

Using cash and vouchers in Somalia in 2017: The need to build on learning from the 2011-12 Somalia drought response

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During the 2011-12 drought response in Somalia, cash and vouchers were distributed at a scale which, at the time, was extremely unusual in such a context. Today, as Somalia again teeters on the brink of famine and humanitarian actors are scaling up responses, cash is accepted as highly appropriate and is a major part of response plans.

Cash has the potential to help hundreds of thousands who are in need. But as the 2017 response is scaled-up, it is vital that we draw on learning from 2011-12 to inform current plans. While it may not always be possible to apply all best practices, we always have the chance to do better if we use learning effectively. The six points below draw together and build on key recommendations from five evaluationsⁱ which were completed after the 2011-12 response.

- 1. Targeting and coverage.** Undertake effective mapping, analysis and coordination to ensure geographical targeting reaches those most in need. Consider blanket coverage in the worst affected areas. When the situation allows, implement community-based targeting. Undertake retargeting to take account of changes in the food security situation and ensure the most vulnerable are continually prioritized. Reflect on historical patterns of famine, both from a geographical and socio-political perspective to better inform operational strategies and plans. Harmonise systems to enable easy and effective cross-checking of beneficiary lists.
- 2. Response and market analysis.** While it is very positive that cash forms a major part of the evolving response, it shouldn't be assumed that it is the right response everywhere. The use of cash and other response modalities should be based on robust response analysis in each context. While markets in Somalia are known to be very responsive, there is need for careful monitoring. Humanitarian actors must be ready to adjust the response modality if needed.
- 3. Risk Management.** Stakeholders should undertake a collective and rigorous risk analysis, this should include risks related to exclusion and diversion. Collusion between programme stakeholders is difficult to monitor and requires both commitment and innovative methods to identify occurrences. If implementing partners undertake effective due diligence, there should be sharing of risk between field staff, senior management, implementing agencies and donors.
- 4. Accountability.** Appropriate feedback mechanisms should be established. Wherever possible agencies should seek to understand and utilize local accountability mechanisms, including understanding clan dynamics and how agency staff work in different contexts. There is need to invest in sharing information effectively with affected communities - both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Organisationally, there is need to share learning to improve internal accountability, including whistle blowing procedures and ways of investigating different types of diversion. Minimum standards vis-à-vis risk assessment, mitigation, monitoring, investigation, reporting, and transparency should be established.
- 5. Funding:** Donors should seek to simplify funding mechanisms. In 2011 six donors signed 13 bilateral agreements with four INGOs in one consortium and had multiple reporting requirements. The opportunities for greater harmonization of reporting should be considered in tandem with work to improve overall monitoring and evaluation.
- 6. Monitoring.** Where intervention objectives are broadly the same, a small number of core process and output indicators should be agreed along with a common system to allow for comparability and aggregation. Core process indicators should be regularly and collectively reviewed by stakeholders and plans adjusted as needed. Common analysis (including methods for determining cost efficiency) and reporting formats should be agreed for process, output and outcomes. Creative ways of monitoring should be used in areas where there is no or limited access.

For a fuller list of evaluation recommendations and other useful reports related to the 2011-12 Somalia drought response, see:

"Checking Back. Using cash and vouchers in Somalia: Recommendations from the 2011-12 Somalia Drought Response" March 2017, available on the CaLP Resource Library

ⁱThe six summary points draw together and build on key recommendations from:

- *Ali, D. and K. Gelsdorf (2012), Risk Averse to Risk Willing: Learning from the 2011 Somali Cash Response. Global Food Security, Vol.1(1) pp.57-63.*
- *Hedlund K, Majid N, Maxwell D & Nicholson N, Final evaluation of the unconditional cash and voucher response to the 2011–12 crisis in southern and central Somalia, Humanitarian Outcomes & UNICEF, 2012.*
- *HPG (2012) CVMG Final Monitoring Report of the Somalia Cash and Voucher Transfer Programme Phase 1: September 2011-March 2012. Longley, C., Brewin, M. and Dunn, S.*
- *IASC Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response in South Central Somalia 2005-2010*
- *Truelove S and Duncalf J (2012), Final Evaluation, Somalia, Humanitarian Coalition*