Plan Overview

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Title: Evaluating the Impact of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Program on Refugee Well-being in Jordan: A Regression Discontinuity Design

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Template: LSE Data Management Plan for Research Staff

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Project abstract:

This study conducts a Regression Discontinuity Design to evaluate the impact of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance program on the well-being of refugee households in Jordan. Implemented by the International Organization for Migration, the program supports vulnerable households in meeting basic needs across key dimensions, including education, shelter, food security, health, and employment. The evaluation exploits the program's eligibility cutoff, determined by a combined vulnerability score, to compare households just above and below the threshold. Baseline data collected in October-November 2024 established pre-intervention characteristics before cash disbursements began. Originally designed as a consecutive eight-month intervention, the program was disrupted by the January 20, 2025, U.S. executive order, which imposed a 90-day pause on U.S. foreign aid, temporarily halting cash transfers after December 2024. Following the resumption of funding in March 2025, the program was restructured to provide monthly cash assistance from mid-March to mid-August 2025. The study includes a midline survey in June-July 2025 to capture the three-month impact of resumed assistance, and an endline survey in September 2025 to measure the six-month program effect, subject to external funding as the program funding period closes on 14 September 2025. If feasible, a follow-up survey in February 2026 will assess whether effects persist six months post-program, contingent on external funding and the absence of new IOM MPCA program cycles or coverage by other humanitarian actors. This approach enhances methodological rigor, mitigates spending bias, and ensures a clear before-and-after impact assessment, providing policy-relevant evidence on the effectiveness of cash-based interventions in humanitarian settings.

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Copyright information:

Evaluating the Impact of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Program on Refugee Well-being in Jordan: A Regression Discontinuity Design

Overview

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Department:

International Development

Is this research funded?

- Yes

Please name the funder below:

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Cyber Security Awareness

Before you fill in the plan, please confirm you have completed the cyber security awareness course within the last 12 months.

- Yes

Project Details

Project Title:

Evaluating the Impact of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance Program on Refugee Well-being in Jordan: A Regression Discontinuity Design

Please summarise your research question:

To what extent does the MPCA program improve the well-being of refugee households in Jordan?

Data Collection

Please could you outline the secondary data you will use to support your research question.

We will primarily use administrative data provided by UNHCR, including Proxy Means Test (PMT) scores, vulnerability filter scores, demographic and socio-economic data, and other relevant indicators, to define eligibility and support the evaluation of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) program. Additionally, we may use other publicly available datasets or secondary sources to supplement the primary and administrative data, particularly for context or comparisons.

Will you require access to any secure data for this project? Secure data refers to data that has restrictions placed on access, such as the requirement to sign a special license or data sharing agreement.

- Yes

For this project, we will require access to secure data. Specifically, IOM Jordan will access administrative data provided by UNHCR, which includes sensitive information such as Proxy Means Test (PMT) scores, vulnerability filter scores, and demographic and socioeconomic data of refugee households. This data is subject to strict data-sharing agreements and confidentiality protocols to protect personal information and comply with ethical standards. All data access and usage will follow IOM and UNHCR data protection policies.

Please outline any secure datasets you will need to access below:

For this project, we will require access to two key secure datasets. The first is UNHCR Administrative Data, which includes Proxy Means Test (PMT) scores, vulnerability filter scores, demographic and socioeconomic data, and prioritisation ranks of refugee households. This dataset will be instrumental in defining eligibility criteria, constructing the Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) running variable, and controlling for household characteristics during the analysis.

The second dataset is IOM Internal Data, which includes aggregated and anonymised survey data collected through structured phone surveys as part of the impact evaluation. This dataset will adhere to IOM's Data Protection Principles, ensuring compliance with all relevant data protection measures to maintain security and confidentiality.

Will you require access to any internal LSE datasets for this project?

- No

Will you be collecting data from research participants?

- Yes

We will be collecting data from research participants. The data collection involves conducting structured phone surveys with refugee households in Jordan. The surveys will gather information on multiple dimensions of well-being, including education, health, housing, financial situation, food security, employment, and community relationships. These surveys will be conducted in three waves: baseline, midline, and end-line, with participation being entirely voluntary and anonymous.

