UP2U — DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR...

• CASH TRANSFERS, VOUCHER SYSTEMS AND BEYOND
• HUMANITARIAN / DEVELOPMENT SERVICE DELIVERY

Responding to the needs of vulnerable people in times of crisis is becoming increasingly challenging for development and humanitarian actors. The complex nature and context of crises requires innovative and affordable solutions with the flexibility to respond to changing needs on the ground at speed, whilst also providing security and accountability.

UP2U is a new digital electronic voucher system designed to deliver efficient, accountable and targeted support to vulnerable households in fragile, hard-to-reach and low-connectivity locations.

Developed by Plan International and CGA Technologies, UP2U was originally devised in 2018 to reduce security risks associated with cash and paper voucher distribution, enabling registered households to purchase goods quickly and safely from participating vendors. The speed and ease of injecting money into rural communities strengthens the local economies.

Now used in three countries — South Sudan, Sudan and Central African Republic — and translated into English, French and Arabic — UP2U delivers support to 2,692 vulnerable households and has the capacity to scale rapidly.

Its advanced functionality, including biometric registration, remote data collection, and monitoring and reporting, offers significant opportunities beyond electronic-voucher and cash distribution, such as Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GRM), attendance monitoring and cash-for-work projects.

How does UP2U work?

PLAN International uses UP2U to distribute electronic vouchers to vulnerable households. Each participating household is registered on the system and given a project ID card. Cards are remotely loaded with a monetary value or commodity entitlement that the household can then redeem for food and other essential items at approved trade points in their communities, mitigating poverty and fuelling the local economy.

Using UP2U has enabled Plan to reduce the security risk associated with distributing cash or paper vouchers and enables beneficiaries to purchase goods as and when they need them.

Those households receiving a monetary value can spend their entitlement freely at trade points and negotiate prices directly with the trader.

The trader redeems the monetary value through their bank or mobile finance operator.

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Breakdown of functionality:

UP2U is a secure smart-card system with a corresponding Management Information System (MIS) and app, which is accessible on Android phones.

- **One-time Biometric Registration:** Households or individuals are registered in situ capturing GPS location and biometric data, including a photograph of the household representative. They are issued with a small plastic card, which uses contactless 'Near-Field Communication' (NFC) scanning software to register in the system via the app.
- **Distribution & Purchase:** Data cards are loaded remotely and securely with a value amount or commodity. Households redeem their entitlements at approved trade points using their data card. Traders use a robust BlackView Android phone to scan data cards and process transactions. Traders are then paid manually using data captured in the app.
- **Dashboard & Reporting:** The system uses secure cloud-based core-database and dashboard enabling teams to monitor household, trader and voucher records in real-time including tracking household entitlements, monitoring how households spend their money, and tracking quantities and price per unit.
- **Offline functionality:** Following initial set-up, UP2U functions in both on- and off-line settings making it suitable for use in ultra-low-connectivity contexts.
- **Structural Security:** UP2U uses state of the art data-encryption and secure transmission including: secure cloud storage and disaster back-up, GDPR compliance and secure NFC-based data cards with PIN access.

UP2U Background

2018: Plan International South Sudan and CGA Technologies piloted UP2U with 400 households, including Internally Displaced People, in Torit County, South Sudan, later expanding to Malakal Town.

2021: The system expanded to El Fasher, North Darfur in Sudan, and Kaga Bandoro in Central African Republic.

2022: Currently, UP2U is used by **2,692** households across South Sudan (2,150), Sudan (300) and Central African Republic (242) with the capacity to scale-up significantly both to new countries and to new households within existing programme areas.

Household card example
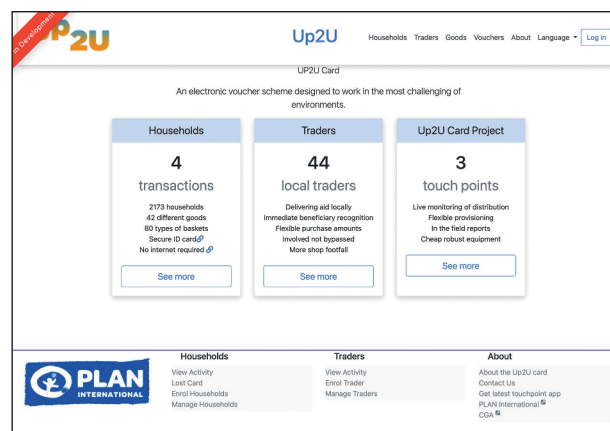
Dashboard landing page (CAR system)

Opportunities for further uses

Remote and low connectivity
Use in other low-connectivity, fragile contexts. Easily replicated in other contexts, for use in other countries and languages.

Grievance Redress Mechanism Inclusion
Potential to develop GRM capacity to be integrated with the UP2U card system.

Wider Cash Programme Information Management
UP2U Card for general cash programme information management, beyond the voucher system with capacity to accommodate Know Your Customer legal requirements. The system can also be used for household attendance monitoring during cash-for-work projects.

Attendance Incentive
Potential for linking education data with payment records. For example, education vouchers could be added to cards when school attendance thresholds are met.

Partnerships and Consortiums
Suitable for use with partners and in consortia, and capable of interfacing with other digital public goods/ integrating with other systems. Built-in donor audit readiness.

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