GOVERNMENT DISBURSEMENTS AND URBAN RESILIENCE

A practitioner's point of view

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PRESENTATION_

Resilient Cities Network defines urban resilience as the capacity of a city's systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and thrive, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. Through digital solutions such as digital disbursements, we believe that it we can build safer and more inclusive cities.

We are delighted to present this point of view on government disbursements, in partnership with Visa. These perspectives are important when working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders to build a more equitable future for all. It aids our planning, guiding us and our member cities on how to approach the challenge, while presenting lighthouse examples from around the world.

Lynette Lim
Global Director, Communications & Knowledge

About Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities)

Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities) is the world's leading urban resilience network. It brings together global knowledge, practice, partnerships, and funding to empower its members to build safe and equitable cities for all. Its unique city-led approach ensures cities drive the agenda to benefit the communities they serve. At work in 100 cities worldwide, the Resilient Cities Network supports on-the-ground projects and solutions to build climate resilient, circular and equitable cities while also facilitating connections and information-sharing between communities and local leaders. For more information, please visit https://resilientcitiesnetwork.org/.

For cities everywhere, the ability to deliver payments and financial support when and where they are needed is a key capability for effectively serving people and communities, and for building resilience against shocks and stresses of all types. The mounting challenges of the 21st century have only increased the need for fast, secure, and flexible payment options.

At Visa, we believe that reliable, inclusive, connected digital solutions are essential to building a successful future for people, governments, and businesses everywhere. We have partnered with The Resilient Cities Network to collaborate with cities to create digital solutions for urban resilience and inclusion challenges, applying Visa's innovation and digital payment capabilities to the RCN resilience framework. In this study, we examine payments made by city governments and other public institutions to people and businesses, for purposes of providing aid, growing economies, or other targeted policy outcomes. We hope you will enjoy and learn from the principles and case study lessons discussed here.

Louise Holden
Global Head of Partnerships, Visa Government Solutions

About Visa, Inc. (Visa)

Visa is a world leader in digital payments, facilitating transactions between consumers, merchants, financial institutions and government entities across more than 200 countries and territories. Our mission is to connect the world through the most innovative, convenient, reliable and secure payments network, enabling individuals, businesses and economies to thrive. We believe that economies that include everyone everywhere, uplift everyone everywhere and see access as foundational to the future of money movement.

THE FUTURE READY CITIES PROGRAM AND THE POINT-OF-VIEW (POV)

Future Ready Cities is a global program launched by Visa and Resilient Cities Network (R-Cities) in 2020 to build urban resilience through education and pilot digital finance solutions, created for cities and with cities. It aims to empower network cities and to demonstrate the power of these solutions for cities everywhere.

City officials can use digital solutions to address goals, such as reducing inequality gaps, stimulating economic prosperity, increasing health and safety, and adapting more effectively to the challenges of climate change. Achieving these goals in turn has a potential benefit of increasing the resilience of cities.

This document presents a practice-oriented approach to the topic of digitalization of government disbursements, aiming to provide insights and learnings to practitioners and local authorities to help facilitate their development of innovative solutions that address urban challenges with benefits to the systemic resilience of a city. The results and conclusions presented in this report are derived from research that involved a comprehensive literature review, consultations with key stakeholders, and the analysis of relevant case studies worldwide. National, regional and local government programs were compiled and analyzed to answer the following question:

> **?** **How can the digitalization of government disbursement programs help improve urban resilience?**

This work aims to consolidate and share advanced and practice-focused knowledge about government disbursement through a resilience lens, making it available for city officials, urban stakeholders and interested audiences worldwide.

INTRODUCTION_

What is urban resilience and why does it matter?

Urbanization is a key global trend, impacting the future of our world, society and the economy. In 2018, more than 55% of the world's population lived in urban areas, and this proportion is expected to increase to two-thirds by 2050. People are attracted to cities as hubs of economic activity – offering job and educational opportunities, easy access to shopping and amenities, more accessible medical care and a variety of cultural and entertainment options. At the same time, cities are also places where stresses accumulate as large numbers of people live in a relatively small amount of space. Financial difficulties, lack of affordable housing and homelessness, traffic jams and air pollution, significant economic inequalities, and rising crime are only some of the issues that city administrations face.

