



Q&A from the CaLP Webinar: Lessons on the use of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) for the Caribbean Atlantic hurricane season

Key messages:

- Given the enabling infrastructure, markets, local capacities and interest of key stakeholders, the Caribbean region offers significant opportunities to scale up CVA.
- International humanitarian actors supporting the response need to take a very localised approach due to the small island context, the generally strong roles of government and local organisations in response (and varying government position vis-à-vis CVA), diverse cultural influences and the challenges of reaching undocumented and other marginalised populations.
- Effective CVA as an emergency response tool and/or as part of shock-responsive social protection systems require significant investments in preparedness.

Key CVA Resources

CaLP library: Search for CVA-related information, PPTs and videos and share/upload yours.

CaLP Programme Quality Toolbox: A step-by-step list of actions to define what needs to happen to support quality CVA. Each action is supported by a set of guidelines and ready-to-use tools and templates to explain how to achieve quality CVA.

CaLP Coordination Tip Sheet: This tip sheet sets out established best practice, key guidance and resources for all aspects of cash coordination, intended as a clear, accessible and action-oriented guide for those engaged in coordination of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) at the field level.

CaLP Minimum Expenditure Basket Tip Sheet: The purpose of this tip sheet is to accompany practitioners and decision makers through key stages in the process of calculating an MEB to: (a) identify what is the most appropriate path to take in relation to their particular context, identified objective, existing capacities and available resources; and (b) access guidance on specific technical issues.

CaLP Organisational Cash Readiness Tool: The OCRT tools support the development of organisational structures, systems, policies and procedures that improve readiness to design and implement effective CVA.

OPM and WFP Shock-responsive Social Protection evidence series: The objective of this study commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) is to generate evidence and inform practice for improved emergency preparedness and response in LAC linked to more flexible national social protection systems. The main research question for the study is: 'What factors would enable social protection systems to be more responsive to shocks?'

Question	Answer
Regarding collaboration [noted in the CRS presentation], what	First and foremost, it should be noted that the Caribbean is a diverse region; INGOs and national NGOs across the region have extremely diverse



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<p>were the roles and strengths and weaknesses of local partners vis-à-vis international organisations?</p> <p>It would be good to hear a bit more on your views of relative strengths of INGO and (national) NGOs with respect to CVA.</p>	<p>experiences and capacities, and the expertise that an INGO brings to one country context might not represent their capacity to implement in another, and in some cases a historic presence of an INGO in a country might exceed that of a national NGO. Likewise, some national NGOs have advanced systems for delivering CVA that rivals or exceed those of INGOs, so there are likely more exceptions to the below generalizations than are able to be listed here.</p> <p>Generally, in emergencies, national NGOs' strengths are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presence on the ground and nuanced understanding of needs, response capacity, context and local dynamics - role in pre-positioning (prior to a crisis) financial service agreements that can enable the collaborative model to respond immediately with CVA. - Existing relationships with key actors, e.g. able to leverage local training spaces, able to identify fears, rumors, or localised challenges linked to CVA, and able to engage more directly with local leaders. <p>International NGOs tend to be strong in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bringing technical expertise to the response based on experience in other contexts, and providing off-the-self minimum standards policies and tools to mitigate wide-ranging implementation risks in a particular context - Understanding donor compliance and quality control mechanisms, including grant management, measurement and reporting - Managing cash flow and chain of custody for large grant monies - Reputational credibility with major donors - Leveraging successes and challenges amongst regional or global forums, and pushing forward advocacy
<p>Regarding collaboration [noted in the CRS presentation], what were the roles and strengths and weaknesses of financial service providers (FSPs) vis-à-vis international organisations?</p>	<p>The key advantages to working with experienced FSPs is that they tend to have more experience with the cash handling, the reporting needs, security management, and beneficiary identity verification (most often linked to national Know Your Customer requirements), which allows humanitarian organisations to focus on training, process management, and quality control.</p> <p>Generally speaking, FSPs in the Caribbean are less experienced with humanitarian CVA. Response actors would do well to engage FSPs prior to a crisis, as part of preparedness efforts, to establish FSP agreements for disbursing cash in emergencies, and ensuring the FSP has the capacity to activate a response during an emergency.</p> <p>In the end, FSPs will typically need to see important margins (financial or social) for their institution in order to invest in CVA at scale. However, if they do recognize interesting business margins, there is a risk that they might oversell their capacity. One tool developed for assessing mobile network operators</p>



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	<p>(but with themes that can be applied to non-mobile money FSPs) is the Mobile Money Assessment and Contracting Guide.</p>
<p>Should we anticipate any limitations in the role of FSPs due to COVID-19?</p>	<p>Yes, specifically, on the FSPs' capacity/willingness to incorporate transmission preventative measures. For more traditional FSPs, such as banks, this is easier, as these are more interested in providing continuous service to their clients. However, for non-traditional FSPs or FSPs that work through agents, these require a more significant push to ensure they incorporate COVID-19 considerations.</p> <p>It should be noted that just because an FSP is willing to support CVA during the pandemic does not mean that they have the capacity or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to safely do so; it is thus recommended to spend additional time with the FSP during scenario-planning exercises as well as through quality monitoring. Organisations should expect to integrate specific reasonable COVID-19 considerations directly into contractual agreements (in agreement with the FSP), monitor their fulfillment, and hold their FSP partner accountable.</p>
<p>What does an organisation need to be 'cash ready'? One of the presenters spoke about significant barriers to entry for this modality.</p>	<p>There are numerous factors for an organisation to be ready to respond. Some basic foundational readiness factors include (not an exhaustive list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FSP contract and SOPs for CVA disbursements - financial controls and risk mitigation measures - trained staff in assessing, analysing, setting up, implementing and monitoring CVA programs. <p>CaLP's Organisational Cash Readiness Tool is an easy-to-use guide to conduct a participatory self-assessment in order to start to reflect on which areas would need to be built up within your organisation in order to be ready for CVA.</p>
<p>Is there any study available about shelter responses using CVA in the small island states? (Not sure if housing related markets are available in small countries such as those in the Eastern Caribbean).</p>	<p>According to existing documentation, CVA for shelter has been used effectively in the Caribbean and for global learning, please see the Global Shelter Cluster position paper stating its commitment to scale up CVA and market-based support wherever possible. The Red Cross has documentation available for shelter responses that used cash in Belize after Hurricane Richard in 2011 and in with the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. Agencies have used cash for shelter in Dominica as well.</p>
<p>Inflation is one of biggest challenges here in Syria. What do you recommend to address this challenge?</p>	<p>High inflation is a challenge in many emergency contexts. The key is to monitor key markets and prices and adjust the transfer value as needed (for example, a threshold of an increase of 10% could trigger an adjustment of the transfer but this needs to be determined for the context). See key market monitoring tools from CaLP's Programme Quality Toolbox.</p>