Please outline your methodology below:

The methodology for this study involves a rigorous approach to evaluating the impact of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) program on refugee well-being in Jordan. The empirical strategy is a regression discontinuity design (RDD), leveraging the eligibility cutoff based on combined Proxy Means Test (PMT) and vulnerability filter scores. This design allows for a robust comparison between households above and below the threshold, isolating the program's causal impact.

Data will be collected through structured phone surveys conducted in three waves: baseline (October-November 2024), midline (June-July 2025), and endline (September 2025, one month after the last disbursement). A potential follow-up survey may also be conducted in February 2026, six months post-program, contingent on external funding and implementation feasibility.

Baseline data was collected in October–November 2024, before the first disbursement of cash assistance, as part of the verification process conducted by the IOM Refugee Response Unit in Jordan and to establish pre-intervention characteristics between recipients and non-recipients. Midline data will assess the short-term effects of three consecutive months of resumed assistance (March-May 2025), while endline data will capture the program's six-month effects (March-August 2025). If the February 2026 follow-up survey goes forward, it will evaluate the persistence of program effects six months after assistance ends.

These surveys will gather information on multiple dimensions of well-being, including education, health, housing, financial situation, food security, employment, and community relationships. The sample consists of refugee households identified through UNHCR's Basic Needs Cash Eligibility framework, divided into treatment and control groups. Treatment households receive MPCA assistance, while control households include those not covered by any humanitarian organisation, using UNHCR's Basic Needs Cash Eligibility framework to determine their MPCA beneficiaries.

The study relies on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data will be collected through the surveys, while secondary data from UNHCR includes administrative information such as PMT scores, vulnerability filter scores, demographic details, and prioritisation ranks. A sharp RDD framework will be used to estimate the average treatment effect (ATE) at the cutoff, with outcome variables such as food security indices, expenditure patterns, health access, and education outcomes analysed using control variables like household size and demographic characteristics to enhance precision. A fuzzy RDD framework will also be applied to estimate the local average treatment effect (LATE) in case of imperfect compliance in program participation.

Ethical considerations are central to the methodology. Informed consent will be obtained verbally before participation, and all data will be anonymised and linked only through unique UNHCR case numbers. Data will be securely stored on encrypted servers, adhering to IOM's protection policies. To ensure data quality, survey instruments will undergo pre-testing and iterative refinement; enumerators will receive comprehensive training to ensure consistency and minimise biases. Real-time monitoring and consistency checks will be implemented during data collection. This methodology ensures a thorough and ethical evaluation of the MPCA program's impact on the well-being of refugee households in Jordan.

Research Ethics

Please outline how you will collect informed consent from research participants:

Informed consent will be obtained electronically from all research participants before they participate in the study. Enumerators will begin each phone survey by reading a standardised informed consent script that explains the purpose of the study, its objectives, and the topics covered in the survey. The script will also outline participants' rights, including the voluntary nature of participation, their right to skip any questions they do not wish to answer, and their right to withdraw from the survey at any point without repercussions. Additionally, participants will be assured that their responses will remain confidential, as no personally identifiable information will be collected, and data will be anonymised using unique UNHCR case numbers.

After presenting the informed consent script, enumerators will explicitly ask participants if they agree to participate in the survey. If participants consent, their responses will be documented electronically by ticking a consent box in the survey form. Enumerators will receive extensive training to ensure the consent process is conducted in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner, ensuring participants fully understand the study and their involvement before consent. This approach aligns with ethical standards for research involving vulnerable populations and ensures that participants' autonomy and rights are respected throughout the study.

Once you have collected proof of consent, you will need to store it safely. Please can you outline below how you plan to do this.

Proof of consent will be securely stored in anonymised electronic records. Consent will be documented in the survey system through a consent checkbox, which enumerators will electronically tick after participants agree to participate. These consent records will be linked only to anonymised UNHCR case numbers, ensuring no personally identifiable information (PII) is associated with the stored consent data.

The consent data will be stored on IOM's encrypted servers, which are protected with secure access protocols, including password protection and two-factor authentication. Access to the consent records will be restricted to authorised research team members, and all data will be handled in compliance with IOM's Data Protection Principles. To further enhance security, consent records will only be retained for as long as necessary for the study. They will be securely deleted or anonymised after the conclusion of the research.