Urban resilience is the capacity of a city's systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt and grow, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. Prioritizing a holistic urban resilience approach relies on creating flexible systems that can support the survival, adaptation, and growth of all its members in the face of increasing shocks and stresses. As cities grow in number and size and as their challenges rise, urban resilience strategies are becoming an indispensable part of well-planned and effective city administration.

55%

of the world's population was living in urban areas in 2018

75%

of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2050

What are government disbursements?

Government disbursement programs are programs funded by governments as part of their social protection systems to support, among others:

Private individuals and families, especially vulnerable individuals and families or those experiencing temporary difficulties. Governments disburse funds to residents for the provision of social benefits, emergency payments, pensions, social security benefits, etc.

Small businesses, usually with the goal of increasing employment, promoting investment and entrepreneurship, or bolstering economic growth. Government support here includes grants, subsidized or guaranteed loans, and sponsored worker training programs.

There are different types of disbursement programs:

- Ongoing, regular payments that are usually part of a country's social insurance systems, e.g., contributory interventions such as pensions, disability payments, or unemployment benefits.

- Focused, one-time payments targeting a specific policy objective, such as incentive payments for adopting green technology or incentives for digitalization for small businesses.

- Event-driven irregular payments aiming to address short-term emergency situations, such as disaster relief, the Covid-19 pandemic, or energy crisis support programs.

For the purposes of this paper, we focus on the latter two types of disbursement programs, which are more frequently managed by city officials. Throughout the paper, we refer to supported individuals and businesses as the "recipients" or "beneficiaries" of disbursement programs.

Government disbursements are often at the core of an inclusive social policy. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, among developing and transition economies, the average global spending on social safety net programs alone was 1.5% of GDP, according to the 2018 World Bank ASPIRE report. However, during the peak of the pandemic (March 2020 - May 2021), global fiscal support to individuals and businesses amounted to USD 13.8 trillion, above 10% of the global GDP.

The aim of disbursement programs is to get required financial support to individuals or businesses in socially and economically vulnerable situations, such as unemployment, sickness, disability or financial difficulties, and at times of crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the European energy crisis. Disbursement programs can also foster specific behaviors deemed by the applicable government as beneficial for the economy and society, such as entrepreneurship and innovation or the adoption of green technologies by individuals and businesses. Hence, disbursement programs can be flexible, practical, and scalable resources in the hands of policymakers. They can be designed to drive prosperity by reducing poverty and inequality, and to enhance financial access and inclusion across society as a whole. Crucially, they can be a powerful tool for governments in their drive to deliver economic stimulus and achieve fiscal policy goals.

City administrations are playing an important role in government disbursements. Many cities with high social welfare caseloads, such as Philadelphia, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Richmond in the U.S., share common elements: a high level of poverty concentrated within particular inner-city neighborhoods, anemic city economies, and extensive decentralization in the metropolitan economy. City administrations, with the knowledge of the local community and the problems facing individuals and businesses, are well-equipped to design and run well-targeted and effective disbursement programs. Digitalizing these programs can significantly increase urban resilience with tangible benefits for all stakeholders.

DIGITALIZING GOVERNMENT DISBURSEMENTS TO ENHANCE URBAN RESILIENCE_

Digitalization of government disbursement is an important lever which city administrations can use to increase the resilience of cities, businesses, and their inhabitants. Digital disbursements can be an important tool for government efforts to increase the level of digital and financial literacy, and can enhance inclusion of otherwise marginalized groups and of society as a whole, with compelling benefits.

Cities that digitalize the disbursement of funds can be better prepared for and more resilient towards future stresses and shocks. City administrations can strengthen city resilience through their disbursement programs focusing on different aspects:

- **Help residents meet their basic needs** for food, transportation, drinking water, access to energy and decent housing. The digitalization of programs focusing on these needs can considerably improve both the identification of beneficiaries and the funds transfer, enabling governments to reach even traditionally hard-to-reach segments, such as unbanked people, individuals with low levels of literacy, migrants, workers in the informal economy, or victims of armed conflicts and climate-related disasters.

