

Meeting report

Place: Virtual and face-to-face
Date: November 09th 2022 (9H-11H GMT)
Participants: 26 attendees among them 12 women
Organizations: UNICEF, Ground Truth Solutions, Save the children, WFP, Catholic relief services, Red-Cross / Belgium, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish refugee council, International Rescue Committee, High Commission for Refugees, ECHO Delegation, Concern Worldwide.

Context

On November 9th, 2022, the meeting of the West and Central Africa Regional Cash Working Group (RCWG) was held in virtual and face-to-face mode at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The meeting is part of the support provided by the regional CWG to the national CWGs of the region with the financial support of the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA/USAID). This meeting was organized with the collaboration of the OCHA regional office to serve as a platform for discussions and information sharing among the various stakeholders. The agenda is centered around a round table discussion of recent activities of the various CWGs and presentations followed by question-and-answer segments, all with simultaneous interpretation in English and French.

Due to time constraints, the third planned presentation with the Mali Cash Working Group on cash transfers in the Humanitarian Program Cycle (HPC) process has been postponed until the next regional CWG meeting scheduled for January 2023.

1- Roundtable of the different national Cash Working Groups

Available on recording (7min- 50 min)

- **Burkina Faso CWG**
 - Technical discussions are underway to revise the amount of multiple purpose cash (MPC) from the last MEB implemented in April 2022. Therefore, a new amount of MPC for households will be set considering updated commodity prices, updated average incomes, and observations by some stakeholders and local authorities on the level of the transfer amount perceived as high compared to the minimum wage or average household income.
 - Change in methodology to in-depth analysis based on market monitoring - CWG, WFP, INSD, and SONAGESS work on data available in INSD and SONAGESS systems to detect MEB items whose prices are not collected in the various markets - Joint market monitoring between CWG, CARE, and NGOs (ACTED, CRS, ICRC).
- **Niger CWG**
 - Monitoring of market prices in the CWG with the support of REACH (data collection for items in the sector baskets), knowing that WFP is monitoring foodstuffs.
 - Updating the MEB by considering the prices of the various sector baskets (however, only the education sector is concerned because the prices of the other sectors were collected at their peak during the lean season).
 - Drafting of a specific note on the CVA in the insecure areas, specifically for the Tillabery's area, which will be used in conjunction with the overall note.
- **Mali CWG**
 - CVA training to the profit of humanitarian actors on the field

- Finalization of the national MEB process
- Terms of reference for the new model of coordination
- **Nigeria CWG**
 - Survey to determine nutrition actors implementing CVA activities. Key figures: number of beneficiaries reached 181,000 for \$2.2 million in partnership with 14 local government agencies - analysis of this survey is ongoing - development of a nutrition CVA policy underway
 - Protection-related CVA activities will be shared at the next regional CWG meeting.
- **Tchad CWG**
 - Update of the MEB developed in 2020
 - Update of the mapping of CVA
 - Advocacy note for a harmonized cash response in the flood crisis
 - Development of ToR for CashCap support for CWG coordination
 - Integration of the cash dimension in the HNO / HRP
- **Cameroun CWG**
 - Capacity building - basic TMs skills training across the country
 - Finalization of the MEB update and transfer values at the end of this month
 - Information management with the use of the online 5W tool. The National Cash Working Group's 5W matrix will help inform us on the different types of interventions
 - Taskforce on market monitoring for humanitarian cash and social protection cash.
- **Central African Republic CAR CWG**
 - Study mandated by the Cash Working Group (CWG) on access, use, and preferences around financial services/REACH (FSP Study) - Presentation of quantitative results to CWG by REACH and final report scheduled for sharing by end of November 2022.
 - Finalization of the Concept note for hybrid MEB by the co-leads of Cash taskforce from WFP, OCHA and Concern. Awaiting feedback from CWG members for validation in early December. MEB to be adopted early December 2022
 - Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) - Cash Barometer in CAR: Quantitative Survey 2022 - presentation of results in December 2022 - Preliminary results analysis workshop held August 31, 2022. For accountability purposes, recommendations from the various agencies are expected.
 - Presentation of ECHO Dakar's CASH policy scheduled for December 5 to the CWG

2- UNICEF: Steps to link cash transfers and social protection (SP): The Cameroon Experience

Available on recording (50min30s – 1H11min)

Ms. Maya FAISAL, Social Protection Officer/ UNICEF Cameroon made the first presentation of this meeting which provided an overview of the humanitarian context in Cameroon, then the establishment of a taskforce (working group) to identify potential links between the CVA and SP through the social protection delivery chain and finally the priority actions and key issues.

Like many countries in the region, Cameroon has a high poverty rate affecting 37.5% of the population. In 2022, it is estimated that 3.9 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection and the most affected regions are in the North and East of the country where there are 3 crises: Conflict and insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin, the North-West and South-West crisis, and the refugee crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR). In terms of the social protection system, the assessment shows: several components of SP - fragmentation of

coverage due to a lack of harmonization because each ministry works separately - inoperability of the system.

