

BRIEFING NOTE AND AGENDA

Lessons Learnt on CVA Coordination in Kenya

1. Background

From 2019 to 2021, Kenya has experienced the triple threat of locust invasion, major flooding and the COVID-19 pandemic. These threats come on top of other long-standing humanitarian needs including high rates of acute malnutrition across the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) counties occasioned by cyclic droughts among other underlying causes.¹ Populations that were already vulnerable have had their lives and livelihoods disrupted and their situations exacerbated. In October 2020, it was estimated that 14.7 million people were in need of assistance, of which 1.7 million people living in the urban informal settlements were food insecure and 739,000 people faced severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) in the ASALs.¹

The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 has specifically hit the urban poor hard, a population that has traditionally not been recipients of humanitarian aid. As such, the existing disaster risk management and financing mechanism triggers were not fit-for-purpose.² Despite the delays in obtaining new funding, humanitarian organizations mobilized to intervene with cash transfer programmes within COVID -19 considerations initially by reprogramming existing funds to address the needs occasioned by the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Although a number of organizations managed to secure dedicated funding for the response later in the year, the needs continued to outweigh available funding. By October 2020, only 37.6 % of the total requirements for the overall humanitarian response had been funded.³

The Government of Kenya also implemented a variety of measures to cushion Kenyans from the threats. These included cash transfers towards populations affected by COVID through various mechanisms. Among them were:

- 1) The multi-agency COVID-19 cash transfers led by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government targeting vulnerable households affected by the economic shock of the Covid-19
- 2) The front-loading of social assistance by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
- 3) *Kazi Mtaani* national hygiene programme – a productive safety-net targeting the youth implemented by the Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development
- 4) Emergency cash transfers to drought-affected populations in the ASALs by the National Drought Management Authority.

Lack of adequate coordination has been cited by various stakeholders as one of the key issues that affected the coherence and thereby the efficiency and effectiveness of the response. This includes coordination among humanitarian actors, within government and between the government and humanitarian actors.^{2,4} In July 2020, the Kenya Cash Working Group (KCWG) supported by CaLP sent a letter to the Permanent Secretary, State Department of Interior & Citizen Services, Ministry of Interior

¹ OCHA (2020). Kenya Situation Report, 20 Oct 2020

² Maintains (2021). Towards shock-responsive social protection: lessons from the COVID-19 response in Kenya

³ OCHA (2020). Kenya Emergency Appeal 2020 – Financial Tracking

⁴ OXFAM (2020). 'Raising the Social Protection Floor' Conference Report

and Coordination requesting for direction on how to access information to enable better linkage of the humanitarian response with the government response. Some coordination between humanitarian actors and with government responses in the form of vertical expansion and piggy-backing was eventually managed predominantly with the National Safety Net Programme. These arrangements were mainly achieved through bilateral engagement.

With the majority of the grant funding obtained during 2020 already used up, a drought crisis looming, many still recovering from the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, with COVID-19 infections on an upward trend, Kenya and its humanitarian partners once again face an uphill task of cushioning its vulnerable populations from destitution. This comes amid funding constraints both within the national social protection mechanism, which has witnessed increased funding gaps, and a downward trend in grant funding within the aid sector.⁵ The efficient and coherent use of any available resources to maximize the impact of available resources is therefore be urgent.

2. Coordination of Cash and Voucher Assistance in Kenya

The Kenya Cash Working Group (KCWG) is an informal group that was formed to facilitate the coordination of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) in Kenya. Currently, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) chair the group. The group brings together stakeholders undertaking CVA in the country to tackle strategic, technical and operational issues that concern it. These include facilitating the coherence of the CVA response (including with government social assistance), contributing to evidence-based policy development, harmonization of standards and approaches and promoting a quality CVA response through technical guidance and information sharing among others.