- **Reduce poverty and improve social cohesion.** Programs that support a basic level of income can help those people living in poverty or prevent people from falling into poverty when they are affected by illness, disability, unemployment or a natural phenomenon impacting their subsistence (e.g., drought). Shocks and stresses can exacerbate inequalities, and preliminary evidence from the World Bank suggests that global income inequality has risen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. With significant job losses and dwindling incomes, many individuals faced financial hardship. For governments, finding effective ways to enhance access to financial aid for such groups is an opportunity to address and alleviate challenging social issues experienced by a number of metropolitan centers. In Spain, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the government imposed a severe mobility ban, affecting a large share of the vulnerable population. To help alleviate the stresses caused by this measure, the _Tarjeta Monedero, a prepaid card program_ with limited transactions to specific outlets such as supermarkets and pharmacies, was implemented nationwide, taking different shapes according to specific capabilities in the regions and cities. In the Andalusia Region, almost 70,000 people were reached across 555 municipalities, with the support of a well-recognized international organization working locally.

- **Grow the local economy and local employment and improve well-being.** Many government disbursement programs aim to support small entrepreneurs, local businesses and the city economy. Such programs were widespread during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to sustain the existence of local small businesses and employment. These programs also can help build up the resilience of the local economy by helping firms realize the benefits of digitalization – by reaching more customers, growing sales, and reducing administrative tasks. Digitalization of disbursement programs targeted at small businesses can reduce fraudulent claims, which are funds provided to companies that are inexistent, not in need, or otherwise ineligible. It can also allow for effective evaluation of program outcomes.

● **Empower women and other marginalized communities.** Some government disbursement programs aim to reduce gender inequality, grow female representation in certain sectors, and enhance women's economic autonomy. This is also true for certain historically marginalized groups, especially gender minorities, such as LGBTIQ+, youth, refugees and asylum-seekers, which suffer employment discrimination even more often than other minority groups, in addition to discrimination in housing and health care. Digitalizing such programs can help reach a larger number of individuals by streamlining the process of obtaining benefits and can help build a more tolerant and inclusive society in return.

● **Foster risk reduction and management.** Government disbursement programs are increasingly relevant in the response to the impacts of climate change. It is critical to accurately identify affected populations during climate-related catastrophes and emergencies. Innovative disbursement programs that use technology, such as artificial intelligence and forecasting, that anticipate necessary income transfers before and after disasters, have been shown to have a positive impact on vulnerable populations. Government disbursement programs can also be used to facilitate the social acceptance of environmental and climate-related policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and physical waste as well as encouraging lower energy use. In Bangladesh, [a program to deliver anticipatory cash transfers for climate-related disaster response](#) utilized data-driven forecasting to predict flooding and support households in at-risk areas to prepare accordingly. The provision of pre-flood monetary transfers to individuals has yielded promising results, enabling better preparation for a catastrophe and significantly mitigating losses.

● Promote health and education. Several government disbursement programs have a strong impact on the population's health and education. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, many government disbursement programs were used to achieve greater vaccination coverage. In Brazil, for example, the [Programa Bolsa Família](#)—a nationwide conditional cash transfer program—allowed low-income families to receive social benefits if they meet qualifying criteria, such as sending their children to school. The program reached [14.28mn families (about 20% of Brazil's population)](#) in 2020, making it the largest such program in the world. In these instances, digitalization plays a fundamental role in monitoring and verification.

DIGITALIZATION TRENDS IN GOVERNMENT DISBURSEMENT PROGRAMS_

Governments can use digital disbursement programs to develop urban resilience more effectively and efficiently. Digitalization can play a vital role in various stages of the disbursement process, such as informing potential beneficiaries about the programs, screening them for eligibility, identifying and onboarding selected beneficiaries, facilitating better financial management and savings and utilizing nudges to enhance payment effectiveness.

"The role of the disbursement program is not only to move money from governments to residents but to deliver a result. Digitalization spirals the benefits of the program."

(Gregory Sheppard. Head of Disbursements. Visa Government Solutions)

There are several trends that can be found in the digitalization of disbursement programs:

TREND 1.
ANTICIPATION OF POTENTIAL DISBURSEMENT EVENTS:

Governments are using innovative models and forecasting tools to identify potential shocks, anticipating the risks and deploying aid in advance. The United Nations piloted an innovative meteorological forecasting approach in Bangladesh to identify potential victims of river flooding and anticipate cash transfers to help them evacuate and cover basic needs. In the African island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe, researchers have demonstrated how poverty maps developed using High-Resolution Satellite Imagery (HRSI) can help the government to rapidly expand and better target social protection programs in response to a crisis.