CVAs are largely financed by the banks and IFC, except for the emergency assistance for the pandemic covid 19, a government initiative. The latter has reached 304,500 households. The main objective is to link CVA interventions with SP interventions to build Cameroon's national social protection systems and progressively achieve universal social protection coverage, as set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Currently, the role of the taskforce is to establish a platform, dialogue and/or space between humanitarian and development stakeholders to explore the linkages between CVA and social protection in Cameroon. The priority actions of the taskforce for the year 2022 are: 1) Establishment of the platform - 2) Mini training sessions for taskforce members for a shock adapted SP 3) Mapping of actors 4) Feasibility and assessment of the strategic linkages of CVA and social protection. Among the issues discussed, the lack of clarity on capacities and steps for protection and data sharing among humanitarian and development partners remains a major challenge.

Questions and answers

Available on recording (1H12min-1H29min)

Regarding the 5W matrix from a cash perspective, is the Development Fund in the same outline, implementing CWGs? The 5W matrix is an example of potential for making linkages, and it is not yet regularized for practices because of the data collection from all actors. This matrix facilitates the transmission of information because it is categorized into different types of cash/CVA.

Do you just focus on the safe areas, or do you go to the challenging/difficult context areas, if so what links or dialogues have you found there? No, the taskforce is not just designated for a specific area or prolonged crisis, it is set up for all actors working in different parts of the region.

In terms of data protection, what methods have you found for registering beneficiaries in the national register? UNHCR has aligned itself with the government's method of registering social nets for beneficiary selection. However, UNICEF's actions are not currently translated into action/practice, we are just in the discussion stages within the Taskforce to find potential linkages.

What are the recommendations to guide the CWGs? Start somewhere - start with a ToR to discuss the vision, objectives, entry points, existing interventions - discussion with government.

What are the linkages between the taskforce and the CWG? The Cameroon CWG is composed of three taskforces: Taskforce for TMs - Taskforce for MEB - Taskforce for Market Monitoring. This UNICEF-led taskforce was set up under the CWG to discuss these three themes in depth. At the end of a workshop organized in December 2021 in collaboration with government authorities, the main concerns that emerged were to better articulate humanitarian responses with social protection - to provide the support requested by the government - to strengthen the various partners for a complementarity of tasks - to maintain a permanent dialogue. This taskforce is currently in an experimental phase and as time goes by the different taskforces will be consolidated.

3- Ground Truth Solutions: Making CVA programs more accountable - Tracking beneficiaries' perceptions of humanitarian aid in West/Central Africa.

Available on recording (1H31min-2H14min)

Ms. Eva Soltész -Project Coordinator/GTS shared the "Cash Barometer" study, a GTS initiative in West and Central Africa that aims to understand the views of people who have received TMs and make recommendations to improve their experiences with assistance. This study uses a mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative studies, feedback to communities and a capacity building component) in collaboration with various partners, humanitarian working groups, consulting organizations and local stakeholders to gather relevant information.

This survey is based on a sample of 2,000 people who have received monetary assistance only and/or humanitarian assistance per country and per data collection cycle. The countries covered by this survey are: Central African Republic CAR, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Chad. This study addressed beneficiaries' perceptions on 1) effects and resilience 2) level of information 3) participation and feedback 4) traders (both vendors and humanitarian actors).

The survey analysis also revealed that modality preference remains a complex issue and even within the same community, preferences are divergent. In terms of possible solutions for strengthening accountability in CVA, there is a need to incorporate information sharing, participation in decision-making and timely feedback from affected communities.

*Publication of perception survey reports in CAR and Nigeria in the following months on the following page : <https://groundtruthsolutions.org/> .

Additional quantitative and qualitative research in CAR, Nigeria, Chad, DRC, and Burkina in the coming years.

Questions et Réponses

Concerning the section of the survey on "Effects and Resilience", how do you explain the differences in responses between different countries and even within the same country, taking the example of CAR where most beneficiaries responded positively that humanitarian assistance helps improve living conditions, but the responses are rather negative in terms of humanitarian assistance and the situation of beneficiaries in the future?

In CAR, the answer to this question depends much more on seasonality because if the question is rephrased in terms of unmet needs, the answer revolves around education. It is important to note that all humanitarian assistance planning is done only once a year, which may be inappropriate for the needs of communities.

Regarding the comparison between the differences in resilience in the responses of different countries, there is no satisfactory answer because the modalities, contexts, seasons, aspects of resilience ... are different.

4- Miscellaneous

Available on recording (2H14min-2H15min)

- Survey on the usage of interpretation services
- A questionnaire will be sent to the different CWGs regarding the best methods of conducting upcoming meetings
- The next regional CWG meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 11th, 2022, to accommodate the holiday season. It will be held face-to-face and online at the OCHA office meeting room.