Have you submitted a research ethics review for this project?

- Yes

The Research Ethics Review Application has already been submitted and approved by the LSE Research Ethics Committee.

If you are collecting primary data from human research participants, you are required to anonymise the dataset so that individuals are not identifiable. How do you plan to do this?

The dataset will be fully anonymised to ensure that individuals are not identifiable, adhering to strict ethical and data protection standards. Participants' responses will be linked only to unique UNHCR case numbers, with no personally identifiable information (PII) such as names, addresses, or contact details collected during the survey. Additionally, any potentially identifiable information will be excluded from the dataset to minimise the risk of identification, even when combined with other data points. Where appropriate, individual responses will be aggregated to protect participants' identities further and ensure that no information can be traced back to specific individuals.

The anonymised dataset will be securely stored on IOM's encrypted servers, with access restricted to authorised research team members only. Robust security protocols, including password protection and two-factor authentication, will be implemented to safeguard the data. If any portion of the data needs to be shared with external stakeholders, it will undergo additional anonymisation processes to eliminate any residual risk of identification. These measures collectively ensure that participants' privacy is fully protected throughout the research process, aligning with ethical and regulatory requirements.

Are there any circumstances where you will not anonymise research participants?

- No

Data Protection

Do you believe your research will require you to fill in a data protection impact assessment?

- No

It is unlikely that this research project will require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA). The primary reason is that all data collected for the study will be fully anonymised from the outset, with participant responses linked only to unique UNHCR case numbers and no personally identifiable information (PII) being processed at any stage. Anonymisation ensures that individuals cannot be identified, even indirectly, thereby removing the dataset from the scope of personal data regulations under GDPR.

Furthermore, the research does not involve high-risk processing activities, such as profiling, automated decision-making, or handling large-scale sensitive data, which are typically flagged as triggers requiring a DPIA. While the study engages with vulnerable populations, robust data security measures—such as encrypted storage, restricted access, and adherence to IOM's Data Protection Principles—are in place to ensure ethical and legal compliance. These measures sufficiently mitigate

risks to participant privacy and data security.

Given the combination of complete anonymisation and stringent data protection protocols, a DPIA is not expected to be necessary for this research.

Travel & Risk

Will you be required to travel outside of the UK/EU/EEA at any point during this project?

- No

Rodrigo Chenú will not be required to travel outside the UK/EU/EEA at any point during this project. The data collection will be conducted remotely in Jordan by trained enumerators hired and supervised by IOM Jordan's Refugee Response Unit. Rodrigo's involvement in the study will be entirely remote, focusing on monitoring the data collection process, analysing the collected data, and supporting the local team as needed.

Do you believe that you'll be required to work with consultants external to the LSE at any point during this project?

- No

The research project is conducted entirely by IOM Jordan; all collaborators are considered IOM Jordan's staff members. The study is coordinated by the IOM Jordan's Refugee Response Unit, which will oversee the data collection. Additionally, enumerators hired by the IOM's Refugee Response Unit in Jordan are responsible for conducting the surveys in Jordan. Finally, the research relies on administrative data provided by UNHCR, requiring collaboration with their data management and administrative teams to access and utilise the necessary datasets.

Data Storage & Security

Will you require any additional software to complete your research i.e. survey tools, transcription software etc.

- Yes

Please describe any additional software below:

Additional software will be required to complete the research. A digital data collection platform, KoBoToolbox, will design and administer the structured surveys, ensuring secure and efficient data collection from participants in Jordan. Statistical software such as Stata and R will be employed to

conduct the Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) analysis and other statistical evaluations for data analysis. Data management tools like Microsoft Excel will manage, clean, and organise the survey and administrative datasets. These software tools are essential for maintaining the quality, security, and efficiency of the research processes.

What hardware will you require to complete this project?

To complete this project, several hardware components will be required. Reliable laptops or desktop computers will be essential for data analysis, report writing, and managing datasets. These devices will also run statistical software like Stata and R and access secure administrative data. Additionally, mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets will be necessary for field enumerators in Jordan to administer surveys using a digital data collection platform like KoBoToolbox. Encrypted storage solutions, such as secure external hard drives or access to cloud-based encrypted servers, will also be required to securely store and back up anonymised datasets. These hardware resources are critical to ensuring the successful execution of the project while maintaining data security and integrity.