TREND 2.
MORE EFFECTIVE IDENTIFICATION AND TARGETING OF BENEFICIARIES:

Governments are leveraging digital tools to identify individuals in need and more effectively target vulnerable populations. This approach not only enables programs to identify people and businesses that might have been overlooked otherwise, but it also mitigates the trade-off between comprehensive eligibility verification and the speed of fund disbursement, especially when utilizing digital tools. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bono Familia emergency cash transfer program in Guatemala relied on information about household electricity consumption to help with targeting disbursements to residents in need. In the Novissi program, in Togo, beneficiaries in rural areas were found after identifying the country's 100 poorest cantons through a machine learning algorithm overlaying satellite imagery with data from a nationally representative household survey. The living conditions were estimated for approximately 5 million mobile subscribers in the country, who were invited via SMS and other communication channels to apply for the program's benefits.

TREND 3.
ABILITY TO ACCELERATE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE EVEN IN ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES:

Many shocks give urban governments practically no time for preparation, for instance, climate-related disasters, financial shocks, or health emergencies like the Covid-19 pandemic. The digitalization of the disbursement process can play a critical role in offering flexible solutions, speed, efficiency and scalability. In Ukraine, for example, during a peak of Covid-19 cases, the ePidtrimka (eSupport) program allowed the government to reach a population of 9.5 million people with digital money transfers in less than two months, with the objective of encouraging people to get vaccinated. Similarly, in Spain, a joint venture called MoneyToPay helped to deliver social protection payments with greater speed, security, and control by using prepaid cards. In some cases, it was possible for organizations to set up a program and distribute the cards in less than one week.

TREND 4.
POTENTIAL TO BUILD STRATEGIC ALLIANCES WITH STAKEHOLDERS:

Collaboration between local and international stakeholders is crucial for enhancing government programs. These synergies can capitalize on the stakeholders' capacities to support government initiatives in driving digitalization. For instance, they can contribute with their experience in helping beneficiaries cope with digital illiteracy, offering in-person and other off-screen contacts, as well as providing governments with the technical expertise to move money digitally. Their presence in the territory, technical capacities, and the trust the community has in them are valuable assets for enhancing digitalization. Under the Bono Familia initiative, the Guatemalan government supported almost 2.7m poor and vulnerable families in the country—almost 80 percent of all households — through an emergency fund disbursement program. In partnership with the World Bank and Unicef, the Ministry of Social Development worked with commercial banks, telecommunication companies, and VisaNet Guatemala, among others, to create an innovative platform to identify, register, and pay benefits to affected families. Leveraging Visa Direct technology, the program enabled the government to provide real-time access to funds for recipients.

"Governments work better when they partner with other organizations. They can use the best products that the private sector has to offer and leverage the support from nonprofits, for instance, to send messages and educate their constituents."

(Ronda Kent. Senior Account Executive. Visa Government Solutions)

TREND 5.
CONVENIENT PAYOUT:

In recent years, governments have increasingly adopted digital money options to facilitate access and accelerate the receipt of funds by beneficiaries. In Malawi, cash transfers were facilitated through Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) using Mobile Money System (MMS). Funds were sent to two MNOs and beneficiaries were expected to access funds from MNOs' agents located in various townships in four target cities. The Novissi program in **Togo** and the Bono Familia program in **Guatemala** implemented mobile money accounts for their recipients. Finally, bonus programs in **Peru** such as "Yo Me Quedo en Casa," "*Bono Independiente*," and "*Bono Familiar Universal*" used a mix of bank accounts, temporary mobile e-wallets, and, as a last resort, over-the-counter payments.

TREND 6.
FINANCIAL EDUCATION AND IMPROVED FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR RECIPIENTS:

Government disbursements often serve as the initial point of access to financial systems for individuals who previously relied solely on cash. The convenience and reliability of digital disbursements not only demonstrate their advantages but also can encourage the adoption of electronic financial products in the long term. Governments have the opportunity to promote financial literacy among their constituents in ways that private financial institutions may be unable or unwilling to do. The integration of financial education into digital disbursement initiatives can yield substantial long-term advantages for economically disadvantaged individuals. One example is the PSARA cash transfer program in Haiti, which supports thousands of households that are vulnerable to poverty and acute shocks such as natural disasters. This program includes a financial education component and aims to promote local economic opportunity through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VLSAs).

