

A MULTI-COUNTRY CASH AND VOUCHER STUDY ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST & EASTERN EUROPE

KEY FINDINGS

Cash Waves explored the impact of 18 cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programmes across eight countries, focusing on livelihood resilience, child well-being, mental health, community cohesion, gender equality, and social inclusion, with an emphasis on supporting displaced populations and sustainable recovery. The study, conducted between August and September 2024, utilised a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys (1,380 respondents) and qualitative insights (from 326 mothers, fathers, girls and boys).

Livelihood Resilience

95% experienced economic relief, with 35% reporting significant improvement.

65% of returnees saw major gains, compared to 34% of refugees, due to greater economic barriers.

Income diversification increased from 16% to 34%.

Female-led businesses reported improved resilience over men.

44% 21%

Economic challenges persist including debt, and unemployment.

"The rising costs of goods and basic necessities, such as water and electricity, add to the financial burden on us." (Palestinian father, Qalqilya, oPt)

Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-Being

Over 90% of participants reported feeling more secure, experiencing improved well-being, and reduced stress, with women perceiving slightly greater benefits than men, and returnees showing the greatest improvements.

Community Cohesion

Returnees saw the greatest community cohesion improvements, followed by internally displaced persons (IDPs); however, refugees experienced the least impact, with 45% reporting no change.

68% reported improved community relationships, with debt repayment significantly easing tensions.

CVA plays a critical role in reducing household stress, enhancing family stability, fostering better coping mechanisms, and supporting children's development.

62% of respondents said their social participation had been boosted especially female-headed households, engaging more in community activities.

"Through these vouchers, we all know each other now." (Ukrainian refugee woman, Batumi, Georgia)

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

66% of participants reported improved communication and collaboration within their families, with returnees (88%) and IDPs (84%) seeing the greatest improvements; however, these improvements were not universal, and 47% of refugees reported no change.

Boosted women's financial agency in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Romania.

98% did not experience an increase in gender-based violence related to CVA receipt. However, isolated cases (1%) of financial pressure were reported among IDPs and host communities, highlighting the need for protective measures and gender-sensitive programming to address potential financial stress.

Children's Well-Being

CVA has significantly enhanced children's well-being, fostering positive changes in their education, health, and emotional stability.

CVA helped unlock opportunities for children, particularly by improving access to schooling and fostering children's personal growth and self-development.

"I had the opportunity to go out of the house and attend private courses." (Syrian girl, Aleppo, Syria)

Positive Impact on Children's Well-Being Post-CVA

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Improved Education Access | 47% |
| Better Health & Nutrition | 43% |
| Emotional Stability | 30% |
| Increased Self-Esteem | 22% |
| Greater Confidence & Hope | 18% |



Full report available here