Do all devices used on this project meet the LSEs [minimum standards for device level security](#)? Please note that DTS issued laptops meet the standard by default unless alterations have been made to them by the user.

- Yes

Are all devices used on this project secured with passwords that meet the standard of the [LSE password policy](#)?

- Yes

Where will you store the research data during the lifetime of the research study:

- Other

You have indicated that you will not use standard LSE storage. Please could you explain below where you plan to store research data:

During the research study's lifetime, all research data will be securely stored on IOM's encrypted servers, which comply with robust data protection standards. These servers have strict access controls, including password protection and two-factor authentication, to ensure that only authorised team members can access the data. Additionally, anonymised datasets may be temporarily stored on secure cloud-based platforms or encrypted external drives for backup purposes and to facilitate collaboration among team members. All data handling will adhere to IOM's Data Protection Principles and ethical guidelines, ensuring the confidentiality and security of participant information throughout

the study.

How do you plan to ensure that all data collected for the project is backed up regularly?

A robust data management and backup protocol will be implemented to ensure that all data collected for the project is backed up regularly. All data will be stored on IOM's encrypted servers, which automatically perform regular backups to secure redundant storage systems. These backups will be scheduled daily to prevent data loss and ensure continuity during technical issues.

In addition to server-based backups, critical datasets will be periodically duplicated and stored on encrypted external hard drives or secure cloud-based platforms with restricted access. These backup copies will be updated regularly to reflect the most current data, providing additional layers of security. Access to all backups will be limited to authorised team members, and data handling will comply with IOM's Data Protection Principles and international ethical research standards.

Data Ownership

Please clarify the copyright and intellectual property ownership of any data you have collected as part of this project. You may find it helpful to refer to the [LSE IP Policy](#) in your reply.

The data collected for this project, including primary survey data and secondary administrative datasets, is owned solely by IOM Jordan, as the research is conducted entirely by IOM Jordan. All research results, whether published internally or externally, also belong solely to IOM Jordan. Therefore, this data is not subject to the copyright and intellectual property (IP) regulations outlined in the LSE Intellectual Property Policy. Additionally, administrative data shared by UNHCR is subject to strict confidentiality agreements, which prevent the sharing of any data collected or managed during this research project.

Data Sharing Restrictions

Do you know of any issues surrounding intellectual property or data ownership which would prevent you from disseminating or sharing your research:

- Yes

Could you explain these issues in more detail?

Potential issues surrounding intellectual property and data ownership may limit the research's dissemination or sharing. The administrative data provided by UNHCR and IOM is subject to strict confidentiality agreements and data-sharing policies, which restrict its use to the purposes outlined in the research proposal. These restrictions protect the privacy and security of sensitive information

about refugee households. Raw datasets cannot be shared publicly or with unauthorised parties. However, the research findings, analysis, and outputs derived from the data will be disseminated in a way that complies with these restrictions. All results will be presented in an aggregated and anonymised format, ensuring that individual participants or sensitive data cannot be identified. Any dissemination will also require adherence to the data protection and intellectual property policies of IOM and UNHCR and the ethical guidelines established for the project. These measures ensure that while the research findings can be shared widely, external collaborators' confidentiality and data ownership rights are fully respected.

Do you have the necessary permissions to reuse any data you collect for future projects?

* Yes

Please can you outline what permission will be requested and how it will be documented?

Permission to reuse the data collected for future projects will be sought and secured as part of the agreements with IOM and UNHCR. Both organisations have clear data-sharing and usage policies, and any data reuse beyond the current project will require explicit approval. This ensures that the data is used in compliance with their confidentiality agreements and data protection principles.

The data collected for this study will be fully anonymised, and any future use will strictly adhere to ethical standards and relevant data protection laws. If permissions are granted, the data will only be reused for purposes aligned with the original scope of the research and under similar confidentiality and security protocols. Where applicable, new agreements or ethical approvals will be obtained to ensure compliance for future projects.