BOOSTING URBAN RESILIENCE VIA DIGITAL DISBURSEMENT PROGRAMS_

5.1. Holistic resilience concept

Cities can adopt a focused approach to enhance urban resilience through the digitalization of disbursement programs. Resilient programs have common characteristics:

REFLECTIVE AND RESOURCEFUL:

THE CAPACITY TO LEARN FROM THE PAST AND FROM OTHERS.

Digitalized government disbursement programs have been developed based on the lessons learned from previous experiences, seeking to improve the way of identifying and reaching beneficiaries. This does not mean that digitalization has reached its limit; quite the contrary, the evolution continually strives to provide better results. Additionally, many digital government disbursement initiatives leverage existing infrastructure (financial, communication, cybersecurity, etc.) recognizing alternative ways of using resources at hand.

ROBUST, REDUNDANT AND FLEXIBLE:

THE CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN SYSTEMS OPERATING.

Digitalized government disbursement programs can reach beneficiaries using different technologies (prepaid cards, virtual wallets, money credited to cell phones, etc.). Moreover, the digitalization of government disbursement programs provides flexibility to social policies, improving their response in the face of abrupt changes, as well as increasing their capacity to adapt to different circumstances. Complementary to this, digitalization of disbursement increases robustness by allowing accessible monitoring of the program's performance and preventing or mitigating fraud cases.

INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE:

THE ABILITY TO INVOLVE STAKEHOLDERS AND INTEGRATE INPUT.

The digitalization of income transfers and other programs has facilitated interoperability between different systems. As a result, there are many government programs that share information to complete and validate their data, both for the identification of beneficiaries and in the search of incompatibilities regarding their benefits. The digitalization of government disbursement programs can be precisely designed according to the needs and preferences of different groups, thus contributing to their empowerment.

5.2. Resilience boosters

Successful digital government disbursements are the result of various enablers. Cities that leverage these enablers can be better prepared to achieve innovation leaps and strengthen resilience.

1.

REGULATIONS

Structures and responsibilities in government programs should be formalized through regulations in order to render lasting policies and their corresponding results. Since 2008, Pakistan's efforts to create a favorable regulatory environment for branchless banking options have helped to expand access to financial services and support innovative ways to distribute government payments. Some digital disbursement programs are born during emergency events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Under these circumstances, decisions are made prioritizing quick results. The positive results obtained by the Quédate en Casa and Fondo de Asistencia Solidaria del Empleado programs in the **Dominican Republic** were, in part, due to the formulation of regulations and the generation of operational procedures made as part of a system of social protection against emergencies as part of a system of social protection against emergencies.

2.

INNOVATION CULTURE AND CHAMPIONS

Technology, knowledge, creativity and innovation are vital. All of them should be present in the next generation of digital government disbursements. The government of Ukraine fostered the proper environment for innovation. Right after taking office in May 2019, the government championed the digital transformation of the Ukrainian state through Diia, a mobile application and online portal that opened digital access to 120 government services with embedded disbursements and payment acceptance, and called Ukrainians to engage with their government online in a one-stop shop.

3.

WIDE PUBLIC-PRIVATE-NGO COLLABORATION

Some programs stand out due to the number of partners involved in their design, execution, and funding. Some private partners provide communications infrastructure or payment platforms, whereas institutional ones, such as NGOs, contribute with transparency, reliable procedures, and advocacy. The programs **Novissi in Togo** and ***Tarjeta Monedero* in Andalusia** are examples of efficient multi-stakeholder articulation targeting different challenges in different geographic contexts.

4.

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

The government plays a key role in strengthening the resilience impact of digital disbursement programs. First, governments should implement **transversal strategies** of modernization that spill over in an integrated manner under a cross-sectoral, whole-of-government approach. To support **Ukraine**'s digitalization, its Ministry of Digital Transformation drove efforts to bring the country's numerous government agencies and departments together through a single e-government platform. Secondly, this Ministry is also an example of **interoperability** within governments' initiatives, a crucial aspect to guarantee appropriate access to information and decision-making. Thirdly, disbursement programs should be managed from **integrated** spaces for multisectoral coordination. All departments that have a stake at any stage of its implementation (e.g., modernization, finance, health, education, economic development) should be convened early.

