to determine eligibility for the programme. However, it is important that this process also avoids stigmatising families.

There may or may not be conditions that must be met in order to receive the disbursement. Efforts are necessary to ensure that interventions do not increase time poverty, especially for women, in meeting the programme conditions and collecting the disbursements.



National cash transfer programmes need sustained investment but can contribute to a range of positive outcomes, including long-term poverty reduction. Cash transfers tend to be more effective and sustainable when they integrate additional training, mentoring, and community ownership. In high-income countries, tax credits and welfare reform are primarily evaluated as the form of financial support.



Approach

● Cash transfers (LMIC-focused)

Money is given directly to people in need, either conditionally (e.g., tied to school attendance) or unconditionally.

- **Evidence:** There is emerging evidence for cash transfers reducing only physical intimate partner violence against adolescents in low- and middle-income countries. Evidence is limited and mixed for other forms of violence against children.

● Cash-plus programmes (LMIC-focused)

Cash transfers are combined with either 1) parent-focused training and support programmes or 2) youth-focused social or behaviour change communications or life-skills training.

- **Evidence:** There is strong evidence in favour of prioritising cash-plus parenting programmes for reducing child maltreatment and multiple studies report reductions in concurrent maternal intimate partner violence. There is also evidence in favour of combining cash transfers with youth-focused life-skills training for addressing youth violence (including sexual violence).

● Microfinance interventions (with or without gender norms or equity training)

Microfinance interventions consist of small loans, grants, or savings accounts that are often part of multicomponent programmes.

- **Evidence:** Evidence is concentrated in low- and middle-income countries, but had insufficient and inconsistent evidence of effectiveness in addressing violence against children.

● Welfare reform or tax credits (HIC-focused)

Financial support through income supplementation or maintenance, tax credits, or welfare reform policies. (These programmes are often labelled as cash transfers in low- and middle-income countries.)

- **Evidence:** There is promising evidence for tax credits in reducing youth violence in the United States, but there is inconsistent evidence for interventions on child maltreatment.

Intervention Type	HICs	LMICs
Cash transfers only on child maltreatment	—	✗
Cash transfers only on sexual violence (inequitable sexual partnerships and sexual intimate partner violence against adolescents)	—	✗
Cash transfers only on intimate partner violence against adolescents (physical IPV only)	—	✓
Cash-plus parent training and support programmes on child maltreatment	—	✓✓
Cash-plus parent training and support programmes on youth violence (including sexual violence)	—	✗
Cash-plus youth-focused life-skills training on youth violence (including sexual violence)	—	✓✓
Microfinance interventions on adolescent intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence against adolescents	—	✗
Microfinance interventions on child maltreatment	—	✗
Welfare reform or provision on child maltreatment	✗	—
Tax credits on youth violence	✓	—

- ✓✓ Recommendations for prioritized implementation are well-supported or supported by evidence
- ✓ Recommendations for prioritized implementation have promising or emerging evidence, or are prudent
- ✗ Recommendations for prioritized implementation are not currently supported by evidence
- No new systematic reviews