There is also a Community of Practice (CoP) for Social Protection in Kenya, which focuses on social cash transfers among other forms of social assistance. The CoP was formed by the Government of Kenya through the State Department of Social Protection. The CoP aims to be a forum for sharing of knowledge and skills, exchange of information, mentorship and sharing of best practices in Social Protection with the objective of enhancing coordination, and building efficiency and visibility in the sector. It also seeks to domesticate/complement the activities of the existing Africa Cash-Transfer CoP in which Kenya is actively involved.

Moreover, since November 2020 there is a sectorial group on social protection for development partners' coordination, which engages in policy dialogue with the Government of Kenya. This group is chaired by UNICEF, and co-chaired by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). In addition, since December 2020 there exists a donor-working group on social protection which is part of the development effectiveness group through which donors engage with the Government of Kenya. Both groups cover issues to do with social cash transfers.

3. Purpose of the event

This event aims to provide space for reflection and dialogue on the learning points of the overall CVA response during 2020 – 2021 with particular attention to coordination. The key questions include: Why is CVA coordination still a challenge in Kenya? What improvements are needed going forward? And How can we work together to bring about the desired changes?

⁵ Development Initiatives (2021). Domestic financial flows in Kenya before and during Covid-19

In addition to identifying solutions to the existing challenges and a way forward, entry points to aid actors engaging and working with the relevant government ministries to improve the synergies between humanitarian cash transfers and social cash assistance in the country will be sought.

4. Agenda

Date and Time: **17th September 2021 – 9.00am to 12.45 pm.**

Venue: **Virtual**

Organized by: **CaLP, in collaboration with the KCWG**

Time (hrs)	What	Who
09.00 – 09.20	Introduction and Framing	Sapenzie Ojiambo – CaLP, Regional representative East and Southern Africa Mr. James Oduor - CEO, National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) and Chair of the Kenya Cash Working Group
09.20 – 10.15	<u>SESSION 1</u> (45 min) Overview of current and past coordination issues (10 min) Collective reflection on the state of CVA Coordination in Kenya (45 min) Key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is working well? • What needs improvement and why? 	Sapenzie Ojiambo, CaLP <u>Perspectives shared by different stakeholders</u>
10.15 – 10.25	<i>BREAK</i>	
10.25 – 11.50	<u>SESSION 2</u> Exploring the challenges and opportunities in Break out Groups (45 min) Key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is valuable in terms of CVA coordination? • What would it take to have CVA coordination that is fit for purpose? 	Virtual attendees: 5-8 people per group* *The number of groups will depend on the number of participants who can/want to join group discussions. Groups to share main discussions and conclusions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What possibilities exist to achieve a more coherent CVA response in Kenya? <p>Discussion in Plenary (40 min)</p>	
11.50 – 12.00	<i>BREAK</i>	
12.00 – 12.30	<p><u>SESSION 3</u> Way Forward – reviewing and strengthening the actions points from session 2 (30 min)</p> <p>(To discuss the emerging ideas and develop them further)</p> <p>Key question: How can we support each other in taking the next steps?</p>	<u>Exchange of ideas in plenary</u>
12.30 – 12.45	Wrap up and Closing Remarks	<p>Sapenzie Ojiambo, CaLP</p> <p>Mr. James Oduor, Chair Kenya Cash Working Group</p>

References

1. OCHA (2020). [Kenya Situation Report, 20 Oct 2020](#)
2. OCHA (2020). [Kenya Emergency Appeal 2020 – Financial Tracking](#)
3. Maintains (2021). [Towards shock-responsive social protection: lessons from the COVID-19 response in Kenya](#)
4. OXFAM (2020). [‘Raising the Social Protection Floor’ Conference Report](#)
5. Development Initiatives (2021). [Domestic financial flows in Kenya before and during Covid-19](#)
6. KCWG (2017). [Kenya Cash Working Group Terms of Reference](#)
7. CALP and URD (2012). [Review of emergency cash coordination mechanisms in the Horn of Africa: Kenya and Somalia](#)
8. CaLP (2017). [Responding to Drought in Kenya Using Cash and Vouchers: Learning from Previous Responses](#)
9. CaLP (2018). [Reflecting on the 2017 Drought Response and Cash Coordination in Kenya](#)