5. PROJECT PRIORITIZATION AND PREPARATION

Cities should prioritize disbursement programs that tackle shocks and stresses as early as possible to avoid the cascading effects of a catastrophe. For instance, droughts and floods can lead to a decrease in farmers' revenues, which may trigger a financial or economic crisis. This can lead to a decline in the quality of life of populations and may result in poverty or civil unrest. The case of **Bangladesh** is a flagship example of a strategy to address climate-related threats before they happen, therefore eliminating or mitigating their consequences.

6. ADOPTION OF TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS BY URBAN DWELLERS

Governments must address digital illiteracy through training and education and must design disbursement programs based on technology with high dissemination and adoption among the target population. In Latin America, successful efforts by telecommunications service providers have helped digital adoption to make rapid progress, enabling programs such as **Guatemala**'s Bono Familia to reach a large portion of the population via their smartphones. Similarly, programs such as the Covid-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI) in **Malawi** highlight the need for more investment in digital payments awareness and usage. Other programs address deeper situations of exclusion, including digital illiteracy, by offering the possibility of personalized contacts in the awareness and implementation stages.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITIES

Technical infrastructure, equipment and capabilities must be available for the successful execution of digital disbursement programs. The communication infrastructure must allow for information and money to be moved quickly and safely. In 2014, **Sierra Leone** faced the Ebola crisis with 90% mobile phone access and coverage across the country, plus a strong national network of mobile payment agents. This infrastructure proved to be an advantage in deploying digital payments during the crisis. The move towards digital government disbursements does not happen overnight and incremental steps need to be taken, especially in countries that require substantial investments in digital public infrastructure.

8. COOPERATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Cities should leverage international cooperation platforms related to government disbursements as they constitute an asset for the generation and sharing of updated practical knowledge. The **G2Px Initiative** is a partnership of the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation that seeks to contribute to the agenda of improving government-to-person (G2P) payments through digitization. The **Better Than Cash Alliance** is a partnership of governments, companies, and international organizations that helps to accelerate the transition from cash to responsible digital payments and helps achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The **Resilient Cities Network partnership with Visa** aims to offer the possibility to scale knowledge and practice to 100 cities in more than 40 countries. These cooperation platforms either offer evidence-based knowledge, promote peer learning, or advocate at different government levels in order to advance digital payments incorporating additional development outcomes such as financial inclusion, women's economic empowerment, and government fiscal savings.

"Disbursement programs can be replicated in other cities and countries, but you need to understand where you are replicating it, who the constituents are and then how that will work. Even in the US, being so big, there are places in cities and rural areas where there is no banking infrastructure and cash is the only way to operate."
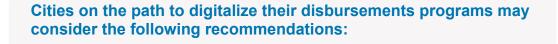
(Ronda Kent. Visa Government Solutions)

THE WAY FORWARD_

Fueled by the Covid-19 pandemic, the world has accelerated the transition to more digital disbursement models. Technology has proven to play a fundamental role in building city resilience, not only in transferring money but also in the stages of identification and contacting potential beneficiaries. By leveraging digital disbursement mechanisms, local governments can more effectively distribute financial assistance to their communities, promote financial inclusion, and improve their overall economic resilience. Likewise, digital disbursement has proven crucial in different types of shock scenarios, providing city administrations with flexibility, speed and efficiency.

Cities on the path to digitalize their disbursements programs may consider the following recommendations:

✓ Formalize structures and responsibilities through regulations to render lasting policies and results.

✓ Promote digital tools uptake, knowledge sharing, creativity, and collaboration. Complementing technology with a culture open to innovation can lead to successful and long-lasting results.

✓ Organize the city government in ways that foster integration and transversal coordination in policymaking, promoting interoperability between systems as well.

✓ Prioritize disbursement programs that tackle resilience shocks and stresses as early as possible to avoid or mitigate cascading effects. Additionally, embed those initiatives into larger city visions and plans.

✓ Address beneficiaries' digital illiteracy through training and education, and design disbursement programs based on technologies that are widely used by the target population.

✓ Invest in infrastructure, technological equipment, and technical capabilities as early as possible.

✓ Leverage international cooperation opportunities, including city networks. They constitute an encouraging environment for the generation and sharing of up-to-date practical knowledge.

✓ Use the advantages of digitalization for accessible monitoring of the programs to improve their scope, results and impacts continuously.

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